

**National Foundation
for Educational Research**



‘All together better’:

**An Evaluation of the GTC-DfES-LEA Continuing
Professional Development Partnership Project**

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Key messages

1 Rationale

The General Teaching Council for England (GTC) and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) have been working in partnership with 26 local education authorities (LEAs) to advance work in supporting teachers' continuing professional development (CPD). This work is part of a national agenda to build schools' capacity for effective CPD.

The GTC-DfES-LEA CPD Partnership Project was funded by the DfES. Much of the foundation underpinning the work at a local level was set in place by the DfES regional advisers¹, with several of the ways of working that were used in the course of the project developed by the GTC, building on styles adopted in an earlier pilot with nine LEAs. The DfES regional advisers identified LEAs for involvement, brokered relationships between the GTC and LEAs and, together with the GTC and LEA, planned the form and focus of the professional development work to be undertaken. GTC link advisers provided specialist input in the authority in support of the identified areas over the course of the academic year 2004–2005.

As part of its commitment to assess the impact of its own policies, the GTC commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to undertake an independent evaluation of the GTC-DfES-LEA CPD Partnership Project. This summary sets out key messages to emerge from the research.

2 Evaluation approach

A principal part of the evaluation was interviews with 74 individuals. This dimension comprised 63 interviewees from 16 of the participating authorities (including both LEA-level and school-based personnel) as well as meetings and interviews with GTC link advisers and DfES regional advisers. In addition, documentation was studied relating to the GTC work undertaken in all 26 LEAs.

3 Form and focus of the partnership project

A principal characteristic of the partnership project was the **flexibility and responsiveness** of input depending on the particular context and needs of each LEA. Thus, across the 26 participating authorities, the nature of the GTC's role, the focus of the professional development project undertaken and the personnel involved varied according to local priorities.

Roles adopted by GTC link advisers included (in order of frequency):

- **critical friend and guide** to the LEA CPD adviser
- **broker/builder of relationships** at LEA-school or inter-school level
- **creator of structures and synergy** for innovative proposals and activities (e.g. devising structures for school-based action research projects, implementation of

¹DfES regional advisers moved to the Teacher Training Agency (now the Training and Development Agency for Schools – TDA) in April 2005 as this assumed responsibility for the professional development of qualified teachers.

coaching and mentoring systems, or the introduction of theoretical models for culture change around the concept of CPD at LEA and school level)

- **provider of focus and strategy** within and across a diffuse range of activities (e.g. intensive work with the LEA CPD adviser around strategic planning and developing structure and focus for partnership project working groups).

Two main foci for partnership project work (both targeted variously at LEA and/or school level) were:

- the **development of CPD strategies or tools**, including the development of opportunities frameworks and CPD strategies/policies
- the **development of thinking around CPD**, including a clarification of the LEA's vision or approach to CPD and the changing of cultures (often moving from a perception that CPD centred on attending external courses to a greater capitalisation on within-school expertise, local networking and collaboration).

Across the participating LEAs, the personnel involved in the partnership varied depending on the form and focus of the professional development project underway. In addition to the GTC link adviser and LEA CPD advisers, it could involve **headteachers/school CPD leaders, other LEA officers, wider school staff** (e.g. teachers and support staff), and **other personnel** such as CPD providers or representatives of higher education institutions. Partnership meetings typically took the form of a working group or larger-scale conferences/seminars, though work with individual schools was also in evidence.

4 The impacts of the partnership project

Overall, a wide range of impacts at both LEA and school level were identified, with interviewees speaking positively about what had been gained from the partnership project.

The range of impacts experienced largely related to the focus of the professional development work taken forward in the LEA. Impacts were experienced at different levels, with the greatest impacts, at this point in time, felt by those who were closely involved, though LEAs had plans for the dissemination of the work undertaken and further development of the project over academic year 2005–06.

Impacts at LEA level

Five principal areas of impact were identified as outcomes for LEAs as a result of the partnership project.

- **A more coherent approach to professional development**
- **Greater priority given to CPD at LEA level**
- **Gaining a wider perspective of CPD and its national context**
- **Enhanced communication and relationships between the LEA and schools**
- **Enhanced CPD offer.**

In addition, when describing the effect on themselves, the LEA CPD advisers from all 16 authorities involved in the data collection highlighted an **increase in their knowledge, skills and understanding of CPD matters**. This included a broadening of the concept of what constituted effective CPD; greater understanding of the CPD needs of particular groups of teachers; and improved expertise in communication with school staff.

That increases in knowledge and skills emerged so prominently as impacts for LEA CPD advisers bodes well for the future development of their CPD work and for the long-term capacity building. A model of CPD outcomes developed by Kinder and Harland, (1991) identified enhanced knowledge and skills as one of two '*first order*' outcomes i.e. those most likely to achieve a substantial impact on practice.

Impacts at school level

At the time of interviewing, school-level outcomes were largely (though not exclusively) reported by those school staff directly involved in the project, and by their schools, if they had begun applying and cascading new approaches and thinking within their institutions. That said, it was anticipated that further impacts on schools across the authorities would be felt through wider dissemination of the work and consolidation of project activities in the academic year 2005–06. Early impacts to emerge for the staff involved so far and their schools were as follows:

- **Increased knowledge and skills and greater understanding** regarding CPD
- **Stronger links with the LEA** including staff involved feeling valued, as well as engendering **greater trust** between the LEA and schools
- **Stronger links with other schools** in the partnership, which could lead to cross-school professional development e.g. observation opportunities, networking
- **Enjoyment** of and **stimulation** from the partnership approach to working
- Greater personal **understanding of career pathways and roles** – particularly where the partnership project had developed an opportunities framework
- Greater awareness of the **CPD options available** to school staff
- Greater awareness of **how to identify training needs**, in turn leading to **more tailored and effective CPD provision**.

Furthermore, there was evidence that school staff had begun to **implement in their own practice the aspects of CPD that they were working on in the partnership project**.

In terms of impacts on pupils, at the time of the data collection most interviewees felt that it was too soon for impacts at this level to be evaluated.

Longer-term development of the partnership projects

Although direct GTC involvement (as well as the evaluation funding) finished at the end of the academic year (2004–2005), the 16 LEAs involved in the interviews did not perceive this as an 'ending' to the work that had been developed during the course of the partnership. There was a desire to build on what had been put in place and achieved in the partnership projects, in order to establish the longer-term development of this work. In many cases concrete steps had been planned.

Future developments were planned to varying extents in all the 16 LEAs involved in the direct data collection. These included:

- the continuation of the work at strategic level within the LEA (including enhanced capacity through new appointments of LEA CPD advisers)
- LEA-wide dissemination of the work to schools, including launches of frameworks, web-based products and new CPD opportunities, etc.
- the continuation of working groups, where these had formed part of the partnership, through extending the focus of the group's work, or formalising the group's membership and remit (e.g. setting up a CPD leaders' forum).

5 Key factors leading to the effectiveness of the partnership project

Having established the impacts emanating from the partnerships project and that this was seen as the start of a long-term development, we now identify the factors that contributed to its effectiveness in order to highlight elements that are key to securing outcomes in work of this type. The **funding** committed by the DfES to the partnership project was felt to have contributed added value by bringing about the work. In addition, analysis of interviewees' comments revealed that the success of the partnership project was ascribed to its constructs and processes, as follows.

Customising and ownership

A principal facet of the partnership project was the **flexibility and responsiveness of input** depending on the particular context, needs and starting point of each LEA. Thus, across the 26 participating authorities, the nature of the GTC's role, the focus of the professional development work undertaken and the personnel involved varied according to local priorities. Because of this approach, partners had **scope for identifying their own focus and taking ownership of the work**, factors they deemed key to its success.

Partnership working

The partnership approach was highly valued. **Collaborative working, sharing knowledge and expertise** and encouraging the input of all parties to shape the work to '**identified need**' and to build **ownership** were deemed important, as were the **status and credibility** brought to the work by the commitment of various parties. Thus, the partnership approach was associated with the effectiveness of the work undertaken and the impacts achieved.

External expertise

Specialist input from outside the locality provided by GTC link advisers was prized. Their involvement was very highly regarded for their **knowledge and skills** related to professional development practices and for their **direct support** by undertaking work to aid often overstretched LEA staff. They were appreciated for their **enthusiasm** and for the **focus, coherence and quality assurance** they brought to the work. Moreover, their **flexible, tailor-made approach further contributed to the partners' ownership** over the professional development work undertaken. Whilst most (though not all) LEAs believed that they would probably have undertaken similar work without the input, the

external expertise added value by kick-starting the work; achieving results more quickly; moving LEAs further forward in their CPD thinking and practice than otherwise possible; and creating a better quality product or outcome.

Challenges arising and areas for improvement

From interviewees' comments regarding the challenges encountered (and largely surmounted) and areas for improvements, we learn that the following are also important in this type of work:

- **support from LEA and school senior management** – senior LEA-level support in particular seemed pivotal in progressing some of the partnerships past an impasse
- **time** – both finding convenient times for all parties to meet and the actual time available to dedicate to the partnership
- **striking a balance** – between flexibility (beneficial for letting projects and partnerships respond and evolve) and clarity of vision regarding the purpose of the work and the roles of those involved (especially at the outset and at entry points for different participants)
- **dissemination and active promotion** of the work beyond those directly involved – this had taken place or was planned in the majority of LEAs involved in the data collection. Effective dissemination was considered fundamental to the longer-term development and embedding of the work undertaken.

6 Modelling principles of effective professional development

What is striking about the partnership project is that it was in effect the embodiment of the principles of professional development that it was trying to convey. Several of the above processes that were perceived to make the project itself effective were actually those that the project was seeking to embed in the practices of participating LEAs.

To explain further, an underlying aim of the project was to move forward LEAs' and schools' adoption of CPD identified as effective in recent educational research and best practice guidance. This chiefly constituted a shift in culture away from a course-based mentality and practice in professional development towards more collaborative, school-based forms such as peer support and coaching, observation with feedback, and the use of the external expertise and professional dialogue (e.g. Cordingley *et al*, 2003). Further, this research established the effectiveness of CPD that takes individual starting points into account and gives teachers scope for identifying their own CPD focus.

As well as aiming to impart and ingrain these features of professional development, the overall construction and processes of the project embodied several of them, for example:

- the **coaching** element raised in the literature was exemplified when the GTC link adviser was a critical friend to the LEA adviser
- the link adviser was the bringer of **external expertise** when working in collaboration with LEA and school personnel on professional development matters

- the commitment to a flexible way of working depending on the particular context and priorities of each LEA took account of **individual starting points and gave partners scope for identifying the CPD focus to be taken forward**
- the partnership approach that brought together some or all of GTC, DfES, LEA and school-based personnel through working parties and seminars established a process **to encourage, extend and structure professional dialogue.**

Thus, the actual design of the GTC-DfES-LEA CPD Partnership Project **modelled several of the principles of professional development that it was seeking to convey.** Moreover, it was to these features that the success of the project was attributed.

Concluding comments

What messages can we take from this to inform national policy development and thinking about professional learning?

The features identified above were first seen as central in effective CPD in relation to teachers' classroom practice. What emerges here is that these same features – use of external expertise, professional networking and dialogue, and needs-based work that affords ownership – can also work in LEA-level/LEA-wide professional development approaches. That these features can transfer to different levels in education suggests their robustness as tenets of professional development.

That said, though promising, the evidence for this comes from the year of input in the partnership project. A further test of the value of these features in LEA professional development would be to follow up the work at a later date to ascertain more fully the effectiveness of the partnership project in fulfilling its core purpose of building capacity for CPD.

Longer-term follow-up would also allow for further exploration of the return on investment of working at LEA level to build capacity for CPD. Much of the focus of the partnership project was, in the first instance, at LEA-level (e.g. critical friendship to LEA advisers, the formulation of professional development policies and opportunity frameworks for application authority-wide, partnership working between LEA personnel, school personnel and others). Later follow-up would show the extent to which such LEA work develops and is taken up and taken forward to effect change in professional development practices authority-wide.

Based on the evidence to date, there are possibly some positive indications in this regard. Firstly, the impacts derived so far by LEA and school level partners suggest the value of LEA focused work. Secondly, the partnership approach, the foci of much of the work already undertaken and the products developed have potential to attain longevity. For example, where the partnership involved schools, LEAs regarded this as bringing credibility to the process and particularly the product, which would help in its dissemination to and take-up by other schools. Further, in terms of the nature of the work, much of the focus over the year of the partnership project involved stimulating teachers' demand for professional development, developing LEAs' and schools' offer away from a concentration on external courses, and achieving congruence between the demand and the offer (e.g. through the development of opportunity frameworks). If congruence is attained

in practice and the demand and offer continue to develop and needs are met, there is the likelihood of long-term continuation of the work and take-up authority-wide.

To sum up finally, follow-up of the work at a later time would help determine the longer-term effectiveness of the partnership project in building capacity for CPD. (This possibility is being explored with the GTC.) None the less, considering the impacts perceived so far in most participating LEAs and given that its approach embodies key principles of professional development, the evidence to date would suggest that there is significant merit and worth in the GTC-DfES-LEA CPD partnership project model of working.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The General Teaching Council for England (GTC) and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) have been working in partnership with a number of local education authorities (LEAs) to advance work in supporting teachers' continuing professional development (CPD). This work is part of a national agenda to 'build schools' capacity for effective CPD'.

Defining 'capacity building'

In order to 'build capacity', the DfES sets out four central strategies through which this will be achieved:

- the closer integration of CPD, performance management and school improvement as key components of effective whole-school policies on teaching and learning
- a stronger CPD infrastructure in schools
- schools' increased awareness and use of CPD activities that lead to significant and sustained changes in practice
- clearer expectations of the skills, knowledge and understanding that teachers should develop over the first five years of their careers (DfES, 2004).

Further, the capacity-building agenda aims to create a climate in LEAs and schools in which:

- CPD is strategically focused and integrated with performance management and school improvement to raise standards of teaching and learning
- teachers expect to engage in continuing professional development and in supporting the development of colleagues, and their performance management arrangements reflect that expectation
- headteachers and teachers are knowledgeable about the wide range of experiences and opportunities that can contribute to strengthening informed professional practice, and the conditions in which professional development has greatest impact on performance
- headteachers embrace their responsibility, working collaboratively with other schools, LEAs, providers of CPD and other stakeholders, to ensure that:
 - their staff have access to appropriate professional development responsive both to local needs and to teachers' aspirations
 - their schools are professional learning communities which make a contribution to the wider professional learning across appropriate networks
- LEAs make a strategic contribution to ensuring that high quality CPD opportunities are available, accessible, and known about, and that conditions are created and sustained in which outcomes of professional learning are widely shared and owned
- governors are properly equipped to promote and monitor effective CPD in their schools (DfES, 2004).

The GTC-DfES-LEA CPD Partnership Project

In support of the core purpose to build capacity for effective CPD, the GTC and DfES regional advisers² have worked in collaboration to help LEAs to form and strengthen relationships with schools, teachers and other partners, and engage in effective local CPD partnerships. The aim has been to ensure that the thinking and approaches identified as effective in recent educational research and best practice guidance are prioritised in local CPD policy making and practice in order to enhance school staff's participation in, their entitlement to, and the responsibility they take for, professional development³.

The partnership project follows on from a pilot stage (2001–03), during which the GTC worked with nine authorities to support teacher retention and teaching quality through the development of local entitlement frameworks to CPD. Building on this pilot, the DfES and GTC have taken forward this partnership work in 26 LEAs⁴.

The partnership project was funded by the DfES. Much of the foundation underpinning the work at a local level was set in place by the DfES regional advisers, with several of the ways of working that were used in the course of the project developed by the GTC, building on styles adopted in the pilot. The DfES regional advisers identified LEAs for involvement, brokered relationships between the GTC and LEAs and, together with the GTC and LEA, planned the form and focus of the professional development work to be undertaken. GTC link advisers provided specialist input in the authority in support of the identified areas over the course of the academic year 2004–2005.

As part of its commitment to assess the impact of its own policies, the GTC commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to undertake an independent evaluation of the GTC-DfES-LEA CPD Partnership Project. This report presents findings from the evaluation.

1.2 The evaluation

The evaluation was commissioned with the aim of creating an evidence base for transporting the GTC partnership model of working, providing a formative input to the project and informing the national CPD agenda as it develops. Key issues considered by the research included:

- the depth, range and coherence of CPD as a professional offer shaped by teachers
- appropriate differentiation according to experience/role/career aspirations, etc.
- access, continuity and progression
- effectiveness in terms of likely impact on teachers' practice and pupils' learning, according to what the most up-to-date research suggests
- the leadership, strategy and coordination of CPD at local and institutional levels
- the role, management and 'added value' of external expertise at different levels

²DfES regional advisers moved to the Teacher Training Agency (now the Training and Development Agency for Schools – TDA) in April 2005 as this assumed responsibility for the professional development of qualified teachers. In this report, they are referred to as DfES regional advisers because the partnership was between the DfES, GTC and LEAs.

³Details of aims taken from the project contract.

⁴Participation by those LEAs selected for involvement was optional.

- the factors, processes and resources which seem most likely to lead to longer-term capacity building and sustainability
- the ‘added value’ (if any) to LEAs beyond the selected group of the GTC’s work
- any issues that have emerged in supporting a partnership model of working between the GTC, the DfES and individual LEAs
- the degree of consistency and cogency of all these messages for framing and informing national policy development.

A key part of the evaluation was interviews with **74 individuals**. This dimension comprised 63 interviewees from 16 of the participating authorities (including both LEA-level and school-based personnel) as well as meetings and interviews with GTC link advisers and DfES regional advisers. In addition, **documentation** was studied relating to the GTC work undertaken in all 26 LEAs. Below we explain the methods used in greater detail.

Case studies

A sample of six LEAs was selected from the participating authorities to form a case-study sample. The LEAs were chosen by the research team to represent the different inputs that the GTC offered as part of the project. Interviews were conducted with GTC project team members, LEA advisers working on the project and school-based staff.

Telephone interviews

Telephone interviews were carried out with the LEA adviser leading on the project in a further ten participating authorities. Telephone interviews were also conducted with DfES regional advisers.

Documentary overview

This involved the study of documentation from across all 26 LEAs participating in the partnership project (including project documents, GTC link adviser reports and LEA group meeting minutes and reports). This overview provided the background to the projects and was used to set the findings from the case studies and LEA telephone interviews in the wider context of all projects.

2 The partnership project

This section seeks to describe the form and focus of the work undertaken in the 26 participating LEAs, drawing on interview data from DfES regional advisers, GTC link advisers, LEA and school-based personnel, and on process-related documentation (i.e. progress reports and summaries of key meetings). To set the context, the principles underlining the GTC-DfES-LEA CPD Partnership Project overall are conveyed, followed by a description of the partnerships formed and professional development work taken forward in the 26 participating authorities. Thus, this section is structured as follows:

- The GTC-DfES-LEA CPD Partnership Project overall
- The partnership projects in the 26 participating LEAs.

2.1 The GTC-DfES-LEA CPD Partnership Project overall

In order to understand the nature of the form and focus of the work in 26 participating LEAs, it is important to set out first central tenets that underpinned the overall design of the GTC-DfES-LEA CPD Partnership Project:

- **the clarity surrounding the vision of professional development that the overall partnership project was endeavouring to convey and embed**
- **the flexibility and responsiveness of the input depending on the particular context and priorities of the LEA**

Thus, although there was consistency in the philosophy of professional development underlining the work, there was variety in the ways in which the partnership project endeavoured to realise this according to local circumstances and priorities.

To explain further, in terms of **the vision of professional development**, the core purpose of the work was to build capacity for effective CPD, as Section 1 relayed. In support of this, the partnership project aimed to forward LEAs' and schools' adoption of those CPD strategies identified as effective in recent educational research and best practice guidance.

In recent years, there has been a shift away from a perception and practice of professional development based around the attendance of courses in favour of more school-based and collaborative forms. This follows research that has identified the positive benefits for teachers and improvements to pupils' learning that could emanate from CPD interventions such as peer support, observation with feedback, the use of the external expertise in school-based activity, professional dialogue and processes to sustain CPD over time to enable teachers to embed practices in their classrooms (Cordingly *et al.*, 2003). Further, research has established the effectiveness of CPD where teachers have ownership over the professional development and scope for identifying their own CPD focus (e.g. Cordingly *et al.*, 2003, Downing *et al.*, 2004, Moor *et al.*, 2005). These messages have been taken forward in policy (e.g. in the Primary National Strategy and the Key Stage 3 National Strategy) and developed further in best practice guidance (e.g. the focus on professional learning as an entitlement and responsibility in the GTC's Teachers' Professional Learning Framework).

It was the principles to emerge from this research and guidance – school-based, collaboration, ownership, entitlement and responsibility – that the partnership project has sought to impart and ingrain in LEAs’ and schools’ philosophies and practices in order to build capacity for effective CPD.

Yet, without losing sight of these principles, the second key characteristic was the **flexibility and responsiveness of approach** depending on the particular context and needs of each LEA: the commitment to tailor-made input. Thus, across the 26 participating authorities **the role of the GTC, the specific focus of the professional development project undertaken and the personnel involved** varied according to local priorities. In order to demonstrate this, this section will now describe the work undertaken in the 26 participating authorities.

2.2 The partnership projects in the 26 participating LEAs

This section seeks to convey the diversity in the form and focus of the work undertaken in the 26 participating LEAs. To this end, it sets out the models of partnership working, the various foci and form of the CPD project taken forward and the range in the roles of the GTC link advisers.

Models of partnership working

As Section 1 relayed, the project aimed to encourage and develop local changes in relation to CPD through a partnership approach between LEA and school-based personnel working alongside GTC link advisers and DfES regional advisers. In all cases, a lead contact within the LEA, most often the LEA CPD adviser, was identified to work closely with the GTC link adviser. In some authorities, one or two other members of LEA personnel (e.g. secondees, consultants, heads of service) were also brought into this core team. Beyond this, partnership models in operation across the 26 LEAs varied in terms of the **range of personnel involved** and the **nature and degree of their involvement** according to local needs, wishes and starting points, as outlined below.

The most common working format for the partnership (in 15 of the 26 authorities) was the **working group, though the personnel involved differed**. Membership of these groups typically comprised the GTC link adviser, the LEA CPD adviser, school staff and/or other LEA personnel. It was amongst the **school staff** involved that the make-up of these working groups most varied – the actual composition as appropriate to each individual project and its aims. The following three core variations of school staff composition were apparent.

- **A variety of levels of experience and roles** (including wider school staff) as appropriate to the project. For example, in order to represent a range of phases, roles and personnel at different stages in their careers, the profile of school-based staff on a working group of 20-plus in one LEA included senior management, Advanced Skills teachers, leading teachers, newly qualified teachers, early careers teachers, teaching assistants and learning mentors. Another example comprised a smaller working group, of about eight to ten school-based staff, and in this case targeted headteachers, deputy heads, early careers and overseas teachers in primary schools – again as appropriate to the project in-hand.

- **Headteachers/school CPD leaders only**, typically with the intention of exploring issues in a more concentrated way at CPD leader-level and the specific contribution they could make from their experience to the work in hand.
- **Sub-groups of school-based staff** working in separate groups but who might come together at some stage to share experiences. For example, one partnership worked for a number of sessions with three sub-groups – namely of headteachers, teachers and support staff – before coming together as a whole group, as it was felt that participants would feel comfortable with this approach. Elsewhere, sub-groups formed latterly, after an initial whole-group session (e.g. the later work was split by phase in one LEA where this seemed to aid the process).

In addition to the above, there was also one case where a multi-agency working group was formed, including representation from headteachers and local authority services.

The contributions from school-based staff were seen to be integral to these partnership projects – with partners working on a common task but bringing their own experiences and perspectives. In terms of the input of the working group to the project, in some cases the group had met at intervals throughout the 12-month duration of the project (for example once every half term was a typical model), whilst in other cases these working groups had met on a few occasions, with ensuing work being carried forward by the lead LEA adviser.

Another partnership approach was the one-off **seminar or conference**, taking place in 11 LEAs. These were often held early on in the project, with invitation to all headteachers/school CPD leaders, or to specific groups of school/LEA staff according to the focus of the project (e.g. early career teachers). These seminars served to introduce the partnership project to key LEA and school personnel, and were a forum to explore ideas, issues or concerns.

Further, direct **work with individual schools** had been carried out by the GTC link adviser and/or the LEA CPD adviser. Typically, this specific school-based project work evolved from activities and ideas generated within working groups, with headteachers/CPD leaders taking forward CPD initiatives within their own schools, sometimes bringing in other members of school staff. In one LEA, however, project work had begun with one-to-one consultations with headteachers to explore issues and concerns around CPD, and from this, the headteachers had expressed a wish to come together to form a working group. Individual school-level work was also underway in authorities where the partnership project had included school-based action research.

In five LEAs, the partnership involved the **LEA CPD adviser** working alongside the GTC link adviser in a series of one-to-one meetings and communication. This could be a model by design, for example where the LEA lead adviser had wished to use the GTC link adviser principally in a critical friend capacity or where projects focused on capacity building at LEA level. However, it could also be a model by default when work had been subject to local delays (e.g. because of illhealth or workload of LEA lead adviser, OFSTED inspection), which meant that projects had not had the opportunity to extend their reach by the time of the research.

It should be noted that the above approaches were not mutually exclusive. For example, some projects had begun with a large-scale conference, and a smaller working group of

interested individuals had taken activities forward. Elsewhere, individual school-based action research was taking place in parallel with a headteacher/CPD leader working group. Examples of the range of partnership models across the 26 projects are given in the box below.

Examples of partnerships

In an authority where the partnership project focused on capacity building at both LEA and school level, the LEA CPD adviser and the GTC link adviser facilitated a working group of school CPD leaders. The group met around six times throughout the year, to discuss developments in approaches to CPD, and explore theoretical models that might support this. The LEA CPD adviser pursued further work with individual schools (including CPD leaders and teaching staff), where discussion within the working group had initiated changes to CPD policy and practice at school level. In addition, presentations were made by the GTC link adviser and LEA CPD adviser to groups of other LEA officers.

In an authority where the partnership project focused on developing the LEA's CPD strategy, the LEA CPD adviser and the GTC link adviser held four regional seminars across the authority, to which all headteachers/school CPD leaders were invited. The sessions provided an opportunity for schools to contribute to discussion around CPD developments and to consult on strategy documents produced by the LEA. Work was then taken forward by the LEA adviser.

In an LEA where the partnership project included school-based action research, headteachers/school CPD leaders were invited to a conference at which the project was launched. Where schools took forward action research, teaching and support staff became involved in the projects. The GTC and LEA advisers continued to work with individual schools throughout the year, including planning and follow-up meetings to monitor the progress of projects.

In an authority where the partnership project focused on building capacity at LEA and school level (with the production of a strategy to reflect new approaches to CPD), four different working groups were brought together, comprising one each of headteachers, teaching staff, support staff and CPD providers. The groups met individually on two occasions each to generate and exchange ideas, and then came together as a larger group to explore future directions.

Focus and form of the projects

Focus

As described above, the overall core purpose of the GTC-DfES-LEA Partnership Project was to build capacity for effective CPD, and in order to advance this, endeavours were made to convey and embed approaches identified as good practice in educational research and guidance. At local level, this goal of capacity building was evident in the vast majority of projects. However, because of their different contexts, starting points, histories and existing work, there were differences in how each LEA proceeded towards this goal. Therefore, whilst ultimately geared towards capacity building, across the 26 LEAs, there were differences in the precise focus of the work taken forward by the partnership and in the particular element of capacity building emphasized. The box that follows gives examples of the foci of projects.

Examples of the foci of the projects

- Formulation or clarification of the LEA's vision and strategy for CPD to support participation and access
- Development of the role of the LEA CPD adviser, including both developing the confidence and expertise of an adviser new to the role and organising/rationalising the workload of an adviser who held a number of duties alongside the remit for CPD
- A reshaping of the LEA's CPD 'offer' to reflect current thinking around effective CPD and the adoption of new ways for the LEA to work with schools in supporting CPD
- 'Changing the culture' of CPD at school level, including a move away from course-based CPD provision to a greater use of in-school expertise and cross-school networking and collaboration: in reaching this objective, contributory aims included the encouragement of broader thinking around what makes for effective CPD and what sources this might be drawn from
- School staff taking greater ownership and responsibility for identifying their individual CPD requirements and taking steps to address these needs
- Development of the role of school CPD leaders, including, as with LEA CPD advisers, enhancing knowledge and skills in the area of CPD, increasing the confidence of individuals carrying out this role
- The promotion to schools of the links between school improvement, performance management and CPD
- Better identification and meeting of CPD needs: either focused on the entire school workforce or on specific groups of staff, namely newly qualified teachers, early career teachers or overseas trained teachers, often because of concerns regarding the recruitment and retention of these groups
- Improved LEA-school communication, enabling each to understand better the requirements of the other, and to achieve greater coherence and consistency in CPD provision, both across the LEA and within individual schools
- Improved cross-school links
- The evaluation of the impact of CPD
- The CPD implications of the Every Child Matters and extended schools agendas (one case).

Form

This section gives an overview of the range of activities undertaken across the 26 projects in order to advance the foci that have been described above. As part of the partnership project, there was a strong focus on **developing thinking and understanding regarding CPD matters**. For a small number of LEAs, at the time of the evaluation study, project activity had been primarily centred around the **discussion and exploration** of ideas and key themes. However, most LEAs had begun to develop this thinking into some form of concrete **CPD document or 'tool'**. Most common among these was the *opportunities framework*, a document detailing the progression routes and CPD options for school staff at various stages of their career. It was explained that the opportunities framework was underpinned by supply, that is, in mapping out the range of CPD activities that might be appropriate to school staff at various stages in their career, the framework set out both the local and national opportunities that were available for staff to draw upon. Other documents or tool developed by the partnership projects included: LEA CPD strategies or statements of intent; action plans for the LEA CPD adviser; tools for evaluating the impact of CPD; and change models for identifying CPD needs of individuals. Table 2.1 gives an overview of the range of documents/tools developed across the 26 projects.

Table 2.1 Documents and tools produced by the partnership projects

Strategic documents/tools	Operational documents/tools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement of intent • CPD strategy • Action plan for LEA CPD adviser 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities framework • Directory of good practice • Handbook for CPD leaders • Directory of multi-agency contacts • Tools for evaluating the impact of CPD • Change models for identifying CPD needs • CPD portfolios

Other activities of the projects included **CPD audits** (at either LEA or school level) to establish current positions and identify concerns or areas of need, and school-based **action research** projects carried out by groups of teaching and non-teaching staff.

GTC roles

The range of roles adopted by GTC link advisers included (in order of frequency):

- **critical friend and guide** to the LEA CPD adviser
- **broker/builder of relationships** at LEA-school or inter-school level
- **creator of structures and synergy** for innovative proposals and activities (e.g. devising structures for school-based action research projects, implementation of coaching and mentoring systems, or the introduction of theoretical models for culture change around the concept of CPD at LEA and school level)
- **provider of focus and strategy** within and across a diffuse range of activities (e.g. intensive work with the LEA CPD adviser around strategic planning and developing structure and focus for partnership project working groups).

Further roles undertaken by the GTC link adviser were the bringing of outside expertise (e.g. theoretical models, research-based strategies and examples of practice from other authorities) and a facilitator role, including hosting meetings and coordinating communication. Further, GTC link advisers were perceived to have increased the capacity of LEAs by working directly with schools around CPD issues, and also served as a catalyst to instigate activities and maintain their momentum.

2.3 The partnership project: summary

A principal characteristic of the partnership project was the **flexibility and responsiveness** of input depending on the particular context and needs of each LEA. Thus, across the 26 participating authorities, the nature of the GTC's role, the focus of the professional development project undertaken and the personnel involved varied according to local priorities.

Roles adopted by GTC link advisers included (in order of frequency):

- **critical friend and guide** to the LEA CPD adviser
- **broker/builder of relationships** at LEA-school or inter-school level
- **creator of structures and synergy** for innovative proposals and activities
- **provider of focus and strategy** within and across a diffuse range of activities.

Two main foci for partnership project work (both targeted variously at LEA and/or school level) were:

- the **development of CPD strategies or tools**, including the development of opportunities frameworks and CPD strategies/policies
- the **development of thinking around CPD**, included a clarification of the LEA's vision or approach to CPD and the changing of cultures (often moving from a perception that CPD centred on attending external courses to a greater capitalisation on within-school expertise, local networking and collaboration).

Across the participating LEAs, the personnel involved in the partnership varied depending on the form and focus of the professional development project underway. In addition to the GTC link adviser and LEA CPD advisers, it could involve **headteachers/school CPD leaders, other LEA officers, wider school staff** (e.g. teachers and support staff), and **other personnel** such as CPD providers or representatives of higher education institutions. Partnership meetings typically took the form of a working group or larger-scale conferences/seminars, though work with individual schools was also in evidence.

3 Impacts of the partnership project

Having discussed the form and focus of the partnership projects in Section 2, the report now turns to the question of impact. It draws on interview data from LEA-based personnel, school-based personnel, GTC link advisers and DfES regional advisers. The section begins with a comment on the overall impact of the GTC-DfES-LEA CPD Partnership Project followed by a more detailed discussion of the impacts at LEA and school level. Thus, this section is structured as follows:

- Overall impact
- Impacts for the LEA
- Impacts for LEA CPD adviser
- Impacts for schools
- Impacts for pupils
- Impacts beyond the 26 participating authorities.

3.1 Overall impact

Overall, a wide range of impacts was perceived to have emanated the GTC-DfES-LEA CPD Partnership Project, with the vast majority of interviewees speaking positively about what had been gained, as the following quotations exemplify:

It's been tremendous. From my point of view, it's been fantastically successful (LEA-based personnel).

I've just thoroughly enjoyed this experience. It's opened my eyes up to things (school-based personnel).

It's been great ... it's the reason we've been able to move further forward (school-based personnel).

The range of impacts experienced largely related to the focus of the professional development work taken forward in the LEA. Impacts were experienced at different levels, with the greatest impacts, at this point in time, felt by those who were closely involved, though, as Section 6 will show, LEAs had plans for the wider dissemination of the work undertaken and further consolidation and development of the project next academic year (2005–06). Indeed, interviewees perceived the partnership project as the start of a process towards building capacity for effective CPD and anticipated further impacts in the future as the new approaches became more widespread and were embedded. Thus, the following discussion highlights the early impacts to emerge.

3.2 Impacts for the LEA

During the data collection, interviewees were asked: *'Has there been any impact on the LEA as a result of the professional development work/project undertaken?'*. The impacts cited in this respect could be categorised into five main areas, each of which is discussed in the sections below:

- **A more coherent approach to professional development**
- **Greater priority given to CPD at LEA level**

- **Gaining a wider perspective of CPD and its national context**
- **Enhanced communication and relationships between the LEA and schools**
- **Enhanced CPD offer**

A more coherent approach to professional development

Overall, the most commonly cited impact of the partnership project at LEA level was the creation of a more **focused and coherent approach** to professional development (noted to some degree by respondents in all 16 LEAs involved in the data collection). This impact was particularly evident in those authorities that indicated that their previous approach to CPD had been disjointed or lacked clarity, some describing their work as *'scattergun'* or *'piecemeal'*. Further, in three LEAs interviewees relayed that this enhanced coherence around CPD had been assisted their planning for impending OFSTED inspections, even contributing to a better outcome than might otherwise have been achieved (e.g. an increase from unsatisfactory to satisfactory rating).

A number of elements within the partnership projects were said to have brought about this greater focus and coherence, as follows.

- **Development/revision of CPD tools or strategies**
For example, the development of an opportunities framework or CPD toolkits and the creation of leaflets, brochures, CD ROMs or websites outlining training events. This was also felt to impact on schools as they were clearer on the CPD opportunities available to them.
- **Identification of CPD needs or issues**
Through carrying out audits, surveys and evaluations of CPD provision as well as working in partnership with schools/obtaining staff feedback, it was felt that LEAs were better able to identify issues and concerns around CPD, and thus to draw together into a more coherent package the professional development support and provision they offered to schools.
- **Planning of future work and activities around CPD**
Planning meetings conducted in partnership with the GTC link adviser enabled LEAs to reflect upon their work, and were felt to result in both better quality future planning and improved structure for existing work (e.g. dissemination) As noted in Section 4, the GTC link adviser was often seen to be the 'catalyst' for planning, as well as keeping up the momentum, drive and focus of CPD activities.

Greater priority given to CPD at LEA level

Often said to be a knock-on from the new coherent approach to professional development, an **increase in the status and priority given to CPD at LEA level** was also cited as an impact of the partnership project. Examples of this included professional development being outlined in the LEA's Single Education Plan for the first time, or requests made to the LEA CPD adviser from other LEA departments for assistance in developing their own CPD programmes. Furthermore, project activities were seen to highlight the importance of the lead CPD adviser's role as well as raise awareness of how overstretched they often were with professional development as one of a number of responsibilities. This recognition had, in some cases, led to support to alleviate their workload pressures and

increased capacity in staffing. For example, in one case, this had resulted in the recruitment of a full-time CPD manager for a one-year post, and in another authority, a new LEA CPD appointment had come about because the higher profile of the LEA lead adviser had increased perceptions of the value of CPD and the need to invest in it.

Gaining a wider perspective of CPD and its national context

Also cited as an impact of the partnership project for the LEA was the acquisition of a **wider perspective of CPD and its national context**. It was felt that the GTC link advisers' knowledge of **good practice in other authorities** in relation to CPD was particularly useful in bringing new ideas to the LEA, and that their accounts of successful strategies, as well as challenges encountered elsewhere, were valuable in informing and improving the LEAs' own approaches.

Gaining the wider perspective enabled the LEA to assess how well it was progressing in respect of its CPD offer compared with other authorities. Further to this, it was said to have '*strengthened*' the LEA's role in terms of its work with schools, particularly with regard to knowledge of up and coming developments and changing agendas. For example, one interviewee relayed how this helped the LEA to '*prepare schools for things coming over the hill ... schools are appreciative of that, because we are doing some of their leg work*' (LEA-based personnel). Linking to earlier discussion of coherence of approach, in a small number of cases, interviewees noted how the work had resulted in a **greater alignment of local strategies with the national perspective on CPD**, and that this, if repeated nationwide, could lead to equivalence in what teachers and support staff could expect and access across the country:

Hopefully what will come out of this will be a national picture of CPD provision and entitlement ... so then teachers, support staff, can see there is some consistency from one LEA to another or one provider and another (LEA-based personnel).

Enhanced communication and relationships between the LEA and schools

The project was regarded as having had a positive impact on **enhancing the communication and relationships between the LEA and schools**, particularly because partnership working had resulted in increased contact between the two. Here, the projects were seen to provide an opportunity for the LEA to become better acquainted with individuals at school level, and similarly for schools to make contacts within the LEA. In some LEAs, the **linking of other agencies and schools**, through project meetings and working parties, was felt to be a unique opportunity for school staff to meet with service representatives directly and, in the wider context of LEA working, it was seen to be particularly important for the new agenda of integrated children's services.

Given this increased contact and communication, a further impact was the opportunity presented to LEAs to **consult with and receive feedback from schools** on professional development matters. Linking to the discussion above on the identification of CPD needs and issues, LEAs were able to gain greater insight into the users' perspective, the forms of CPD they deemed to be effective and, importantly, the elements of the LEA CPD offer that warranted improvement. A further impact of these enhanced contacts was that they enabled schools to become more involved in the LEAs' CPD planning. In some cases, school staff reported that this, in turn, made them feel more valued.

Enhanced CPD offer

The fifth and final main area of impact was improvement in LEAs' CPD offer. This was, in effect, the culmination of the several of the effects discussed above. For example, greater coherence and focus resulted in a more coordinated LEA CPD programme.

Gaining the wider perspective on CPD and its national context meant, for a number of LEAs, a change in culture with a move from one-off courses to more longitudinal, internal, school-based CPD, with increased networking opportunities and the sharing of good practice. Increased LEA-school communication aided the identification of gaps in provision and how those could be addressed, increasing the relevance of the offer.

Further, a number of interviewees indicated that the project had resulted in their authority being more able to identify training needs, including those of specific groups of staff (e.g. early career teachers and overseas teachers), and had amended their programme accordingly. In addition, it was noted that some LEAs were being more critical of course providers, requiring greater quality assurance and evaluation of courses.

Impacts for the LEA

Greater focus and coherence

This has cemented our mindset and has given us a clearer understanding and structure for CPD in the LEA (LEA-based personnel).

It's helped us to look at being much more coherent as an LEA about the approach. I'm not pretending that we've actually got there - we're just at the foothills. But we've now got more of a direction than we had previously ... that's been an impact – helping us to be focused (LEA-based personnel).

The fact that they [the LEA] have taken on board publishing all the things that we have discussed, the toolkit, the policies and the professional development route planner, was important for them as it crystallises and pulls all the different strings from the LEA into a clear perspective, actually a coherent approach to professional development (school-based personnel).

Gaining a wider perspective of CPD and its national context

The partnership with the GTC has strengthened our hand, given us more confidence that we're right and what the national picture looks like and what it should look like in our LEA (LEA-based personnel).

Enhanced communication and relationships between the LEA and schools

We were all going down our own little parallel paths before, and now we've crossed. It has enhanced relationships and respect on both sides, and an awareness of the value of the work that everybody is doing (school-based personnel).

Now it's all much more transparent and cooperative – so there are a lot of advantages to everybody. And I believe now that it is also more school led, in that schools have an opportunity to say what their needs are, rather than somebody at the LEA thinking that these are the courses that people want but there not being much take-up. There's a lot more consultation going on (school-based personnel).

Enhanced CPD offer

The authority has changed the way they speak. I would say that began a year ago – they weren't sending out so many centrally based INSETs. They were asking us more what we would like our staff to have ... There does seem to be a huge impetus towards that, and I think that is because of the partnership, I think it's become a priority (school-based personnel).

Whereas in the past, we might have offered one-offs, we might have gone for one training day or a twilight session, what we've actually done in writing our prospectus this time is say 'Right, we're not going to do that any more. What we will do is we'll offer you packages on a limited range of themes, which will be longitudinal, which will spread over the year... part of that will be an initial meeting, at which we will explore where the school is and we will use this configuration idea to actually say "Where are you?"' and help the school define what it's really trying to get out of this. That will help us to tailor the sessions to them better, but almost as importantly, if not more importantly, we will actually revisit, at a period afterwards, to make sure they've evaluated it properly (LEA-based personnel).

As some of the above quotations testify, school-based personnel interviewed in the six case-study authorities had also noticed the impacts on their LEA as a result of the professional development work undertaken in the partnership project. A small number of school-based interviewees believed there to have been no impacts at the wider LEA level. In one case, this was because the interviewee felt that the intended outcomes of the project were aimed at school CPD leaders and were not anticipated to impact directly at LEA level. In the other cases, interviewees indicated that the main impacts related more specifically to the LEA CPD leader and had not spread to the wider authority.

Looking across the 26 participating authorities, there was a small number where the partnership project had not progressed as far as had been hoped. As mooted in Section 5, lack of senior LEA-level support seemed to have contributed to partnerships not having progressed beyond initial identification and communications. Another reason was the sheer enormity of the workload of the lead CPD adviser, which meant that time and space could not be found for the project. It was suggested that, in these cases, a different approach by the GTC might have progressed these projects further e.g. if they had led

meetings or assisted with administrative tasks that the LEA CPD adviser did not have the time to carry out. However, as shown in Sections 2 and 4, these were among the roles taken on by link advisers.

3.3 Impacts for LEA CPD advisers

Moving on to LEA CPD advisers, when asked to comment on the effect on themselves from the project, chief among the impacts was an **increase in their knowledge and skills and thinking and understanding of CPD issues**. This was cited by LEA CPD advisers in all 16 authorities involved in the data collection. Specific areas included: a broadening of the concept of what constituted CPD; greater awareness of what makes effective CPD; understanding of the CPD needs of specific groups of teachers (in particular newly qualified and early career teachers); and an appreciation of the ‘bigger picture’ of CPD issues (e.g. national agendas). This was also manifested through the acquisition of new ideas and CPD ‘tools’, either from the theoretical expertise of the GTC link adviser or his/her practical experience of working with other LEAs. It included exemplars of CPD strategies and frameworks, and models for action planning, change and evaluation. With reference to specific skills, some LEA CPD advisers believed that the partnership project had led to improved expertise in communication with school staff.

That increases in knowledge and skills and deeper understanding of CPD issues emerged so prominently as impacts for LEA CPD advisers bodes well for the future development of their CPD work. A model of CPD outcomes developed by Kinder and Harland, (1991) proposed that for developments to occur in practice, certain outcomes were more critical than others and hence a hierarchy was suggested. In this hierarchy, the top or ‘*first order*’ outcomes – i.e. those most likely to achieve a substantial impact on practice – were ‘knowledge and skills’ and ‘value congruence’ (that is personal conviction re the worth of the technique or philosophy to be implemented). As shown above, knowledge, skills and deeper understanding were the key outcomes derived by LEA CPD advisers. Further, there was also evidence of some individuals’ commitment to the principles of professional development inherent in capacity building (value congruence). Thus, with one, if not both, of these ‘first order’ outcomes, this model would suggest that the conditions are present for further CPD development and capacity building, though this would be subject to staffing changes.

Increase in knowledge, skills and understanding of CPD issues

I was very clear right from day one that they [the GTC] were starting from a very low knowledge-level base with me. [CPD] wasn't an aspect of work which I would ever have considered to be one of my strengths ... There were lots of projects, both nationally and locally, that I really didn't know about particularly. So it was that knowledge-base support that this has given me (LEA-based personnel).

There are strategies and there are tools that s/he has introduced me to, literature that s/he's introduced me to – I'm not saying I wasn't aware that it was out there, but I wasn't aware of its power and its influence. And so, working with that literature, working with those tools has certainly opened that field to me, without a doubt ... (LEA-based personnel).

3.4 Impacts for schools

As Section 3.1 conveyed, the impacts from the partnership projects were experienced at different levels, with the greatest impacts, at the time of data collection, felt by those more closely involved. Reflecting this, the impacts reported at the time of data collection were chiefly at LEA level and also for the lead CPD personnel in the LEA (conveyed in 3.2 and 3.3. above). However, in a number of LEAs those closely involved also included

school-based personnel, and early impacts to emerge for these staff and their schools were as follows:

- **increased knowledge and skills and greater understanding** regarding CPD
- **stronger links with the LEA** including staff involved **feeling valued**, as well as engendering **greater trust** between the LEA and schools as they had been asked to contribute to an LEA-level piece of work
- **stronger links with other schools** in the partnership, which facilitated the exchange of ideas and could lead to cross-school professional development for school staff e.g. observation opportunities, networking
- **enjoyment** of and **stimulation** from the partnership approach to working for those directly involved
- opportunity to **focus and reflect on CPD**, including the exchange of ideas, concerns and good practice – in this regard, the professional development afforded through involvement with the project work in itself was also recognised
- greater personal **understanding of career pathways and roles** – an area of impact for both teaching and non-teaching staff involved, identified particularly where the partnership project had involved the development of an opportunities framework
- similarly, greater awareness of the **CPD options available** to school staff
- greater awareness of **how to identify training needs**, in turn leading to **more tailored and effective CPD provision** – noted especially by school staff involved in partnership projects where the focus had been on developing thinking and using models associated with CPD.

Furthermore, there was evidence of how school staff had begun to **implement in their own practice the aspects of CPD that they were working on in the partnership project**. This could occur at a personal level or at school level.

That said, at the time of interviewing, school-level outcomes were largely (though not exclusively) experienced by the school staff directly involved in the projects, and by their schools, in cases where they had begun applying and cascading new approaches and thinking. Notwithstanding, it was anticipated that further impacts on schools across the authority would be felt through wider dissemination of the work and consolidation and development of project activities over the next academic year (2005–06). (LEAs' plans for dissemination and future development are outlined in Section 6.) Follow-up at a later date would be needed to gauge the extent to which schools beyond those directly involved had begun to develop their CPD thinking and apply any materials (such as opportunities frameworks) devised through the project. This would measure more accurately the effectiveness of the partnership project in building capacity, and would reflect recent research findings on the need for longer-term follow-up of CPD outcomes (Goodall *et al.*, 2005).

3.5 Impacts for pupils

LEA and school-level personnel were asked to comment on the extent to which they felt the partnership projects had impacted on pupils' learning. Though numbers were small, it appeared to be the case that impacts on pupils were being observed predominately in LEAs where partnership project work had included direct work in individual schools. At

this point in time, however, most interviewees felt that it was too soon for impacts at pupil level to be evaluated.

3.6 Impacts beyond the 26 participating authorities

DfES regional advisers were asked if there had been any impacts on other LEAs not directly involved in the partnership project. Although most of these interviewees suggested there had been little or no main impact on other LEAs as yet, each of the six advisers did note that the work had been made known to other LEAs through the dissemination of project processes and outcomes by both themselves and the participating LEA advisers. Largely, this was through the sharing of ideas at regional meetings.

3.7 The impacts of the partnership project: summary

Overall, a wide range of impacts at both LEA and school level were identified, with interviewees speaking positively about what had been gained from the partnership project.

The range of impacts experienced largely related to the focus of the professional development work taken forward in the LEA. Impacts were experienced at different levels, with the greatest impacts, at this point in time, felt by those who were closely involved, though LEAs had plans for the wider dissemination of the work undertaken and further consolidation and development of the project over academic year 2005–06.

Impacts at LEA level

Five principal areas of impact were identified as outcomes for LEAs as a result of the partnership project.

- **A more coherent approach to professional development**
- **Greater priority given to CPD at LEA level**
- **Gaining a wider perspective of CPD and its national context**
- **Enhanced communication and relationships between the LEA and schools**
- **Enhanced CPD offer.**

In addition, when describing the effect on themselves, the LEA CPD advisers from all 16 authorities involved in the data collection highlighted an **increase in their knowledge and skills and thinking and understanding of CPD issues**. Amongst others, this included a broadening of the concept of what constituted effective CPD; greater understanding of the CPD needs of particular groups of teachers; and improved expertise in communication with school staff.

That increases in knowledge and skills and deeper understanding of CPD issues emerged so prominently as impacts for LEA CPD advisers bodes well for the future development of their CPD work and for the long-term capacity building. A model of CPD outcomes developed by Kinder *et al* (1991) identified enhanced knowledge and skills as a '*first order*' outcome – i.e. one of those most likely to achieve a substantial impact on practice

Impacts at school level

At the time of interviewing, school-level outcomes were largely (though not exclusively) experienced by the school staff directly involved in the projects, and by their schools, in cases where they had begun applying and cascading new approaches and thinking. That said, it was anticipated that further impacts on schools across the authority would be felt through wider dissemination of the work and consolidation of project activities in academic year 2005–06. Early impacts to emerge for these staff and their schools were as follows:

- **increased knowledge and skills and greater understanding** regarding CPD
- **stronger links with the LEA** including staff involved **feeling valued**, as well as engendering **greater trust** between the LEA and schools as they had been asked to contribute to an LEA-level piece of work
- **stronger links with other schools** in the partnership, which facilitated the exchange of ideas and could lead to cross-school professional development for school staff e.g. observation opportunities, networking
- **enjoyment** of and **stimulation** from the partnership approach to working for those directly involved
- greater personal **understanding of career pathways and roles** – an area of impact for both teaching and non-teaching staff involved, identified particularly where the partnership project had involved the development of an opportunities framework
- similarly, greater awareness of the **CPD options available** to school staff
- greater awareness of **how to identify training needs**, in turn leading to **more tailored and effective CPD provision**.

Furthermore, there was evidence of how school staff had begun to **implement in their own practice the aspects of CPD that they were working on in the partnership project**.

In terms of impacts on pupils, at the time of the data collection most interviewees felt that it was too soon for impacts at this level to be evaluated. As yet, the extent of the partnership project had not spread much beyond the 26 participating LEAs. Where there was evidence that the work had become known in other areas, this was largely due to dissemination by DfES regional advisers and participating LEA advisers.

4 The value of partnership working

This section describes interviewees' perceptions of the value of partnership working. It draws on interview data from LEA-based personnel, school-based personnel, GTC link advisers and DfES regional advisers. The analysis is based chiefly on the data relating to the six case-study and ten telephone-survey LEAs. The following sections are presented:

- overall value of working in partnership: interviewees' perceptions
- perceptions of the value of the GTC link advisers' input to the partnership
- the 'added value' of the GTC contribution to projects and their impacts.

4.1 Overall value of working in partnership: interviewees' perceptions

Partnership working was viewed positively by the vast majority of participants interviewed, as the following quotations exemplify:

- *'This kind of experience is almost invaluable'* (LEA-based personnel).
- *'... we wouldn't have achieved what we did without the partnership'* (LEA-based personnel).
- *'This way of working with partners, I have found it better, altogether better'* (LEA-based personnel).
- *'... phenomenal, really, really good ... [the] whole collaboration is quite impressive and quite rewarding'* (school-based personnel).
- *'... I've just thoroughly enjoyed this experience'* (school-based personnel).

When asked to consider the value of partnership working⁵ (i.e. the partnership as appropriate to each of the LEA projects), **most of the interviewees linked their comments to external input** from the GTC. However, in interviewees' responses there was also a sense of the value of **partnership working as a whole** and the contributions made by the different parties involved. It is these views that are considered here, before moving on to examining more specifically the value of the GTC link advisers' contribution in Section 4.2.

Three key areas were evident, where the input from across the partners was valued, and which contributed to the effective working of the partnership as a whole. These were: the opportunity for sharing knowledge, experience and expertise in collaborative working; 'needs-based' working and a sense of ownership; and the status and credibility brought to the projects by having a range of partners involved. These three features are outlined in turn, below.

Sharing knowledge, experience and expertise in collaborative working

By far the most frequently mentioned advantage of working in partnership was the opportunity this presented to benefit from the knowledge, experience and expertise of the other parties involved. In this regard, the GTC's **external expertise and wider**

⁵All interviewees were asked: *'What do you see as the value, if any, of this partnership way of working between those involved?'*

knowledge of CPD was particularly valued by project participants (a contribution considered in further detail later in Section 4.2). Also seen as important were the **different perspectives and experiences of CPD** brought by LEA-based personnel, and school-based personnel where involved. These aspects were especially noted where the partnerships involved a range of school-based personnel (where, for example, staff from a training school felt they had particular expertise to offer) or a range of staff from different LEA services (including multi-agency working).

Linked to the sharing of knowledge and expertise described above, interviewees valued the **collaboration and professional dialogue** between the parties in the partnerships.

A number of levels within this collaborative approach to working were evident.

- LEA-based personnel saw **strategic** benefits such as **not working in isolation**, the opportunity for cross-authority working, advantages in having a number of people involved at LEA level, and the ‘*cross-fertilisation*’ of ideas between themselves and the GTC. *‘In partnership, people do bring different perspectives. The fact that you are bringing in from schools, from the local authority, from the GTC ... it’s much better than you being out there trying to do something in isolation.’*
- In some of the partnerships which directly involved schools, LEAs described a valuable **consultation** role with their schools, important in prioritising work and also in gleaning the priorities and views of all those involved: *‘True partnership is consultation ... It’s not an authority vision. It’s partnership. The authority doesn’t know it all.’*
- School-based personnel benefited from the opportunity to **meet** LEA-based personnel and work collaboratively with them on the projects. Putting a face to a name and feeling involved was beneficial for some participants: *‘... this was my first real face-to-face thing ... they’re interested in what we’re doing’*; as was learning more about LEA-level work: *‘... the LEA is actually working in partnership with schools so that we have a clear understanding of what they do.’*
- School-based personnel also valued learning from other school-based colleagues – such as through cross-sector and cross-phase working, as well as sharing with same-phase or similarly experienced teachers. They particularly appreciated the opportunity this gave for **sharing ideas**, having conversations, and professional **networking**. *‘It’s about bouncing ideas around. It’s about spreading good practice. It’s just picking up ideas from other people and just talking it through, because we’re facing the same challenges.’*

‘Needs-based’ working and a sense of ownership

Key to the success of many of the projects was that participants in the LEAs and partnership schools saw them as **‘needs based’**. Through partnership working, participants felt they were able to own the work and tailor it to need. Both LEAs and schools expressed the value of ‘needs-based’ professional development. Again, input from across the partnership was felt to contribute here, and a sense of ownership seemed apparent where sharing of knowledge and collaborative working were also evident.

Status and credibility

Although mentioned less frequently than the above aspects of partnership working, interviewees felt that having GTC, LEA, school and DfES commitment to the partnerships brought status and credibility to the work. This was evident on a number of levels:

- DfES funding was perceived as giving status to the partnership projects
- GTC and DfES endorsement was regarded as valuable to the projects as a whole by LEAs and schools (*'having the sort of clout that goes with it is very useful'*)
- in partnerships where schools were directly involved, LEAs felt that involvement from national bodies brought credibility to the process and helped them to gain the schools' participation (*'it strengthens our hand, when topics such as this come up, we are able to then talk to schools about how the agenda is moving'*)
- LEAs also regarded schools' involvement as bringing credibility to the process and particularly the 'product', which would help in its dissemination to other schools
- some interviewees commented that a coherent message about CPD presented by the GTC and the LEA added credibility to the work: *'[the] advantage back into school is that this is joined up. We're saying the same messages ... Again, it just brings that coherence back into schools.'*

Again, this feature (status and credibility) seemed inextricably linked to the sharing of knowledge, collaborative working and needs-led approaches (i.e. the other key features highlighted above). The following quotes illustrate the trio of features outlined in this section.

Overall value of working in partnership

Sharing knowledge, experience and expertise in collaborative working

Interviewer: *And were you able to bring any specific expertise from your training school status to this process?*

I think so. In terms of the training school, we were able to talk about how we have found working with newly qualified teachers and graduate teachers from other schools, and some of the real practical difficulties that we've had, to try to make sure that they are not repeated in any borough-wide programme (school-based personnel).

'Needs-based' working and a sense of ownership

The biggest benefit as far as we're concerned, is that the schools are both the recipients and very often the deliverers [of CPD]. So we were able to sit round and say 'This is what we want, this is what we don't want, this is a waste of time, this is not effective, this is good, this is useful' and so on. So we can actually pin down what we wanted from each school – primary, secondary and so on. And we could come to a collective view of it. So I think what we will have produced at the end of this is something that is based on need, and it's need as perceived by the schools themselves rather than the LEA (school-based personnel).

It's about giving ownership. It's not something that's just imposed. It's organic as well. So through our work around the national framework, it's developing and growing to meet our particular needs. And similarly with schools, it will develop according to their context and their particular needs. So right the way down the line, that is a very healthy approach to something like this (LEA-based personnel).

Status and credibility

I think it's very important from the point of view that everybody is putting things in so that you see it from a wider perspective. I found it useful in finding out where [the LEA] were going – because I didn't know very much about this before. And it was interesting to find out that so many different groups and organisations are involved in it. It made you think how important it must be if they are all putting their six-penn'orth in (school-based personnel).

In sum, analyses of interviewees' perceptions of the value of partnership working as a whole, revealed a trio of features to which parties from across the partnership contributed, and which relayed effective partnership working. These were: **sharing knowledge, experience and expertise in collaborative working**; **'needs-based' working** and a sense of **ownership**; and **status and credibility** brought by the partners' commitments. The involvement of a range of parties seemed to have contributed to effective partnership working, valued for the sum of its parts.

These features would seem to reflect current and recent research on professional development which points to **ownership** and professional **networking** as effective elements of CPD (Cordingley *et al.*, 2003). Indeed, several interviewees noted moves towards collaborative working, professional networking and needs-led approaches in the professional development agenda, and appreciated that the partnership project had promoted these approaches.

The professional development agenda

Collaborative approaches to professional development

The agenda for professional development and school improvement and in fact practically everything else, is much more a collaborative or a cooperative venture now, and this approach just fits into that ... it fits extremely well (LEA-based personnel).

Needs-led approaches to professional development

And I believe now that it is also more school led, in that schools have an opportunity to say what their needs are, rather than somebody at the LEA or the GTC or wherever, thinking that these are the courses that people want but there not being much take-up. There's a lot more consultation going on (school-based personnel).

As noted throughout this section, the value of the GTC's input was evident in each of the three areas. There were other ways also in which the GTC's input was uniquely valued. The next section (4.2) examines the advantages of the GTC input in more detail. The following section (4.3) then considers to what extent this constituted 'added value' to the projects and impacts achieved.

4.2 Perceptions of the value of the GTC link advisers' input

In addition to questions on the value of partnership working, perceptions of the GTC input were specifically probed in the interviews. The **input of the GTC link adviser** was held in **high regard** within the partnerships: *'It's very exciting', 'it's been vital, s/he's provided the glue that has stuck together quite a lot of what was already happening in the authority', 'it's moved it on tremendously', 'so useful and so interesting', 'the time that we've had to work on this, with someone who is an expert in his/her field, has been wonderful.'*

Taking all interviewees' comments into consideration (LEA-based personnel, school-based personnel, GTC personnel and DfES regional advisers), seven features were identified as valuable aspects of the GTC advisers' contributions – three of which reiterated and expanded upon the trio of features prized in partnership working as a whole, and another four which were uniquely attributed to the GTC input.

Table 4.1 presents these seven arenas, in order of frequency that they were mentioned as valuable aspects of the GTC's input. By mapping these back on to the positive elements of partnership working as a whole (Section 4.1), this shows where the GTC's input was uniquely appreciated (marked with *).

Table 4.1 Perceptions of the value of the GTC link adviser's input (showing mapping to the value of partnership working as a whole and the elements that were uniquely attributed to the GTC input marked with an asterisk)

The value of working in partnership as a whole	GTC link adviser's input brings ... (in order of frequency)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the opportunity for sharing knowledge, experience and expertise in collaborative working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> external expertise (including knowledge of national professional development agendas, and experience of professional development projects elsewhere)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> direct support in undertaking work*
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a professional boost (providing a 'kick-start', motivation and positive challenge)*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'needs-based' working and a sense of ownership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> responsiveness and flexibility in customising work and giving ownership
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> focus, coherence and clarity to the partnership work*
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> enthusiasm, vision and energy and 'personality'*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> status and credibility brought through commitment from a range of partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> endorsement and reassurance for the work

Source: GTC-DfES-LEA CPD Partnership Project evaluation, 2005.

We shall now examine each of the seven areas where the GTC's contribution was valued (i.e. as shown in Table 4.1), in turn. Differences across and within LEAs are highlighted, as well as by interviewee-type, and, in particular, *for whom* the input was valuable (e.g. for the project as a whole, for the LEA lead, or for schools and teachers).

External expertise

The most frequently appreciated area of the GTC's input to the partnerships was that, through the GTC link adviser, this brought **external expertise** into the work. Generically, this included:

- the GTC link advisers' **knowledge of national professional development** agendas (*'the bigger picture'*)
- their **experience of professional development projects** elsewhere (e.g. through their involvement in the pilot projects) and
- the *'freshness of an external view'* in general.

Almost all the LEA-based personnel were extremely positive about the knowledge, experience and expertise which the GTC link advisers brought to the partnership projects and especially **to their own role** in the LEA (this latter point was emphasised by LEA personnel recently new into posts in charge of CPD). In particular, they welcomed the GTC link advisers' knowledge of professional development matters at a national level and their experience of working with other LEAs on similar projects, as one LEA adviser summed up:

Bringing in the national context has short circuited having to read that up and keep up to date. It's been fantastic. There was also the sharing of good practice that s/he brought from across the country, particularly with the LEAs that s/he's been working with.

Whilst not all the school-based personnel interviewed felt able to pinpoint the nature of the knowledge and expertise brought by the GTC (reflecting somewhat the extent or closeness of their involvement), those who did comment felt it had been very positive – for their own knowledge and, interestingly, for the LEA's approach to CPD.

As well as generic features of external input, **particular skills and areas of expertise** amongst the GTC link advisers were also identified, and were appreciated especially by LEA lead staff who felt they themselves did not have such experience. Areas of expertise included: knowledge of **models of professional development**; knowing how to **approach partnership working** – e.g. how to get started and how to get people working together; skills in helping participants to **reflect** and evaluate; and knowledge of **materials and resources** to tap into. The GTC advisers' input to seminars, conferences and other talks was also appreciated.

Direct support in undertaking work

One of the benefits of working in partnership was felt to be the increased capacity this allowed LEAs and schools to undertake the work. One of the most frequently mentioned ways in which 'increased capacity' was attained was through the GTC link advisers' direct support in undertaking work. This feature was attributed **almost uniquely to the GTC's input**.

LEA-based staff in particular valued the direct support which the GTC involvement brought to their own role during the project, e.g. setting up meetings, preparing materials and carrying out work, which LEA personnel **felt they would not have been able to do given their time and workload commitments** elsewhere in their role. This kind of support seemed especially beneficial in this regard, as many of the LEA lead staff involved had CPD as just one of a number of strands to their role.

A professional boost

GTC, LEA and school-based personnel all felt that partnership working brought a professional boost to participants. It was principally the GTC advisers' input to which this boost was attributed – uniquely providing a '*kick-start*', motivation, and a positive challenge to LEA and school-based personnel's reflection and thinking on CPD. This kind of input was felt important for the LEAs' approaches to professional development, but was also valued as a boost to individuals. Interviewees stated that GTC advisers provided this boost in multifarious ways, for example, through critical or positive **challenge** ('... *challenge in that pleasant way*'), acting as a '*coach*', providing a '*sounding board*' and evaluating progress.

Responsiveness and flexibility in customising work and giving ownership

As discussed in Section 4.1, many of the participants in the LEAs and partnership schools felt the beneficial effects of projects that were ‘needs-based’. A number of examples of the GTC’s contributions in terms of responding to need were evident, as described below.

- The flexibility to **change the parameters** of the work as it evolved throughout the partnership was particularly evident, and valued, in a number of the LEA partnerships. *‘I think one of the real benefits was that we weren’t bound by the five areas that we’d identified – that we thought we might be able to manage throughout the year – but for whatever reason we couldn’t. We weren’t penalised for that. The flexibility was encouraged really.’*
- Where external ‘models’ of professional practice or approaches to professional development were introduced, LEAs and schools felt they were able to **customise** them to their own circumstance: *‘... it’s that customising, not losing sight of the principles of a framework, but at the same time showing that it can work for you, it could work for me, and so on and so forth’.*
- Moreover, interviewees in these LEAs commented on the appropriateness of these schemes to their circumstances, and felt they provided effective models upon which the partnership could frame the professional development work. This exemplified a general feeling amongst LEA and school participants that the GTC advisers were skilled in gauging need and **matching approach/work to need**: as one teacher put it, *‘they could feel the pulse and the needs of the schools in the LEA because it was a two-way conversation’.*
- As projects progressed, a number of the LEA lead personnel (i.e. those in charge of CPD) noted greater ownership of the work and indeed, **the balance of responsibility** gradually shifting towards them. GTC personnel confirmed this ‘handing over’ of ownership and roles. As one LEA adviser noted, *‘If anything, there’s a lessening – as it’s developed, we’ve taken on more of the role, s/he’s taken more of the back seat which is exactly how it should be, isn’t it?’.*

Focus, coherence and clarity in the partnership work

The GTC link advisers were seen to be instrumental in bringing focus, coherence and clarity to the partnership projects. LEA-based and school-based personnel alike noted aspects such as: GTC advisers **refining the focus of the project** (*‘crystallised what we needed to do’*); bringing people’s ideas together; defining shared goals; and keeping the projects **on track** (this latter point linked to their direct support in setting up meetings, etc., as outlined previously). A number of interviewees valued the oversight that the GTC adviser had of the project and its progress, and felt *‘it stops us from reinventing the wheel’* and *‘brings an objective viewpoint’.*

Enthusiasm, vision and energy

Partnership working engendered enthusiasm amongst participants – noted by GTC, LEA-level and school-based personnel. The GTC advisers were especially attributed with initiating this **enthusiasm**. Their **vision and energies**, as well as their *‘wealth of knowledge’* and accessibility, were received positively across all the partnership projects

(noted by many interviewees as well as through evaluative comments sent to and collated by the GTC).

A number of LEA-level interviewees felt that projects had benefited from the ‘**person**’ and ‘**personality**’ of the particular GTC adviser: ‘... *it would be remiss if I didn’t say that [GTC adviser], the way s/he is, his/her personality and the fact that s/he was amenable and flexible and worked around us in the way that we wanted to do it ...*’. This perhaps raises the question, to what extent would projects have differed given different personalities and qualities in the link adviser? The dynamics of partnerships are inevitably shaped by the characteristics of those involved. In response to this though, it might be noted here that the GTC advisers were selected for the skills and qualities they could bring to partnership working and the professional development arena. In addition, the philosophy underpinning the partnership project was important in ensuring commonality of approach and coherence of vision across the project, as outlined in Section 2. The GTC advisers themselves highlighted the ‘ground work’ undertaken in terms of their own preparation for the partnership project (such as the articulation and sharing of values) and the ‘back-up’ received from the GTC as a whole, especially regarding current and recent research and policy.

Endorsement and reassurance for the work

As well as the perceived benefits of GTC organisation-level endorsement of the work (described in Section 4.1 above), a number of interviewees noted the ‘reassurance’ and ‘quality assurance’ brought by the GTC advisers themselves to the work. These benefits are neatly summarised by two LEA-based personnel who noted how the GTC ‘*quality assured that the work that we are doing is on the right lines*’ and that ‘[without GTC adviser] *it would be a model that would be driven by the LEA and there would be no guarantee that what we would be doing would be the right way forward*’.

The following quotations from interview data and collations of evaluative comments, illustrate some of the above findings.

Perceptions of the value of the GTC link advisers' input

External expertise

It has been phenomenally useful, because I was very clear right from day one that they were starting from a very low knowledge-level base with me. [CPD] wasn't an aspect of work which I would ever have considered to be one of my strengths ... So there were lots of projects, both nationally and locally, that I really didn't know about particularly. So it was that knowledge-base support ... (LEA-based personnel).

Direct support in undertaking work

... [GTC adviser] has been able to support me as an individual, professionally. I e-mail him/her constantly to say 'I have just thought about this, what do you think?' He/she has helped me prepare for meetings; s/he has done a lot of physical stuff as well ... [e.g. s/he's] put something together for people to look at. For me personally, s/he is at the end of the phone, s/he does come to meetings, s/he sends me relevant literature, and talks to me about other pieces of work that other people have been doing ... (LEA-based personnel).

A professional boost

I quite like the idea of having the adviser to talk to as well, just to pop in and just be my sounding board ... He/she actually provides quite a coach facility for me, so it helps me move forward and refine my thinking (LEA-based personnel).

Responsiveness and flexibility

I think the project made us identify what we perceived to be the need of the moment, but it also allowed the flexibility to change the route of that project throughout the year (LEA-based personnel).

Focus, coherence and clarity

I think by having [GTC adviser] calling the meetings and calling these people together, saying 'This is the date and this is when things need to be done by, and this is when you need to be feeding back' actually helps them focus what they need to be doing. And it keeps CPD as central in the agenda (LEA-based personnel).

Enthusiasm, vision and energy

- ...[his/her] enthusiasm and expertise [has] resonated with schools (LEA-based personnel).
- ... an exceptional [person] in terms of [his/her] knowledge of CPD, his/her enthusiasm is terrific (LEA-based personnel).
- ... a wealth of knowledge beyond anything that I've met before (school-based personnel).
- ... it's all very down to earth and very practical and very accessible, and I think that's very important, because we're busy people (school-based personnel).

In summary, then, the **GTC's input via the link adviser** was **highly regarded** within the partnerships. Seven features were identified as valuable aspects of the GTC's advisers' contributions. Three of these reiterated and expanded upon the trio of features prized in partnership working as a whole: **external expertise; responsiveness and flexibility** in customising work and giving ownership; and **endorsement and reassurance** to the work. Another four features were attributed uniquely to the input of the GTC: **direct support in undertaking work; a professional boost; focus, coherence and clarity; and enthusiasm, vision and energy.**

Given the nuance of the GTC advisers' input to the partnerships and the apparent uniqueness of some types of contribution, over and above those areas noted in Section 4.1, all of these features would seem to **'add value'** to partnership working.

The interviews with LEA-level and school-based personnel sought their perceptions of the 'added value' of the GTC involvement to the projects and in particular to the impacts achieved. Section 4.3 now considers to what extent the GTC involvement constituted 'added value'.

4.3 The ‘added value’ of the GTC contribution to projects and their impacts

The interviews with LEA-level and school-based personnel sought their perceptions of the ‘added value’ of the GTC involvement through the following questions:

- *To what extent do you feel the impacts you have just described would have come about without the involvement of the GTC?*
- *Would the LEA and schools have been carrying out this type of professional development work without the involvement of the GTC?*

Included in interviewees’ responses was a reiteration of the beneficial features of the GTC input, as described in Section 4.2 above (i.e. all categories identified in Section 4.2 were again cited here). In particular, the **external expertise**, and **focus and coherence** brought by the GTC input, as well as the **professional boost** and reflection engendered in participants, were felt to have added value to the impacts achieved.

Further, the GTC input was perceived to have ‘added value’ in the following ways.

- **Results had been achieved more quickly** (cited by LEA-level and school-based personnel) – *‘I don’t think we would have done it as quickly as we have done’, ‘it would have been slow going’, ‘I’m sure I could have done it but it would have been a lot slower’*. Pace, *‘keeping driving forward’* and having allotted times to meet for the work were felt to have contributed to this ‘quicker’ progress.
- **The work had been kick-started** (noted chiefly by LEA-based personnel, and from one LEA in particular, school-level interviewees) – *‘it needed somebody outside to kick-start the thing ...’, ‘this gave us the impetus and the focus that meant we addressed it’, ‘we needed a catalyst, and the catalyst was the GTC involvement’*. The input from external bodies in general was implicated in this motivation – *‘having somebody come from an external body has made all of us sit up and listen’*.
- **LEAs had moved further forward** than would otherwise have been possible (cited by LEA-level personnel), including influencing LEAs to give CPD a higher priority – *‘we wouldn’t be anywhere near as far on as we are now’, ‘we would have [just] been tinkering at the edges’, ‘I’m not sure we’d have been anywhere like as far down the road ... I think [it] has accelerated our progress ... [it’s] moved us past things’*.
- **A better quality product** had been produced (noted by LEA-based and some school-based personnel), in that it was more ‘effective’, relevant and customised to need. Participants felt without the GTC input: *‘I don’t think it would be anything like as robust as it is’, ‘... I think we would have had a good stab at it, as to whether we would have pulled it off to the extent that we did, I don’t think we could have done that without [GTC adviser]’, ‘It’s helped advisers say ‘exactly what is it that we want from CPD? What does it look like?’’*.

In addition, ‘added value’ was associated with other sources. The **funding** committed by the DfES to the partnership project was felt to have contributed ‘added value’ by bringing about the work and its achievements in the first place. Also, an area noted by school-based personnel to this particular line of questioning was added value through the **collaborative nature** of the work.

In response to the second question under investigation here, most LEAs would probably have been undertaking similar work to that carried out in the partnership projects. Some interviewees did, however, note that the schools and LEAs would most likely not have carried out this kind of work without the GTC input. There was a difference between these two groups' perceptions of added value:

- where participants felt that their LEA and schools would have been involved in this kind of work anyway, the GTC input was seen to add value in terms of **moving them further forward, creating a better quality product** than they might otherwise have achieved, and the perception that the partnership project itself had **brought strands together** in their work and thinking, e.g. '*come at the right time*'
- where participants felt that the LEA and schools would most likely not have been carrying out this kind of work without the partnership project, the added value of GTC input was identified in terms of providing a **kick-start**, bringing **external expertise** and **enthusiasm** into the process.

These differences in perceptions of added value reveal different ways in which capacity was being built across the partnership projects. Section 6 will consider the longer-term plans for the partnership projects, and perceptions of the embedding of capacity.

4.4 The value of partnership working: summary

Partnership working was viewed positively by the vast majority of participants interviewed. Interviewees spoke particularly highly of the value of external input from the GTC. However, in interviewees' responses there was also a sense of the value of **partnership working as a whole** and the contributions made by the different parties involved.

Overall value of working in partnership

The following trio of features was identified as important to the partnership as a whole:

- **sharing knowledge, experience and expertise in collaborative working** (including the benefits of not working in isolation, being able to meet personnel from other arenas, and the opportunity for professional dialogue and networking)
- **'needs-based' working** and a sense of **ownership** (including the flexibility to tailor work to LEA and school circumstances)
- **status and credibility** brought by the partners' commitments (including GTC and DfES endorsement and '*clout*', and the advantage of school-level input to the LEA in 'selling' and disseminating the work more widely).

These features support current and recent research on professional development, which highlights **ownership** and professional **networking** as effective elements of CPD (Cordingley *et al.*, 2003). In addition, having a range of parties involved seemed to have contributed to effective partnership working, suggesting 'added value' in the sum of its parts.

Perceptions of the value of the GTC link advisers' input

The input of the GTC link advisers was **highly regarded**. Seven features were identified as valuable aspects of the GTC advisers' contributions – three of which reiterated and expanded upon the features prized in partnership working as a whole, and another four were uniquely attributed to the GTC input (marked with *). The GTC advisers' brought:

- **external expertise** – e.g. knowledge of national professional development agendas, experience of professional development projects elsewhere, and the '*freshness of an external view*' in general; as well as particular expertise in approaching partnership working, and adopting models for CPD
- **direct support in undertaking work*** – e.g. setting up meetings, preparing materials, and giving presentations – valued by LEA-based staff in particular, who often undertook CPD as one of just a number of strands in their role
- **a professional boost*** – e.g. providing a '*kick-start*', motivation, and a positive challenge to participants' reflection and thinking on CPD, by acting as a '*coach*' and providing a '*sounding board*'
- **responsiveness and flexibility in customising work and giving ownership** – e.g. allowing projects to evolve and change course, tailoring existing models to circumstances, matching approach to need, and shifting the balance of responsibility towards the LEA over time
- **focus, coherence and clarity*** – e.g. keeping the project on track, bringing together people's ideas, defining shared goals, '*stops us reinventing the wheel*' and '*brings an objective viewpoint*'
- **enthusiasm, vision and energy*** – including the GTC advisers' personalities and qualities. Advisers were well-regarded, although this raises the question of whether projects would have differed given different personalities and qualities in the link adviser?
- **endorsement and reassurance** for the work, including confidence '*that we're on the right lines*' and '*quality assurance*' for the work produced.

The nuance of the GTC advisers' contributions and the apparent uniqueness of some of the inputs, over and above those areas noted in partnership working as a whole, suggests '**added value**' in the GTC's input to the process of partnership working. In addition, added value was also seen in the GTC's contribution to projects and their impacts – summarised below.

The 'added value' of the GTC contribution to projects and their impacts

In terms of 'added value', interviewees reiterated the seven beneficial features of the GTC input covered above. In particular, **external expertise**, **focus and coherence**, and the **professional boost** brought by the GTC contribution, were felt to have added value to the impacts achieved. Added value was stated in terms of:

- results being achieved **more quickly** – and the GTC ‘*driving forward*’ the work
- the work having been **kick-started** – the GTC providing impetus and a ‘*catalyst*’ to the work
- LEAs having **moved further forward** in terms of their CPD work and thinking than might otherwise have been possible – e.g. ‘*accelerated progress*’
- a **better quality product** having been created, in that it was ‘*robust*’ and customised to need.

The **funding** committed by the DfES to the partnership projects was also felt to have contributed ‘added value’ to the projects and their achievements.

Some implications for policy and practice

In exploring the value of partnership working, two key areas would seem to hold implications for policy and practice.

- The value of **partnership working as a form of professional development** is espoused throughout this section. Collaborative working, sharing knowledge and expertise, and encouraging the input of all parties to shape the work to ‘need’ seemed important. Partnership working was also associated with the success of the work undertaken and the impacts achieved. Might other areas of the workforce capitalise on ‘partnerships’ as an effective approach to professional development? Certainly, these kinds of partnerships would seem to represent a model of working which evidence suggests should be encouraged.
- The importance of **external expertise** and the GTC advisers’ **direct support in undertaking work** were emphasised in these partnership projects (these were the two most frequently mentioned beneficial aspects of the GTC’s input to the partnerships). These features seemed especially valued in these partnerships, where a number of LEA leads were new into posts in charge of CPD and/or undertook CPD as part of a number of roles. LEA personnel themselves noted ‘*low CPD knowledge bases*’, ‘*insular ethos*’ and simply ‘*not having the time*’ to devote to CPD awareness-raising. Other LEAs may be able to benefit from similar intensive external input – an approach which can complement the work of regional advisers.

5 Challenges arising and suggested improvements

This section describes interviewees' perceptions of the issues and challenges that emerged in the partnership projects across the 26 LEAs and their suggestions for improvements to the work or the partnerships. It draws on interview data from LEA-based personnel, school-based personnel, GTC link advisers and DfES regional advisers. This is supplemented by information extracted from documentation obtained (in the form of progress reports, minutes from meetings, etc.).

Interviewees were asked to identify challenges arising from two elements of the partnership project: challenges that emerged from the partnership model of working; and the challenges associated with carrying out the projects themselves. In addition, interviewees were asked to recommend any areas for improvement in terms of either the partnership method of working and/or the professional development work itself. The following sections are presented:

- challenges related to partnership working
- challenges associated with the professional development work undertaken (i.e. the projects themselves)
- suggested improvements.

5.1 Challenges related to partnership working

This section documents interviewees' perceptions of the issues and challenges arising in partnership working, as identified by examining interviewees' responses to the open-ended question: *'Have there been any issues or challenges with this partnership way of working between those involved?'*

Reflecting perceptions of the value of partnership working, most interviewees felt the partnerships had been a positive experience. The majority relayed a sense of there having been **generally few challenges**, or that where challenges were experienced they had, on the whole, **been surmounted**. On the other hand, for particular individuals there were stumbling blocks which appeared not to have been fully resolved.

The main challenges identified seemed typical of partnership working, including: **time**; accommodating **different priorities**; occasional lack of **clarity** of roles and responsibilities; timely **communication** at a local level; and LEA/school **personnel issues**. These five most frequently mentioned areas are outlined below.

Time

Challenges associated with **time** were the most commonly identified problems of partnership working.

- **Arranging convenient times** for all parties to meet regarding the project, but which would also accommodate individuals' existing commitments, was a common challenge in the partnerships involving **working groups** with a range of school-based personnel, and where GTC input direct to schools was carried out. Negative

implications included inconsistent attendance at meetings (i.e. varied representatives each time), and consequently, a need to ‘back-track’ to ensure that all parties were up to date on project matters; and less regular/frequent meetings than would be the ideal.

- The amount of **actual time** needed to invest in the partnership process (e.g. to attend meetings) was a challenge of partnership working for some LEA-based personnel and some school-based staff. Linked to this, interviewees highlighted the challenge of **balancing their commitment** to the partnership within their **existing workload** and alongside other pressures.

Different priorities

Accommodating the different priorities of the partners involved and finding **common ground** in their experiences and agendas presented challenges in the partnership model of working; as did participants’ different levels of **enthusiasm and commitment** to the work.

- The challenge of finding ‘**common ground**’ across partner representatives was raised where partnerships involved a variety of partners, and particularly those where a **range of school-based personnel** participated. Interviewees highlighted, for example, the disparity between the issues, priorities and CPD requirements of primary and secondary schools and the challenges this presented in terms of partnership working. That said, challenges raised in this way were, on the whole, surmounted – for example through project flexibility, working in different groupings, and coming to shared agreements. In one partnership, for example, LEA staff consulted more deeply with school partners once different priorities came to light; and the partnership members worked closely with similar phase teachers in order to strengthen similar perspectives before coming together as a cross-phase group – where different points of view were acknowledged and valued.
- Differing levels of **enthusiasm and commitment given to a partnership approach** (and to some extent to CPD) were cited as challenges to engaging in these partnerships. A number of LEA-based interviewees noted their own **low priority** given to CPD in the initial stages of the partnership, but found this rose as the partnership progressed. In addition, the **support from LEA and school senior management**, and the priority given to CPD, was seen as crucial to participants’ engagement in the partnerships. Senior LEA-level support in particular seemed pivotal in progressing some of the partnerships past an impasse/stumbling block. On the other hand, in a small number of instances, lack of support in this regard seemed to have contributed to partnerships not having progressed beyond initial identification and communications.

Clarity of roles and purposes

Occasional lack of clarity regarding the role and responsibility of all those involved in the partnership arose for a small number of participants. This was linked somewhat to the different priorities and agendas that individuals brought to the partnerships. It was also related to a perceived **lack of communication and clarity regarding the purpose of the project to be undertaken in the LEA** at the outset and **at entry points** for different participants.

- **Some lack of clarity at the outset** was a concern across a small number of LEAs, although in one LEA it was highlighted by the majority of interviewees. This resulted in perceived tensions between partners, and participants' feeling uncertain as to the **purpose of the partnership work** or what the intended outcomes might be. Although there was a sense of greater clarity once projects were underway, this concern might nevertheless be an area to consider in future work of this kind: *'I think it could have been defined a little more about what the purpose was. That might have been helpful at the beginning. I think that's the thing that I would suggest. I think perhaps it's clearer now that you've actually done it'* (LEA personnel).
- Several interviewees from a few of the partnerships also expressed their own initial lack of clarity about **the nature of the GTC's involvement in the work** (e.g. their time commitment, availability, nature of support, role within the initiative). A very few remained uncertain; and a few others felt that, had their own understanding here been clearer sooner, this would have aided the partnership project (and they might have achieved more). Explicitly clarifying the GTC's contribution might require attention here (as recommended by some interviewees), but it might also be acknowledged that participants' own understanding (in what might be a new area of work for them) could simply need time to 'clock in', as one interviewee said: *'I would like to have a better understanding of their role within this initiative – that isn't necessarily saying they haven't provided that, it's just that I haven't quite got what that is yet'* (LEA-level personnel).

Communication

The implications of a lack of **timely local communication** (e.g. between schools and LEAs, including, for example, returning calls, late notification and feedback) were highlighted by a minority. Specifically, school-based interviewees referred to some local administrative problems in terms of non- or late notification of meetings and arrangements, and non-return of e-mails and telephone calls between schools and LEAs. Although only identified in a very small number of cases, the implications for the individual could prove critical: participants believing the partnership had dwindled or ceased or being unaware of partnership meetings or events, were a few examples.

Thus, **consistency of communication between and within different levels** of the partnerships might be an important consideration.

LEA/school personnel issues

LEA/school personnel issues such as staff changes within LEAs, poor relations with/between schools, and existing pressures and circumstances were raised. Specific challenges associated with the partners themselves (e.g. LEAs, schools) and their contexts were identified by interviewees (many of these link to the areas of challenge already outlined above).

- Within LEAs, **staff changes** (for example, new staff being appointed and staff absence); internal priorities and pressures; and the limited capacity of LEA key contacts to take on extra work; were highlighted as presenting particular difficulties, specifically in relation to communication and **establishing and building relationships** with partners.

- In the case of schools, interviewees pointed to challenges of partnership working arising from existing poor **levels of networking** between schools, funding for release time, taking on acting roles where staff were on long-term sick, and senior management's commitment to the partnership (including their openness to change).

The following quotes illustrate the features outlined by interviewees as presenting challenges in partnership working.

Challenges related to partnership working

Time: arranging convenient times

I think the biggest thing has been that on a couple of occasions we've had dates in the diary, and for whatever reason have had to change. For example, last week it had to change, and the reality is it's the last week of term and noone had a joint free session. That's no fault of anybody; it's just the nature of this work that we're jiggling it in amongst an enormous workload really (LEA-based personnel).

Time: actual time and commitment

The one that will always come out is time, because we obviously only have a limited amount of time, and I hold quite a deal of responsibilities. So trying to create space to do this work. I've given it priority and we have made time, and [GTC adviser] has been particularly flexible to fit in with my schedule, but it is that factor of making it a priority so that it does get the required amount of time (LEA-based personnel).

Different priorities

The most difficult thing was to get a common viewpoint across the schools. Because we work in different phases, and we have special schools represented as well, it was quite difficult to agree on the sort of CPD route that was appropriate in broad brush strokes for everybody (school-based personnel).

Clarity of roles and purposes

I think initially, none of us were clear really what it was going to be about. Maybe that was our responsibility, to have found out more before we turned up at the meeting – there's always that ... the first couple of meetings, there was a tension there, because we weren't quite sure (school-based personnel).

Each of the LEA partnerships experienced a number of these challenges, but, on the whole, resolved issues as the partnership progressed and evolved. However, some partnerships appeared not to have got off the ground, and it seemed to be the **combination of the challenges** identified, which **contributed to projects' lack of or slower progress**. One such combination involved challenges associated with lack of clarity of roles, difficult communication and personnel issues (e.g. change of personnel). Another combination of issues, which seemed particularly difficult to overcome, was that of LEA personnel time and workload, alongside LEA colleagues' commitment to CPD and different agendas and priorities within the LEA (the latter two making the first two arenas here difficult to overcome).

5.2 Challenges associated with the professional development work undertaken (i.e. the projects themselves)

This section describes interviewees' perceptions of the issues and challenges associated with the actual professional development work (i.e. the projects themselves), as identified by examining responses to the open-ended question: *'Have there been any issues/challenges in the professional development work/project as it has developed?'*

Of those who offered a response to this question, **approximately half felt that no project-related challenges had arisen**, and indeed, concurred that the project work had been a positive experience for them. In this respect, interviewees pointed to the shared

ideas, good communication across the partnership group and the contribution of the GTC link advisers amongst the factors felt to have contributed to its success.

There were also fewer project-related challenges than those related to working in partnership. However, the most widespread challenge, noted in relation to eight of the partnership projects, was:

- **Maintaining the focus of the project** – defining a focus presented some initial challenges in some of the projects; as well as keeping the project on track; and, like partnership working, incorporating different priorities and perspectives into the work itself. The latter was highlighted on projects where groups were working to produce an LEA framework or policy for CPD, and presented specific challenges in terms of finding a CPD tool or product applicable and of value to all school partners – although, reflecting findings in Section 4 on the value of partnership working, there was an acknowledgement that different viewpoints were important and would contribute to a better quality product as a result.

A small number of other project-related challenges, noted chiefly with regard to specific projects, were as follows.

- As with the challenge of partnership working, the **time commitment** necessary for project work (specifically the amount of time required out of school) and the **increased workload** arising from involvement in the project were nominated as challenges. LEA staff generally accepted this ‘challenge’ as part of their everyday work and remit. There was the intimation, however, that for schools, this could be more ‘costly’. One school in particular appeared to have invested highly in the project (in terms of time, workload and money): *‘because ultimately, you’re going to have to pay that price if you want quality at the end, and you’ve got to devote the time’* (school-based personnel).
- The **complexity** of the CPD model being used in the project was notable on one project in particular. About half the interviewees had found the work conceptually difficult – e.g. *‘to get my head round everything, some of the terminology’*. By considering its practical applications, and customising to need, this sense of difficulty was somewhat allayed.
- Difficulties with **establishing initial interest** and enthusiasm for the project work were raised. In particular, the question of how to encourage more schools to take part where projects took the form of school-based action research; similarly with regard to engaging schools in process-based CPD rather than a product-based CPD project (e.g. promoting changes in thinking and practice, rather than working towards a specified outcome, might be difficult to define and ‘sell’).
- The act of actually **changing perceptions of CPD** through engagement with the project was noted as ‘slow going’, ‘challenging’ and ‘hard work’ in some arenas.
- Occasionally, the **timescale** allocated to the projects was considered problematic in terms of the success and outcomes of the work undertaken. More generally, a number of interviewees pointed to the issues associated with **short-term projects** that expected tangible outcomes, noting that changes were often slow to unfold and therefore achieving them might be unrealistic in the specific timescale. *‘If they are going to be sustainable it has to be long term – it is a slow burn’* (LEA-based

personnel); *‘Good professional development does involve a fair amount of organisation. It’s long term, it happens over time’* (LEA-based personnel).

A number of interviewees also raised the ‘challenge’ of **how to take the projects forward** and embed the professional development work. LEA-based and school-based interviewees recognised this. Possible ‘next steps’ for projects are discussed in Section 6 on the future developments for the work.

Challenges associated with the professional development work undertaken (i.e. the projects themselves)

Defining the focus

What we realised was, when we came to look at the policy, we hadn’t actually got a clear LEA strategy about CPD to hang things on. And so we kept thinking, ‘why are we finding this so difficult? Why are we struggling with this?’ And all of a sudden we realised it was because we don’t actually have a coat-hanger to hang the coat on (LEA-based personnel).

Keeping the project on track

Trying to keep some of the stakeholders paced, there are some that want to go off and do more than the remit allows them to do. They are thinking far too far in advance without first of all completing some of the tasks beforehand... While they are completing some of the tasks that have been given to them they are expanding it far more than is necessary for the project (LEA-based personnel).

5.3 Suggested improvements

This section describes interviewees’ suggestions for improvements to be made in the partnerships and/or the professional development work itself, as identified in responses to the open-ended question: *‘Do you feel there are any areas for improvement, either in the professional development work/project itself or the partnership method of working?’*. In addition, interviewees’ recommendations for any improvements specifically with regard to the GTC involvement were probed.

Interviewees’ recommendations for improvements are presented in Table 5.1. Most of the suggested improvements were generic to the partnership project as a whole (although with roots in specific individual projects).

As can be seen from Table 5.1, the types of improvements suggested by interviewees reflected the areas of challenge identified in partnership working and/or in the projects themselves, highlighted in the earlier Sections 5.1 and 5.2. The findings presented raise a number of implications, outlined below.

- The most commonly called for improvement was **communicating greater clarity of vision and purpose** of the individual partnership projects, at the outset and at entry points for schools, teachers and other partners. The importance of a **coherent message** presenting consensus and collaboration across the parties about the nature of the specific partnership project was also highlighted, including in its publicity and dissemination.

That said, it was recognised that a sense of flexibility was also beneficial in the work – especially in letting projects and partnerships evolve (which may have contributed to this ‘clarity issue’). The **balance between responsiveness** or flexibility, and **firmly communicating visions, roles and purposes**, might be considered in any future work of this kind.

- The second most frequently suggested area for improvement was an **increased opportunity for consultation and dissemination** (both during the projects, and in terms of taking them forward) – the latter crucial to effectiveness according to some interviewees. However, as will be shown in Section 6, plans for dissemination were underway across many of the LEAs.
- The third most commonly cited area for improvement, was to be able to **increase the time available** for the work – both in terms of actually having the time to commit to the projects given people’s existing roles and responsibilities, and the notion of lengthened timespans for the projects. This perhaps **reflected participants’ perceptions of the value and importance of this work**. Implications for funding and the provision of external support are obvious here.

Timely communication to all parties of project events and progress was a high priority for some. **Attention to administration systems** in this regard would seem to be important. There were also some recommendations for **involving different types of partners** in the process – particularly at school level. There were both recommendations for more similarly experienced school-level personnel to be involved, and a desire for a greater range of the workforce with different levels of experience to take part in such partnership working.

Another area for improvement, called for by a few individuals, was the greater *‘joining up’* of these projects with other local and national CPD agendas.

In addition, although not mentioned by interviewees in response to this question, **gaining earlier LEA senior management commitment to the partnership project** might have proved beneficial in some cases (as highlighted in Section 5.1).

With regard to the **GTC’s input in particular**, three-fifths of those who responded to this aspect felt that no improvements were needed. Specific improvements that were mentioned included: clarity of GTC role and responsibilities in the partnership; GTC to visit schools; to arrange cross-LEA links and regional or national dissemination. Further, it was raised that there should be greater acknowledgement of and attention to all members of the partnership by the GTC, including in publicity materials.

Table 5.1 Suggested improvements – the top three areas

Increased opportunities for dissemination and consultation	<p><i>I think now there has got to be some kind of follow-up so that it doesn't fall flat, it's actually got to be to now say, we've done the ground work, we've put together the leaflet, so where are the goods now? Is it actually going to get disseminated or is it something that has been shelved? (school-based personnel).</i></p> <p><i>I think the message has to be spread more, because I was introduced to it in a room with four heads and deputies from [X] and four heads and deputies from [Y], so there's a lot of heads and deputies out there who have not come across this approach before. But I'm spreading the word automatically, because I am using it and people are talking to me, so that's how it's mushrooming (school-based personnel).</i></p> <p><i>I think it would have been good for the heads who went along to the meetings to maybe have had time to consult other headteachers, and I realise that's more time away from school business, but to some extent, going cold to the meetings sometimes is not beneficial. There are several cluster groups, particularly in our LEA, that are particularly effective and maybe those could have been used to a greater degree (school-based personnel).</i></p>
Communicating greater clarity of vision and purpose of the project, aims and roles at the outset	<p><i>The one thing we could improve on is to make it clearer, more widely, what the partnership is, and how long the partnership is going to last, what its central purpose is, so people have a greater understanding of the contributions ... When you're working on schemes, I think you do need to know who your partners are, you need to know something about them and there has to be relationships developed, even if you're several steps away from the originating organisation. So I think that needs to be a little clearer (school-based personnel).</i></p> <p><i>What might have been helpful right at the beginning was a very clear statement about the intended outcomes of this project. I don't think we really ever had that. And if we'd known what the intended outcomes were, it might have been helpful. I'm not saying it would have changed anything we did, but it might have been helpful (school-based personnel).</i></p>
Increased time available	<p><i>The only one I can really think of would be if I'd had more time to be able to devote to it, we might have been able to move a bit faster still ... But we had to work within the human resources available (LEA-based personnel).</i></p> <p><i>I think if it's ever possible, I think a slightly longer timescale. This was just over two terms, but even three terms is very short when people have so many other things to do (LEA-based personnel).</i></p> <p><i>It really needed a year – you meet for half a day, and then you come back and have to look at what you've done and to gather information in from other LEAs and then to disseminate which is good and which is bad - it does take time (school-based personnel, same LEA as above).</i></p>

5.4 Challenges and improvements: summary

This section has discussed the findings relating to the challenges that emerged in the partnership projects across the 26 LEAs and any suggestions for improvements to the work or the partnerships.

Challenges related to partnership working

Reflecting perceptions of the value of partnership working, most interviewees felt the partnerships had been a positive experience. The majority relayed a sense of there having been **generally few challenges**, or that where challenges were experienced they had, on the whole, **been surmounted**.

However, working in partnership raised some **typical challenges**, including:

- **finding convenient times** for all parties to meet and the **actual time** available to dedicate to the partnership
- accommodating the **different priorities** of the partners involved (finding ‘*common ground*’), and their different levels of enthusiasm and commitment to the work
- an occasional lack of **clarity of roles** and responsibilities of all those involved in the partnership, noted at the outset and at entry points for different participants
- some **communication** and administration difficulties (such as returning calls and e-mails, late notification of arrangements, etc.) – i.e. *timely* communication
- **LEA/school personnel** issues such as staff changes, relationships between/with schools, and existing pressures and circumstances.

Such challenges were **generally surmounted**, or worked through (e.g. through project flexibility, working in different groupings, and coming to shared agreements). However, the extent or **combination of challenges** appeared particularly acute or burdensome in some of the LEA partnerships which seemed not to have progressed beyond the initial stages. For example, where challenges with workload, time, individual’s commitment to CPD and different priorities within the LEA were present. In addition, the **support from LEA and school senior management**, and the priority given to CPD, was seen as crucial to participants’ engagement in the partnerships. **Senior LEA-level support**, in particular, seemed pivotal in progressing some of the partnerships past an impasse.

Challenges associated with the professional development work undertaken

In terms of the projects themselves, **fewer challenges** appeared to have emerged. Of those who offered a response to this arena, approximately half felt that no project-related challenges had arisen.

The most widespread challenge associated with the work was **maintaining the focus of the project** – e.g. defining a focus, keeping the project on track and, as with partnership working, incorporating different priorities and perspectives into the work or product itself.

In addition, **time and workload**, the **complexity** of the CPD models being used, **establishing initial interest** and enthusiasm, actually **changing perceptions of CPD**, and

the perceived **short timescales** allocated to projects, were cited as challenges arising in the projects.

Suggested improvements

Interviewees' recommendations for improvements reflected the areas of challenge identified in partnership working and/or in the projects themselves. Most of the suggested improvements were generic to the partnership project as a whole; not many interviewees raised areas of the GTC's input specifically for improvement. The most commonly called for improvements were:

- **communicating greater clarity of vision and purpose** of the individual partnership projects, at the outset and at entry points, for schools, teachers and other partners. The importance of a **coherent message** presenting consensus and collaboration across the parties about the nature of the specific partnership project was also highlighted, including in its publicity and dissemination.

That said, it was recognised that a sense of flexibility was also beneficial in the work – especially in letting projects and partnerships evolve (which may have contributed to this 'clarity issue'). The **balance between responsiveness** or flexibility, and **firmly communicating visions, roles and purposes**, might be considered in any future work of this kind.

- **increased opportunity for consultation and dissemination** (both during the projects, and in terms of taking them forward) – the latter crucial to effectiveness according to some interviewees. However, it should be noted that plans for dissemination were underway across many of the LEAs.
- **increased time available** – participants wished both that they had had more time to commit to the work, and that projects had lengthened timespans. Implications for funding and the continuation of external support are obvious here.

In addition, **timely communication** to all parties of project events and progress was a high priority for some. **Attention to local project administration systems** in this regard would seem to be important.

There were also some recommendations for **involving different partners** in the process – both more similarly experienced personnel and different perspectives were recommended. There was the evidence that **greater explicit joining up of local CPD projects might also bring further benefits**. In addition, although not mentioned by interviewees in response to this question, **gaining earlier LEA senior management commitment to the partnership project** might have proved beneficial in some cases.

With regard to the **GTC's input in particular**, specific improvements that were mentioned included: clarity of GTC role and responsibilities in the partnership; GTC to visit schools; to arrange cross-LEA-links and regional or national dissemination. Further, it was raised that there should be greater acknowledgement of and attention to all members of the partnership by the GTC, including in publicity materials.

6 Longer-term development

This section examines the intentions for future developments and extensions of the partnership projects to be undertaken after the end of the academic year 2004–2005 (i.e. when DfES funding and formal GTC input ceased), and the factors and strategies, ways of working and resources needed to continue with and build on this work in the longer term.

It draws chiefly on interview data from the six case-study LEA partnership projects and the ten telephone survey LEAs. It is divided into two sections:

- further development and extension of the work (i.e. what kinds of work might be continued and developed)
- factors, strategies and resources needed to continue with and build on the work longer term.

6.1 Further development and extension of the work

Interviewees' responses to the following two questions were examined in order to establish their plans for the further development of the work:

- *Do you envisage that there will be any further development/extension of the work undertaken to date?*
- *Will there be a long-term future for the professional development work/project after the end of this school year?*

The partnership project overall was intended for one year, with DfES funding and direct GTC involvement finishing at the end of the academic year (2004–2005). Nevertheless, there was a desire to build on what had been put in place and achieved in the participating LEAs, in order to establish the longer-term development of this work. Firm or concrete plans for further development were evident in 11 of the 16 LEAs involved in the direct data collection. In five of the LEAs, areas for further development were mainly expressed as ideas or wishes, but with (as yet) no definite substance as to what these would entail.

Plans for further development and extension of the work included the following (presented in order of frequency that they were apparent across the LEAs).

- There was an intention to **build on the work** (e.g. the models, frameworks or approaches) **at strategic level**, evident as an express desire across all the LEAs. In more concrete terms, a number of LEAs planned to **monitor and evaluate** the work in its roll-out, including an example of a working group to be charged with this role. Several LEAs had identified **other parts of the workforce** to which they would extend the frameworks produced (e.g. to expand a primary framework to secondary schools, or to extend opportunities frameworks to include support staff). Two LEAs would **develop other strands of the work** originally identified with GTC personnel and DfES regional advisers but not yet fully tackled through the partnership projects (for example, to look at a CPD strategy related to middle management, or the theme of coaching and mentoring). In addition, staff from one LEA commented on their

upcoming **two-year action plan**, which now included aspects of the work from the partnership to be taken forward.

- Amongst those who had not already done so, **dissemination of the work to schools** was planned in seven of the LEAs through, for example, LEA-wide launches of frameworks, an annual conference for the schools involved, and web-based outputs (e.g. CPD internet noticeboards). LEA personnel in a further two cases expressed hopes to disseminate the work LEA-wide at some point.
- In addition, '**getting the work into schools**' was planned by school-based personnel involved in the partnership projects (according to those interviewed in the six case-study sites) through, for example, **promotion** of the work within their own schools, and the **application** of the work to their school context. A number of these participants had identified specific areas where the approaches and models could be applied and taken forward in their schools, including in their planning and evaluation strategies, interview techniques, and in developing aspects of teaching and learning such as higher-order thinking skills.
- The **collaborative aspects** of the partnerships were identified as areas to be extended beyond the timeframe of the projects. In particular, the **continuation and development of working groups** was being considered in the LEAs where these had formed part of the partnership. Whilst group memberships and remits were not as yet always fully firmed up, plans included: extending the focus of the group's work; formalising the group's constitution (e.g. setting up a CPD leaders' forum – not previously in existence in a number of LEAs); expanding the membership to include other levels of school-staff experience; and, in contrast, condensing the group's membership and size to continue focused work at a more strategic level. Timespans for the extension of collaborative work were generally not specified, although in one case, a timeframe of six months had been adjudged in which to continue the work with schools and group members, after which the LEA would again take stock.
- In addition, three of the LEAs also intended to **continue working with the GTC link advisers**. **Exit strategies** for the GTC role here were planned, including school visits to help schools formulate direction and next year's programme, and a final meeting in the autumn term in order to advise LEA personnel on web-based outputs once up and running. Similar exit strategies had perhaps already been achieved or undergone in other LEAs further forward in their progress and outputs. Certainly, as highlighted in Section 4.2 (on the benefits of the GTC input), in a number of cases, one possible exit strategy had been a gradual step-back from the GTC adviser with more responsibility taken on by the LEA, as projects had progressed.
- Enhancing future capacity through **LEA-level roles and responsibilities** was a planned feature in some of the LEAs, including in more than one case the appointment of a full-time LEA CPD adviser. A number of LEA staff mentioned funding regarding TDA workforce development advisers as an area to be explored in this regard. One LEA, currently undergoing restructuring, was considering whether this could enhance capacity at an operational level, in order that LEA staff could then '*actually do that capacity building in schools*'; and another planned to use the TDA-funded post to help extend the work to support staff.
- Finally, there was a desire on the part of LEA personnel to now **link the work with other initiatives and agendas** such as: the Teacher Learning Academy (TLA);

workforce remodelling; other services within the LEA or across the School Improvement Team; and with the work of other LEAs (which would also extend collaborative aspects of the work).

The kinds of future developments planned by these LEAs depended on progress to date and the extent of their achievements.

6.2 Factors, strategies and resources needed to continue with and build on the work longer term

Interviewees' responses to the following questions were examined, in order to explore the factors, strategies and resources that might be needed to continue with the work in the longer term:

- *What is needed to continue with and build on the work in the longer term?*
- *Are there any hindrances to the continuation of the work undertaken?*

The key factors that LEA and school-based personnel felt would help in the future development of the work are outlined below.

- **Funding** – there were numerous declarations that more funding would be welcomed. Whilst broadly seen as a general 'wish', additional funding was felt to be crucial to the continuation of specific aspects of the work, including:
 - teacher release time where further collaborative groups were planned
 - large-scale dissemination events
 - the roll-out of action research programmes and for the actual school-based research projects themselves.

In addition, the location and dedication of funding (including the devolving of professional development monies to schools) led to LEA-held concerns that they could not necessarily determine the **allocation of those monies** to CPD or to the development of the work from the partnership projects: *'I'm very upset that the Capacity Building monies have gone, because for the last two years, that money has been so valuable for me, in seconding out experienced teachers from schools ...'* (LEA-based personnel).

- The availability of **time to dedicate to the work** would be important to its development. Areas of concern included LEA- and school-staff time – given their workload, other pressures and responsibilities (including information overload); as well as teacher release time (related to funding above). In this regard, it is important to note that external support, whilst in place, had provided an impetus to people's use of time and a focus to the progress of the projects (areas very much valued with regard to the GTC's input, as described in Sections 4.2 and 4.3 earlier). Once this external support is 'removed' from the equation, the question is raised, to what extent can this impetus be maintained, especially given pressures from other commitments?

At school level, external impetus might come from the LEA – as one headteacher suggested, through providing regular timeslots to meet, or timescales in which certain elements might be evaluated or fed back. However, for LEA staff, consideration

might be needed on this matter. Although the DfES regional advisers would take forward some of this work, given the nature of their brief and the large number of the LEAs they each work with, continued support would most likely be less intensive than was possible in the partnership project.

- As well as finding time, the **longer-term nature** of the LEA's plans for the work would equally require **longer-term timescales** in which the work would progress and consolidate. Interviewees felt that reflection and thinking time for teachers to assimilate and apply new material and approaches would be needed, as well as sufficient timeframes in which to monitor and evaluate the consolidation of the work.
- In this regard, the **continuation of external input and support** for the LEA CPD adviser in the form of knowledge, expertise and critical guidance ('*GTC-like support*') would be welcomed by many. Although not generally seen as a barrier to the continuation of the work, without such support, LEA- and school-based staff alike felt this represented lost potential: '*We need the same consultant to stay with us now for at least another 12 months, until it's secured. Because new learning needs to be secured before you can expand it ... You need to embed that learning until it's automatic, and that's what we need him to do now*' (LEA-based personnel).

As noted in LEA plans above, LEA staff roles might be extended (or indeed, new positions implemented) to encompass elements of the partnership project work. To ensure effective development, other personnel might also need to take on particular roles. For example, in order to extend the work into schools, administrative responsibilities, support from the school CPD leader in the classroom, and extensions of training school manager roles, might need to be considered (as recommended by interviewees themselves).

- The development of collaborative aspects of the work would require the **continuation of a shared vision and agenda** between LEAs and schools, as one LEA interviewee put it: collaboration '*on the ground*'. In this regard, a balance between different partners' needs (LEA-level extension of the work, CPD relevant to schools and teachers) would be maintained. Some teachers felt this aspect might be enhanced through continually renewing the membership of the group; whilst, in other instances, consolidation of the existing group membership might also prove fruitful.
- **Active promotion** and **effective dissemination** of the work were cited as important (if not the most important by some interviewees). Support from senior management would be important to schools' commitment to the work, and it was felt that having headteachers and deputy heads involved in further working groups would have some bearing here. As seen in LEAs' plans for the development of the work, above, a number of dissemination strategies were in place. Areas to consider include how far-reaching will these strategies be, and who attends? (From the partnership projects themselves, it was noted that initial blanket invitee events would attract the enthusiasts and could be small in participant or attendee numbers.) And how far will the work move beyond those schools directly involved in the partnership projects?

Existing networks might prove a useful area to consider in this regard. As well as taking work forward at individual school-level, and at LEA-level, in a small number of cases, **school-clusters, consortia and networks** were identified as arenas through which the work would develop. Given the emphasis placed on dissemination, and the importance of the collaborative aspects of the partnerships (as shown in Section 4)

could more be made of existing networks in order to take the work beyond the partnership group?

Furthermore, **non-contact days** (suggested in some LEAs) might also prove effective for both disseminating work and changing thinking and seeing its application.

- It was also felt that **changed thinking about CPD** at LEA level, headteacher/CPD leader level, and at teacher level, would be vital for the effective roll-out of the work across the LEA and into schools. In many instances, this had already come about for those directly involved in the partnership projects (as shown in Section 3). It was perceived that effective dissemination, continued collaboration and consolidation time would all contribute to the furthering of changed or congruent thinking across the LEA. However, changing thinking was also seen as particularly challenging, in that it might require ‘changing cultures’. As one interviewee said: *‘Changing a system of running a meeting is an easy change, because it’s just a system change, but actually changing the way that people deal with one another ... getting people to think through solutions ... it’s a people thing, and that takes ages’* (school-based personnel).

The features discussed above represent the generic factors felt to be important to the future development of the partnership projects’ work. Different mixes of factors and their emphases were evident across the partnerships, according to the actual developments planned. The discussion that follows outlines where these factors would be critical to the future progress of projects, where and how any possible hindrances had already been overcome, and finally, those factors that analysis revealed as the most likely to achieve sustainability in the longer term.

Areas which appeared to be crucial to the future of the work: potential hindrances

Some factors appeared to be **crucial** to future developments in certain LEAs (i.e. where, if not in place, a real stumbling block or **hindrance to the progress of the work** might be encountered).

Firstly, **funding and release time** received the most nominations in terms of proving real hindrances should these not be resolved. These were especially important where LEAs wished to continue with working groups, and vital to one LEA where the framework being put together via a working group was not yet fully complete (although some carried forward LEA-level funding would be available to help complete the work in this particular case). The capacity of personnel to take the work forward (in terms of time, workload, and their expertise) – i.e. **human resources** – could also be a hindrance to the work. The question is raised, are there any other sources to be tapped to help release capacity of this nature?

Secondly, **changes in thinking** might prove the most difficult area to crack (as noted in the factors needed to continue with the work longer term, above). A small number of LEAs felt they had not yet progressed far enough in this regard in order to gain LEA and school senior management support across the board – seen as vital to the extension of the work.

Thirdly, there might also be **circumstances and events**, which, over and above anything related to the projects, might prove insurmountable or affect the direction of the LEA’s

work in other ways. Issues with falling rolls, the changing nature of LEA-wide pupil and teacher profiles (due for example to immigrant populations), the influence of regional agendas (such as London Challenge), and in a few cases, **key personnel moving on**, were all cited as areas which might critically affect the future of the project or require the attentions of the LEA in different arenas.

Arenas where potential hindrances had been overcome

That said, some of the factors raised as important to the continuation of projects **were already in place and related challenges had been overcome** – an indication of the extent to which *capacity* had already been built. As noted earlier, in a small number of cases LEA CPD adviser **posts** had been instigated, and several LEAs were exploring the potential of the TDA workforce advisers post in this regard. Also, several LEAs felt they had **changed thinking sufficiently** at all levels in order to move further forward (in contrast to those LEAs above, where it was deemed that thinking had not yet been changed far or wide enough).

In a couple of cases, projects had found ways of **gaining time and funding**, no longer a hindrance to any future development – for example, dedicated administration time had been allocated to the work for one teacher in her school. In other cases it was noted that elements were being taken forward that **expressly did not require funding** – for example through school-level plans for CPD that slotted in with the partnership project work without additional onus for the school, and through viewing further activity as a ‘process’ of change, rather than working towards a ‘product’ – which might require costs and resources (i.e. taking forward work that was already planned but in a different way, to match or adapt the processes adopted in the partnership project).

The need for **continued external input** had been addressed by a couple of LEAs – one had arranged external speakers at a dissemination event, and another would enlist the support of strategy consultants (already working with consortia in the LEA) at some point to help with evaluation of the work.

Which plans and factors are most likely to be sustainable in the longer term?

None of the factors identified as important to the future development of the work was about kick-starting the work. This had already been provided by the partnership projects. But the question raised now is how might the work be continued in the longer term? Which plans and factors are most likely to be sustainable in the longer term? By examining all the factors, as well as the areas which appeared to be crucial to the future of the work, and arenas where potential hindrances had been overcome (as above), there appeared to be certain factors that analysis suggested would be those most likely to achieve sustainability in the longer term.

The models and frameworks themselves were seen as important platforms from which to develop the work – and key factors for sustainability in the longer term. That said, approaches and processes were also seen as having potential for sustainability – ‘a process rather than a product makes it sustainable’, was posited. Producing frameworks and models, or getting to grips with approaches to CPD, was seen as an important ‘*front-loading*’ of resources in these projects. However, what might be key to sustainability, is that alongside the ‘*tool*’ (whether that be a physical product such as an Opportunities

Framework, an approach to collaboration, or a process for change) sits **changed thinking about CPD**, ideally at a range of levels across the workforce.

The need for **consolidation time** for changed thinking, approaches and frameworks to **translate into practice** would also seem key to sustainability – including time to see work and results filtered through to all schools, as one LEA-level interviewee put it: *‘It’s only when they’ve got a real example in their own school or with their own teachers, that you get the opening of the eyes and the real understanding.’*

In this regard, the notion of **ongoing drip-feed support** might prove important to sustainability – for example external support (e.g. from the regional adviser) at regular intervals (providing a professional boost, objectivity, fresh insight and wider expertise – as highlighted previously in Section 4.2), and through ongoing LEA-school or school-school support. *‘Good professional development does involve a fair amount of organisation. It’s long term, it happens over time ... The people involved need continuing support, so that’s going to take time and effort to gradually ensure this thing plays out’* (LEA-based personnel).

Finally, by continually **seeking opportunities for joined-up working** – e.g. LEAs *‘weaving’* CPD initiatives and information together for schools; linking with other aspects of the school cycle; joining up school and LEA plans; and engaging with other LEAs’ work – the longer-term sustainability of the work was posited.

The extent to which long-term capacity had been built through the partnership project can, at this stage, only be conjectured. However, the above elements would seem to be important considerations in this regard. Certainly though, the legacy of the partnership project was a strong desire from LEA- and school-level personnel to build on what had been put in place and achieved. Although DfES funding and direct GTC involvement finished at the end of the academic year 2004–05, personnel from the 16 LEAs involved in the interviews did not perceive this as an ‘ending’ to the work that had been developed throughout the course of the partnership:

I think what we’ve done is we’ve skilled up the central people, so that they’re feeling in a better position to begin to ... but I just see this as the beginning, not as the end (LEA-based personnel).

I see it as the platform from which we do all our CPD (school-based personnel).

Longer-term follow-up of the partnership projects would ascertain more fully the effectiveness of the project in building capacity long term.

6.3 Longer-term development: summary

Drawing chiefly on the data from the six case-study LEA partnership projects and the ten telephone survey LEAs, the intentions for future developments and extensions of the work, and the factors needed to continue with and build on this work in the longer term, were examined.

Further development and extension of the work

The partnership project overall was intended for one year, with DfES funding and direct GTC involvement finishing at the end of the academic year (2004–2005). Nevertheless,

there was a desire to build on what had been put in place and achieved in the participating LEAs, in order to establish the longer-term development of this work. Firm or concrete plans for further development were evident in 11 of the 16 LEAs involved in the direct data collection. In five of the LEAs, areas for further development were mainly expressed as ideas or wishes, but with (as yet) no definite substance as to what these would entail.

Plans for further development and extension of the work included:

- an intention to **build on the work at strategic level** – e.g. to monitor and evaluate the work in its roll-out, and to extend frameworks to other parts of the workforce
- **dissemination of the work to schools** – e.g. LEA-wide launches of frameworks, an annual conference for the schools involved, and web-based outputs
- **‘getting the work into schools’** through promotion by staff involved in the partnership and application in their own schools
- the continuation and development of **collaborative working groups**, where these had formed part of the partnership – e.g. extending the focus of the group’s work, or formalising the group’s membership and remit (e.g. setting up a CPD leaders’ forum)
- in a small number of cases, **continued work with the GTC link advisers**, including **exit strategies** for the GTC role – e.g. school visits, a final meeting, and advice on products once up and running
- to enhance **LEA-level roles and responsibilities**, including in a small number of cases the appointment of a full-time LEA CPD adviser; and the possibility of enhancing human resources through linking with TDA workforce development advisers – posts currently being instigated
- a desire to now **link the work with other initiatives and agendas** – e.g. the Teacher Learning Academy; workforce remodelling; other services within the LEA; and with the work of other LEAs.

Factors, strategies and resources needed to continue with and build on the work longer term

The key generic factors that LEA and school-based personnel felt would help in the future development of the work were:

- **continued funding** – broadly expressed as a general ‘wish’, although viewed as crucial to the continuation of certain aspects of the work, such as teacher release time where further collaborative groups were planned; and concerns about the future **allocation of monies** to CPD, given the devolving of monies to schools for professional development
- **time to dedicate to the work** – given workload and other responsibilities, to what extent can impetus to dedicate time to this work be maintained, particularly once external support (which had provided motivation for the work) is ‘removed’ from the equation?

- **consolidation time** – e.g. for teachers to reflect on, assimilate and apply new material and approaches, as well as sufficient timeframes in which to monitor and evaluate the progress of the work
- the **continuation of external input and support** for the LEA CPD adviser in the form of knowledge, expertise and critical guidance (*'GTC-like support'*)
- the **continuation of a shared vision and agenda** between LEAs and schools, as one LEA interviewee put it: collaboration *'on the ground'*
- **active promotion and effective dissemination** of the work – seen as the most important factor by some interviewees, and requiring support from LEA and school senior management. The question is raised, how far-reaching will the planned dissemination be? And how far will the work move beyond those schools directly involved in the partnership projects? Existing networks, school clusters and consortia might prove useful arenas to consider in taking the work to a wider audience – particularly given the emphasis placed on dissemination, and the importance of collaboration in the CPD agenda
- **changed or congruent thinking about CPD** at all levels and across the LEA, which in turn would require effective dissemination, continued collaboration and consolidation time. This was seen as one of the more challenging arenas to *'crack'*, although in many instances, this had already come about for those directly involved in the partnership projects.

Different mixes of factors and their emphases were evident across the partnerships – and moreover, in some cases, certain features were seen as crucial to the future progress of projects, whilst in others, potential hindrances had already been overcome.

Which plans and factors are most likely to be sustainable in the longer term?

None of the factors identified as important to the future development of the work was about kick-starting the work. This had already been provided by the partnership project. But the question raised now is which plans and factors are most likely to be sustainable in the longer term? Analysis suggested that the factors most likely to achieve sustainability in the longer term were as follows:

- **the models, frameworks** and approaches developed – seen as important platforms from which to develop the work.
- alongside these *'tools'*, **changed thinking about CPD**, ideally at a range of levels across the workforce
- **consolidation time** for changed thinking, approaches and frameworks to **translate into practice**, including time to filter through to all schools
- **ongoing drip-feed support** – given the importance of external support to LEA-level staff in particular, the provision of external support at regular intervals (e.g. from the DfES regional adviser) might prove beneficial on a number of counts (e.g. providing

a professional boost, objectivity, fresh insight and wider expertise); and ongoing LEA-school and school-school support might also be critical

- continually **seeking opportunities for providing a coherent approach to CPD**, for example, by joining up local, regional and national CPD initiatives and agendas (including in both school and LEA-level plans).

The extent to which long-term capacity had been built through the partnership project, can, at this stage, only be conjectured. The above elements would seem to be important considerations in this regard – however, some may require further attention.

That said, although DfES funding and direct GTC involvement finished at the end of the academic year (2004–05), personnel from the 16 LEAs involved in the interviews did not perceive this as an ‘ending’ to the work that had been developed throughout the course of the partnership. The legacy of the partnership project was a strong desire from LEA- and school-level personnel to build on what had been put in place and achieved.

Follow-up of the work at a later date would ascertain more fully the effectiveness of the project in building capacity long term.

7 Conclusion

To conclude this report, we consider what the experience of the partnership project reveals about professional development, and the messages to emerge that may inform national policy development.

7.1 Key factors leading to the effectiveness of the partnership project

Having established the outcomes and impacts emanating from the partnership project in Section 3 and that this was seen as the start of a long-term development, the first area for attention is to draw together the findings of the report to identify the factors that contributed to the effectiveness of the partnership project. The **funding** committed by the DfES to the partnership project was felt to have contributed added value by bringing about the work. In addition, analysis of interviewees' comments revealed that the success of the partnership project was ascribed to its constructs and processes, as follows.

Customising and ownership

Section 2 of this report revealed that a principal facet of the partnership project was the **flexibility and responsiveness of input** depending on the particular context, needs and starting point of each LEA. Thus, across the 26 participating authorities the nature of the GTC's role, the focus of the professional development work undertaken and the personnel involved varied according to local priorities. Because of this approach, participants had **scope for identifying their own focus and ownership of the work**, factors they deemed key to its success.

Partnership working

The project aimed to encourage and develop local changes in relation to CPD through a partnership approach to working between LEA and school-based personnel with GTC link advisers and DfES regional advisers. The value that interviewees attached to the partnership approach was relayed in Section 4. **Collaborative working, sharing knowledge and expertise** and encouraging the input of all parties to shape the work to 'need' and build **ownership** were deemed important, as were the **status and credibility** brought to the work by the commitment of various parties. Thus, the partnership approach was associated with the effectiveness of the work undertaken and the impacts achieved.

External expertise

Section 4 also conveyed how interviewees prized the specialist input from outside the locality provided by GTC link advisers. Their involvement was highly regarded for their **knowledge and skills** regarding professional development practices and their **direct support** by undertaking work to aid often overstretched LEA staff. They were appreciated for their **enthusiasm** and for the **focus, coherence and quality assurance** they brought to the work. Moreover, their **flexible, tailor-made approach further contributed to the partners' ownership** over the professional development work undertaken. Whilst most (though not all) LEAs believed that they would probably have undertaken similar work without the input, the external expertise added value by kick-

starting the work; achieving results more quickly; moving LEAs further forward in their CPD thinking and practice than otherwise possible; and creating a better quality product or outcome.

7.2 Modelling principles of effective professional development

What is striking about the partnership project is that it was in effect the embodiment of the principles of professional development that it was trying to convey. Several of the above processes that were perceived to make the GTC-DfES-LEA CPD Partnership Project itself effective were actually those that the project was seeking to embed in the practices of participating LEAs.

To explain further, as Section 1 relayed, an underlying aim of the project was to move forward LEAs' and schools' adoption of CPD identified as effective in recent educational research and best practice guidance. This chiefly constituted a shift in culture away from a course-based mentality and practice in professional development towards the more school-based and collaborative forms as established by, amongst others, Cordingley *et al*, (2003), focusing on:

- creating an emphasis on peer support and coaching
- involving outside 'experts' to support the school-based activities, including coaching
- offering scope for teachers to identify their own CPD focus
- taking accounts of teachers' individual starting points
- introducing processes to facilitate and encourage professional dialogues
- conducting focused workshops
- providing quality time for teachers to participate in collaborative professional development activities
- developing processes for sustaining the CPD over time to enable teachers to embed the new practices in their own classroom settings.

As well as aiming to impart and ingrain these features of professional development, the overall construction and processes of the project embodied several of them. This can be demonstrated by mapping features of the partnership project on to the findings from the literature:

- the **coaching** element raised in the literature was exemplified when the GTC link adviser was critical friend to the LEA adviser
- the link adviser was the bringer of **external expertise** when working in collaboration with LEA and school personnel on professional development matters
- the commitment to a flexible way of working depending on the particular context and priorities of each LEA took account of **individual starting points and gave partners scope for identifying the CPD focus to be taken forward**

- the partnership approach that brought together some or all of GTC, DfES, LEA and school-based personnel through working parties and seminars established a process **to encourage, extend and structure professional dialogue**
- the project funding, where used for release time for teachers, helped to provide **time for participation in collaborative activities** such as working parties.

Thus, the actual design of the GTC-DfES-LEA CPD partnership project **modelled several of the principles of professional development that it was seeking to convey**. Moreover, it was to these features that the success of the project was attributed.

7.3 Concluding comments

What messages can we take from this to inform national policy development and thinking about professional learning?

The features identified above were first seen as central in effective CPD in relation to teachers' classroom practice. What emerges here is that these same features – use of external expertise, professional networking and dialogue, and needs-based work that affords ownership – can also work in LEA-level/LEA-wide professional development approaches. That these features can transfer to different levels in education suggests their robustness as tenets of professional development.

That said, though promising, the evidence for this comes from the year of input in the partnership project. A further test of the value of these features in LEA professional development would be to follow up the work at a later date to ascertain more fully the effectiveness of the partnership project in fulfilling its core purpose of building capacity for CPD.

Longer-term follow-up would also allow for further exploration of the return on investment of working at LEA level to build capacity for CPD. Much of the focus of the partnership project was, in the first instance, at LEA-level (e.g. critical friendship to LEA advisers, the formulation of professional development policies and opportunity frameworks for application authority-wide, partnership working between LEA personnel, school personnel and others). Earlier sections of this report have shown how much partners appreciated the opportunity of coming together in partnership to strengthen relationships between those involved and to develop frameworks and policies for use across the LEA. Later follow-up would show the extent to which such LEA work develops and is taken up and taken forward to effect change in professional development practices authority-wide.

Based on the evidence to date, there are possibly some positive indications in this regard. Firstly, the impacts derived so far by LEA and school level partners, as shown in Section 3, suggest the value of LEA focused work. Secondly, the partnership approach, the foci of much of the work already undertaken and the products developed have potential to attain longevity. For example, as Section 4 showed, where the partnership involved schools, LEAs regarded this as bringing credibility to the process and particularly the product, which would help in its dissemination to and take-up by other schools. Further, in terms of the nature of the work, much of the focus over the year of the partnership project involved stimulating teachers' demand for professional development, developing LEAs' and schools' offer away from a concentration on external courses, and achieving congruence between the demand and the offer (e.g. through the development of

opportunity frameworks). If congruence is attained in practice and the demand and offer continue to develop and needs are met, there is the likelihood of long-term continuation of the work and take-up authority wide.

To sum up finally, follow-up of the work at a later time would determine the longer-term effectiveness of the partnership project in building capacity for CPD. (This possibility is being explored with the GTC.) None the less, considering the impacts perceived so far in most participating LEAs and given that its approach embodies key principles of professional development, the evidence to date would suggest that there is significant merit and worth in the GTC-DfES-LEA CPD partnership project model of working.

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