

WHAT PARENTS SHOULD BE LOOKING FOR IN A SCHOOL:

A School that Invests in Teachers' Continuing Professional Development

"Education is not the learning of facts, but the training of the mind to think." - Albert Einstein

Providing high quality continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities are crucial to the success of teachers' progression. CPD should therefore be an ongoing key priority for all schools, as the positive impact this has on students' learning experiences, including increased progress made by learners, is eminent.

WHY IS CPD SO IMPORTANT?

Research has proven that effective CPD has several benefits to educators including:

- Motivating teachers to ensure their knowledge and capabilities stay relevant, up-to-date and in line with current standards;
- Acquiring understanding about the technologies available within the classroom to embed interesting, diverse, engaging and challenging lessons with appropriate support to meet students' needs;
- Helping develop knowledge and skills to advance professionally, enabling meaningful contributions to be made to their departments whilst improving the overall effectiveness of the school;
- Empowering teachers to make advances in their career, moving into new positions where they can support colleagues through effective leadership and management, including the mentoring and coaching of others.

These benefits all, in turn, lead to increased student engagement, motivation and resilience within the classroom, aiding students' achievement and progress over time. Parents should, therefore, opt for their children to attend a school that invests heavily in regularly training their teachers, keeping up-to-date with the latest educational principles and practices.

HOW CAN SCHOOLS DEVELOP THEIR TEACHERS PROFESSIONALLY?

In September 2017, an Ofsted and Ministry of Education and Culture compliant lesson observation system was introduced at PASCAL Private English School Larnaka (PPESL), training all staff regarding what an 'outstanding' lesson would encompass. A new lesson plan format and lesson observation form were implemented, and Heads of Department, key middle leaders in the school, were trained how to effectively observe lessons. This involved conducting



joint observations with the Senior Management Team, triangulating students' feedback with their attainment data and long-term lesson planning evidenced in schemes of learning. Following these observations, teachers at PPESL received timely, personalised feedback identifying their key strengths as well as areas for further development.

"The lesson observation process is highly productive, with one of the most useful elements being the feedback that follows, which takes place in the form of a discussion between the observer and the teacher. It is really important that we can exchange ideas concerning the aims of the lesson, learning materials used plus the strategies and procedures in place. Following this dialogue, the teacher is able to improve their practice, realising different approaches they can apply to their teaching." - Panayiota Athanasiou, Head of Greek and Classical Studies Department at PPESL

In order to aid professional development further, Teachers at PPESL elected which areas they would like to receive additional training on throughout the year, including differentiation to meet students' needs, assessment for learning (AfL) strategies to check students' understanding and progress, plus literacy and numeracy strategies across the curriculum.

WHAT IMPACT CAN CPD HAVE?

"Educators are developing an enriched learning culture, sharing ideas and enhancing their existing knowledge through communication and dialogue. Empowering educators through CPD opportunities and effective feedback on lesson observations will motivate them to take initiatives in their teaching and improve their long-term performance and, consequently, that of their students." - Christina Thomaidou Pavlidou, Head of Social Sciences Department at PPESL.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved greatly at PPESL since the new lesson observation and CPD process was first introduced

a year ago, and this is continuing to add value across the school on a daily basis. Teachers' progress is tracked, monitored and evaluated, and next steps are identified to ensure 'quality first teaching' (QFT) occurs consistently throughout the school.

"Through continuous professional development, teachers become more skilled, confident and creative in the delivery of their subjects. They are able to reflect and adapt, embracing technology in their lessons, constantly finding new ways to challenge critical thinking skills and promote independent learning. By adopting a 'growth mindset', educators become lifelong learners, setting high standards for our students' progress and success." - Louiza Loizou, Head of Languages Department at PPESL

FUTURE CPD OPPORTUNITIES

Schools must continue to professionally develop teaching staff based on their needs analysis following lesson observation feedback and the elective selection of future training opportunities, in line with current teaching standards.

Teaching staff can then share good practice across the school, volunteering to deliver staff training seminars themselves, having acquired confidence in their abilities as leading teaching professionals, once adequate training has been provided.

Nelson Mandela pointed out the following: **"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."**

Imagine how great the world would be if we continue to educate our educators...

Article written by Anastasia Evangelou-Ward

Anastasia Evangelou-Ward was appointed from the UK to lead on the development of teaching, learning and assessment initiatives, including teachers' continuing professional development, at PASCAL Private English School Larnaka. Prior to this, Anastasia worked in a range of school improvement, leadership and management roles throughout her career.



Graded as an 'outstanding' teacher with Qualified Teacher Status in Business and Economics Education from the Institute of Education (University of London), she worked as a Curriculum Leader, being recruited on the Teaching Leaders Programme, which is a programme for high-potential middle leaders working in schools in challenging contexts. The programme focussed on improving the quality of teaching whilst providing participants with instructional leadership skills to lead on curriculum, assessment and pedagogy. As the only middle leadership development programme in England that has been independently shown to have impact on pupil outcomes, it transforms middle leaders to drive school-wide improvement, providing Anastasia with the skills to then graduate from one of the top Russell Group universities with a Masters in Educational Leadership, later being promoted as an Assistant Headteacher in London.

GIVE THEM THE BEST START FOR A BRIGHT FUTURE