



The Teacher Learning Academy

An Evaluation of the Teacher Learning
Academy: Phases 1 and 2

**Final report
(Summary report and full report)**

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June 2006

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Acknowledgements

We would like to express our sincerest thanks to staff at the General Teaching Council (GTC) for their time and contributions to this evaluation. Their unstinting support and guidance over the course of the study has been very much appreciated and valued by the research team. Special gratitude is also extended to the many teachers, verifiers and Teacher Learning Academy partners who were involved in face-to-face and telephone interviews. We are much obliged to them for giving up their time to speak to us. We are also very grateful to our current and former colleagues at NFER for their contributions to the research: Thomas Benton, Dick Downing, John Harland, Jennie Harland, Sally Kendall and Ruth Watson.

Summary Report

1 Introduction

This summary sets out key findings from an evaluation of Phases 1 and 2 of the pilot Teacher Learning Academy (TLA). The research was conducted by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) on behalf of the General Teaching Council for England (GTC).

1.1 About the Teacher Learning Academy

The pilot TLA has been established by the GTC to provide professional and public recognition for teachers' learning and development work. The Academy offers the opportunity for the learning that occurs in teachers' daily professional lives to be acknowledged through a national system. The Academy provides professional recognition across six stages, from 'Associate' (entry-level) to 'Senior Fellow' (equivalent to an education doctorate).

Beginning in academic year 2003–04, the TLA was first piloted in three local authorities (LAs): Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield (Phase 1). The GTC, the LA and a local Higher Education Institute (HEI) collaborated to launch the Academy in each of these areas. From September 2004, the pilot was extended into other contexts and partners across England (Phase 2). This included LAs, groups of LAs and training schools as well as work with other CPD providers (whereby professional development conducted through these means could form the basis of a TLA submission). The Academy began Phase 3 in September 2005.

1.2 About the research

This report draws together evidence relating to Phases 1 and 2 of the pilot, which was garnered via the following methods.

Enrolment data

- A statistical analysis of the enrolment forms completed by teachers joining the pilot TLA in Phases 1 and 2.

Phase 1 Data collection involving all three LAs participating in the TLA during this phase

- Interviews with GTC link advisers, and LA and HEI representatives
- observations of three launch events, three local support group meetings and six sessions of verifier training
- nine case studies, involving interviews with the case-study teachers, and the headteacher and/or CPD coordinator in their school
- a telephone interview survey of 57 participating teachers, 40 of whom had submitted projects to the TLA for recognition at the time of their interviews (for

ease of reference called ‘submitters’) and 17 who had yet to submit (‘non-submitters’)

- in order to ascertain any long-term impacts of participation in the Academy, follow-up interviews were conducted with LA/HEI representatives, with three of the case-study teachers and their headteachers and/or school CPD coordinators, and with 24 of the submitters from the telephone interview survey.

Phase 2 Data collection primarily involving eight of the partners participating in the TLA during this phase

- Interviews with GTC managers and with the GTC link advisers working with the eight partners
- interviews with representatives leading the TLA in each of the eight partners
- observations of four local support group meetings and five verifier training sessions
- six case studies, involving interviews with the case-study teachers, and the headteacher and/or CPD coordinator in their school
- a telephone interview survey of 113 submitters
- a telephone interview survey of 15 verifiers.

In total, in the course of the research, 250 interviews were conducted.

1.3 About the TLA enrolees

Statistical analysis was undertaken of 1,267 of the enrolment forms completed by teachers upon joining the TLA. The characteristics of these enrolees are set out below.

- Phase 1 of the pilot operated in three LAs, and Phase 2 involved around 30 partners. In total, 283 of the enrolment forms were from Phase 1 enrolees and 984 were from Phase 2.
- Primary and secondary teachers were represented in the Academy in almost equal measure. Of these 1,267 enrolees, 48 per cent taught the primary age range, 47 per cent were secondary teachers, and five per cent worked in special educational needs (SEN) schools, were LA based or were supply teachers.
- Taking both Phases of the pilot together, half of the enrolees entered the Academy at Stage 1¹ and close to one-third joined at Stage 2. Proportionately more of the Stage 2 enrolments were from Phase 1 where one of the participating LAs had strong links with a local HEI and encouraged its teachers to enter at Stage 2 and work towards academic accreditation as well as TLA recognition.
- The TLA attracted teachers at all stages of their careers, with the highest proportion in this analysis being recently qualified teachers (42 per cent of the 1,267 had been members of the profession for between 1–5 years). Amongst the enrolees were staff at all levels of responsibility in school.

¹Enrolees’ Stage of entry: Stage 1: 49%; Stage 2: 29%; Stage 3: 10%; Stages 4–6: 1%; undecided/more than one box ticked: 8%; non-response: 3%.

When asked why they had become involved in the Academy, the key reason cited by almost half of the 1,267 enrolees was the opportunity for recognition that the TLA offered, especially the recognition of work undertaken on a day-to-day basis in school. The next most common reasons (each stated by almost one-quarter of enrolees) related to the development of and reflection on teachers' own learning, and the opportunity that the Academy offered for CPD. Thus, on the basis of the enrolment forms, **the principle reasons for participation are commensurate with the underlying rationales of the Academy – professional development in everyday practice and the continuation, development and evaluation of teachers' own learning.**

Comparison across the two Phases of the pilot showed some differences in the rationales given for participation in the Academy. Most notably, in Phase 2 there was an increase in the proportion that had enrolled because of a recommendation, most often from their school or a CPD provider. In Phase 1, one in ten enrolees had been recommended to join; in Phase 2, it was one in four.

2 Impacts of involvement in the TLA

The research probed submitters' views of the outcomes of TLA participation, and analysis sought to identify the factors associated with these impacts.

2.1 Impacts of TLA involvement for submitters

As part of their interviews, submitters in the telephone survey were asked in an open-ended question, '*What have been the main impacts of undertaking your TLA project so far?*'. In response, they were almost unanimously positive, with only six of the 153 interviewed submitters reporting no impact for them. The main impacts that they identified were as follows, in order of frequency:

- the **opportunity to reflect on teaching and learning**
- the **development of their teaching practice**
- the **acquisition of new knowledge and skills**
- the opportunity to **work with colleagues**
- their **enhanced contribution to the school**
- the **status** and recognition gained through TLA involvement
- increases in their **motivation and confidence.**

In a further inquiry, submitters were asked to rate the effect of TLA participation on seven specified areas using a five-point scale. The strongest impacts were registered on: **enhancements to pupils' learning and school experiences**; enrolees' own **teaching practice**; and **contribution to colleagues and the school**. For two-thirds of the interviewed submitters, the effects had been considerable in each of these areas, especially in Phase 1.

There was some evidence that the outcomes that submitters derived from undertaking a TLA project were long lasting. Albeit based on small numbers, when 27 Phase 1 submitters were followed up, the long-term impacts they described were largely of the same order as the more immediate impacts of TLA involvement that they had rated six months earlier.

The vast majority of the interviewed submitters reported that their involvement in the TLA had altered their perceptions and understanding of professional development. Their changed perspectives included:

- an increased understanding that professional development was part of their **everyday teaching practice**
- a shift in attitude away from regarding professional learning as a course-based experience in favour of viewing it as **an ongoing school-based activity**
- an enhanced awareness of the merits of **collaborative working** and of **formally evaluating and reflecting** on practice as key features of professional learning
- an appreciation that engaging in professional development alongside teaching duties **need not be onerous and time consuming**.

2.2 Factors associated with the impacts experienced

In both Phases 1 and 2, the **six core dimensions** of the TLA were identified as the key factors that led to the impacts that submitters had derived. The core dimensions highlighted as having particular significance in this regard included:

- **accessing peer support**
- **evaluating the impact on practice and own learning**
- **disseminating what has been learnt.**

In addition to acting as catalysts for the outcomes that participants derived, accessing peer support and evaluating one's own practice were actually also identified as impacts in themselves (as section 2.1 shows).

Main impacts of involvement in the TLA for submitters

The opportunity to reflect on teaching and learning

It makes you reflect more on what you are doing in school and on how what you are doing does have an immediate impact on the children and on the school in general (Phase 2 submitter, primary).

The development of their teaching practice

It's certainly benefited my classroom management skills and the monitoring of behaviour and also how to model appropriate behaviour to challenging pupils. It's altered the way I plan my lessons, both the way I plan the content and also the way I actually plan the physical layout of the classrooms (Phase 2 submitter, secondary).

The opportunity to work with colleagues

It enabled me to get to know more staff, which was a really key thing for me as an NQT [newly qualified teacher]. When you're new to the school and new to the profession, you're so busy and overwhelmed you tend to operate within your comfort zone with your fellow NQTs. Getting involved with the TLA meant that I was involved with 20 other people doing it and that brought me into contact with people who'd been in the profession 25 years and work in other departments I never have contact with (Phase 2 submitter, secondary).

Enhanced contribution to the school

It has had a huge impact across the school. We've now got departments that are following an Assessment for Learning cycle that we put together. We've developed resource materials for staff, we've led heads of department meetings, whole-school staff meetings and briefings. But there's also been opportunity to take it beyond the school, out into the local community to conferences as well as working with the LEA (Phase 2 submitter, secondary).

Status and recognition

I have the certificate which I was quite proud of and also I've put it on my CV and my school file. I've used it as part of my job application when I applied for my new role in September (Phase 2 submitter, secondary).

Motivation and confidence

Doing something new, having ownership of it, and implementing it into the classroom, and then seeing the benefits for the children, it is very empowering and motivating, and keeps people engaged in teaching and learning (Phase 1 submitter, primary).

3 The manageability of participation in the TLA

Participants' perceptions of the manageability of taking part in the TLA were explored.

3.1 Overall challenges

Submitters' perspectives on manageability were probed through both an open question, e.g. 'What, if any, have been the main challenges for you in undertaking your TLA project so far?', and a closed item where interviewees rated on a five-point scale five pre-determined areas of potential challenge.

Drawing together the evidence from both lines of inquiry, participation in the Academy was regarded as 'reasonably manageable, but ...'. It was these 'buts' that caused teachers challenge (sometimes considerable). Submitters' chief concerns were with **finding time for completing the submission** and understanding **the TLA requirements**. Regarding the latter, over the course of the pilot, around two-fifths of interviewed submitters (slightly less so in Phase 2) rated this as rather difficult in response to the closed inquiry. There was also a sense that teachers did not know how to solve or resolve their concerns (for example, who to ask for help; where to go next

in the TLA; the submission requirements; and the submission process). These concerns carry particular resonance given interviewees' resulting uncertainty as to whether they would continue with their TLA project while there were such issues to contend with. Indeed, whilst the submission rate improved in Phase 2, the number of enrolees who are non-submitters exceeds those who are currently submitters within the TLA.

None the less, there was progress within the Academy over the course of the pilot in terms of the manageability of submitters' involvement. The identification of challenges was overall **less frequent** and **generally less emphatic** in Phase 2 compared with Phase 1. For example, in response to the open enquiry, almost one-third of the Phase 2 submitters interviewed felt that there had been no real problematic areas for them in undertaking their TLA project – a far greater proportion than at Phase 1.

Greater peer-peer collaboration within schools, **whole-school involvement**² and the provision of organised **hands-on, step-by-step support sessions** convened at partner- or school-level contributed to a more manageable experience for teachers. In addition, where teachers selected projects that were **part of their everyday practice**, manageability issues were eased. Further, there was suggestion in the data that the workload pressures of balancing teaching duties with a TLA project might be alleviated by **building the TLA into existing professional development structures and vice versa**. This might include the marrying of performance management structures with the TLA at school level, or through the development of an Opportunities Framework at local authority level.

The above features were more in evidence in Phase 2 than in Phase 1; however, they were not all present in all locations, nor were they experienced by all teachers interviewed at Phase 2 even where they were in place. There was still a range of experience amongst the Phase 2 interviewees, with some inconsistency as regards the level and nature of the support available across the Academy.

A further key issue remaining in the TLA was centred around teachers' concern over the conceptual **level of the work** being undertaken. This was rated as more of a challenge in Phase 2 than in Phase 1.

- On the one hand, this was related to the effort and hard work relayed by many of the submitters, signifying a **level of rigour** and personal undertaking they wished to invest in the work.
- On the other hand, there were also reports of the 'extra' amount of work and time that teachers had given to their projects and write-ups (in some cases over and above their initial expectations).

The implication of this was the need for unambiguous **explanations of the expectations** for Stage 1 and Stage 2 submissions.

An additional issue affecting the manageability of the Academy was reflected in the experience of *some* of the submitters who had become involved in the TLA via other CPD provision (e.g. through involvement via another national body or on a local

²It is important to note here that whole-school involvement needs to be balanced with individuals' own choice. School-imposed participation could militate against teacher engagement with the Academy and lessen the impacts derived.

authority-run course). This group perhaps had the least manageable experience in the TLA overall. Here, interpreting the requirements of the TLA, matching their projects to the submission form and accessing guidance and mentoring generally proved more problematic.

Manageability: chief concerns

Finding time to prepare the submission

Not the actual project itself, it was literally just finding the time to do it [the submission] [that was challenging]. That's the only barrier that I had – the nature of physically writing it all down because that was the time-consuming element (Phase 2 submitter, secondary).

Understanding the TLA requirements

As a teacher, you're used to teaching children to meet exam and assessment requirements, and here [in the TLA] they weren't very clear what those were. You weren't quite sure exactly what people were looking for ... (Phase 2 submitter, secondary).

4 Future developments in the TLA

The research considered the future of the TLA, and in doing so explored its currency and additionality, and examined the scaling-up of the Academy to a national level³.

4.1 The currency of the TLA

In order to gain a measure of the value attached to the TLA, all interviewees (submitters, non-submitters, verifiers, case-study CPD coordinators/headteachers and partner leads) were asked what they perceived to be its most valuable aspects, either actual or potential.

All but three of these interviewees identified aspect(s) of the Academy that they regarded as valuable, indicating that the TLA was a highly regarded model of professional development. Two elements of the Academy were perceived as particularly valuable: primarily **the recognition it provides for teachers' work**, and secondly **the model of professional development that it promotes**. Particular features of the TLA model were seen to contribute to its value in this regard:

- it provides the opportunity to **work alongside colleagues** and share knowledge and good practice
- it encourages teachers to **reflect on their practice**
- it offers **progressive CPD through the Academy Stages**
- it provides **opportunities for career progression** and promotion
- it allows teachers to pursue and focus upon their **individual areas of interest**
- it facilitates and **promotes action research** in schools
- it **raises the status of the teaching profession** and encourages professionalism
- it offers an **alternative to HEI courses**
- it **motivates teachers** and enhances their confidence.

³One possible caveat to bear in mind when interpreting the findings in this section is that much – though by no means all – of the perceptual data comes from interviewees who had submitted projects to the TLA for recognition. These submitters were for the most part, by their own admission, committed to professional development and in schools supportive of professional development, so the extent to which they are representative of the wider teacher body is hard to ascertain. That said, there was a good deal of consistency regarding the strengths of the Academy in the views expressed by all those interviewed in the course of the research – submitters, non-submitters, case-study CPD coordinators/headteachers, verifiers and partner leads, alike.

Valuable elements of the TLA**Recognition of the work done by teachers as part of their everyday practice**

I would say that [the value lies in] being able to do something, as a classroom practitioner, and for it to be worth something in the larger world, and there being some sort of recognition for that. I don't think that there is enough recognition for the hard work that goes on in schools (Phase 1 non-submitter, secondary).

It's getting that recognition for things that you're doing anyway. There is a huge push in teaching for professional development, but actually being able to turn around and prove it, there is very little way of proving anything in our career. It's getting that bit of paper which you can use to prove that you've actually done something towards your profession (Phase 2 submitter, primary).

Encouraging and providing an effective model of professional development

We've [the teaching profession] had a very amateurish attitude towards professional development – it's ad-hoc, it's bitty, it's random, and it's been without any sort of rigour in the past. The TLA will introduce this... (Phase 1 case-study CPD coordinator/headteacher, primary).

Progressive route through CPD

It [the TLA] provides teachers with some sort of progression and a route for their professional development. Having been involved with CPD work at county level, one of the things that other teachers and I have been crying out for is guidance on 'What can I do next to develop professionally?'. You come across a lot of dead-end routes. It's good that the TLA has levels. It gives something at a very beginning level and you can take it as far as you want it to go (Phase 2 submitter, primary).

4.2 Additionality of the TLA

Comparing the impact of the TLA with other forms of professional development

Two-thirds of submitters believed that their involvement with the TLA had had a greater impact than other forms of professional development in which they had taken part. Compared with Phase 1, in Phase 2 there was increased reference to the 'different' impact of the TLA. Thus, these findings would indicate that for submitters, greater or at least alternative benefits can be gained from participation in the TLA.

When explaining why the Academy had a greater or different impact than other forms of CPD, the following features were advanced by interviewees:

- it is a form of **self directed learning**, where teachers could choose their own focus and where they are accountable for their own learning
- it requires a **reflective and evaluative approach** to CPD, encouraging teachers to think about their practice
- it involves carrying out school-based projects where teachers can see **immediate results**
- it is a more '**hands-on**' approach to professional development
- teachers receive **recognition for their learning and efforts**
- and finally it is more **long term** and continuous than other forms of CPD, involves **collaboration** with colleagues and **dissemination** of learning.

Recognition for professional development

We can gain a further sense of the additionality of the TLA by considering whether the Academy attracted teachers who had not previously sought recognition for their professional development. To this end, analysis revealed that of the interviewed

submitters in Phases 1 and 2, slightly more had not undertaken HEI-led courses in the past compared with those who had done so. For some enrolees, the Academy was seen as offering an attractive alternative to studying on traditional higher education courses, and encouraged those who had been inhibited by the workload involved with HEI courses to explore the route of the TLA

4.3 Scaling up to national level

Making the TLA available to teachers nationwide

In total, over 90 per cent of all responding interviewees (including submitters, non-submitters, verifiers, case-study CPD coordinators/headteachers and partner leads) believed that the TLA should be rolled out nationwide. A plethora of reasons were advanced as to why, many reflecting the value of the Academy as outlined in the currency section above (4.1). Given the early challenges that affected the TLA in its first Phase, interviewees at Phase 2 recommended a national roll-out more unreservedly than their Phase 1 counterparts.

Progression to the next Stage of the TLA

In order to ascertain whether participants regarded the TLA as a once-only experience or whether they were keen to continue their involvement, interviewed submitters were asked whether they planned to work towards the next Stage in the Academy. Over three-quarters of the submitters interviewed at Phase 1 had such intentions. At Phase 2, the figure was nearer to three-fifths. This finding suggests that fewer Phase 2 submitters in the sample were intending to work towards the next Stage than those from Phase 1. Analysis showed that this was primarily attributable to two factors:

- **competition from other more immediately recognised qualifications:** a number of teachers chose to embark on National College for School Leadership courses or Masters-level degrees rather than continue within the Academy – this suggests a need for greater publicity and heightened status of the TLA
- **a perceived lack of information and awareness of the next Stages of the Academy** – this suggests a need to promote the Stages of the TLA and provide additional information for teachers on how to progress.

Suggested improvements to the TLA

The improvements advised by interviewees are set out as follows in order of frequency.

- **Improvements to the support available in the TLA:** having a lead person, mentor or contact more readily available; further provision of TLA meetings and support groups.
- **Greater publicity and heightened status for the TLA:** publicity was seen to be crucially important to the future success of the TLA, particularly regarding its currency alongside other more recognisable national qualifications.
- **Clearer guidance and guidelines on the submission form and the expectations of the TLA:** to include materials written with less jargon and increased use of ‘plain English’.

- **Access to exemplar materials.**
- **Clearer information on the Stages of the TLA:** to acquaint interviewees better with the level of work needed at a particular Stage; to provide them with encouragement and information on how to proceed to the next Stage in the Academy.

The Academy approach being trialled in Phase 3 of the pilot would seem to have the potential to fulfil several of the recommendations interviewees suggested. This involves setting up the Academy in **hubs of schools**, with each school in the hub having a trained TLA leader and verifier. The TLA leader, with the backing of local partners and a GTC link adviser, could offer the support enrolees felt they needed through the entire process from project start-up to submission, could facilitate peer-to-peer collaboration and would be very readily accessible to participants in their school. This latter point is pertinent given acknowledgement amongst some interviewed submitters and non-submitters in Phases 1 and 2 that they themselves had at times lacked initiative and had not asked for or actively sought any help.

In Phase 3, **links with national partners and other CPD providers** are also an area for continued development. Such work will go some way to raising the Academy's profile, as it widens its availability and helps enable the TLA to position itself in the professional development landscape, both as integral to other CPD offerings as well as a fixture in its own right. It should be borne in mind though that action was needed to alleviate the manageability issues experienced by a number of those joining the TLA via other CPD providers.

Thus, whilst the developments in Phase 3 respond to the areas of concern that interviewees put forward, analysis did show that **the future development of the TLA is closely associated with the resolution of these and the other improvements suggested and, as such, this may need continued monitoring and action.** For example, decisions as to whether to continue working within the Academy were related to: the availability of information on progression through the TLA; the expectations of each Stage; support and guidance; and the Academy's currency and status. Furthermore, there are other issues that are fundamental to the continued development of the TLA that the evidence suggested were in need of attention. Chief amongst these were the **management of the procedures for verification and moderation** and the **long-term planning and financial future of the Academy.**

5 Overall concluding comment

In the two years since the evaluation began, the TLA has developed from an Academy available in three local authorities to one that has representation in all Government Office Regions; has forged major links with national partners, teacher unions and professional associations; and has received over 300 submissions. The TLA in Phase 1, whilst experiencing teething troubles inevitable in any new venture, was highly valued by interviewed submitters and they derived significant outcomes from their involvement. This continued in Phase 2, together with some improvement in the manageability difficulties that had hindered the rate of submissions in Phase 1. The TLA leader/hub model being trialled in Phase 3 takes on board and has the potential to resolve further the manageability issues that concern participants. Thus, whilst areas key to its future viability still require attention, there has been considerable

progress to date, reflecting the endeavours and conviction of the participating teachers, schools, verifiers, partners and the GTC.

1 Introduction

1.1 The Teacher Learning Academy

This report presents findings from an evaluation of the first two phases of the pilot Teacher Learning Academy (TLA). The research was conducted by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) on behalf of the General Teaching Council for England (GTC).

The pilot TLA has been established by the GTC to provide professional and public recognition for teachers' learning and development work. The Academy offers the opportunity for the learning that occurs in teachers' daily professional lives to be acknowledged through a national system. The TLA provides professional recognition across six stages, from 'Associate' (entry-level) to 'Senior Fellow' (equivalent to an education doctorate).

The Academy is part of the range of developments and research that the GTC has initiated and nurtured to promote effective professional learning in teaching since its inception. Other work relating to continuing professional development (CPD) has included the *Teachers' Professional Learning Framework (TPLF)* (GTC, 2004), developed by the GTC to support the development of schools and other education settings as professional learning communities; the creation of Connect, a network for those who lead in CPD in schools; and intensive partnership working with a number of LAs and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) to advance teachers' professional development and build capacity at LEA- and school-level (GTC, 2003; Moor *et al.*, 2005). In addition, a network for those promoting race equality in schools (Achieve) has been established and a network launched for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) called Engage.

Beginning in school year 2003–04, the TLA was piloted in three local authorities (LAs): Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield (Phase 1). The GTC, the LA and a local Higher Education Institute (HEI) collaborated to launch the Academy in these areas. From September 2004, the pilot was extended into other contexts around the country (Phase 2). This included LAs, groups of LAs and training schools as well as work with other CPD providers whereby professional development conducted through these means could form the basis of a TLA submission. The Academy began Phase 3 in September 2005. The findings in this report relate to Phases 1 and 2 of the TLA.

1.2 The research

Findings are drawn from the following sources of evidence.

Enrolment data

- A statistical analysis of the enrolment forms completed by teachers joining the pilot TLA in Phases 1 and 2.

Phase 1 Data collection involving all three LAs participating in the TLA during this phase

- Interviews with GTC link advisers, and LA and HEI representatives
- observations of three launch events, three local support group meetings and six sessions of verifier training
- nine case studies, involving interviews with the case-study teachers, and the headteacher and/or CPD coordinator in their school
- a telephone interview survey of 57 participating teachers, 40 of whom had submitted projects to the TLA for recognition at the time of their interviews (for ease of reference called ‘submitters’) and 17 who had yet to submit (‘non-submitters’)
- in order to ascertain any long-term impacts of participation in the Academy, follow-up interviews were conducted with LA/HEI representatives, with three of the case-study teachers and their headteachers and/or school CPD coordinator, and with 24 of the submitters from the telephone interview survey.

Phase 2 Data collection primarily involving eight of the partners participating in the TLA during this phase

- Interviews with GTC managers and with the GTC link advisers working with the eight partners
- interviews with a representative leading the TLA in each of the eight partners
- observations of four local support group meetings and five verifier training sessions
- six case studies, involving interviews with the case-study teachers, and the headteacher and/or CPD coordinator in their school (four of these case studies were drawn from amongst the eight partners that were the focus of data collection; two came from other Phase 2 partners)
- a telephone interview survey of 113 submitters (ranging from eight to 17 per partner)
- a telephone interview survey of 15 verifiers.

In total, in the course of the research, 250 interviews were conducted.

1.3 The TLA's enrolees in Phases 1 and 2

Statistical analysis was undertaken of 1,267 enrolment forms completed upon joining the TLA by teachers in Phases 1 and 2 of the pilot and received by NFER from the GTC between May 2004 and 31st August 2005. In total, 283 enrolment forms were from Phase 1 enrolees and 984 were from Phase 2.

This section first documents the characteristics of these teachers and then relays details of their participation as expressed on their enrolment forms (for example their initial intentions regarding the focus of their TLA project and their reasons for involvement).

1.3.1 The characteristics of the Phase 1 and Phase 2 enrolees

Tables 1.1 and 1.2 set out the proportion of enrolees by school type and participants' Stage of entry as indicated on their enrolment forms. Analysis of Stage of entry shows that two-fifths of the Phase 1 participants had enrolled at Stage 2. The corresponding figure in Phase 2 was one-quarter. This is explained by the fact that one of the Phase 1 LAs had strong links with a local HEI. Here, at the launch event for the Academy, attendees were encouraged to join at Stage 2 and work towards academic accreditation (30 MA CAT points) as well as TLA recognition with a package of support offered by the HEI.

Table 1.1 Number of enrolees by phase/type of school

Phase / type of school	Overall % (N = 1,267)	Phase 1 % (N = 283)	Phase 2 % (N = 984)
Primary	48%	49%	48%
Secondary	47%	41%	48%
Special	3%	7%	2%
LA & supply staff	2%	4%	1%
Other	<1%	-	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100.

Source: TLA enrolment forms (received by NFER between May 2004 and 31 August 2005).

Table 1.2 Number of enrolees by Stage of the Academy

Stage of enrolment in the Academy	Overall % (N = 1,267)	Phase 1 % (N = 283)	Phase 2 % (N = 984)
Stage 1	49%	37%	53%
Stage 2	29%	41%	25%
Stage 3	10%	8%	11%
Stage 4	1%	1%	1%
Stage 5	<1%	1%	<1%
Stage 6	<1%	1%	-
Undecided / more than one Stage indicated	8%	8%	8%
No response	3%	4%	3%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100.

Source: TLA enrolment forms (received by NFER between May 2004 and 31 August 2005).

Presented below are further details of the characteristics of the 1,267 enrolees. Any notable differences between Phases 1 and 2 are highlighted.

- Gender** Overall, 74 per cent were female, 22 per cent were male and four per cent did not respond to this question.
- Ethnicity** Predominately White (79 per cent) with Indian (1 per cent), Black Caribbean (1 per cent), Bangladeshi (1 per cent), Pakistani (1 per cent) and less than 1 per cent each of White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, Black African, Chinese and other. (The non-response to this question was 15 per cent).
- Time in teaching** The TLA attracted teachers at all stages of their careers, with the highest proportion being recently qualified teachers. In total, 42 per cent of the 1,267 in the analysis had been teaching for five years or less. 21 per cent had taught for 6-10 years, 17 per cent had 11-20 years of experience and 18 per cent had spent 21 years and over in the profession. (The non-response to this question was two per cent.)
- Roles in school** Amongst the enrolees were staff from all levels of responsibility in school. For example: 16 per cent of primary school enrolees overall were headteachers, deputy heads or senior teachers. It was slightly more common for primary heads, deputies and senior teachers to enrol at Phase 1. Of the enrolees at secondary level overall, seven per cent were deputy heads and 32 per cent were heads of department or heads of year. Compared with Phase 1, it was less common for secondary deputy heads but more common for heads of year or departments to join at Phase 2. In terms of specialism, at secondary level representatives of all subjects were included, and at primary level teachers at foundation and key stages 1 and 2 enrolled.
- Disability** One per cent of the enrolees included in the analysis described themselves as having a disability.
- Previous work** Examples of previous work included: master degrees, diplomas, mentoring courses and National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH). There were more teachers with such previous experience at Phase 2 (51 per cent) than at Phase 1 (35 per cent) (though the wording of the question on the enrolment form was different in Phase 2 and, as well as work with HEIs, also included professional development organised by the National College for School Leadership, teacher unions and subject/specialist associations).

1.3.2 Details of enrolees' participation in the TLA

Planned area of investigation

On their enrolment forms, participants were asked, '*What is your planned area of investigation which you will submit for recognition through the GTC Teacher Learning Academy?*'. When responses were classified using a coding frame that grouped together similar replies, it was apparent that the foci of teachers' intended projects covered a very wide range of areas (indeed, as will be shown in Chapter 4, the Academy was appreciated for the opportunity it created for allowing teachers choice over their professional development and to follow areas of personal need or interest). The intended foci of projects ranged from:

- **teaching and learning in class** – 48 per cent of projects overall:
 - a focus on styles of teaching and learning; developing pupils' skills in speaking, listening and thinking (particularly prevalent in one LA, where proposed projects would involve the continuation of work already underway in this authority); and raising pupils' achievement and motivation
 - in some cases, target groups were identified, such as: special needs; English as a second language; and a small number of proposals to work on boys' underachievement or with gifted and talented groups
 - a number of projects planned to focus on certain curriculum areas, in particular ICT (use of interactive whiteboards, developing e-learning or computer aided design), literacy and numeracy
- **curriculum and resource development:** 33 per cent of projects overall, with planned foci across three key areas:
 - devising **schemes of work**, developing the vocational and work-related curriculum, creating resource banks, the introduction of a new subject or course into school and linking the curriculum
 - investigating means of **assessment**, and devising pupil recording and monitoring systems
 - the development of **school policy** and planning (documents and systems).
- **management development:** 14 per cent of projects overall, including planned foci such as:
 - developing staff mentor schemes including coaching, lesson observations and staff wellbeing
 - investigating teacher roles (e.g. the role of the deputy head)
 - support for specific groups of teachers e.g. (newly qualified teachers, NQTs).

Enrolees also identified more overarching purposes to their planned projects that encompassed many of the above areas, including 'school improvement', 'raising standards' and 'professional development'. Less than one per cent of enrolees noted that they were as yet undecided as to what they planned to do for their TLA project; and four per cent gave no response.

Reasons for involvement

On their enrolment forms, participants were asked, '*Why did you decide to become involved in the GTC Teacher Learning Academy?*'. Responses were classified using a coding frame that grouped together replies, as shown in Table 1.3.

Table 1.3 Enrolees' reasons for involvement in the TLA

Reasons for involvement in the TLA	Overall % (N = 1,267)	Phase 1 % (N = 283)	Phase 2 % (N = 984)	Examples
Opportunity for recognition, accreditation, certification or research	48%	54%	46%	recognition of work already done in school; offers structure to CPD; alternative to MA; opportunity to gain CAT points; opportunity to undertake action research
Development of own learning	23%	29%	22%	continuation of own learning, knowledge and skills; pursue own interest; self improvement; opportunity for reflection; enhance motivation and confidence
Opportunity for CPD	23%	23%	23%	giving teachers a new or additional opportunity to further their professional development
Recommendation	21%	10%	24%	encouraged or recommended to become involved by the school (head, champion, CPD coordinator, CPD provider); impressed by TLA publicity or presentation
To impact on practice and roles held	19%	22%	19%	to develop own practice; improve subject knowledge; enhance understanding of roles; to improve practices that benefit pupils directly
To impact on school	12%	11%	12%	to contribute to school improvement; to support other teachers in the school
Career development	6%	6%	6%	to develop own career and role; to progress to new roles and responsibilities
Collaboration and dissemination	6%	7%	6%	to learn from or work with peers, including other teachers in the TLA; to disseminate and share good practice with other teachers
Exciting development for the profession	6%	10%	5%	an exciting and inspiring opportunity for the teaching profession; interested in what it has to offer; to be part of a professional group
Other	1%	1%	1%	
No response	7%	8%	7%	

Enrolees could give more than one reason so percentages may not sum to 100.

Source: TLA enrolment forms (received by NFER between May 2004 and 31 August 2005).

When asked why they had become involved in the TLA, the key reason cited by almost half of the 1,267 enrolees was the opportunity for recognition of professional learning, especially the recognition of work undertaken on a day-to-day basis in school. The joint second most common reasons (each stated by almost one-quarter of enrolees) related to the development of and reflection on teachers' own learning, and the opportunity that the Academy offered for CPD. Thus, on the basis of the enrolment forms, **the principle reasons for participation are commensurate with the underlying rationales of the Academy – professional development in everyday practice and the continuation, development and evaluation of teachers' own learning.**

Comparison across the two Phases of the pilot shows some differences in the rationales given for participation in the TLA. Whilst the opportunity for the recognition of professional learning and the development of teachers' own learning were among the top reasons for involvement in both Phases, the proportions citing these were slightly higher in the first Phase than the second. Further, proportionately more Phase 1 enrolees had signed up to the Academy because they perceived it as an exciting development for their profession. However, the most notable difference of all between the two Phases was the increase in the proportion that had enrolled because of a recommendation, most often from their school or a CPD provider. In Phase 1, one in ten enrolees had been recommended to join; in Phase 2, it was one in four.

1.4 This report

Following this introductory chapter, this report is structured as follows.

Chapter 2	The impacts of involvement in the TLA
Chapter 3	The manageability of participation in the TLA
Chapter 4	The value of the TLA and its future development
Chapter 5	Conclusion

2 The impacts of involvement in the TLA

Participants' perceptions of the impact of taking part in the TLA are explored in this chapter. The findings presented draw on: the responses from the teacher telephone surveys of submitters at Phase 1 (40 submitters) and at Phase 2 (113 submitters); the case-study data from Phase 1 and Phase 2; the interviews with partner- and GTC-based personnel; and follow-up interviews with 27 Phase 1 submitters. The chapter begins by presenting submitters' views of the outcomes of their involvement in the TLA. This is followed by an exploration of the impact of TLA participation on submitters' understanding of professional learning.

Thus, the chapter is structured as follows:

- 2.1 The impacts of TLA involvement for submitters
- 2.2 The impact of TLA involvement on submitters' understanding of professional learning
- 2.3 Vignette.

2.1 The impacts of TLA involvement for submitters

This section begins by documenting teachers' perceptions of the 'main impacts' of involvement with the TLA, as identified by examining interviewees' responses to the open-ended question, '*What have been the main impacts of undertaking your TLA project so far?*' (section 2.1.1). This open question gave teachers the opportunity to respond freely about the main impacts they had experienced, so as to gain their unprompted perceptions of the outcomes of participation.

Following this, interviewees' responses to a series of closed questions will be discussed (section 2.1.2). Here, submitters were given a list of seven possible outcomes and asked to rate on a five-point scale the extent to which undertaking their TLA project had affected them in each of these areas. This allowed us to consider the impacts experienced by both the Phase 1 and Phase 2 submitters in the telephone survey across a range of given areas. This section then moves on to discuss the factors associated with the outcomes derived by submitters (section 2.1.3), and ends by considering the long-term impacts of TLA involvement as reported by Phase 1 submitters who were followed up in Phase 2 of the pilot (section 2.1.4).

2.1.1 Types of impact

This section outlines the main ways in which the 153 submitters interviewed as part of the telephone survey considered their involvement with the TLA to have impacted on them, as identified by their responses to the open-ended question, '*What have been the main impacts of undertaking your TLA project so far?*'.

In highlighting what they perceived to be the main impacts, the interviewed submitters were almost unanimously positive, with only six⁴ of the 153 reporting no

⁴These six comprised three submitters who had joined the TLA via other CPD provision and the remainder were from three different partners.

impact for them. Set out below in order of frequency are the main impacts of TLA participation for all those submitters who were interviewed over Phases 1 and 2 of the pilot.

- **The opportunity to reflect on teaching and learning**
One-third of the interviewed submitters, in particular those from Phase 2, identified the opportunity to reflect on their teaching and learning as a main impact of their involvement in the TLA. Here, both the opportunity to reflect upon and evaluate their everyday teaching practice, as well as the chance to reflect on the projects themselves, was cited. For those who had become involved in the Academy via other CPD provision (e.g. LEA-run courses, national body), the opportunity provided by engaging with the TLA to reflect upon the CPD activity itself was highlighted as a main impact of involvement. These interviewees pointed to the benefit of reflecting on, and evaluating their work which, in turn, had highlighted the merit of the activities they had undertaken. In this way, the value of the TLA as a useful vehicle for writing up their experiences was acknowledged.
- **The development of their teaching practice**
This was the second most frequently cited main effect of participation in the Academy, nominated by one-quarter of interviewed submitters. Reflecting on teaching and learning, and the new ideas/skills that teachers had been exposed to through their TLA projects had led to changes in actual teaching practice and had subsequently impacted on pupils. Developments included: the introduction of new teaching styles, raised expectations of pupils, and changes to the classroom organisation.
- **Acquisition of new knowledge and skills**
One-fifth of submitters highlighted the development of new skills and knowledge as a main impact of their TLA involvement. In particular, it was felt that engaging with the Academy provided the opportunity for teachers to research specific subject areas, which could then be applied to develop their practice or used for future reference or study.
- **The opportunity to work with colleagues**
For one-sixth of the interviewed submitters, especially those in Phase 2, the principal outcome of undertaking their TLA projects had been their increased opportunities to meet with and share ideas and experiences with a wide range of colleagues. Several aspects of the TLA process were highlighted in this respect, including carrying out the project itself, discussing and evaluating the work and dissemination. In addition, the collaborative approach to professional development promoted by the TLA was appreciated.
- **Teachers' enhanced contribution to the school**
Approximately one-sixth of the interviewed submitters highlighted the effect of implementing their TLA project work in school as a main impact. The outcomes described in this regard included changes at classroom level, at year group, key stage or departmental level (e.g. the implementation of new schemes of work) and across the whole school (e.g. the development of a new behaviour policy). The

need to disseminate learning, as set out in the Academy's core dimensions, was particularly acknowledged as contributing to these impacts.

- **Recognition**

The status and value associated with gaining TLA accreditation was also identified as a main impact of involvement. In particular, interviewees highlighted how gaining the recognition had increased their self-esteem and had also raised their status within school. However, in acknowledging the recognition from the TLA, several submitters questioned the external value of attaining their Stage in the Academy and expressed some uncertainty about the currency and future value of their achievement.

- **Increases in their motivation and confidence**

This was cited especially by interviewed submitters in Phase 1 and was achieved both as a result of undertaking the project itself and through gaining TLA recognition.

Comparing submitters' perceptions over the two Phases of the pilot, what was particularly striking in Phase 2 was the frequency with which interviewed submitters highlighted certain aspects of the TLA process itself as main impacts of taking part. This included the opportunity to reflect on teaching and learning and the opportunity to work with colleagues. That submitters held aspects of the Academy model in esteem perhaps offers testament to the TLA approach to professional learning.

Main impacts of TLA involvement for submitters interviewed in Phases 1 and 2

The opportunity to reflect on teaching and learning

It makes you reflect more on what you are doing in school and on how what you are doing does have an immediate impact on the children and on the school in general (Phase 2 submitter, primary).

The TLA required a great deal of reflection ... It really required us to look at the effectiveness of teaching strategies that we'd developed and how well they worked in the classroom (Phase 2 submitter, secondary).

I could formally reflect on what was learnt and do a much more in depth analysis of boys' and girls' different learning ... it does help my teaching in a way to understand which style works best for which students (Phase 1 submitter, secondary).

The development of their teaching practice

I have become a lot more conscious of different learning styles and plan my lessons according to that so that all pupils can gain something from the lesson. I have different ideas now about organising classes [seating arrangements] ... I realise the importance of linking learning to previous learning and the fact that pupils learn better when they know the objectives of the lesson (Phase 2 submitter, primary).

My classroom practice has improved and altered. I'm much more focused on them [the pupils] forming their own questions now rather than just me giving them questions, and a lot less chalk and talk, a lot more of them (Phase 1 submitter, primary).

It's certainly benefited my classroom management skills and the monitoring of behaviour and also how to model appropriate behaviour to challenging pupils. It's altered the way I plan my lessons, both the way I plan the content and also the way I actually plan the physical layout of the classrooms (Phase 2 submitter, secondary).

When you do any sort of project like this you learn about the topic you're going through yourself. So from my personal point of view it's opened my eyes up to some of the varying teaching styles which I don't always use. I did some observations of colleagues to get an idea of what else is going on out there and it helped with my teaching because it gave me some ideas about how I could teach differently (Phase 2 submitter, secondary).

Acquisition of knowledge and skills

You don't realise that when you've got there [completed the TLA project], you've actually really improved your concept around the topic you choose. You've really got a much greater understanding (Phase 2 submitter, secondary).

I got a lot of theoretical knowledge about it and the understanding behind the lessons (Phase 1 submitter, secondary).

I've seen that my science investigation has certainly improved. I'm trying to implement it into my current class and hopefully I'm going to be able to divulge it to the rest of the school and teaching staff. To me that was a big personal development within science and hopefully as a whole-school focus (Phase 2 submitter, primary).

The opportunity to work with colleagues

It was the opportunity to talk with other colleagues that I really appreciated. As part of my work you had to talk to other colleagues and I was having conversations with the deputy head and the EWO [Education Welfare Officer] and they were bringing information to me (Phase 2 submitter, secondary).

We're all at different stages in our career in terms of experience, and I think that is something that is really good about this scheme. You don't have to have been teaching for 10 years or 20 years to be able to participate. It said that everybody has got something to offer. Everybody is doing something really good around education. And I think that it's ensured that we've had continual professional dialogue amongst ourselves and with other colleagues (Phase 1 submitter, primary).

I found it really useful working with NQTs right through to heads of faculty to another colleague on the leadership team who has done one [a TLA project] and that cross-school, cross-hierarchy working, I found very, very useful (Phase 2 submitter, secondary).

It enabled me to get to know more staff, which was a really key thing for me as an NQT. When you're new to the school and new to the profession, you're so busy and overwhelmed you tend to operate within your comfort zone with your fellow NQTs. Getting involved with the TLA meant that I was involved with 20 other people doing it and that brought me into contact with people who'd been in the profession 25 years and work in other departments I never have contact with (Phase 2 submitter, secondary).

Enhanced contribution to the school

It has had a huge impact across the school. We've now got departments that are following an Assessment for Learning cycle that we put together. We've developed resource materials for staff, we've led heads of department meetings, whole-school staff meetings and briefings. But there's also been opportunity to take it beyond the school, out into the local community to conferences as well as working with the LEA (Phase 2 submitter, secondary).

There has [been an impact] in that the whole staff have changed the way they plan, and the whole curriculum. We now have a totally different way of planning our non-core subjects (Phase 1 submitter, primary).

The project has created more of a push on vocational areas [in the school] ... it's given a bit of emphasis to that, and given a bit of feedback to the head and the governors and the deputy head who does the 14-19 curriculum (Phase 1 submitter, secondary).

Status and recognition

The recognition itself, the fact that you can put this down on application forms for career progression is absolutely superb because you're involved in active research on current initiatives. I think professional development-wise the fact that I've been working with senior leaders and been encouraged to get involved with them working within the task group, I think has done a lot for me career-wise (Phase 2 submitter, secondary).

By doing this, the Teacher Learning Academy, I feel personally it's raised my status in the eyes of the head (Phase 1 submitter, primary).

I think any acknowledgement that you get that you've done something right, it boosts your morale, it makes you feel like you've achieved something ... to actually get feedback or acknowledgement from somebody that's higher, not just within the school. This is the TLA, it really boosted me and I felt like I'd achieved something that was just part of my day-to-day working (Phase 1 submitter, primary).

I have the certificate which I was quite proud of and also I've put it on my CV and my school file. I've used it as part of my job application when I applied for my new role in September (Phase 2 submitter, secondary).

Motivation and confidence

Because I have had to research it [Year 9 girls' PE curriculum], when I talk to a kid about things I know what I am on about. Also delivering it at departmental sessions, I did loads of handouts about stuff and research and also research from the kids about what we found out from our questionnaires and how that linked into national surveys. It is almost like you become specialised about something (Phase 1 submitter, secondary).

It's given me the confidence to know that I can carry out a whole school project and that it will have an impact within school (Phase 1 submitter, primary).

Doing something new, having ownership of it, and implementing it into the classroom, and then seeing the benefits for the children, it is very empowering and motivating, and keeps people engaged in teaching and learning (Phase 1 submitter, primary).

2.1.2 Degree of impact

After probing the 'main impacts' of TLA involvement, the telephone surveys carried out in Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the pilot sought to gauge the degree of impact discerned by the interviewed submitters across seven areas. Interviewees were asked to rate on a five-point scale (with 1 being 'not at all' and 5 being 'a great deal') the extent to which undertaking their TLA project had affected them in each of the specified areas. Table 2.1a presents the ratings for each outcome as reported by all submitters involved in the telephone survey over the course of the research (n=153). The following two tables then split the data by Phase, with Table 2.1b setting out the scores of the submitters (n=40) interviewed in Phase 1, and Table 2c giving the ratings of the interviewed submitters (n=113) from Phase 2.

Tables 2.1 Submitters' ratings of the degree of impact of TLA involvement in seven specified areas

The tables show the number of teachers circling each number on the five-point scale to rate the extent of the impact.
(Scale: 1= not at all; 5= a great deal)

Table 2.1a Overall – Phases 1 and 2

Impacts	Frequency of responses (N)						Number giving rating of 4 or 5	% giving rating of 4 or 5
	N	Rating 1	Rating 2	Rating 3	Rating 4	Rating 5		
Development of teaching practice	148	4	10	34	71	29	100	68
Enhancement to pupils' learning and school experiences	150	5	8	34	64	39	103	69
Improvements to teachers' motivation and confidence	150	5	11	39	64	31	95	63
Contribution to colleagues and the development of the school	150	7	15	31	68	29	97	65
Enhanced willingness to engage in professional development	147	11	11	31	49	45	94	64
Access to and involvement in professional development opportunities	135	19	13	35	41	27	68	50
Thinking on how they would like their career to develop	147	22	15	44	46	20	66	45

Columns give the number of respondents apart from the final column, which is the % of respondents rating 4 or 5. % is calculated from the number of respondents.
Source: NFER Phases 1 and 2 submitter telephone survey.

Table 2.1b Phase 1

Impacts	Frequency of responses (N)						Number giving rating of 4 or 5	% giving rating of 4 or 5
	N	Rating 1	Rating 2	Rating 3	Rating 4	Rating 5		
Development of teaching practice	40	2	3	7	20	8	28	70
Enhancement to pupils' learning and school experiences	40	0	1	8	23	8	31	78
Improvements to teachers' motivation and confidence	40	1	2	11	18	8	26	65
Contribution to colleagues and the development of the school	40	1	2	7	24	6	30	75
Enhanced willingness to engage in professional development	38	2	2	13	15	6	21	55
Access to and involvement in professional development opportunities	36	5	1	13	8	9	17	47
Thinking on how they would like their career to develop	39	1	4	15	13	6	19	49

Columns give the number of respondents apart from the final column, which is the % of respondents giving a rating of 4 or 5. % is calculated from the number of respondents. %s should be treated with caution as Ns are less than 100.

Source: NFER Phase 1 submitter telephone survey.

Table 2.1c Phase 2

Impacts	Frequency of responses (N)						Number giving rating of 4 or 5	% giving rating of 4 or 5
	N	Rating 1	Rating 2	Rating 3	Rating 4	Rating 5		
Development of teaching practice	108	2	7	27	51	21	72	67
Enhancement to pupils' learning and school experiences	110	5	7	26	41	31	72	65
Improvements to teachers' motivation and confidence	110	4	9	28	46	23	69	63
Contribution to colleagues and the development of the school	110	6	13	24	44	23	67	61
Enhanced willingness to engage in professional development	109	9	9	18	34	39	73	67
Access to and involvement in professional development opportunities	99	14	12	22	33	18	51	52
Thinking on how they would like their career to develop	108	21	11	29	33	14	47	44

Columns give the number of respondents apart from the final column, which is the % of respondents giving a rating of 4 or 5. % is calculated from the number of respondents.

Source: NFER Phase 2 submitter telephone survey.

As shown in Table 2.1a, submitters' ratings of the degree of impact were largely positive overall. Taking a rating of 4 or 5 out of 5 as indicative of a considerable effect, it would appear that involvement in the TLA had impacted most keenly on the submitters interviewed over the course of the research in the following areas, in order of frequency:

- **enhancements to pupils' learning and school experiences**
- **the development of teaching practice**
- **contribution to colleagues and the development of the school.**

Two-thirds of the submitters rated the impact of the TLA strongly in each of the above areas. Further, for just under two-thirds, the effects on their motivation and confidence and on their willingness to engage in professional development were considerable. Comparatively less impact was registered as regards their thinking on their future career plans and their access to and involvement in professional development opportunities. None the less, around twice as many submitters still indicated that engaging with the TLA had considerably affected them in these regards (nominating a score of 4 or 5) compared with the number deriving no discernable or a minimal impact in these areas (a rating of 1 or 2).

Contrasting the ratings over Phases 1 and 2 (as shown in Tables 2.1b and 2.1c), some notable differences in submitters' ratings are apparent. Firstly, for certain outcomes in Phase 2, the proportion of submitters indicating that TLA involvement had had a considerable impact was lower than had been the case in Phase 1. This was especially the case for the effect on pupils' learning and school experiences and the contribution to colleagues and the school. Analysis revealed that the ratings in Phase 2 were reduced somewhat because of low scores given by a number of submitters from two partners whose entry into the TLA was on the back of other CPD provision and who perceived (sometimes erroneously) that an Academy submission was a compulsory element of their original CPD undertaking⁵. In addition, in Phase 2 compared with Phase 1, the focus of teachers' TLA project was more frequently a school priority rather than the individual's own choice, and those submitters who indicated that their project's focus had, at least in part, been a school decision were more likely to rate the impact on their pupils (as well as on their own confidence and motivation) at the lower end of the scale. Further, specifically in terms of the ratings for contributions to colleagues and the school, a number of these submitters who registered little impact to date in this regard came from two schools and noted that they had not as yet had the opportunity to disseminate their projects particularly widely.

In contrast, there were also outcomes where the effects of TLA involvement were stronger in Phase 2 than had been registered in Phase 1, for example the impact on submitters' access to and involvement in professional development opportunities and, to a greater extent, on their willingness to engage in professional development. In Phase 2, participants' enhanced willingness regarding CPD emerged as the joint strongest impact with two-thirds of interviewed submitters giving a score of 4 or 5 out

⁵To be clear, it should be noted that this does not apply to all of the interviewed submitters who had enrolled in the TLA via other CPD providers. A number who joined through this route were very positive about the impacts of participation in the Academy, one referring to himself as a '*convert*' to the TLA. However, there was a clutch from a provider and a course who believed that making a submission was obligatory, and this coloured their view. In at least one of these partners, since the time of interviewing, efforts have been made to reassure future cohorts that undertaking a TLA submission is optional.

of 5. In Phase 1, by comparison, nearer half of the interviewed submitters rated its impact as such.

Breakdown by partner

Submitters' ratings for each of the seven specified areas were further analysed by partner. Interviewed submitters from three of the Phase 2 partners reported notably stronger outcomes than those involved through the other partner areas. Interestingly, in these three areas, interviewees reported particularly positive impacts in relation to their contribution to colleagues and the development of the school. Here, a variety of opportunities for dissemination within these partner areas were identified by submitters. As a consequence, teachers were more able to discuss and identify the outcomes of their projects with colleagues, and therefore recognise the impact of their work in the wider domain. Other areas where stronger outcomes were identified by interviewees in these three Phase 2 partners were the development of teaching practice and teachers' willingness to engage in professional development.

Phase 2 interviewees who had become involved with the Academy via other CPD provision (e.g. LEA course, national body) were somewhat less positive about the impact of their TLA participation across the seven specified areas. In particular, the areas in which outcomes were less strongly reported were: teachers' thinking on how they would like their careers to develop; teachers' contribution to colleagues and the development of the school; and enhancement to pupils' learning and school experiences.

In these partners, the TLA was incorporated into an existing professional development activity that teachers were, or had been, engaged in. As such, the TLA was used as a vehicle for writing up projects or professional development activities that they had already started or completed. In this way, a number of the teachers enrolled in the TLA through this route found it difficult to differentiate between the impact of the projects themselves and the impact of their TLA submission, often attributing lower impacts to the latter in comparison with their project work as, for several teachers, it was felt that the impact of their project could not be credited to the Academy. Notwithstanding, there were several teachers who had joined the TLA through this route and felt they had benefited greatly from their involvement. For these teachers, the Academy was considered to have been a useful vehicle through which to reflect on and evaluate their experiences. In addition, the recognition gained through the TLA was felt to have added value to the original project.

2.1.3 Factors associated with the outcomes experienced

In the course of discussing the effects of their involvement, interviewed submitters identified the elements of the TLA experience that had led to the outcomes they derived. As discussed in section 2.1.1, for a number of submitters, specific aspects of the Academy approach to professional learning and the recognition it offered were actually identified as main impacts in themselves. In addition, the **core dimensions** were cited as the factors leading to the impacts that submitters had experienced. In particular, these included:

- accessing peer support (i.e. the opportunity to work with colleagues)

- evaluating the impact on practice and own learning
- disseminating what has been learnt.

Thus, that outcomes were attributed to the core dimensions demonstrates the perceived value in the TLA's model of professional learning. Furthermore, several interviewees credited the impacts that they had derived to the overall composition of the TLA, noting that it provided a useful **structure** for the instigation, implementation and write-up of research projects, which led participants through the process of reflection, evaluation and dissemination.

Factors associated with the outcomes experienced

Accessing peer support (the opportunity to work with colleagues)

To be co-enquirers with three other colleagues and feel that we were all equal in that enquiry [was beneficial]. Very often in school you don't get that – you feel that either you're leading the way or following. This was really nice, and we learnt a lot from each other. I learnt that the co-enquiry research skill is a very useful tool ... so that was really, really helpful, and I found it very stimulating (Phase 2 submitter, primary).

Evaluating the impact on practice and own learning

There was the opportunity to reflect, because sometimes we're going at such a pace that we don't have the opportunity to stop and think about it (Phase 2 submitter, special school).

I think it makes you reflect on your practice, and have a look at aspects of teaching and be quite critical about it. And also you've got the further study and research as well. So it's reflecting on your own practice, and also improving on that through observing colleagues, further research and study (Phase 2 submitter, primary).

Disseminating what has been learnt

Having to disseminate what you do and learn made me really focus on what I had got out of my project so that I could put it into words and make it make sense for my colleagues when I was speaking to them ... When I did my presentation, the other teachers said things that hadn't occurred to me so although I was meant to be helping them by telling them about my work, I think they probably helped me more or as much anyway (Phase 1 submitter, secondary).

The structure of the TLA

One thing they [the TLA] did do ... was to make you think about the stages of thinking, what you went through. It started off by making you think about where you were coming from, what did you know about it [the subject area]?, what were you going to find out?, and then; the plans for what you were going to do, and how and when you were going to do it. It encouraged you to think about the project in an organised way and, in that way, it was good (Phase 2 submitter, via other CPD provision).

I've had to think very carefully about the whys, the wherefores, how it will be monitored. You do this anyway but it focuses you and makes it sharper. And in writing up the process and in being asked to consider, in a very specific way, how it will be of use to the school, that was clearly of help... it was tremendously helpful (Phase 2 submitter, secondary).

2.1.4 Long-term impacts

Follow-up telephone interviews during Phase 2 with teachers first interviewed in Phase 1 of the pilot allow us to ascertain whether the outcomes generated by the Academy were long lasting. These interviewees were asked to rate the long-term impacts of participation on the same five-point scale as had been used in Phase 1.

Analysis revealed that the Academy maintained its impact over time. Around two-thirds of the follow-up interviewees believed that their TLA involvement had had a considerable long-term impact on their teaching practice, their motivation and confidence, their contribution to their colleagues and the school, and their pupils' learning. Around three-fifths felt that their willingness to engage in professional development had been considerably enhanced long term, and around half were still deriving considerable benefits from the TLA in terms of the effects on their views of their career development and their access to and involvement in professional development opportunities. Indeed, there was relatively little, if any, difference in their ratings of the immediate impact of Academy involvement in Phase 1 and the longer term outcomes they reported in their follow-up interviews.

To sum up so far, in discussing the impacts they derived from their involvement in the TLA, submitters from Phases 1 and 2 were positive. Drawing together their responses to both the open-ended and the closed questions, the outcomes that emerged as particularly prevalent were: impacts on teachers' practice; enhancements to their pupils' learning and school experiences; and greater contributions to their colleagues and school. In Phase 2 in particular, specific aspects of the TLA approach to professional development were identified as impacts in their own right, as well as leading to the other outcomes experienced. These included the opportunity to reflect on teaching practice and the opportunity to work with colleagues.

2.2 The impact of TLA involvement on submitters' understanding of professional learning

In addition to assessing the impact of involvement with the TLA, at both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the pilot, interviewed submitters were asked what difference, if any, their participation had made to their understanding of professional learning (i.e. the types of activities that could constitute professional development and/or what makes effective professional learning). In response, the vast majority of interviewees across both Phases (who had submitted projects to the Academy) stated that their perceptions and understanding had been altered.

In explaining why their perspectives had changed, submitters particularly pointed to the fact that their involvement with the TLA had raised their **awareness of professional learning as part of their everyday teaching practice**. Here, they particularly valued the opportunity afforded through the TLA to gain recognition for professional development activities that were being undertaken in the classroom on a day-to-day basis: *'It was actually giving people recognition for things that they would do anyway'* (Phase 2 submitter, primary).

Recognition for work being undertaken as part of teachers' everyday practice

Being involved in this project makes me realise that we all do research on a daily basis in our everyday lives because of the challenges that we meet. That is research on an informal level, and to formalise it actually doesn't take very much (Phase 1 submitter, primary).

The thing about the TLA way was that we were able to work on something that we were already doing – rather than it be a separate something, extra, on-top-of, our work. There's so much going on in teaching now, so that was a real bonus (Phase 2 submitter, primary).

You feel that what you do is more valued. Someone is saying what you are doing is valued. We didn't have that before. We were doing it, but no outside agency said 'Yes, that's a good way of doing it' (Phase 2 submitter, primary).

TLA work was much more focussed on what is actually happening in the classroom and acknowledging the skills that you have already got that you bring to the classroom (Phase 2 submitter, secondary).

I thought it was quite different from the kind of CPD that I've come across before because it was actually giving people recognition for the things that they would do anyway ... I think it is doing something that is significantly different to other types of CPD that I have experienced and I think that will be very popular (Phase 2 submitter, secondary).

Submitters also spoke positively of the TLA as an **in-school and self-directed (i.e. teacher-led) activity**. In this respect, the TLA was perceived to be of more relevance to teachers' interests and classroom practice. The consequence of this was that these interviewees had now **come to view professional development as a school-based activity as opposed to a one-off or external, often course-based, experience**: *'A lot of development, or so called development, has often not seemed very relevant to actually what you have got to do whereas this [the TLA] can be extremely relevant (Phase 2 submitter, via other CPD provision); 'I would now consider working with staff in school first probably, rather than going on a course and finding out what other people think outside school' (Phase 1 submitter, primary).*

In addition, several teachers suggested that their involvement with the TLA had increased their awareness of and perceptions towards professional development as an **activity in which the whole school could participate** (i.e. not just as a personal development opportunity). This had prompted several schools to encourage other staff to enrol in the TLA with a view to establishing a professional learning community.

TLA as a teacher-led, school-based activity

I think that in the past you went out on a course and you never disseminated the information. It was just a day out and it was or it wasn't useful. This way you get to talk to colleagues, you have mentors and peer coaches and all that sort of support and therefore you do disseminate more and you actually get more from talking it through with colleagues than you might otherwise if you were doing something out of house (Phase 2 submitter, secondary).

It's confirmed that most of the CPD needs can be delivered by staff through staff within schools. There is some need for external courses obviously but I think it proves that there is a lot of development that can take place within the schools (Phase 2 submitter, secondary).

This is more about what we're doing ourselves – I think it needs to be an evolution from the teachers themselves (Phase 1 submitter, secondary).

So much can be done in house and does not have the cost. It's away from the traditional courses and days out of school. It shows that there is a lot more to learn from people that are around you (Phase 2 submitter, secondary).

Practitioners could actually do something that was meaningful to them and they could do it at any level they wished, rather than feeling that they had to do X, Y and Z which actually wasn't going to relate to the work they were doing within the classroom situation (Phase 2 submitter, via other CPD-provision).

It makes it much more meaningful, rather than just 'Oh I've gone on a course' and you come away and you've got stacks of paper and you do nothing with it. This [the TLA] is much more you want to implement it really. And you can see the benefit (Phase 2 submitter, secondary).

Several interviewees across both Phases of the pilot also described how their involvement with the TLA had increased their awareness of different professional development opportunities and that, moreover, had raised **the profile of professional development *per se*** (including the profile of the TLA itself):

I sometimes think we spend a lot of time in school and professional development can seem to be almost put on a back burner but this [the TLA] has given it recognition and it is realising that teachers do need it (Phase 2 submitter, primary).

It's confirmed that you need to develop professionally, that you can't stand still, you've got to move forward, and you need to have concentrated areas to move forward in (Phase 2 submitter, primary).

In further stating the impact of their involvement with the TLA on their understanding of professional development, submitters pointed to the benefit of the **structure of the Academy as a model for professional learning**. Here teachers spoke positively of the robust nature of the TLA process which, for some, was felt to have raised standards of professional development. Furthermore, interviewees pointed to **specific aspects of the TLA process** (i.e. the six core dimensions) in this respect, highlighting, in particular, the value of **reflecting** and evaluating on teaching and learning, accessing **peer support** (i.e. the opportunity to work with colleagues) and **disseminating** what had been learnt. For example, several submitters described how their involvement with the TLA projects had increased their awareness of the value of collaborative working in professional development, particularly in terms of accessing support and guidance from other teachers, and acknowledged that the Academy had

highlighted the merits of formally evaluating and reflecting on practice as a key feature of professional learning.

Finally, several teachers described how their TLA involvement had **allayed many of their preconceptions that engaging in professional learning, alongside their teaching demands, would be onerous, difficult and time consuming**. Rather, they reported that their participation in the Academy had led them to perceive professional development as a less daunting activity than they had previously thought. The implications of this would also appear to be reflected in and supported by teachers' ratings on the impact of the TLA on their willingness to engage in professional development, which was identified as one of the strongest areas of impact in Phase 2.

2.3 Vignette

To conclude this examination of the outcomes derived from TLA involvement, we broaden our focus to look at whole-school as well as individual effects of participation. A vignette is presented that sets out the school and individual impacts that one of the case-study primaries had derived.

Case study
Profile: Primary school
Focus and form of TLA involvement
<p>For the headteacher, the opportunity afforded through the TLA for several members of staff to enrol in the Academy was considered to be of particular appeal as it would enable a 'learning community' to be established within school which had not existed previously.</p> <p>Teachers' response to the TLA was overwhelmingly positive with the majority of the teaching staff at the school (10 out of 12) enrolling in the Academy. Teachers were encouraged to carry out and submit their own research projects, although a whole-school approach to the TLA was established (e.g. encouraging collaborative working through creating opportunities for teachers to share their ideas and experiences).</p> <p>In addition, the headteacher undertook verifier training, which allowed her to become more involved with the TLA and enabled her to support teachers' submissions.</p>
Impact of the TLA
<p>For the headteacher, the impact of the TLA was felt at a whole-school level. In particular, it was perceived that the TLA had highlighted the value of professional learning for teachers and had enabled the school to begin to establish itself as an institution where teachers' own professional development was at the fore:</p> <p><i>If schools are going to have more responsibility for their own direction, they need to have teachers who are aware of their own direction ... you actually have to introduce some element of willingness to move on, and if you are doing research, then I think you are looking out for new things and can develop in that way (headteacher).</i></p> <p>Numerous impacts were reported by the teachers involved. These included: increased knowledge and skills, the opportunity to reflect on and consequently to develop teachers' actual practice' and gaining the recognition of the Academy</p>
Factors associated with the impacts experienced
<p>As part of the whole-school approach to the TLA, opportunities for staff enrolled in the Academy to share their ideas and experiences were built into the introduction of the Academy in school. This involved regular staff meetings and training days being scheduled during the course of teachers' projects at which they were able to discuss their work and disseminate their findings. For the headteacher, this added value and impact to each project and established the foundations of the learning community that the school was aiming to develop through the TLA.</p> <p>Teachers' comments also highlighted the value of this approach with all those interviewed acknowledging the support they received from colleagues throughout their TLA projects and the value of disseminating their findings: <i>It was really interesting to find out what everyone else was doing. You don't realise because people go off and do these things so it is actually quite nice to come back and say 'This is what I have done. This is what I have got out of it' (teacher).</i></p> <p>Teachers also spoke positively about the TLA model of professional learning, highlighting, in particular, the opportunity to reflect on their own practice and to implement a classroom-based action research project of interest and relevance:</p> <p><i>Before I undertook the TLA, I thought professional development was I go along and get informed about good practice. Whereas the TLA, it really gives you a voice and allows you to carry out research in an area which interests you so it is very much valuing the individual and their worth rather than saying 'You should be doing this'. I think that it [the TLA] is a lot better, much better (teacher).</i></p>
Outcomes
<p>Following the introduction of the TLA in the school, the headteacher concluded that the value of professional learning as a whole-school activity had been confirmed and would continue to influence their future professional development activities in the school.</p>

2.4 Concluding comments on the impacts of the TLA

Drawing together the evidence presented in this chapter, across both Phases of the pilot, the outcomes that emerged as most prevalent for submitters were: impacts on teachers' practice; enhancements to their pupils' learning and school experiences; and greater contributions to their colleagues and school. Follow-up work showed that the impacts were long lasting. Furthermore, for the vast majority of interviewed submitters, participation in the TLA had furthered their understanding of professional development.

Most striking was the frequency with which specific aspects of the TLA approach were identified as impacts in their own right, as well as leading to the other outcomes experienced. These included, in particular, the opportunity to reflect on teaching practice, to work with colleagues and to disseminate learning. This serves to underline the perceived value of the Academy's approach to professional learning.

3 The manageability of participation in the TLA

This chapter presents the findings on the manageability of taking part in the TLA. It draws on: the responses from the teacher telephone surveys of submitters at Phase 1 (40 submitters) and at Phase 2 (113 submitters); the case-study data from Phase 1 and Phase 2; the non-submitter survey carried out during Phase 1 of the pilot (17 non-submitters); the 15 verifier interviews and the interviews with partner- and GTC-based personnel.

The chapter begins by discussing the manageability of taking part in the TLA for enrolees. This section outlines the key findings from the submitter telephone surveys, with results from both Phases of the pilot presented and compared. In so doing, we highlight the progress of the pilot Academy thus far. Where appropriate, the case-study interviews illustrate the discussion, as do the views of the non-submitters. The chapter then moves on to the manageability of the Academy for the partners and the verifiers. The chapter closes with a consideration of the future development of the TLA in terms of manageability.

The chapter is structured as follows:

- 3.1 The manageability of participation for enrolees**
- 3.2 The manageability of participation for partners**
- 3.3 The manageability of participation for verifiers**
- 3.4 Factors contributing to manageability of participation in the TLA and future implications**

3.1 The manageability of participation for enrolees

This first part of the chapter draws together findings from the full set of data gathered throughout the evaluation of the pilot, to portray a sense of the manageability of taking part in the TLA for enrolees. It begins by setting out interviewees' responses to open and closed inquiries that sought their views on this matter. Following this, findings from a further set of questions on the support and guidance received and any areas for improvement in this regard are then fed into the discussion.

3.1.1 Overall manageability of taking part in the TLA

Teachers' perspectives were probed through both open inquiry, e.g. '*What, if any, have been the main challenges for you in undertaking your TLA project so far?*', and a closed item where interviewees rated five pre-determined areas of manageability in terms of the challenge they posed on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 5 (a great deal). For both the telephone survey and case-study interviews, comparable instruments were used in Phase 1 and Phase 2. Hence, findings from both these Phases are presented

and compared. The progress made thus far by the Academy is discussed and any areas for further attention are explored. Experiences of undertaking projects and preparing submissions, and views of the core dimensions, are then examined.

Overall manageability: responses to open inquiry

Phase 1

At Phase 1, the top four most frequently mentioned challenges identified through open responses by the submitters were: **finding time to prepare** the submission; **understanding the requirements** of the TLA; the need for appropriate and adequate **support**; and managing their TLA participation alongside their **everyday work**.

Variation by partner area in Phase 1 showed a key difference made by close involvement with an HEI. The model adopted here involved the submission of an essay of 6,000 words to the HEI for accreditation; as well as organised support sessions available. Workload was the main challenge for these teachers (related to the essay model), whilst they felt **clearer on the requirements** of the TLA than those in other authorities.

Phase 2

At Phase 2, the challenges most frequently cited were: **finding time to prepare** the submission; and **satisfying the TLA requirements** particularly when aiming to fulfil two purposes at once (e.g. undertaking both course activities through other CPD provision and TLA involvement). Unlike Phase 1, managing their TLA participation alongside their **everyday work** was not amongst the most frequently referenced areas of challenge in this open inquiry at Phase 2.

In terms of open responses, partner variation showed that teachers involved in the TLA **via other CPD provision** (e.g. through involvement via another national body, or on a local authority-run course) found particular difficulty with structuring, matching or fitting their project write-ups to the requirements of the TLA submission.

Phase 1 and Phase 2 open responses compared: the progress of the Academy

Findings from Phase 1 of the pilot evaluation suggested a need to consider the encouragement of **greater peer-peer collaboration** in supporting teachers' involvement in the TLA and its potential roll out. Comparing submitters' perceptions at Phase 1 with those at Phase 2, there would certainly seem to have been progress made within the Academy in terms of teachers' within-school and cross-school collaborations. In addition, amongst the Phase 2 submitters themselves, there was greater confidence with peer-support and/or mentoring as part of everyday CPD practice than had been apparent during Phase 1. As well as progress within the Academy itself, this probably also reflects teachers' greater awareness and experience of current CPD priorities espoused in a number of national messages and initiatives, and more widespread than they had been at the time of our Phase 1 evaluation.

However, a consequence perhaps of these greater collaborations between peers (evident both in carrying out their TLA projects and for supporting submissions) was that finding time to liaise with peers, and in some cases for schools to provide staff cover, emerged more frequently as **logistical challenges** in Phase 2 than they had done at Phase 1. As one of a number of teachers explained: ‘... *the organisation of it [is challenging], finding time to meet up with people and the logistics of coordinating work with peers. But that’s one of the challenges of doing anything in a school*’ (Phase 2 submitter, secondary school).

As further endorsement of the progress of the Academy, **fewer citations of unmanageability** were made in response to this open question by the Phase 2 submitters compared with their Phase 1 counterparts. Indeed, almost one-third of the Phase 2 submitters interviewed felt that there had been no real challenging or problematic areas for them (34 of the 113) – a far greater proportion than that at Phase 1. Underpinning this finding would seem to be greater collaborative support in Phase 2 (as highlighted above) and the emphasis on projects as part of everyday professional learning and classroom practice. In the second Phase of the TLA, the participants themselves were also more likely to consider the **pilot** nature of the scheme in their responses, suggesting an overall balance in their views.

Overall sense of manageability

It’s not easy to set up research-based projects within the classroom. You’ve got to try theories out, and work out which ones work and see what the success rate is. It’s just the time element really – but any form of professional development is time-consuming. But this was easier, because this is something you can do on a regular basis, and rather than thinking of something new, this was something I wanted to do in my classroom anyway, so therefore it was part of my everyday teaching (Phase 2 submitter, secondary).

It was manageable. It was a lot more manageable than doing a PGCert or a PGDip in terms of time. The difficulties arose over the fact that it is a pilot project ... (Phase 2 submitter, secondary).

The only challenge was that I wasn’t sure of the nature of what they wanted ... my attitude was [just to] send it in, and if it’s okay, it’s okay (Phase 2 submitter, via other CPD provision).

That said, throughout the evaluation, with regard to manageability there was an overall sense of the TLA as ‘*reasonably manageable, but ...*’ It was these ‘buts’ that caused teachers concern or challenge (sometimes considerable), and the ensuing sense of unmanageability often reflected teachers not knowing how to solve or resolve their concerns (for example, who to ask for help; where to go next in the TLA; the submission requirements; and the submission process). These concerns carry particular resonance when considered in the light of interviewees’ resulting uncertainty about continuing in the Academy without addressing such queries. We will return to this later when we consider support and guidance in the TLA (section 3.1.2). In the meantime, the next section highlights the degree of manageability / unmanageability experienced by the submitters in the Phase 1 and Phase 2 pilot and reported through their responses to a closed enquiry.

Degree of manageability: responses to the closed inquiry

The telephone surveys carried out in Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the pilot specifically sought to gauge the degree of manageability felt by the submitter interviewees in five pre-determined areas. Respondents could reply on a five-point scale (where ‘1’ would

mean no challenge at all, and '5' a great deal of challenge) and elaborate with examples and explanation as necessary. Tables 3.1a and b present the ratings to these statements given by the submitters in Phase 1 and Phase 2.

Tables 3.1 Submitters' ratings of the degree of challenge in five specified areas

The tables shows the number of teachers circling each number on the five-point scale to rate the extent of the challenge (Scale: 1 = not at all; 5 = a great deal)

Table 3.1a Phase 1

Manageability statement	Frequency of responses (N)						Number giving rating of 4 or 5	% giving rating of 4 or 5
	Number of respondents	Rating 1	Rating 2	Rating 3	Rating 4	Rating 5		
Managing your general teaching workload and your TLA project	40	7	13	10	7	3	10	25
The level of work that you need to do for your TLA project	40	9	16	9	5	1	6	15
Interpreting the requirements of what you need to do and produce in order to attain your Stage in the TLA	40	2	11	9	14	4	18	45
Accessing any guidance or mentoring that you need for your TLA project	40	14	14	5	5	2	7	18
Financing resources/equipment that you need for your TLA project	40	29	8	3	0	0	0	0

Columns give the number of respondents apart from the final column, which is the % of respondents giving a rating of 4 or 5. % is calculated from the number of respondents. %s should be treated with caution as Ns are less than 100.

Source: NFER Phase 1 submitter telephone survey.

Table 3.1b Phase 2

Manageability statement	Frequency of responses (N)						Number giving rating of 4 or 5	% giving rating of 4 or 5
	Number of respondents	Rating 1	Rating 2	Rating 3	Rating 4	Rating 5		
Managing your general teaching workload and your TLA project	109	40	21	26	15	7	22	20
The level of work that you need to do for your TLA project	108	22	30	33	19	4	23	21
Interpreting the requirements of what you need to do and produce in order to attain your Stage in the TLA	107	16	19	30	32	10	42	39
Accessing any guidance or mentoring that you need for your TLA project	106	45	24	15	16	6	22	21
Financing resources/equipment that you need for your TLA project	92	80	3	7	1	1	2	2

Columns give the number of respondents apart from the final column, which is the % of respondents rating 4 or 5. % is calculated from the number of respondents.

Source: NFER Phase 2 submitter telephone survey.

Firstly, it should be noted that for all five of the items probed, only very small numbers of interviewees rated any as ‘a great deal’ of a challenge (a score of 5). Bearing this in mind, Tables 3.1a and b reveal the following findings.

Phase 1

- **At Phase 1, interpreting the requirements** of the TLA was the most keenly identified problem, with almost half of the 40 submitters nominating a score of 4 or 5 to this statement.
- At Phase 1, this was followed by **managing their workload**. Interviewees’ qualifying statements related this chiefly to preparing submissions rather than carrying out projects. That said, it is important to note that half of these Phase 1 respondents felt that balancing their workload and TLA project was not a problem at all or was just a slight challenge (a score of 1 or 2).

Phase 2

- **At Phase 2 compared with Phase 1**, for four of the five items probed, proportionately more teachers gave a rating of 1, thus registering that participation in the TLA had caused them no manageability issues at all.
- Notwithstanding, at Phase 2, **interpreting the requirements** of the TLA again emerged as the most keenly identified challenge – with similar perceptions of uncertainty about ‘*what goes where*’ and repetition in the write-up as had been stated in Phase 1. Although the actual proportions of teachers rating this as a considerable challenge had reduced somewhat (a score of 4 or 5), for two-thirds, some definite sense of challenge remained.
- In Phase 2, balancing **a general teaching workload and a TLA project** was, on average, **less problematic**. Double the proportion of Phase 2 submitters compared with those from Phase 1 indicated that this had not been an issue at all for them (a score of 1). Reflecting their comments in open discussion, many of the Phase 2 submitters expressed that the project involved ‘*work they were or would be doing anyway*’, or that they were able to use some non-contact time for preparing the submission. On the other hand, those holding senior or middle management posts tended to rate this as a somewhat difficult area.
- However, managing **the level of the work** required presented a greater sense of difficulty at Phase 2 than it had done at Phase 1 – the proportions of those rating this item 3, 4 or 5 all increased. In particular, teachers struggled with accurately judging the level of the work required for the relevant Stage (e.g. how much to write, the depth required, etc). This was a generic issue: ratings were not associated with the actual Stage that teachers were working at. Crucially, however, in a few cases a ‘high rating’ signalled a hard but ‘positive challenge’ (for example, some teachers had chosen to delve deeply into the issues they were researching and working on). Thus, a high rating here should not always be taken to represent an issue or difficulty.

- Although over half of the 113 Phase 2 submitters had little problem with **accessing guidance or mentoring** (i.e. ratings of 1 or 2), there was in fact a slightly greater proportion of submitters at Phase 2 finding this aspect more difficult than had been the case at Phase 1 (i.e. somewhat of a **dipole of experience** here at Phase 2). The challenge was most evident for those involved in the TLA via other CPD provision (e.g. local authority-run course, national body). That said, others involved via these particular routes expressed little challenge in this regard, as they had been able to access guidance through colleagues or course-leaders.

Partner variations

- Across both Phases, when submitters' ratings were analysed by **partner**, scores for manageability across these five areas varied (although smaller numbers interviewed within some of the partner areas warrant caution when interpreting the findings).
- It was particularly noteworthy that where **organised support** involving hands-on, step-by-step guidance (particularly for the submission) was available within partner areas, teachers' ratings indicated a more manageable experience overall. This was especially the case with regard to **interpreting the requirements of the TLA** and **accessing support and guidance**. (Further perceptions on support and guidance are given in section 3.1.2.)
- Where teachers' **whole school** was involved in the TLA *and* where that involvement included **peer-peer** collaboration for projects and/or submissions, experiences of manageability also improved. In general, this model tended to be school specific, although participation in one partner area in particular was typified by this type of involvement. (It is important to note that individual choice over projects and over the decision to take part in the Academy was also essential here, rather than it being school 'imposed' participation.)
- Where teachers were involved in the TLA **via other CPD provision**, interpreting the requirements of the TLA and accessing guidance and mentoring generally proved more problematic. This was even more the case where these teachers also worked in 'isolation' on their submissions (e.g. away from other TLA participants, the only TLA entrant within their school, etc.).

Charting the progress of the Academy: the manageability of involvement in the Academy overall

In summary, from open responses and the areas probed on the five-point scale, participants' chief concerns were with **finding time for the submission**, and understanding **the TLA requirements**. Regarding the latter, over the course of the pilot, around two-fifths of interviewed submitters (slightly less so in Phase 2) rated this as rather difficult in response to the closed inquiry (i.e. gave a rating of 4 or 5 out of 5).

Manageability: chief concerns**Finding time to prepare the submission**

Not the actual project itself, it was literally just finding the time to do it [the submission] [that was challenging]. That's the only barrier that I had – the nature of physically writing it all down because that was the time-consuming element (Phase 2 submitter, secondary).

Understanding the TLA requirements

As a teacher, you're used to teaching children to meet exam and assessment requirements, and here they weren't very clear what those were. You weren't quite sure exactly what people were looking for ... (Phase 2 submitter, secondary).

However, the identification of challenges was overall **less frequent** and **generally less emphatic** at Phase 2 than at Phase 1 – indicating progress within the Academy. Greater peer-peer collaboration within schools, whole-school involvement and the provision of organised hands-on, step-by-step support sessions appeared to have contributed to more manageable involvement for teachers. In addition, the participants themselves were more likely to consider the **pilot** nature of the scheme in their responses.

Further, whilst **workload** had caused some difficulty in Phase 1, it was not seen as unmanageable to quite the same degree in Phase 2 (indeed, over one-third of our submitters in Phase 2 found no problem with this at all). This seemed very much related to teachers choosing projects that they would be doing anyway within their practice – part of the philosophy of the TLA.

As well as reiterating the underlying ethos of the TLA as recognising teachers' everyday practice and development, further improvements to the manageability of teachers' workloads alongside their TLA projects might be found in **building the TLA into existing professional development structures and vice versa**. This might include the marrying of performance management structures with the TLA at school level, or through the development of an Opportunities Framework at local authority level. Certainly there were the beginnings of both these solutions at the time of interviewing a number of our case-study and partner-level participants from a range of partner areas.

The key issue remaining in the Academy was centred around teachers' concern over the conceptual **level of the work** being undertaken. This was rated as **more of a challenge** in Phase 2 than in Phase 1.

- On the one hand, this was related to the effort and hard work relayed by many of the submitters, signifying a **level of rigour** and personal undertaking they wished to invest in the work. As two teachers explained: *'The level of work was as much as you wanted it to be. If I'd chosen a far simpler focus then that would have been my choice'* (Phase 2 submitter, secondary). *'It depends on how much you want to put into it. You can either do a sketchy type of research, or you can do more reading ...'* (Phase 2 submitter, primary).
- On the other hand, there were also reports of the 'extra' amount of work and time that teachers had given to their projects and write-ups (in some cases over and above their initial expectations).

An implication from this, drawn from the interview data, was the need for unambiguous **explanations of the expectations** for Stage 1 and Stage 2 submissions. A number of interviewees had felt that this could have been clearer in TLA materials and at initial launch events, for example. Particular consideration might be warranted here if such events and promotion are to be implemented by a range of parties across the TLA (i.e. this might include GTC-based personnel, local authority-based personnel, HEI-based personnel, school personnel, etc.). As participants themselves intimated, it would be important for all parties to *‘sing from the same hymn sheet’*.

A further issue affecting the manageability of the Academy in Phase 2 was reflected in the experience of *some* of the submitters who had become involved in the TLA through other CPD provision. Here, some concerns were raised over matching projects and their write-ups to the TLA requirements, and with regard to support, and accessing guidance and mentoring (further details on this are discussed in section 3.1.2).

It must be said that as well as differences across the Phases, and across the different partner areas/routes to involvement in the TLA, there was also individual variation in teachers’ perceptions of manageability of being involved in the TLA. For example, there were those for whom there was little or no challenge (34 of the 113 submitters at Phase 2 responded as such to our open question) and others for whom the whole experience represented many challenges. Two of the Phase 2 areas in particular showed great individual variation within them. This would suggest that factors other than Phases of the TLA and local flavours of the Academy affect participants’ experiences of manageability. (For example, not all teachers have the same experience within an area; not all teachers access provision of support to the same extent, etc.). The next section of the chapter (section 3.1.2) will look at what some of those features might be.

First though, we finish this part by turning to participants’ perceptions of projects and submissions, including the core dimensions and the requirements of the TLA submission.

Projects and submissions

In the open inquiry, a sense of whether challenges were **project-related or submission-related** was analysed. Throughout the pilot, where challenges were experienced, submitters more often associated these with completing their **TLA submission**.

For submitters, carrying out the project was **not deemed to represent a major challenge**, except for some **practical or project-specific** difficulties such as accommodating projects within the timetable or alongside everyday classroom matters. Throughout the pilot, the majority of submitters had **chosen their projects themselves** and this, along with school support, seemed important to aiding the manageability of carrying out the project.

As Chapter 2 of this report has already relayed, in general the **core dimensions** of the Academy were perceived to be extremely **valuable** by the vast majority of interviewed submitters (although sometimes with the caveat *‘... once you have got*

your head round them'). Perceived benefits were that they provided **structure** for the write-up (*'the bricks' ... 'the subtitles'*) and helped with **reflection**. In terms of the progress of the TLA to date, Phase 2 submitters also emphasised that the core dimensions matched the kinds of approaches to other professional development that they were starting to become involved in or were currently experiencing anyway (e.g. action research, classroom project, 'research lesson'). However, whilst the core dimensions were seen as valuable overall, there was **a range of experience when putting them into practice** in projects and submissions, as Table 3.2 illustrates.

Table 3.2 Views on the core dimensions in practice in projects and submissions (from Phase 1 and Phase 2)

Engaging with an appropriate knowledge base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exciting for some teachers, especially those who enjoy research, and mentioned particularly by male teachers challenging for others, e.g. knowing what sources or knowledge base to view and use, referencing sources 	<p><i>If you're going to engage in a piece of research, you need to have a starting point. Engaging with a knowledge base and doing a piece of writing about it really got my mind working (Phase 1 submitter, male, special).</i></p> <p><i>I think accessing a knowledge base might be a challenge. For mine, it was just something I read by chance really. Maybe we do need more access to more current thinking on education (Phase 1 submitter, male, secondary).</i></p>
Planning of professional learning and change activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> many chose projects they would have done/were doing anyway, therefore planning rarely presented a problem, although a few thought it obvious and need not be formalised as a dimension could be time-consuming when planning a school strategy change, or for teachers with many areas of responsibility 	<p>Interviewer: <i>Could I ask for your views on planning of a professional change activity?</i></p> <p>Interviewee: <i>To be honest, I'm not sure what that means. Probably, as a teacher, you couldn't come up with a new body of work without doing that anyway (Phase 1 submitter, secondary).</i></p>
Carrying out a change activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> rarely a source of challenge to teachers, although there were some practical challenges in accommodating projects some concern over meeting this requirement when involved via other CPD provision where 'change' might not necessarily be within its remit 	<p><i>We were unable to give a specific project a specific change activity as a result of our study. We were reflecting on educational practice [elsewhere in the world] that would possibly have an impact on the development of our vision as leaders ... the change activity wasn't appropriate for our group (Phase 2 submitter via other CPD provision).</i></p>
Accessing peer support, coaching and/or mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> noted as a difficult aspect at Phase 1 where many were unclear about what this should involve more understood and valued at Phase 2, although some logistical problems noted 	<p><i>I'm not too sure why they put peer coaching in. I don't know whether it is because they wanted to make sure we had support or not, but I'm not sure why, maybe that needs to made clearer (Phase 1 submitter, secondary).</i></p> <p><i>My colleague acted as a critical friend ... but [it is] potentially difficult coordinating when you and your colleague both have time ... (Phase 2 submitters).</i></p>
Evaluating the impact on practice & own learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the extent of reflecting and evaluating was seen by many teachers as greater than they would normally have done 	<p><i>... evaluating and disseminating [were valuable]. They linked together. Sometimes there was more you could do after the evaluation and dissemination from what people had said (Phase 2 submitter, secondary).</i></p>
Disseminating what has been learnt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> particularly useful for in-school sharing of practice at Phase 2 in particular, greater clarity over the extent and type of dissemination was required by some (perhaps related to the greater individual variety in the Stages being entered, rather than Stage being a partner feature as at Phase 1) 	<p><i>At first I thought that the dissemination wouldn't be valuable, but in actual fact, when it came to doing it, that was probably one of the most valuable bits (Phase 1 submitter, secondary).</i></p> <p><i>Disseminating what had been learnt – in what context? To whom? It was a bit vague ... (Phase 2 submitter, secondary).</i></p>

In all, **submission-** and **requirement-related** issues were more common amongst submitters than project-related issues, and included the following concerns.

- The **format of the submission** was regarded by many as repetitive, and by others as restrictive, too reliant on text, or inappropriate for some forms of professional development undertaken, e.g. study visits.
- Gauging how much to write and particularly what to put where was a concern for many, as well as having not **written** like this for some time.
- There was some misunderstanding with regard to the emphasis envisaged by the TLA for projects in terms of their foci on **teachers' learning**, rather than necessarily being about pupils' learning (although this might follow).
- While for some, **engaging with a knowledge base** had been particularly useful (*'the one that sets you going'*), others had not realised that this could include their own experience as well as research literature.
- Dissemination was perceived very positively, although **the extent and level of dissemination required** for the different Stages (e.g. 1, 2 or 3) of the TLA had caused some interviewees uncertainty.
- **Accessing peer support** had been a somewhat difficult area of the core dimensions for teachers to grasp or carry out at Phase 1: although many teachers had talked to someone about preparing their submission, there appeared to have been relatively little testimony to 'conversations' with others about their own learning during their projects. However, at Phase 2, there was **more testimony to accessing peer support**, for example through **discussions with colleagues** within the department or with parallel classes, as well as some cross-departmental or wider school-based conversations. That said, for those involved in the TLA via other CPD provision, the core dimension of accessing peer support **was not as easily addressed** (although some participating via this route had had conversations with other colleagues from elsewhere in the county/nation from the course).

Thus, whilst the core dimensions themselves were perceived very positively overall, there was **some difficulty** for some participants in terms of what was then **required in practice and in particular in the submission for the TLA**. The examples below illustrate the range of opinion on the TLA submission 'form' requirements (for some, straightforward, for the majority a little difficult, and for some of those who had become involved in the TLA via other CPD provision, a particular struggle).

Challenge in the TLA submission: a range of opinions

I honestly didn't find the process too difficult at all, and writing it up was very straightforward – because it is in a question and answer format for Stage 1 (Phase 2 submitter, primary).

It was quite straightforward. The form we had to complete was fairly well structured ... it wasn't a real challenge and they didn't want reams and reams. It made you think about the process, but that was good as the questions you had to think about really structured your answers (Phase 2 submitter, primary).

I didn't find the question headings as helpful as they might have been. You sit there and you start to think, 'Well, is it me?' ... there seemed to be some repetition and confusion to me (Phase 2 submitter, primary).

The biggest challenge was trying to write to the headings that we were given ... I struggled for ages to try to write to the criteria ... We weren't able to talk about our experience and how useful it was, within the framework of the report ... (selection of Phase 2 submitters).

In order to help teachers use the core dimensions even more successfully, there were many recommendations for the use of more plain English (less 'jargon'), as the quotation below illustrates.

The core dimensions and requirements: consistent opinion for 'less jargon'

I think [the core dimensions] are probably quite good, but I think maybe the way they are presented is not good. Logically there's not a problem with finding info [sic], planning how you're going to do something, doing it, evaluating it, disseminating it – they're obvious things to do. But somehow they don't come across as those five [sic] simple words when you start doing the project. The information you're fed at first is a bit too jargonistic, those words get lost. This could be overcome by removing a lot of language from the matrix (Phase 2 submitter, talking about the presentation material viewed and discussed at an initial session on the TLA).

Other recommendations for more manageable submissions included: the use of open questions on the submission form; questions or bullet points to jog the memory and help with writing under the headings of the form; and, suggested by several interviewees, a further 'dimension' to include on the submission of 'where next?' 'What are your next steps going to be, where is it going to take you and what are you going to work on next as a result?' (Phase 2 submitter).

Progress in the Academy: projects and submissions

Findings from the Phase 1 evaluation of the pilot TLA suggested a need to improve participants' perceptions and experiences of their **project and submission as integral components** of their involvement in the Academy, with the core dimensions as relevant to both arenas. Over the course of the Academy, teachers had indeed started to see their TLA project *and* the TLA submission and requirements as fundamentally connected. In addition, the **core dimensions** were being employed to a greater extent throughout the whole process (although with the exception of those involved in the TLA retrospective to having undertaken a 'project' or CPD activity, where the core dimensions had not necessarily formed part of the 'project process').

So far, in this chapter we have set out the accounts and perceptions of the 153 submitters who were interviewed in Phases 1 and 2 of the pilot. However, summing up this section and in considering the development of the TLA further, it is important here to note all our interviewees' experiences of manageability of TLA projects and submissions. That is, submitters' *and* non-submitters' views. As this section has

highlighted, for our **submitters**, there was an overriding association of **challenge with TLA submissions** rather than projects. This would suggest focusing further support and development in the TLA submission process – explanation of requirements, improving submitters’ awareness of recognition procedures, and where next for teachers’ involvement (e.g. enrolling for the next Stage, what the next Stage entails, etc.).

On the other hand, amongst the **non-submitters** (participants who had enrolled but not submitted work) that we interviewed during Phase 1, there was a **higher incidence of project-related challenge** than was relayed by the submitters. This included being unable to carry out the project owing to **workload and time** commitments, difficulty beginning the project (e.g. *‘not having any ideas what to do for a project’*) and a perceived lack of support that would have helped make the project happen (e.g. cooperation and collaboration with other schools, other departments, etc.). Thus, it would seem that **support for both projects and submissions, indeed encompassing the whole process, is important in order to aid conversion from enrollee to submitter.**

Based on the Phase 2 evidence, there was an intimation that the project-specific challenges cited by the non-submitters could decrease as the concepts of ‘everyday’ CPD and ‘peer collaboration’ – currently stressed through the Academy as well as through a variety of national messages – further permeate practice. Comments from the Phase 2 submitters would certainly suggest this to be the case. Underpinning much of the Phase 2 experience of the TLA was a sense of collaborative support, and an emphasis on projects as part of everyday professional learning and classroom practice. *‘It was something we were doing anyway, it wasn’t something extra, it became part of the planning and implementation’* (Phase 2 submitter, primary school). Such an ‘ethos’, together with support from GTC link advisers and partner leads, is likely to have contributed to greater manageability as well as the higher submission rate in Phase 2 compared with Phase 1.

However, this ethos was not part of the experience of all interviewed Phase 2 submitters and although the submission rate has improved, the number of enrollees who are non-submitters still exceeds those who are currently submitters within the TLA. How then to focus resources and support for improving participants’ sense of manageability in the continuation and roll out of the TLA? It is to these considerations that we now turn as we set out the views of both submitters and non-submitters on the support and guidance they received and convey the recommendations they shared for further development within the TLA in this regard.

3.1.2 Support and guidance

The section draws together findings from a further set of questions on the support and guidance received and any related areas for improvement in the TLA. Teachers’ perspectives were garnered to ascertain the extent and sources of support, type of support, helpfulness of support and any areas for further support and guidance. Submitters’ and non-submitters’ views have been analysed in order to pull together the key findings. Findings from across both Phases are presented, and the progress made thus far by the Academy and any areas for further attention are explored.

Perceptions of the support and guidance received

Across both Phases of the Academy, the vast majority of the interviewed submitters had received some support and guidance during their involvement in the TLA.

Extent and sources of support

- At **Phase 1**, HEI personnel were the key source of support for submitters, followed by the school champion or CPD coordinator.
- Overall, the support received in **Phase 2** was greater in extent and range than that reported at Phase 1. At Phase 2, submitters' key sources of support were **other teachers involved** and **local authority-based personnel** – constituting a marked difference from Phase 1. The lesser involvement with HEI-based personnel simply reflects the models adopted by the different TLA local partners, whilst the greater extent of support from other teachers corresponds with increased peer collaboration by participants when carrying out their projects and preparing submissions.
- The majority of the **non-submitters who were interviewed in Phase 1 had not received any support or guidance** at the time of interview for their involvement in the TLA. At Phase 2, the small number of interviewed submitters who felt that they had not received support or guidance were mainly those involved in the TLA via other CPD provision. Both these groups were similar in that **the majority would have liked some support**.

Type of support

- At **Phase 1**, support was reported chiefly in relation to the submission (e.g. putting the project onto paper, what goes where, interpreting the requirements of the TLA and 'checking it through').
- At **Phase 2**, there was a **wider range** in the types of support that interviewees had received, marking progress within the provision of the Academy and amongst participants themselves. Support reported in Phase 2 included advice on writing the submission, colleague-to-colleague discussion about progressing the projects themselves, and help with initial ideas about the types of project that could be undertaken. Reassurance, where received, from colleagues, local authority personnel or GTC link advisers was viewed as especially important, and indeed was felt to be key to the completion of their project and submission by some interviewees.
- At both Phase 1 and Phase 2, there was partner-level **variation in how support was organised**. All the partners' work involved the **promotion** of the TLA: for example, sending leaflets/fliers; or organising a launch event; or targeting schools/teachers (in a number of cases, specific groups such as headteachers, training schools, and teachers already undertaking specific CPD, had been targeted). In a smaller number of cases, **more extensive support for teachers'**

involvement in the TLA had been a feature of partners' work. Support strategies included:

- regular partner-run **support sessions**, such as twilight sessions (suggested as particularly effective in aiding teachers' involvement by a number of Phase 2 partners)
 - facilitators/other **points of contact** made available to teachers
 - the production of **tailored** submission and other materials
 - **in-school** partner-organised/led support for individual teachers and whole schools.
- Where such support had been available, teachers rated their involvement with the TLA as more manageable. Several other partners indicated that they would have liked to have offered support in these ways, but did not have the capacity (financial, time, human resources, etc.) to do so.

Helpfulness of support

- On the whole, the support received was rated as '**helpful**' to '**very helpful**' across both Phases of the TLA. Both organised and informal support was rated highly.
- However, as alluded to above, where **locally coordinated** hands-on support in particular was available within partner areas (at both Phases), teachers' ratings indicated a more manageable experience overall (e.g. authority-wide support sessions organised by the local authority; a designated session – as part of an existing course – for supporting TLA write-ups). This was especially the case with regard to interpreting the requirements of the TLA and accessing support and guidance.

Areas for further support and guidance

- At Phases 1 and 2, there were **recommendations for further support** from personnel and through materials (e.g. local group sessions, exemplar materials). Although such support was available, especially in Phase 2, it was not available across all partners nor, crucially, was it universally accessed by teachers.
- At Phase 2, there remained areas for further attention regarding support, including: support or mentor groups, **dissemination networks**, and more **direct communication** from the TLA to teachers.
- In addition, at Phase 2 there were particular recommendations for even greater **personally relevant** (or indeed, individual) support. That is, support that meets the needs of their particular projects and queries. These suggestions emanated mainly, although by no means solely, from those involved in the TLA via other CPD provision. Amongst this particular group, there were also recommendations for **greater personal understanding** of the Academy – its aims, the submission process and 'where next?'.

- Amongst the non-submitters we interviewed, there were requests for support ‘*in the early stages*’ as well as regular support sessions to provide **impetus throughout**. To help them proceed, these non-submitters felt they needed **greater personal contact**, direct communication with TLA personnel, and greater clarity as to **exactly what was required** and expected for the submission – e.g. what evidence could be collected, the amount of work required, bullet-pointed guidance material.
- In addition, it was felt that **in-school drive and support for the TLA** would have helped them to proceed (although as noted below, a school ‘imposed’ decision to take part, rather than individual choice, was a factor against their engagement).
- Crucially, **those interviewees who enrolled but did not submit were more likely to question the value or relevance of the TLA** than those who had submitted. This suggests that clarity in explaining the purpose of the TLA might be a critical area to address in presenting the Academy to teachers. Better marketing and promotion of the scheme was also recommended.
- In addition, a number of non-submitting teachers had enrolled as ‘a school decision’. **Lack of personal interest or investment** in the decision to take part had some impact on their lack of engagement. Indeed, similar uncertainty as to the value of the TLA and the lesser extent of involvement in the decision to take part could be found amongst those involved in the TLA via other CPD provision at Phase 2. This group perhaps had the least manageable experience of the TLA overall.

The above recommendations for support and guidance were given both by interviewees who had and had not received support – i.e. these recommendations were expressed as important in furthering what had already been received, and where such support had not been received. As section 3.1.1 set out, there was progress over the course of the pilot in terms of participants’ experiences of manageability. And contributing to this, a number of these recommendations were more evident in practice in Phase 2 than in Phase 1. However, they were not all present in all locations, nor were they experienced by all teachers interviewed at Phase 2 even where they were in place.

The Academy approach being trialled in Phase 3 of the pilot would seem to have the potential to fulfil many of the recommendations interviewees suggested. This involves setting up the Academy in hubs of schools, with each school in the hub having a trained TLA leader and verifier. The TLA leader, with the backing of local partners and a GTC link adviser, could offer the support enrolees felt they needed through the entire process from project start-up to submission, could facilitate peer-to-peer collaboration and crucially would be very readily accessible to participants in their school. This latter point is pertinent given acknowledgement amongst some interviewed submitters and non-submitters in Phases 1 and 2 that they themselves had at times lacked initiative and had not asked for or actively sought any help.

Whilst Phase 1 and 2 evidence would suggest that the TLA leader and hub model may prove an effective means by which to support enrolees, there would be two notes of caution to sound, none the less. Firstly, as the recommendations above highlight, a

school-imposed involvement can militate against teacher engagement with the Academy, therefore any in-school drive for the TLA will need to be balanced with leeway for teachers to make their own decisions so that any benefits of the hub approach are not assuaged. Secondly, the manageability issues of those involved in the Academy via other CPD provision may still warrant attention. Whilst work was underway to customise support material and the submission form so that they better fit these enrolees' experiences, further efforts may be required to resolve difficulties that may persist with the aspects of the Academy that they found most problematic: the interpretation of the TLA requirements and accessing guidance and mentoring (see section 3.1.2).

3.2 The manageability of participation for partners

Despite concerns over capacity (time, human resources), the manageability of involvement with the TLA for the **authority** and **partner leads** (including HEI leads in Phase 1) themselves was generally perceived as **quite reasonable**.

- Operational management was aided by **partner-level commitment** (both across the organisation and from higher levels).
- It was also enabled by **absorbing work** into one's everyday role and/or running the Academy in parallel with existing structures and programmes (such as, in one case, the development of an Opportunities Framework). However, where this was not possible, involvement with the TLA meant extra workload.
- Across both Phases, the GTC was felt to have been **responsive** to partner needs: an example of this from one partner was how the link adviser developed 'locally-relevant' materials.
- There was concern over **keeping track** of enrolments and submissions. It was felt that greater locally-based knowledge of expressions of interest, enrolments and submissions would aid local follow-up of teachers as well as the strategic planning of local operations. In this regard, partners would welcome more frequent updates from the GTC on which teachers from their area had enrolled in the Academy and had submitted work.
- At Phase 2 in particular, partners expressed a need for **supporting their own understanding of the TLA**, including progression through the Stages, the relationship between recognition and academic accreditation, and the implementation of verification procedures. The operational manageability of verification and moderation procedures also concerned Phase 1 partners.

Across the pilot, partners were enthusiastic about the potential of the TLA, and were readily willing to '*see how it goes*'. In order to take the TLA forward at partner level, there were concrete plans amongst several partners to enhance and develop their involvement in the TLA. These included: consultants becoming involved (e.g. to help embed the TLA into the LA, or to raise its profile at school level); and in another partner area administrative staff were to become more involved in local operations. That said, doubts were raised by several partners over their capacity to provide support to enrolees and to facilitate the Academy long-term. Indeed, personnel

changes, new priorities and limited time and resources meant that in two of the three Phase 1 areas the TLA did not maintain its original foothold during the course of Phase 2.

3.3 The manageability of participation for verifiers

In the course of interviews conducted with 15 verifiers who had verified submissions during Phases 1 or 2, issues related to their role in the Academy were discussed. The key points they raised were as follows.

- For the most part, verifiers were **positive about the initial training** that they had received (particularly the one-day courses) in terms of introducing them to the core dimensions and providing an opportunity to see exemplar submissions. The quality of the input from the trainers was acknowledged, especially in Phase 2. However, it was stated that the initial training was not entirely sufficient for verifiers to begin verifying submissions alone. Moderation sessions, where held, did help them to feel better equipped, and such sessions were viewed as essential in ensuring standardisation and commonality of approach across verifiers as attendees could share their understanding as to what was required at each Stage. Concerns were raised as to the feasibility of holding such sessions when the Academy was rolled out nationwide because of the costs involved. Online support for verifiers, like e-seminars and a discussion page, was also suggested.
- Verifiers from schools relayed that undertaking the training had a *‘massive impact’* on the support they were able to provide to the TLA enrolees in their school.
- Verifiers from HEIs in particular acknowledged **concerns about work that was submitted for both HEI academic accreditation and TLA recognition**. Questions raised included the following. Generally how would TLA recognition marry with academic accreditation? What would happen if the work met one set of criteria but not the other (e.g. the academic expectations were fulfilled but not the core dimensions or vice versa)? Would a teacher working towards academic accreditation and Stage 2 recognition produce more but attain the same TLA Stage as a colleague seeking Academy recognition only? Was this equitable?
- **There was unanimity that the quality of submissions verified to date had been variable**. Those of the highest quality had been submitted by enrolees who had received support in the course of their involvement with the TLA. The core dimensions that verifiers felt were least well represented in the write-ups were dissemination and peer support (*‘... it’s all very descriptive – they tell you that they’ve presented their project to colleagues but they don’t say how they or their colleagues benefit from this’*). To a lesser extent, engaging with the knowledge base was also identified as an area of potential weakness. Verifiers from HEIs in particular also commented that some submissions lacked a theoretical underpinning, were limited in their critical analysis, and were poorly written or inappropriately worded (*‘too chatty’*).

- **That said, there was acknowledgement by verifiers that whilst the write-up itself may be inadequate, the quality of the actual project undertaken could be sound.** Evidence from the enrolees also showed that the written submission process could be a major stumbling block. For example, among the non-submitters interviewed and the Phase 1 teachers who were followed up, there were those who had undertaken their TLA project but had stalled at the point of turning this into a written submission. This raises the question as to whether a submission, especially at Stage 1 but also perhaps at Stage 2, always needs to be in a written format. An option suggested was a presentation or an interview with a verifier instead. Moderation would be difficult with this approach and the verifier time needed would make this a potentially costly process (though there may be economies of scale if a verifier could assess a number of submitters from a school in the course of one visit). Notwithstanding, an oral approach may reduce the number of *'highly descriptive'* submissions: it was evident from the interviews conducted in this research that submitters could critically assess their projects and analyse the type and extent of the impacts generated and also identify the factors that led to those outcomes.

A final and crucial point to make as regards the verifier's role was that interviewees expressed concern as to whether they would be able to perform their verification duties long-term without some recompense for themselves or their institution: *'It's fine now but at some point, my university will say that I can't do this [verification] without some reimbursement for the time'*. We shall return to this issue in the conclusion of this report.

3.4 Factors contributing to manageability of participation in the TLA and future implications

To begin to draw this chapter to a close, we gather together the evidence to identify the elements that facilitate participation in the Academy and consider areas for development in terms of manageability.

From the data garnered throughout the TLA evaluation, a number of key factors would seem important in enabling teachers' involvement in the TLA. These included:

- **headteacher and whole-school commitment** to professional development and to their teachers' TLA projects
- **teacher-teacher collaboration and support** (i.e. accessing peer support, *learning conversations*, supporting each other in making the submission), which could be either informal or planned into projects/submissions. Teachers working *'in isolation'* in their schools made for a less manageable experience overall
- **hands-on, step-by-step support** for teachers (ideally organised and timetabled) (e.g. through locally coordinated support sessions; in-school sessions; TLA-personnel personal support)
- **a key member of school staff** as a champion or *'cascader'* or, as in Phase 3, TLA leader

- participants' **personal choice, interest and investment** in the project, and the nature of the TLA work as part of **everyday classroom practice**
- the importance of **face-to-face, personal** and (moreover, perhaps) **personalised** support – imparting **information** about the TLA, its aims, the submission process and 'where next'; and offering some degree of **individual support** in the context of participants' particular projects.

Progress in the Academy over the course of the pilot meant that a number of these features were more evident in practice in Phase 2 than in Phase 1. The data at Phase 2 showed that teachers' sense of manageability was greater where a good many of these features were in place – thus consolidating them as effective elements for those participating in the TLA.

Notwithstanding progress made in Phase 2, there remained areas for development regarding manageability. These are summed up below at four different levels: for individual participants; for schools; for the partner and for the GTC/TLA scheme as a whole.

At individual level

- To involve **peer-peer collaboration**, either informally or formally, when carrying out projects and submissions. This would: address the core dimension of 'accessing peer support'; link with current CPD priorities in national agendas and initiatives; and possibly establish an informal support network for teachers.

At school level

- To monitor the extent to which peer collaboration is manageable for their teachers, so that **logistics** (e.g. finding time to meet, class cover, etc.) do not detract from the benefits of this type of professional development.
- To **embed** the TLA **into existing school systems** such as performance management or existing action research programmes.
- To consider the Phase 3 **TLA leaders' role** and its implementation **within and across schools** so that participants gain the benefits of wider insights and support beyond their own school.

At LEA/partner level

- To continue to develop promotion strategies, both overarching and **honed to suit** their partner context, e.g. target specific teacher groups; link with existing local networks.
- To consider its role in providing hands-on support, bearing in mind capacity. Certainly, **a named, accessible contact** seemed important to teachers.

At GTC/scheme level

- To consider the development of the scheme so as to provide **a more consistent experience of manageability** and support for all participants. This would include the different types of support available (e.g. launch events, documentation,

website materials, hands-on support) and the different sources of that support i.e. to ensure consistent messages from GTC, local authority, HEI and other partners. The TLA Leader approach of Phase 3 may facilitate consistency.

- In terms of the administration of the scheme, greater efficiencies in the transmission of enrolment/submission data from the TLA to LEA partners might be developed.

3.5 Concluding comments on the manageability of the TLA

To conclude, over the course of the pilot, there was progress within the Academy in terms of submitters' experiences of manageability. None the less, teachers' participation was regarded as '*reasonably manageable, but ...*'. The key areas perceived as less manageable were time and understanding the requirements of the TLA. Other areas contributed to uncertainty and there was an overall sense that teachers did not know how to solve or resolve their concerns.

Greater collaboration between peers had started to improve experiences overall. However, three other 'Cs' remain important for the roll out of the Academy: **clarity** of who, what, where and how in the scheme as a whole; ensuring **consistency** of all participants' experience (granted some differences with local flavours of the TLA); and, for those enrolling in the Academy via other provision, **coherence** between TLA participation and the original CPD activity so that they fit together (e.g. relevant support documentation, submission form).

As a final point, it should be noted that despite some manageability difficulties, the majority of submitters who were interviewed were overwhelmingly positive about taking part in the TLA and had enjoyed researching and disseminating their own learning.

4 The value of the TLA and its future development

This chapter of the report considers interviewees' perceptions of the value of the TLA and its future development, and in doing so, covers the following areas:

- 4.1 The currency of the TLA
- 4.2 The additionality of the TLA
- 4.3 Scaling the TLA up to national level

4.1 The currency of the TLA

This section explores the currency of the TLA by setting out interviewees' perceptions of its value.

4.1.1 The value of the TLA

In order to ascertain what value was attached to the TLA, a question probing its most valuable aspects, either actual or potential, was asked to all 170 enrolees (both submitters and non-submitters) who were interviewed in Phases 1 and 2. Verifiers for the Academy, CPD coordinators/headteachers from the case-study schools and TLA partner leads were also asked for their perceptions. All but three of these interviewees identified at least one valuable aspect of the Academy, indicating that **the TLA was a highly regarded model of professional development**. Here we set out the elements of the Academy that were cited as valuable, presenting first the responses of enrolees before moving on to the views expressed by verifiers, case-study CPD coordinators/heads then partner leads.

The value of the TLA: enrolees' perceptions

Across Phases 1 and 2, interviewed enrolees (both the submitters and non-submitters) perceived two aspects of the TLA to be particularly valuable: primarily the recognition it provides for teachers' work, and secondly the model of professional development that it promotes.

To explain further, where the TLA was commended for **providing external recognition of work done by teachers as part of their everyday practice**, interviewed enrolees described it as *'nice to be recognised'* and good for *'professionals to get that recognition'* (i.e. acknowledgement from outside school). They also felt that *'... we do so much and it isn't recognised'*. In Phase 2, interviewees also valued the TLA as a way of **providing recognition for the extra work** or effort that interviewees put into their TLA project or into their professional development more generally. For example, they appreciated the fact that the TLA provided *'recognition that you've done something extra, you've done some research'*.

The TLA was also highly regarded for encouraging and providing an **effective model of professional development**. The Academy was viewed as *'a very good vehicle for*

professional development' and was generally seen to be a most useful and progressive system that fitted with the current climate of professional development in schools. Particular elements of the TLA model were seen to contribute to its value in this regard. These are outlined below in order of frequency.

- **It encourages teachers to reflect on their practice**

Interviewees valued the TLA for enabling them to reflect upon their practice and professional development through the core dimensions. They prized the opportunity *'to take a step back and assess what you're doing'* and the fact that *'... it required us to look at the effectiveness of teaching strategies that we'd developed and how well they worked in the classroom'*. This was perceived as particularly important given a teaching culture in which *'time to sit and think'* was perceived to be a rarity.

- **It provides the opportunity to work alongside colleagues and share knowledge and good practice**

The opportunities created by the TLA for working with colleagues were highly regarded. It was seen to be *'a fantastic opportunity to share ideas with people right across the country'* and as a way of *'sharing expertise'*. It created *'a situation where teachers can talk to teachers about their own learning and have dialogues with people from different subject areas'*. At Phase 1, the opportunity to disseminate their TLA work was particularly valued and the Academy was viewed as effective vehicle through which good practice could be shared. This aspect of the TLA was seen to have tremendous potential and was viewed by some as key to its future success.

- **It offers a progressive route of CPD through the Stages in the TLA**

In this regard, interviewed enrolees described the Academy as a *'development pathway'* and as *'giving you a ladder to move up – it gives you a measurable progress'*. The TLA model of professional development was also appreciated for providing teachers with a **structure** to follow, and a way of demonstrating their commitment to professional learning. This was cited predominantly by Phase 2 interviewees.

- **It provides opportunities for career progression and promotion**

More teachers in Phase 2 recognised the TLA as a valuable tool for promotion and career progression than in Phase 1. For example, a number of the interviewed enrolees had chosen to use their TLA submission to advance their threshold application; as part of their performance management; and as part of their general progression within teaching: *'It can go in your portfolio for development and it may be recognised when you go for another job'*.

- **It allows teachers to pursue and focus upon research into their individual areas of interest**

Teachers appreciated the fact that they were provided with a **choice over their focus** and area of development, and were able to progress at their own pace. In this way, they were given control and ownership over their professional development.

- **The TLA facilitates and promotes action research within schools**

Interviewed enrolees spoke of being *'excited'* about carrying out research in their schools, and recognised the value of being able to investigate classroom issues at the *'chalk face'*.

Other valuable aspects of the TLA were that it offers an **alternative for those not wishing to study on more traditional HEI courses**; that it **enhances teachers' confidence and motivation**; that it provides **opportunities to link with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)**, and because it is practical, **hands-on** and classroom based. Finally, some interviewees rated the TLA as a way of **raising the status of the teaching profession and encouraging professionalism** – for some, this was long overdue.

The data suggests that enrolees (both submitters and non-submitters) have a high regard for the concept of the TLA, not only for the recognition it provides of work done by teachers everyday, but also for the model of CPD that it promotes. Some subtle differences can be noted between the valuable features identified in Phases 1 and 2. These were largely a result of the way that the TLA was promoted to teachers by partners (i.e. the emphasis that was placed on different elements of the Academy, local links with HEIs, the degree of collaboration and presence of support networks) and also individual teachers' experience of CPD (i.e. whether they already had or were working towards a higher qualification, and the kinds of CPD in which they had previously partaken in school). For example, fewer interviewed teachers from Phase 2 attached value to the opportunity to carry out action research within their school. This could be attributed to many of the Phase 2 TLA partners already having carried out CPD initiatives and approaches that involved action research so this was not therefore regarded as a unique feature of the Academy. This perhaps reflects the current climate of CPD for more classroom and evidence-based learning.

Interviewed enrolees from Phase 2 were more likely to focus on the reflective element of their submissions and on the potential for career development as a result of participation in the TLA. This latter finding, that more teachers were assigning value to opportunities for career progression through the TLA, could be a result of the way the Academy had been launched to enrolees in Phase 2, with several of the partners drawing attention to this at their launch events. Phase 2 interviewees were also more inclined to attach value to the opportunity to progress through the Stages in the Academy.

The value of the TLA: verifiers' perceptions

Verifiers' responses generally mirrored those of the teachers. For example, the recognition of teachers' everyday work was cited most frequently, followed by the opportunity for teachers' to reflect on their current practice and professional development. They had high regard for the form of CPD that the Academy promotes, for the collaboration it encourages, for the opportunity for teachers to share good practice and for the promotion of class-based research. Verifiers also pointed to how the TLA *'fits in'* with the current CPD agenda and collaborative arrangements currently operational in some partners. Interestingly, one verifier warned against the TLA becoming *'elitist'* in being *'too rigid'* and requiring *'such formal write-ups'* and therefore failing to appeal to high numbers of teachers.

The value of the TLA: case-study CPD coordinators'/headteachers' perceptions

Case-study CPD coordinators/headteachers from Phase 1, Phase 2 and from follow-up interviews were also invited to comment on what they perceived to be the valuable aspects of the TLA. As with the enrolees, they viewed the recognition of teachers' everyday work as the most valuable aspect of the Academy, alongside the opportunity to collaborate with other teachers and share good practice. They also prized its ability to raise teachers' levels of confidence, motivation and self-esteem; the model of CPD that the Academy promotes; the opportunity for teachers to reflect on their practice; and the opportunity to participate in action research.

They also reported that their involvement with the Academy had become part of performance management in their schools and had exemplified their commitment to CPD. They believed that this may be helping to retain current employees. To date, involvement in the TLA had not been used to attract any potential candidates for new posts, though this was recognised as a future possibility. Prior participation in the Academy by those applying to the schools for advertised positions was viewed positively. For example, these interviewees believed that membership of the Academy demonstrated an interest in '*wider professional effectiveness*' and in school improvement. It was also seen to provide an indication of the teachers' commitment to CPD and, for these CPD coordinators/headteachers, would feature as a '*favourable component*' in any application form.

Valuable elements of the TLA: enrolees', verifiers' and CPD coordinators/headteachers' perceptions

Recognition of the work done by teachers as part of their everyday practice

I would say that [the value lies in] being able to do something, as a classroom practitioner, and for it to be worth something in the larger world, and there being some sort of recognition for that. I don't think that there is enough recognition for the hard work that goes on in schools (Phase 1 non-submitter, secondary).

The key is, it's [the TLA] saying to people 'We value what you're doing on a day-to-day basis. It's important and it contributes not only to your own professional development but to the education of young people in school' (Phase 1 case-study CPD coordinator/headteacher, primary).

It's getting that recognition for things that you're doing anyway. There is a huge push in teaching for professional development, but actually being able to turn around and prove it, there is very little way of proving anything in our career. It's getting that bit of paper which you can use to prove that you've actually done something towards your profession (Phase 2 submitter, primary).

Giving the teachers a chance to gain some sort of accreditation for a lot of the work they do in school, the extra work, projects and research, all the different things that are part and parcel of their role, I think it's good that they can have that recognised formally and count as part of their personal development (TLA verifier).

Encouraging and providing an effective model of professional development

We've [the teaching profession] had a very amateurish attitude towards professional development – it's ad-hoc, it's bitty, it's random, and it's been without any sort of rigor in the past. The TLA will introduce this... (Phase 1 case-study CPD coordinator/headteacher, primary).

I think that the thing is built up in terms of there's got to be a rigorous planning process, there's got to be evaluation of what you're doing and where it's going to go in the future, and there also has to be the dissemination so you're not just doing it yourself but you're also trying to convey what you've learnt to a wider audience. All of those things are very good and I think that's the way that professional development in schools is moving anyway. It fits nicely into that pattern (Phase 2 submitter, secondary).

Encouraging teachers to reflect on their practice and professional development

It's evaluating and reflecting on your practice – that's the most valuable thing for me. You sit down and think 'I'll change that for next time etc.', so it will actually have an impact on the children (Phase 1 submitter, primary).

I think focusing on one specific part of your practice, and having to work through what did and didn't work, reflecting on how it's going to change your practice in the future, was the best thing (Phase 2 submitter, primary).

An arena for sharing good practice and working with colleagues

[The TLA lets] colleagues talk about their work with each other and outside their own school, and we can get this cross-section of ideas that can go across schools ... That kind of thing is valued far more than stuff that comes down from the DfES (Phase 2 submitter, secondary).

I think it is starting to make them [teachers] see that their work can influence and help others. I think that this whole business of working together as a team and mentoring and coaching each other in an area, that whole-team approach and developing themselves as a professional with others is tremendously valuable (TLA verifier).

Progressive route through CPD

It provides teachers with some sort of progression and a route for their professional development. Having been involved with CPD work at county level, one of the things that other teachers and I have been crying out for is guidance on 'What can I do next to develop professionally?'. You come across a lot of dead-end routes. It's good that the TLA has levels. It gives something at a very beginning level and you can take it as far as you want it to go (Phase 2 submitter, primary).

Opportunities for career progression and promotion

When I was speaking with a colleague, we were talking about job applications and that fact that obviously if you are still relying on your first degree, you need to have something else to get you up the career ladder, and this [the TLA] seems a perfect chance to improve your own professional development and get some qualifications as well (Phase 2 submitter, secondary).

I think with the change of management and TLR points that it's a way of showing that you've got leadership qualities because it's harder now to get into management and it's showing that you're undertaking things beyond your classroom (Phase 2 submitter, primary).

Allowing teachers to pursue and focus upon research into their individual areas of interest

It enables you to focus down on one particular area so closely. When you're in school there are so many different aspects that you have to consider at all times whereas this really allows you to focus down on one thing again. It gives you, not an excuse for doing it, but a specific reason for doing it when the pressures are great from elsewhere (Phase 1 submitter, primary).

The value of the TLA: partners' perceptions

The Phase 2 partner leads were asked for their perspectives on the currency of the TLA. They valued the concept of the TLA and were quick to recognise the '*enormous value*' in participation. They, too, commended the TLA for the structure that it offers to CPD; for the ownership teachers can take over their professional development; and for the enhancements it provides to current CPD provision. Value was also assigned to the notion of class-based research, and the potential of the Academy to aid career progression and promotion. Also akin to the teachers', verifiers' and CPD coordinators/headteachers' perceptions, the partner leads valued the TLA for its recognition of teachers' work.

In addition, the Academy was appreciated for offering an alternative to traditional HEI qualifications (e.g. post-graduate certificates and higher degrees). In this regard, the value of Stages 1 and 2 were noted particularly, though some reservation was expressed at times over the upper Stages in the Academy. To explain further, Stages 1 and 2 were viewed extremely positively and were seen to '*fill the gap*' between undergraduate and postgraduate study in the current professional development landscape. These initial Stages were perceived to be '*less academic*' than subsequent Stages and were described as '*kick starting people into thinking more seriously about professional development*'. However, as regards the upper Stages, some partners wondered how these would compare with other better established qualifications. Concern was expressed that once enrolees reached Stage 3, HEI-led courses, the NPQH, the Established Leaders' Programme and other NCSL provision would be seen as more relevant by teachers. **As such, the continued promotion of the status and currency of the TLA would appear necessary to sustain its place in the busy professional development landscape.**

Valuable aspects of the TLA: partners' perceptions**Recognition of the work done by teachers as part of their everyday practice**

The more we look at what's happening with professional development and the new work of the TDA, teachers do want some sort of record and evidence of accrediting their practice, so I think the Academy's unique in that way (Phase 2 partner-level interviewee).

The value of Stages 1 and 2

That first level is absolutely crucial. That's where, for me, the TLA filled a gap that hadn't been looked at. It's enormously powerful, I think it could be very important (Phase 2 partner-level interviewee).

It is a way of incrementally working up to a Masters. It gives a backbone to that (Phase 2 partner-level interviewee).

The currency of the upper Stages in the Academy

I think it's going to be difficult to justify the TLA for those that are going down that route [of promotion], because basically they [other CPD providers] are doing a similar job, and NPQH and some of the other programmes have got more status, because they are akin to qualifications and are linked in to the solid bits of career progression. I would see, certainly the earlier Stages of the TLA – 1, 2 and 3 – as building blocks and as means of supporting self-evaluation and autonomous ways of learning as fantastic, but I think beyond [i.e. the higher Stages] there might well be a question mark, as the other qualifications start to kick in there (Phase 2 partner-level interviewee).

Perceptions of the GTC as a result of the TLA

Also of note in this section are interviewees' perceptions of the GTC in the light of their TLA involvement. Interviewed teachers in Phases 1 and 2 and verifiers were asked whether their participation in the Academy had changed their perceptions of the GTC and its remit. Just over one-half (56 per cent) of responding interviewees believed that their perceptions had changed positively. This would suggest that the TLA has the potential to be a valuable tool for the GTC in that it can help enhance its image and general levels of understanding regarding its role. However, it should also be noted that a negative experience in the Academy (e.g. lack of support, slow response to a submission) generated or reinforced a negative perception of the GTC.

To sum up, the findings presented in this section demonstrate that interviewees were quick to recognise the value of the TLA, especially its capacity to provide recognition for work done as part of teachers' everyday practice and in offering a model for professional development. Further, in presenting the appraisals of enrolees, verifiers, CPD coordinators/headteachers and partner leads separately, the degree of consistency as to its perceived value, whatever one's association with the TLA, is apparent.

4.2 The additionality of the TLA

This section conveys interviewees' perceptions of the 'additionality' of the TLA in terms of professional development. It considers the impact of the TLA compared with other forms of professional development. Further, it explores whether or not submitters had previously considered gaining recognition for their professional development prior to their involvement in the Academy. In this way, the section demonstrates the extent to which the TLA provides opportunities for teachers that they would not otherwise undertake.

4.2.1 Comparing the impact of the TLA with other forms of professional development

In total, 122 of the 153 interviewed submitters from Phases 1 and 2 commented on how the impact of their involvement in the TLA compared with other forms of professional development in which they had participated:

- two-thirds of these interviewees (79) believed that the TLA had had a greater impact than other types of professional development
- eight interviewees felt that it had less impact
- 17 believed that it had the same impact
- 18 described its impact as ‘different’ from any other form of professional development in which they had taken part.

A slightly greater proportion of submitters from Phase 1 reported that the TLA had a greater impact than other forms of professional development than in Phase 2. In Phase 2 there was increased reference to the ‘different’ impact of the TLA, suggesting that, for the majority, the Academy provides a more effective form of professional development and that, for others, it offers a ‘different’ form from that which is currently available. Thus, these findings indicate that greater, or at least alternative, benefits can be gained from participation in the TLA.

To examine the perceived difference between the TLA and other forms of professional development in more depth, submitters were asked to give reasons for their responses. When explaining why the Academy had a greater or different impact from other forms of professional development, similar rationales were given in both Phases 1 and 2.

Combining the data from both Phases reveals that the most frequently cited reason was that the TLA was a form of **self-directed learning**. Interviewees described greater impact as a result of choosing their own focus of research, making it ‘*more suited to your own needs*’, being accountable for their own learning, and relying upon their own self-motivation: ‘*You’re in control, in the driving seat*’. Teachers were afforded ownership because they could choose their own focus and develop their own interests rather than being directed by a school or national priority. (As an aside, this underlines the importance of teacher choice in the Academy, important to bear in mind perhaps, given that in Phase 2 there was a greater tendency for the foci of projects to be a school rather than an individual’s decision.)

Secondly, the greater or different type of impact of the TLA was attributed to its **reflective and evaluative approach**. As a result of the reflective processes, teachers cited more improvements in their own practice than those experienced through other forms of CPD. Further, in cases where teachers would have been doing the work anyway, ‘... *writing it up and evaluating it made a difference*’ to the level of impact derived.

In addition to the self-directed and reflective style of learning, further reasons were advanced. For example, teachers identified benefits in carrying out school-based

projects where they could see **almost instant results**: *'You're getting an immediate assessment and evaluation of something that you are doing in school'*. The fact that the TLA projects could be framed within the school environment meant that they could be tailored to meet certain needs and were directly relevant to the teachers' own experiences. The TLA was also seen to be a more **'hands-on' approach** to professional development (particularly at Phase 1). Interviewees described being *'more involved'* in this type of CPD as opposed to others where *'you don't really interact that much'*. *'Actually getting a chance'* to carry out projects and explore ideas in schools was regarded as a fresh and particularly advantageous approach.

That teachers received **recognition** also meant that the Academy had a greater or at least a different impact compared with other forms of CPD: *'There was a carrot at the end of it'*. Teachers also described the Academy as being more **long-term**, continuous and encompassing than other forms of CPD, and hence this enhanced any impacts they experienced. Finally, some felt they had derived greater benefits from the TLA because they were able to **collaborate** with colleagues and learn from their peers both within and outside their own school, and because they were **required to disseminate** their work.

Why the TLA has a greater or different impact than other forms of professional development

It is a form of self-directed learning

This [the TLA work] is really self-learning. It's more investigative rather than going on a course and sitting and listening to someone else speaking for putting into your own practice. You get more satisfaction from doing it yourself, from learning yourself about how to do things and how to deal with situations (Phase 2 submitter, secondary).

The TLA is something that you've opted to do yourself, it's of direct relevance to you, you're driving your own training, you're in control. I think also that because you're doing it, you have a greater sense of ownership ... so there's much more sense of achieving something but also wanting to achieve it because it's yours and you don't have to take it and adapt it and apply it, it's yours (Phase 2 submitter, secondary).

It's your baby, if you like, it was my thing. It was something that I was able to do off my own back and it was original, and the difference between that and other courses is that they're something that's given to you, and you're talked at and you do what you're told, but this was very subjective. I could take it where I liked and I thought that was beneficial (Phase 1 submitter, secondary).

Teachers evaluate and reflect upon their work

You're more focused about your own project ... it requires a certain amount of self motivation to say 'This is what I want to trial and try', and then to think closely about the impact, and whether it has any, and then be self reflective and change your practice. Whereas I think that when you attend courses or INSET days, you get caught up in all your other duties and you don't think about making it part of your practice (Phase 1 submitter, primary).

[Compared with other forms of CPD] I think it was good that it was so reflective, and that you really had to think about what you'd done and why (Phase 2 submitter, primary).

Teachers observe immediate results in school

...this is actually based in schools, and the projects are taking place in a school – whereas sometimes you go on courses and they give you all this information, but it's not necessarily very easy to put into practice (Phase 1 submitter, primary).

It encourages a 'hands on' approach to CPD

It was a very hands on approach, which I wanted ... writing a programme [for Gifted and Talented children in the school] and everything, I felt that was really important. If it was just writing an essay or whatever then it probably wouldn't have had a lot of impact at all (Phase 2 submitter, primary).

This isn't simply receiving a little bit of CPD. This is about digging into it, researching it thoroughly, putting it into practice, evaluating. It is the full cycle so it has to have a deeper impact than many other forms of CPD (Phase 1 case-study CPD coordinator/headteacher, special).

Teachers receive recognition

The accreditation does make a difference. It gives it a status, gives it a purpose (Phase 2 submitter, secondary).

The TLA is more long term and continuous

It is because it is done over a more sustained period of time. You're not just on a course for a day or a few days (Phase 1 submitter, secondary).

Teachers can collaborate on projects

We found it such a valuable way of working. A couple of us worked together, we tended to work in pairs and we've carried that on because it was so effective. It gave us the realisation that there was a lot of expertise and that we can probably use each other... (Phase 2 submitter, secondary).

Before moving on, it is important to acknowledge the perspectives of the eight submitters (two from Phase 1 and six from Phase 2) who believed that the TLA had less impact than other forms of CPD. The two Phase 1 submitters were of this opinion because they had previously undertaken CPD of this kind or as a result of long delays in feedback on TLA submissions. In Phase 2, three of the six interviewees had become involved in the Academy through a CPD provider. They believed (erroneously in some cases) that their participation was obligatory, and as a result of the perceived lack of choice, had taken less interest in the TLA. The remaining teachers in Phase 2 who perceived the TLA as having less impact did so because they favoured in-house training days or because their project had not been disseminated widely.

4.2.2 Recognition for professional development

We can gain a further sense of the additionality of the TLA by considering whether the Academy attracted teachers who had not previously sought recognition for their professional development. To this end, analysis revealed that of the interviewed submitters in Phases 1 and 2, slightly more **had not** undertaken HEI-led courses in the past compared with those who had done so.

Such findings may suggest that the TLA can provide an opportunity for teachers to undertake what they would not otherwise have done. The Academy was seen as offering an attractive alternative to studying on traditional higher education courses, and encouraged those who had been inhibited by the workload involved with HEI courses to explore the route of the TLA. For those already studying on HEI-led courses, the TLA was an opportunity to attain additional recognition. For others, the Academy was regarded as a first step before progression on to diplomas or Masters-level degrees (in this regard, see also the partner leads' views of the value of the TLA).

To sum up so far, this section has considered the additionality of the TLA in Phases 1 and 2. In doing so, it examined the impact of teachers' involvement in the Academy in comparison with other forms of professional development, and whether the interviewed submitters had considered attaining recognition for their professional development prior to their involvement in the TLA. Based on the high numbers of interviewees who rated the impact of the TLA as greater or different than other forms of CPD, it appears that the Academy has the potential to provide an effective and broader form of professional development than that which has been available to date. Further, in support of its additionality, there was evidence that the TLA may offer an opportunity for some teachers to gain recognition for their professional learning that they would not otherwise have done.

4.3 Scaling the TLA up to national level

In order to gain a sense of the demand for a national rollout, all interviewees were asked whether the Academy should be made available nationwide. This section presents their responses to this. In addition, we explore whether interviewees were keen to continue their involvement in the TLA and the degree to which a sense of 'Academy' had been achieved. Finally, areas for improvement are considered.

4.3.1 Making the TLA available to teachers nationwide

In total, of the 155 interviewed submitters and non-submitters who commented, 144 believed that the TLA should be rolled out nationwide. This represents 93 per cent of the responding teachers' perceptions from Phases 1 and 2. Four interviewees thought it should not be rolled out (including one non-submitter), and seven were unsure. Twelve of the 14 verifiers also agreed that the Academy should be made available nationwide.

There were some notable differences between the two Phases in terms of how interviewed submitters and non-submitters spoke about the future development of the Academy. In Phase 1, many of the interviewees in favour of a national implementation felt that this should be conditional on the resolution of a number of issues. In contrast, in Phase 2, of the 101 submitters supporting a roll-out, only nine qualified their response in this way. This would therefore suggest that **by its second Phase, the Academy had developed so that those who had successfully submitted work felt able to recommend a national roll-out more unreservedly**. However, it should be borne in mind when interpreting this finding that this largely represents the opinions of interviewees who had progressed through the TLA to the stage of submission. Had the Phase 2 interview sample included teachers who were still to submit work (as was the case in Phase 1), it is likely that their responses would have been more tempered.

Nevertheless, when asked to explain why the TLA should be implemented nationwide, a further difference between the two Phases was apparent. Interviewees in Phase 2 were much more likely to focus on their positive experiences of the Academy when justifying their opinion than in Phase 1. As shown earlier in this report, some Phase 2 submitters had found the TLA more manageable than their Phase 1 counterparts (see Chapter 3).

Further reasons given in favour of a national roll-out were that the TLA is important for the recognition of teachers' work and professionalism, and is an effective model of CPD (see section 4.1.1 on valuable aspects for further explanation). A final key justification was that a rollout would raise the profile and currency of the TLA. Related to the concerns of the partner leads outlined in section 4.1.1, it was believed that this would help to establish the Academy's stake next to other more well-known forms of CPD in the professional development landscape.

4.3.2 Progression to the next Stage of the TLA

In order to ascertain whether participants regarded the TLA as a once-only experience or whether they were keen to continue their involvement, interviewed enrolees in Phases 1 and 2 were asked whether they planned to progress and work towards the next Stage in the Academy. In addition, when follow-up interviews were conducted with 27 teachers who had been part of the telephone survey or case studies in Phase 1, they were asked to give an update on whether they had participated in the Academy since the time of the first round of data collection. Thus, the evidence presented in this section provides a further indication of the extent of future interest in the TLA.

Responses from Phases 1 and 2 and from the follow-up interviews showed some variation.

Phase 1

The intentions of the 39 responding submitters who were interviewed at Phase 1 were as follows:

- 30 interviewees, over three-quarters, stated they were planning to work towards the next Stage of the TLA (of these, 9 were intending to proceed straightaway and 21 were planning to continue at some point in the future)
- two reported that they would not be undertaking further TLA professional development
- seven were undecided

The sample of interviewed non-submitters was evenly split between those intending to progress further, those deciding against and those who were unsure.

Phase 2

The intentions of the 109 responding submitters from Phase 2 were less positive:

- a total of 64 interviewees, almost three-fifths, stated they were planning to work towards the next Stage of the TLA (of these, 37 were planning to continue at some point in the future and 27 were intending to proceed straightaway)
- 17, around one-sixth, reported that they would not be undertaking further TLA professional development
- 28, one-quarter, were undecided.

These findings suggest that fewer Phase 2 submitters in the sample were intending to work towards the next Stage of the TLA than those interviewed in Phase 1. Ten of the submitters who had chosen not to or were unsure whether to continue with the Academy in Phase 2 already held higher degrees or, since completing their TLA submission, had embarked on other qualifications such as NPQH or Masters-level degrees. This finding is in line with predictions of some TLA partners who felt that teachers may progress on to other forms of CPD rather than continue working within the TLA (see section 4.1.1). This was thought to be primarily attributable to competition from other more immediately recognised qualifications. It was suggested that this could be redressed through greater publicity and heightened status of the TLA (as covered in more detail in section 4.3.4).

The above results were not entirely due to competition from other forms of CPD, however. They could also be ascribed to a perceived lack of information and awareness of the next Stages of the Academy. A number of those who were either unsure about or had decided against further participation were uncertain how to progress through the TLA and felt they lacked information on what the next Stage would involve. This would suggest that further attention may need to be given to

promoting the Stages of the TLA and additional information provided for teachers on how to progress (again, as covered in section 4.3.4).

Of note, the analysis revealed that where TLA partners provided interviewees with local information packs, they were much more likely to continue their involvement. This could be due to having clearer information on how to progress to the next Stage, or due to the better availability of local support. Furthermore, where interviewees had found the TLA requirements hard to interpret, they were much less inclined to continue working within the Academy, thus highlighting the need for clearer guidance.

It is worth noting that, as Chapter 2 relayed, one of the strongest impacts of TLA participation in Phase 2 was an enhanced willingness to engage in professional development. Yet, the above findings suggest that the Academy may not currently be fully capitalising upon this. Some teachers had elected to move on to other forms of professional development (which, although advantageous for the profession and the individual, means the TLA could lose out on further enrolments) or were lacking information and awareness of the next Stages of the Academy. Thus, the evidence suggests that it would be beneficial for the TLA if it could harness more for itself the enthusiasm for professional development it ignites by continuing to raise its status and also by ensuring that teachers receive all necessary information on how to progress through the Stages. This is explored further in section 4.3.4.

Follow-up interviewees' progression to the next stage of the TLA

Follow-up telephone and case-study interviews with teachers first interviewed in Phase 1 allow us to ascertain whether these submitters continued their involvement in the Academy.

Of the 27 teachers followed up:

- ten were working towards, or had already achieved a higher Stage in the Academy
- eight teachers were not currently involved with a TLA submission, but planned to resume their involvement with the Academy at some point in the future
- five were undecided whether they would progress any further
- four reported that they would not be undertaking further TLA professional development.

These figures are less positive than might have been expected given the findings from Phase 1 presented above. At times, it was the case that although teachers had not continued with the TLA formally in terms of making submissions, they had continued to use the core dimensions and the Academy's approach in their professional development. Notwithstanding, the above figures may lend some support to the evidence from Phase 2 that the TLA might not be doing enough to retain its enrolees.

Where follow-up interviewees had progressed within the Academy, they had largely received support and encouragement from HEI personnel, from a GTC link adviser or guidance and focus from a consortium group of schools. These support mechanisms had also been in place during the preparation for their first submission to the TLA.

Thus, as was suggested in the above discussion of the Phase 2 data, continued guidance and support offered to teachers is crucial in encouraging their further progress within the Academy.

Those who had chosen not to continue with TLA participation attributed this to the time demands of completing a second submission and, where support had not been provided, to *'disappointment'* over the lack of support they had received in Phase 1. The loss of senior staff in schools who promoted the TLA was also cited as a reason for ceasing involvement. Where teachers were currently unsure whether they would progress, this was largely due to a lack of communication from the Academy since their initial involvement, or because they were now working towards other types of accredited CPD such as a Post Graduate Certificate or Masters-level degree. This further indicates that, in order to retain enrollees, the Academy needs to present itself as a viable and worthwhile alternative form of CPD.

Follow-up interviewees were also asked to identify ways that teachers could be encouraged to continue working within the Academy. Quicker feedback to submissions and the provision of non-contact time or funding for supply teaching were referred to most frequently as potential mechanisms for retention. One follow-up case-study CPD coordinator/headteacher called for funding, support and training to empower personnel in school to provide clearer and more directed support to teachers who wish to be involved in the TLA. (This is akin to the TLA Leaders strategy that is being implemented in Phase 3.) Information on and encouragement to progress to the next stage of the TLA was also seen as particularly important. Having a lead TLA contact in schools – *'... unless we push it forward as senior managers, it will die'* – and more flexibility over the form of submissions were also cited as possible ways of encouraging teachers to maintain their interest in the Academy. Recommendations such as these are explored further in section 4.3.4.

4.3.3 Whether a sense of being part of an Academy can be generated

In order to explore whether participants felt part of a band of teachers engaged in professional learning, interviewees from Phase 1 and 2 (submitters only) were asked to what extent they felt part of the wider Academy. Of those who responded, 61 (just over half) did not identify with a wider sense of an Academy and 24 were undecided. Such a feeling of community was generated amongst 30 interviewees (one-quarter).

These 30 teachers were more likely to have received support sessions or materials from outside their school. For example, interviewees' sense of Academy was enhanced by celebration events and support sessions in the local authority and high value being placed on their TLA certificates. Support from within school could be important, too. However, it was of note that interviewees who did not identify with the Academy were less likely to have received external support or acknowledgement even if they were encouraged and felt part of a group within their own school. As such, the evidence here suggests that external support may be beneficial in generating a greater sense of 'Academy'.

4.3.4 Suggested improvements to the TLA

All interviewees involved in the research were asked for their perceptions of any improvements that could be made to the TLA. Here we present the responses of enrolees before moving on to the views expressed by verifiers, case-study CPD coordinators/heads then partner leads.

Enrolees' recommended improvements to the TLA

In both Phases 1 and 2 the enrolees who were interviewed made recommendations as to the elements of the TLA that, in their experience, warranted further attention. By outlining the suggestions for improvements that were made in the two Phases separately, we are able to highlight the progress of the pilot Academy thus far.

Phase 1

At Phase 1, all but eight of the 57 interviewed submitters and non-submitters cited at least one improvement. These are listed below in order of frequency:

- improvements to the support available in the TLA
- improvements to guidance material
- quicker responses to submissions
- clarification of the aims and objectives of the TLA
- greater publicity and heightened status
- improved systems of communication
- a reduction in the required workload for TLA submissions
- improved layout of the submission form or an alternative mode of submission
- clearer links with academia.

Phase 2

By Phase 2, it was evident that progress had been made in a number of the areas identified above. Firstly, over one-tenth of the interviewed submitters from Phase 2 believed that no improvements were needed (16 out of 113). Although this is a relatively small number, this does suggest that marginally more interviewees were satisfied with their experience of the TLA in Phase 2 than in Phase 1.

Furthermore, in terms of the actual improvements specified, fewer teacher interviewees in Phase 2 suggested that there should be quicker responses to submissions and for a clarification of the aims and objectives of the TLA. This suggests that the administration of the TLA had improved, and also that the aims of the Academy were better conveyed to potential enrolees in the second Phase. Additionally, fewer Phase 2 teacher interviewees called for a reduction in the workload requirement – this relates to the findings in Chapter 3 that Phase 2 submitters found the TLA more manageable (although it could also reflect the fact that the Phase 2 sample did not include interviewees who were yet to submit to the Academy). By contrast though, a greater proportion of Phase 2 teacher interviewees called for greater publicity and heightened status of the TLA. However, this is perhaps an encouraging finding in that it reflects these interviewees' enthusiasm for the Academy and their desire to see it continue in a high profile manner.

Full details of the improvements identified by Phase 2 submitters are presented in Table 4.1 in order of frequency.

Table 4.1 Improvements to the TLA recommended by Phase 2 submitters

Improvements to the support available in the TLA	<p><i>It comes back down to the actual form and the support materials for the form. What needs to come with that is the support at the end of the project, support to put your submission together (Phase 2 submitter, primary).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improvements to the support available in the TLA continued to be called for by interviewees in Phase 2. Interestingly, this improvement was not cited by teachers who had received support from within school or where support materials were provided by the TLA partner through which they enrolled. This improvement was proffered mostly by those involved in the TLA via other CPD provision, where links are in their earliest stages and where interviewees had written up their submission without the support of other teachers enrolled from their geographical region. ▪ The majority of interviewees who cited this improvement suggested that they would have preferred more ‘<i>general support</i>’, particularly where they were working in isolation. Some mentioned the use of websites, a helpline or a message board (interestingly, unaware that a website is already established). Others, particularly those involved via other CPD provision, called for local TLA centres or key staff working within each local authority to provide support. ▪ As in Phase 1, interviewees also suggested that a lead person, mentor or contact should be made more readily available. It was hoped that this would make the TLA more of an ‘<i>entity</i>’ as it ‘<i>doesn’t always feel very concrete</i>’. In this sense, ‘<i>... a bit more human contact</i>’ or ‘<i>... access to real people</i>’ would be useful. It was largely suggested that this person should be GTC personnel or school-based. The TLA leader strategy at Phase 3 may fulfil this.
Clearer guidance and guidelines	<p><i>It’s not very well known, so they probably should produce some simpler guidance and guidelines – it’s rather wordy at the moment. Something a bit shorter and snappier would be helpful. What they’ve got at the moment is almost like an encyclopedia rather than a short and snappy two-page booklet (Phase 2 submitter, secondary).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This improvement, cited across almost all partners, related to clearer guidance material, particularly concerning the submission form and the expectations of the TLA. Interviewees called for ‘more plain English’ in the guidance materials, and more practical guidance about what is involved e.g. about how to do each Stage of their project.
Greater publicity and heightened status	<p><i>I think people need to know about it, quite simply. When I speak to colleagues, they don’t know what it is; friends who aren’t in the teaching profession have no idea. I think if this is something that’s going to go ahead, then I think people need to know what it is, and they [the GTC] need to say more ‘This is the TLA. This is what it stands for’. The teachers who are involved in it need to be celebrated. It needs to be something that people leaving university know what the next Stage up is, how you can progress, something that’s really well known. I found it so difficult when you’re talking to someone and you feel so pleased with yourself [for doing a TLA project] and everyone’s like ‘Well, what is that?’ ... you feel a bit deflated (Phase 2 submitter, secondary).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publicity of the TLA was seen to be key to its continued success. ▪ The majority of interviewees who cited this improvement spoke very positively of the TLA and were keen that awareness of it should be raised amongst teachers, schools and universities. For example, it was suggested that the TLA should be represented at all national CPD conferences to raise its profile. ▪ Interviewees were also keen that any publicity always focused on the fact that recognition can be sought for everyday work and that it could be sold ‘<i>as not being an extra burden</i>’. By raising its profile in these ways, it was felt that the TLA could better hold its own amongst longer established accreditation routes.

Access to further exemplar material	<p><i>It would have been better if we could have had an exemplar of something that went along with [the guidance] that was verified ... (Phase 2 submitter, secondary).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The need to access exemplar material was raised as an area for improvement. Interviewees called for the provision of a range of examples of successful submissions. They contended that this would help to make the expectations of each Stage clearer, would have served as a way of introducing teachers to the TLA effectively and may have reduced workload. As in Phase 1, the interviewees accepted that the provision of such materials may be difficult during the pilot stages.
Clearer information on the Stages of the TLA	<p><i>The next thing on the line is to go into the second Stage [of the TLA], but we're still not terribly certain about how we go about that. That's again information we are waiting for. It will hold us back now until we know that (Phase 2 submitter, special).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interviewees were not always clear about the level of work needed for a particular Stage, and felt that further information would be helpful on the expectations of each Stage. Furthermore, interviewees who had submitted at later Stages in the TLA were keen for more information to be provided about Stages 4-6 to enable them to proceed within the TLA. ▪ Submitters also expressed concern that they did not receive encouragement to work towards subsequent Stages in the TLA. This was cited more frequently than in Phase 1. Interviewees called for some form of communication, such as an email or letter, to follow up their initial involvement inviting them to continue within the TLA. Otherwise it was feared that interest would <i>'fizzle out'</i> and that teachers would be <i>'lost'</i>. As explained in section 4.3.2, some members of the TLA had decided not to progress within the Academy as a result of a lack of information on the Stages of the TLA. Furthermore, follow-up interviews with Phase 1 submitters confirmed that this did indeed prevent some from progressing as they had wished. Hence, the provision of such information would enable more enrolees to continue working within the Academy, thus strengthening its future development.
Further improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Greater clarity over submission procedures. This included a clearer or alternative submission form. ▪ Clearer links with HEIs. ▪ Greater flexibility over submission dates or, for example, monthly opportunities to submit direct to the GTC. This improvement emerged as a local issue within some of the TLA partners where specific deadlines had been set. ▪ Clarification of the aims and objectives of the TLA. ▪ Quicker responses to submissions and improved systems of communication.

Verifiers' recommended improvements to the TLA

The interviewed verifiers chiefly called for greater promotion and publicity for the TLA in order to encourage more teachers to enrol and to raise the credence of the Academy as a key mode of CPD. Interestingly, like the interested teachers, they also suggested that clearer information was needed on how to progress through the Stages of the TLA and that improvements in communication were essential to achieve this. The verifiers recommended that information should be provided to both teachers and verifiers on '*what next?*' in order to retain enrolees. As a result of verifying a number of submissions, increased information on how to disseminate TLA projects was recommended as an improvement given that this was outside the experiences of some teachers and schools. Verifiers also called for more TLA representatives and for exemplar materials.

Unlike the teachers, but in agreement with the TLA partner leads (as will be shown below), verifiers suggested that there should be more local and regional networking in order to encourage a sense of Academy. In addition, verifiers stressed that '*... there needs to be recognition that schools need structure & support in order to engage teachers in the TLA*' and that where much time and effort had been channelled into support, this led to very successful submissions (see note in the next section on the TLA Leaders strategy). They also warned against rolling the TLA out without sufficient time and support being made available for local authorities, schools and teachers. Finally, a change to the submission form was advocated, with greater flexibility suggested over the nature of submissions to include group submissions or presentations.

Case-study CPD coordinators'/headteachers' recommended improvements to the TLA

These interviewees also pointed to greater publicity and promotion of the TLA as a key area for improvement. They believed that '*... the Academy's really got to be standing up there*', and that '*... if what the TLA is offering in terms of kudos and status could somehow be beefed up*', this would enhance its credibility and allow it to compete successfully with other forms of CPD. Interestingly, compared with the views of teachers, a slightly different emphasis was placed on recommendations regarding support, in that these CPD coordinators/headteachers largely referred to the need for greater support for schools in running the Academy as opposed to recommendations for specific support for teachers. For example, they were keen that funding should be awarded to schools to enable them to support their teachers with additional time and to help provide management time for overseeing the Academy. This was also recommended by the verifiers (see section above). Like all other interviewees, the CPD coordinators/headteachers believed that support should be more readily available within the Academy, and that this should come in the form of key personnel based in schools or the local authority. Similarly, it was also suggested that there should be closer networking of schools and greater local authority support. Again, the introduction of the TLA Leaders strategy/hub approach may be key in fulfilling these recommendations.

Case-study CPD coordinators/headteachers went on to suggest that there needed to be clearer information communicated to enrolees on the Stages of the TLA and longer time-scales or greater flexibility for completing submissions (this was a local issue

within two of the TLA partners). Finally, as highlighted by the TLA partners in section 4.1.1, these CPD coordinators/headteachers questioned the value of the higher Stages of the Academy: *'I just can't see the top end working out. I think people will just go to universities for what they need at the upper end.'*

Partners' recommended improvements to the TLA

When asked what factors would aid the long-term success of the Academy, TLA partner leads suggested similar improvements to the teachers. They primarily called for greater promotion and publicity for the TLA in order to give it a firm place in the professional development landscape so that the Academy becomes *'embedded within professional development and the teaching profession'*:

I think the TLA has got to have a clear role within the revised framework of qualifications for teachers. It's got to sit with clear reasons for being there ... There is a danger that you've got possibly a number of empire builders – you've got the Training and Development Agency, the GTC, NCSL and also the Specialist Schools Trust – so there are at least four groups there which are all vying for pre-eminence within the market place. And there are some very strong competitors there, people who have already got a large chunk of the market. I think where the TLA sits in relation to these other players, in relation to qualifications and career routes, I think that's got to be very clearly spelt out, and then I think it will survive a national roll-out and will be a tremendous asset to CPD (Phase 2 partner-level interviewee).

One partner was particularly keen to see the TLA become a requirement of teachers' CPD so that *'... they maintain their professional expertise through robust accredited, or at least recognised, CPD'*.

Like the Phase 2 submitters, partners also recommended exemplar material and closer links with HEIs. Unlike the teachers, they also called for support for CPD coordinators; for continued local leadership and local authority involvement; for an assurance that the TLA will remain non-costly; and for the Academy (or an equivalent) to be made available to the wider workforce e.g. teaching assistants.

Resolving the suggested improvements

From a comparison of the improvements that enrolees suggested in Phases 1 and 2, it was evident that progress had been made in a number of the areas over the course of the TLA pilot. Albeit marginal, fewer of the interviewed enrolees recommended improvements in Phase 2, and certain issues did not generate quite the degree of concern that had been apparent in Phase 1, especially the need for a quicker response to submissions and greater clarification of the aims and objectives of the TLA. Developments that are taking place in Phase 3 of the Academy look set to address other areas of attention that interviewees raised. For example, the TLA leader/hub approach has the potential to provide the levels of support and guidance that enrolees needed in a manner that is also viable for schools given the initial resourcing that underpins this model.

None the less, as in Phase 1, analysis did show that **the future development of the TLA is closely associated with the resolution of these and the other improvements suggested and, as such, this may need continued monitoring.** For example, decisions as to whether to continue working within the Academy were related to: the availability of information on progression through the TLA; the

expectations of each Stage; support and guidance; and the Academy's currency and status. Additionally, whether a sense of Academy is generated has been shown to be affected by the level of local support available in the TLA. Furthermore, as was noted in Chapter 3, there are questions remaining as regards the procedures for verification. Finally, perhaps one of the greatest challenges for the future of the Academy is how it stands up in the busy and competitive professional development landscape. A higher profile and stronger currency, achieved through promotion and the wider availability of the TLA, were regarded by interviewees as fundamental to its further and future success.

4.4 Concluding comment on the value of the TLA and its future development

To conclude, appraisals of the value of the TLA showed the high regard in which it was held by interviewees whatever their association with the Academy: submitters, non-submitters, verifiers, CPD coordinators/headteachers, partner leads. In both Phases, it emerged that the model of professional development that the Academy embodied was much appreciated, and that it offered an attractive route to professional recognition, including for those who had not previously considered gaining accreditation or recognition for professional development.

A key development over the course of the pilot was that Phase 2 submitters recommended a national rollout of the TLA more unreservedly than their Phase 1 counterparts, indicating that the experience of the Academy had improved for participants overall and that progress had been made in addressing early challenges. Work underway in Phase 3 has the potential to remedy further issues that affected participation. Notwithstanding, a number of key issues were still identified, especially promotion and publicity, and guidance on how to proceed through the Stages, that enrolees, verifiers, case-study CPD coordinators/headteachers and partner leads believed were fundamental to the continued development of the Academy.

5 Conclusion

To conclude, we draw together the findings presented throughout this report in order to consider the future development of the TLA. To this end, we set out the strengths of and the support for the Academy, sum up the progress made to date, evaluate the approaches adopted in Phase 3 in the light of experiences at Phases 1 and 2, and present areas for further attention.

5.1 The strengths of and support for the TLA

Interviewees' evaluations underlined their support for the concept and philosophy of the TLA, and the outcomes submitters derived highlighted the benefits of participation. One possible caveat to bear in mind, however, when interpreting the following points is that much – though by no means all – of the perceptual data comes from interviewees who had submitted projects to the TLA for recognition. These submitters were for the most part, by their own admission, committed to professional development and in schools supportive of professional development, so the extent to which they are representative of the wider teacher body is hard to ascertain. That said, there was a good deal of consistency regarding the strengths of the Academy in the views expressed by all those interviewed in the course of the research – submitters, non-submitters, case-study headteachers, verifiers and partner leads, alike.

- That around half of the 1,267 Phase 1 and Phase 2 enrolees joined the TLA principally because of the opportunity it offered for the recognition of professional development demonstrates the degree of interest in the principle of the Academy.
- Appraisals of the value of the TLA from submitters and non-submitters alike, case-study headteachers, verifiers and partner leads show appreciation of its worth in the teaching profession, especially for providing a means of recognising the work done by teachers in their everyday practice and for offering an effective model of professional development. In this regard, the Academy was particularly valued for encouraging teachers to reflect on their practice and for providing an opportunity for colleagues to work together and to share knowledge and good practice.
- There was evidence that participation in the TLA:
 - led to considerable impacts, that were sustained long-term, on submitters' actual teaching, pupils' learning, contribution to colleagues and school and their confidence
 - had advanced submitters' perceptions and understanding of CPD and, especially in Phase 2, had enhanced their willingness to engage in further professional development
 - had a greater impact than other forms of professional development: two-thirds of the interviewed submitters who commented rated the impact of the Academy as such

- offered an opportunity to undertake what they may not otherwise have done: around half of those enrolling had not undertaken previous work with an HEI.
- The high regard in which the core dimensions of the Academy were held offers testament to the TLA approach to professional learning. The core dimensions led on to the outcomes that submitters derived from their involvement, were cited as impacts in their own right and aided the manageability of participation (especially assessing peer support).
- The Academy has the potential to be a valuable tool for the GTC in enhancing its image and increasing general levels of understanding regarding its remit. More than half of those submitters, non-submitters and verifiers who were asked believed that participation in the TLA had positively changed their views in this regard.
- Finally, over 90 per cent of all interviewees involved in the research – that is submitters, non-submitters, case-study headteachers, verifiers and partner leads – believed that the TLA should be rolled out nationwide.

5.2 Progress in the TLA over Phases 1 and 2

The findings from Phase 1 of the evaluation showed the potential of the TLA and the strength of the outcomes of participation (indeed, stronger impacts than in Phase 2 were observed in some cases). Yet, as Phase 1 interviewees put forward, there were also significant manageability issues with which to contend, some of which were the inevitable teething troubles of any new venture and some of which had potentially longer lasting implications. Progress was evident in Phase 2.

- There was advancement in terms of interviewed submitters' experiences of manageability. In response to an open enquiry, almost one-third of the Phase 2 submitters interviewed felt that there had been no real challenging or problematic areas for them in undertaking their TLA project – a far greater proportion than at Phase 1. Greater collaboration between peers had improved experiences overall.
- In Phase 1, many of the interviewees in favour of a national implementation of the Academy believed that this should be conditional on the resolution of a number of issues. Their Phase 2 counterparts recommended a national rollout of the TLA more unreservedly, indicating that the experience of the Academy had improved between the two Phases and that progress had been made in addressing early challenges.
- The submission rate was higher in Phase 2 than in Phase 1.

That said, the number of enrolees who are non-submitters still exceeds those who are currently submitters within the TLA. And, evidence of progress notwithstanding, participation in the TLA was summed up in Phase 2 as '*reasonably manageable, but ...*'. Less manageable areas for participants were time and understanding the requirements of the TLA. In addition, a number of teachers did not know how to

solve or resolve their concerns (though, by their own admission, this could be attributed to their own initiative being in short supply, not the available support).

To ameliorate manageability issues raised, we can look to the recommendations that submitters and non-submitters made regarding support and guidance. These included:

- increased support in the early stages of a project as well as regular support sessions (including individual attention) throughout, to provide impetus and maintain momentum
- clarity as to exactly what was required and expected for the submission
- in-school drive and support for the Academy
- greater personal contact with TLA personnel.

5.3 Evaluation of the Phase 3 approaches

Many of the above recommendations that interviewees shared regarding support and guidance in the TLA may be fulfilled by the new approach being trialled in Phase 3 of the pilot. This involves setting up the Academy in hubs of schools, with each school in the hub having a trained TLA leader and verifier, and able to assess back-up and support from local partners and a regional GTC link adviser. Participating institutions are also required to undertake to set up support sessions for enrolees.

The hub model is commensurate with the approaches that worked most successfully in the pilot. For example, in Phase 2, where teachers' whole school was involved in the TLA and where that involvement included peer-peer collaboration for projects and/or submissions, experiences of manageability improved. Further, manageability was easier where organised support involving hands-on, step-by-step guidance (particularly for the submission) was available for teachers. In addition, that this support in the hub approach would be very readily accessible to participants in their school is pertinent given acknowledgement amongst some interviewed submitters and non-submitters that they themselves had not endeavoured to ask for or seek any help even though they were in need.

The hub approach of Phase 3 might also offer a more sustainable model for the future of the Academy. This is especially important given doubts raised by several Phase 1 and 2 partners over their capacity to provide extensive support to enrolees long-term. However, if the hub approach is to be sustainable, the question will be whether it will need a resource allocation and investment to facilitate it in each school, and if so, whether this can be maintained. A further point to bear in mind regarding the hub approach will be the need to balance the in-school drive for the TLA with individuals' choice over their own involvement. In Phase 2 especially, school-imposed participation militated against teacher engagement with the Academy and, for some, had lessened the impacts derived.

In Phase 3, links with national partners and other CPD providers are also an area for continued development. Such work has the potential to raise the profile of the Academy, as it helps enable the TLA to position itself in the professional development landscape both as integral to other CPD offerings as well as a fixture in

its own right. This is important given partner leads' concerns regarding the sustainability of the Academy against other, longer established qualifications and modes of CPD. Work with national partners and other providers also widens the availability of the TLA and aids its promotion, factors deemed key in raising the Academy's profile and therefore its long-term viability. However, it should be noted that a number of those joining the TLA via other CPD providers displayed less commitment to the Academy, derived fewer outcomes and had most manageability issues. This was by no means the experience of all those interviewed who had joined via other providers. However, this did occur in cases where these participants perceived enrolment as obligatory in their original CPD undertaking. Therefore, one's own choice as regards involvement is as important for those enrolling in the TLA via other CPD provision as it is for those joining through school hubs.

5.4 Areas for further attention

Notwithstanding the progress of the TLA to date, a number of key issues were identified that submitters, non-submitters, verifiers, partner leads and GTC personnel believed were fundamental to the continued development of the Academy.

- **Improvements to the support available in the TLA**
 This may be ameliorated by the TLA leader / hub approach⁶. However, the manageability issues of those involved in the Academy via other CPD provision may still warrant attention. Whilst work was underway to customise support materials and the submission form so that they better fit these enrolees' experiences, further efforts may be required to resolve any remaining difficulties with the aspects of the Academy that they found most problematic: the interpretation of the TLA requirements and accessing guidance and mentoring.
- **Focus on conversion rates from enrolee to submitter**
 Enrolee rates show the interest in the Academy; however, submission rates are more indicative of the success of the TLA experience.
- **Encouragement and information about how to proceed to subsequent Stages of the Academy**
 There is evidence that the TLA is losing out on 'repeat business' because submitters had received no communication on how to work towards the next Stage following the successful completion of a project.
- **Greater promotion of the Academy**
 This is regarded as fundamental to the TLA's future success given the competitive professional development landscape. The establishment of further links with national partners and other CPD providers may help in this regard. The re-design of the TLA's publicity materials and marketing is also suggested, as one interviewee put it: '*I didn't realise what a 'Teacher Learning Academy' meant and I don't understand the wispy thing [the dandelion seed head logo on TLA documentation].'* Badging TLA schools in the same way that institutions are badged as '*Investors in People*' or '*Healthy Schools*' or as having been awarded

⁶This is not to suggest that the model of Phases 1 and 2 centred around local partners had been unsuccessful. Whilst support was variable, there were examples of very effective support mechanisms provided by effective local partners through this approach.

the 'Artsmark' was recommended. The hub approach of Phase 3 may facilitate this.

- **Clearer information on the expectations of each Stage of the TLA**
 Difficulty interpreting the requirements of the TLA and, as a consequence, gauging the level of the work required were among interviewed submitters' chief manageability difficulties. Participants and verifiers stress the need for more exemplar materials and guidance written with less jargon. Some interviewees had undertaken the TLA project, but had stalled at the writing stage and as a result, had not submitted. Therefore, there are also calls for the development of alternatives to making a written submission e.g. audio-visual material, oral assessment interview with a verifier.
- **Verification and moderation procedures**
 This is possibly one of the most pressing areas of need and was the aspect about which interviewees spoke with least certainty about how this could or should operate. Questions raised are who / what will take charge of the administration of the verification procedures? Who / what will collect submissions and distribute them to verifiers? How will the training and verifiers' time be resourced, especially long term? How will moderation procedures operate and how will this be coordinated? How, if at all, should TLA recognition be married with HEI academic accreditation and vice versa? Interviewees strongly suggest that systems need to be in place rather than what is perceived as the current *ad hoc* approach. A number of interviewed submitters had been deterred from proceeding to the next Stage in the Academy because of the time taken over the verification of their script and the lack of feedback (other than their certificate) that they had received on the quality of their work. Given that verification is core to the Academy process, there was a sense that the TLA might unravel if an approach to verification and moderation could not be found that was viable and manageable as well as rigorous and assured in preserving the worth of TLA recognition and thus the currency of the Academy.
- **Administration and operational management**
 Interviewees, including submitters, verifiers and partner leads, were positive about their dealings with the individual personnel working on the Academy and their responsiveness to their concerns. However, negative attitudes towards the GTC are generated or reinforced when the administration of the scheme flounders, especially in terms of delays in responding to submissions. Recent increased capacity at the GTC may rectify this.
- **The generation of a sense of 'Academy'**
 When asked, so far only a minority of participants had any impression of being part of a wider Academy of teachers engaged in professional learning. Evidence suggested that external support (e.g. from the local authority) is beneficial in generating such a sense of 'Academy'. Therefore, in Phase 3, it is important that work at a local level is not overlooked as support becomes more concentrated in individuals' own schools. It may be necessary to make full use of the potential of the hub (as well as the local partner) in enabling links between schools, collaboration and the organisation of wider celebration events.

- **Long-term planning and the financial future of the TLA**

More longer term planning at GTC level regarding the development of the Academy was suggested. This included long-term preparation for a national roll-out given the staff recruitment that could be needed to sustain this. Questions were also raised about the resourcing of the TLA as it expands, for example whether there is an enrolment fee, a charge for the verification of submissions, and who / what provides continued funding, if any, to hubs? Now that the TLA is established with its early challenges well on the way to resolution, any further evaluation should focus on its future resourcing in order to ascertain whether an approach that makes some overt financial demand, however minimal, on participants and/or their school would affect their take-up and perceptions of the Academy. On the basis of the evidence to date, as would be expected, there were costs associated with participation for schools, local partners and the GTC, especially in terms of staff time. A number of case-study CPD coordinators/headteachers and verifiers were keen that funding should be awarded to schools to enable them to support their teachers and to help provide management time for the overseeing of the Academy. Some partners recommended that the TLA should not make charges for enrolment or verification. However, it should be noted that no form of professional development is entirely cost-free. In terms of the TLA, the data shows that the Academy was considered by most to have a greater impact than other modes of CPD, with wide-ranging benefits reported for the individual, their pupils, colleagues and the school. Therefore, where schools, individuals or local authorities resource CPD, the evidence would suggest that investing in the TLA is likely to reap considerable rewards. To this end, it might be posited that the higher the status of the Academy and of TLA recognition, the higher the probability that schools *et al* will be prepared to resource participation. This again underlines the importance of promotion and publicity.

5.5 Overall concluding comment

To end, let us sum up what has been achieved in the TLA in the two years since the evaluation began. It has developed from an Academy available in three local authorities to one that has representation in all Government Office Regions; has forged major links with national partners, teacher unions and professional associations; and has received over 300 submissions. The TLA in Phase 1, whilst experiencing teething troubles inevitable in any new venture, was highly valued by interviewed submitters and they derived significant outcomes from their involvement. This continued in Phase 2, together with some improvement in the manageability difficulties that had hindered the rate of submissions in Phase 1. The TLA leader/hub model being trialled in Phase 3 takes on board and has the potential to resolve further the manageability issues that concern participants. Thus, whilst areas key to its future viability require attention, interviewees were almost unanimous about the value of the Teacher Learning Academy and there has been considerable progress to date, reflecting the endeavours and conviction of the participating teachers, schools, verifiers, partners and the GTC.

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