Chapter 7
Professional Development for School Improvement: Are Changing Balances of Control Leading to the Growth of a New Professionalism?

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Introduction

The main purpose in this chapter is to reflect on the strategies that have been adopted by successive governments in England to encourage, support and provide continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers and headteachers and to consider whether these strategies have led to the emergence of a new teacher professionalism. Policy makers have been increasingly concerned to identify and use mechanisms to influence practice in schools and classrooms in order to raise standards in education. Teacher professional development has been seen as one of the key levers for change and over the years questions have been raised on a regular basis about what are appropriate processes and content for CPD and whether these issues should be decided by the teachers, Local Education Authorities or the Government. The balance of influence between these stakeholders has shifted back and forth from a position where all parties had an input into policy making to one of more central government control, which in turn has implications for teacher professionalism.

The discussion is structured in three sections corresponding to three periods in which differences in educational ideology, approaches to educational policy, and strategies of implementation can be discerned. The three sections are labelled: Partnership, New Public Management and Modernisation. These divisions and labels are somewhat arbitrary and one can argue about the boundaries between sections but I have found them a useful organising device. Partnership refers to the period when the main stakeholders all had input into educational decision-making and there was a broad consensus about the direction of policy. Typically this led to systems of structuring and managing schools which enabled teachers to have "*a degree of freedom in the exercise of professional practice*" (Hoyle, 1986: 170) and to enjoy relative autonomy. The distinction between New Public Management and Modernisation is less clear since both are rooted in a belief in the market and the value of choice and competition as a means of improving provision. The term associated with New Public Management and sometimes used interchangeably with it is managerialism. The defining features of managerialism are a strong central regulatory framework, devolved decision

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making to organisational level, a focus on measurable outputs and a willingness to rely on quasi-market forces. Levacic (1999) has argued that in the late 1980s and 1990s the UK Government increasingly adopted a rationalistic approach to school management emphasising the importance of strategic planning and objective setting, financial control, monitoring implementation and reporting outcomes of activities, one consequence of which was to strengthen the role of the headteacher as chief executive rather than professional leader. Simkins (1999) suggested that managerialism assumes that techniques for achieving better management are knowable and generally applicable so managers must be given freedom to manage. For Hoyle and Wallace managerialism is "*leadership and management to excess*" (2005: 68). They argue that the emphasis on control, although not wholly negative, has led to an intensification of staff work loads, lowered job satisfaction and may have distracted headteachers and teachers from their core task centred on teaching and learning. Although many features of managerialism continued in the period I have labelled Modernisation, these years are associated with a move away from strict market principles and some change in focus, less concern about the structure and organisation of schools and more emphasis on teaching and learning (DfEE, 1997). The Government's expressed wish was that this would lead to the emergence of "*a new professionalism for teachers*" (DfES, 2004: 5, 39).

(a) Partnership – promoting professional development and school improvement prior to 1988

The period from the 1970s to the 1988 Education Reform Act is referred to here as a time of "Partnership". Although the term was not widely used at the time, retrospectively it does reflect the broad consensus that appeared to exist between the Department of Education and Science (DES), the local education authorities (LEAs) and the teachers about a range of educational issues. Throughout this period the DES was the major initiator of policy but implementation was largely devolved to LEA and school levels. McNay and Ozga commented that:

> *The existence of the broad consensus permits a division of labour: the DES promotes particular policies and establishes the general direction of policy, the LEAs make provision, and the teachers interpret the word within their own classrooms.…* (1985: 2)

The DES position could be characterised as a "hands off" approach, teachers were generally regarded as autonomous professionals, the curriculum was controlled by schools and teachers rather than the government thus headteachers and their staff had considerable freedom to select the changes that should be introduced and how they should be implemented. Teacher autonomy involved teachers taking responsibility for their individual professional development, although not all teachers made the most of the opportunities that were available. Educational policy was not a high national priority. However, in the late 1970s and 1980s this situation changed and teacher autonomy was progressively challenged as successive Governments sought to introduce central controls and regulations which culminated in the 1988 Education Reform Act. Two key documents which helped to shape the policy context during

this period were The James Report (DES, 1972) and the Ruskin College Speech (Callaghan, 1976).

The 1972 Report on Teacher Education and Training (The James Report) was a wide-ranging and influential report which reviewed arrangements for the education, training and probation of teachers in England and Wales. Teacher education and training was conceptualised as falling into three cycles: first, personal education, second, pre-service education and induction, and, third, in-service education and training. The recommendations about in-service education are especially pertinent to this discussion in that they emphasised the importance of continuing education for teachers. In-service education was said to include,

> *… the whole range of activities by which teachers can extend their personal education, develop their professional competence and improve their understanding of educational principles and techniques.*
>
> (DES, 1972: 2.2)

It was anticipated that teachers would need to deepen their knowledge and understanding of teaching methods and educational theory as well as their areas of special expertise. The underlying presumption was that individual teachers would identify their own development needs although it was noted that: "*Sometimes the acquisition of new subjects and skills may be dictated not so much by the inclinations of the teachers as by the needs of the schools*" (DES, 1972: 2.9). The continued training of teachers was said to be an essential task for every school.

If the James Report had highlighted the importance of continuing professional development for teachers this was reinforced by the so called "Great Debate on Education" sparked by Prime Minister Callaghan's 1976 speech which called for a broad debate about the future of education, a debate which should involve parents, professional bodies, representatives from higher education and industry as well as the teachers. Although he praised the work undertaken by many in the teaching profession, some concerns about student achievement were noted and teachers were warned that they were accountable for outcomes:"… *you must satisfy the parents and industry that what you are doing meets their requirements and the needs of their children*" (1976: 156). Becher and Maclure (1978) argued that this speech marked a change in the political climate and opened up a debate about standards of achievement, the content of the curriculum and the governance and management of schools. Trust in the professional expertise of the teachers began to erode.

Looking back now at educational policies in the 1980s it can be seen how the consensus between the DES, LEAs and Teacher Associations was beginning to fragment. Experience with school self evaluation, teacher appraisal and management training serve as illustrations.

(i) School self evaluation

The push for greater professional accountability did not lead initially to an increase in school inspections by Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) or by local education authorities. However, a government publication on the school curriculum exhorted schools to set out their aims in writing and to assess how far these aims were being

achieved in the education they provided (DES, 1981). In turn LEAs encouraged schools to engage in self evaluation: Elliott (1984) reported that 90 of the then 104 LEAs in England and Wales had initiated discussions on school self evaluation and 44 authorities had produced some form of guidance for schools. Clearly, these developments could be interpreted as ways of strengthening professional accountability. The Schools Council, which was jointly funded by the LEAs and the DES but with teachers forming the majority membership, decided to sponsor the Guidelines for Review and Internal Development in Schools (GRIDS) project (McMahon et al., 1984) with a brief to develop some procedural guidelines for school self evaluation. The GRIDS project was part of the accountability movement but also a response to it in that one of its key purposes was to achieve internal school development rather than produce reports for formal accountability purposes. Headteachers and their staff could use the guidelines to help them assess the effectiveness of their school independent of controls exercised by their LEA or by national government.

(ii) Teacher appraisal

No formal systems for teacher appraisal were in place in the 1980s when the Government began to argue that the teaching profession needed to be more tightly controlled. In several DES publications suggestions were put forward that teachers' tasks should be more clearly specified, that their performance should be assessed, and that judgements about performance should be linked to salary. For example, the Government White Paper "*Teaching Quality*" reiterated the importance of in-service training but also drew explicit links between a teacher's training and deployment and made a connection between performance and pay (DES, 1983: paras 89 and 90). A further suggestion was that each teacher's performance should be formally assessed, this assessment to be based on classroom visits and an appraisal of "*both pupils' work and of the teacher's contribution to the life of the school*." (DES, 1983: para 92). These proposals challenged the notion that teacher professional development was an intrinsic "good" by suggesting that it should be linked much more explicitly to the assessment of teacher performance and to identified school priorities. This was reiterated in the 1985 White Paper, *Better Schools* (DES, 1985a) which signalled a move away from the concept of teachers as autonomous professionals taking individual responsibility for their professional development to the notion of teachers as employees guided in their development by a managerial assessment of their needs. Professional and career development and salary were to be "*largely determined by reference to periodic assessment of performance*" (para 181).

However, these proposals were strongly resisted by the teacher unions. As Secretary of State for Education, Keith Joseph was keen to introduce a teacher appraisal scheme, but could not gain the cooperation of the teacher and head teacher associations and, realising that the proposal to link appraisal and salary rewards was a major stumbling block, he withdrew this suggestion in a speech in November 1985. The issue of performance related pay for teachers did not reappear on the policy agenda for a number of years.

(iii) Funding for in-service education

These early, but unsuccessful, moves to introduce teacher appraisal can be interpreted as the beginnings of a more managerialist approach to the profession and this trend is also evident in the provision of professional development. In 1983, Government began to shape the content of in-service teacher education by allocating funding for what it identified as specific national priority areas: £7 million was allotted to courses on management training for heads and other senior staff; mathematics teaching; teaching the 16–19 age group; special educational needs in ordinary schools; and bilingual needs in Wales. Of course, this earmarked funding largely determined who received training as well as shaping the training content. As part of the management initiative, the DES and the Welsh Office funded a National Development Centre (NDC) for school management training initially for three years (1983–1986), later extended until 1988. The NDC had a development rather than a research brief (Bolam, 1986), its main role being to promote the provision of high quality school management development and training for headteachers and senior staff in schools. Various strategies were used to promote quality in provision: a resource bank of information about good practice in management training was established; rigorous evaluation of training course provision was encouraged; management training materials were developed; and workshops, fellowships and attachments were used to facilitate the sharing of ideas and expertise. Experience of coordinating the management training courses in the first year led NDC staff to widen the Centre's brief to focus on management development as an underlying concept (McMahon and Bolam, 1990). In retrospect, this too can be seen as part of the managerialist trend.

Over the next few years the DES increased its central control over the content of in-service education by requiring LEAs to submit bids for funds for teacher professional development. This approach was piloted in 1985 though the Technical and Vocational Educational Initiative (TVEI) scheme, followed by the Local Education Authority Training Grants Scheme, first known as GRIST (Grant related in-service training) and later as LEATGS (Local Education Authority Training Grants Scheme) which was intended to"… *promote the professional development of teachers; to promote more systematic and purposeful planning of in-service training; to encourage more effective management of the training force; and to encourage training in selected areas, which are to be accorded national priority*" (DES, 1986). The practice of the DES holding a central pool of funds that LEAs could draw upon to support the secondment of teachers to long courses (e.g. MEd programmes) also ended. Reflecting later on this period Williams commented:

> *The trend … for central bodies to define the agenda and predominant funding arrangements for INSET has distanced the individual teacher from the source of funding, de-emphasising the needs of the individual and asserting the importance of national priorities. The emphasis has been increasingly more upon the teacher as someone to be trained to meet current requirements and less upon the teacher as a professional who has his or her own personal agenda for professional development.*
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> (Williams, 1993: 15)

Challenging Professional Autonomy?

Hoyle has argued that one reason why teachers enjoyed a relatively high level of autonomy for many years was: "… *the sheer difficulty of exercising control … since their work is carried out in private settings and is hard to evaluate, especially in the short term*." (Hoyle, 1986: 85) If this was true at the start of these "Partnership" years by the late 1980s the DES's control over teachers was much more apparent. The strategy of centralising funding for professional development and identifying priority areas for training was a powerful influence. Yet, it would be wrong to assume that the DES had taken complete control or indeed, that government policy makers wished to do so. Undoubtedly, the climate had changed, there had been a shift in the balance of control towards the DES and with this came a wider recognition that teachers and other educational professionals needed to be accountable for student learning. Nevertheless, agreement among the different stakeholder groups, DES, LEA and Teacher Associations, about the direction of policy could still be identified. LEAs and schools engaged with school self evaluation rather than argued against it; the earmarked funding for priority areas did not provoke teacher opposition to professional development; headteachers participated in management training; only the proposals for performance related pay met with strong resistance.

(b) Promoting professional development and school improvement in the era of New Public Management

The period from 1988 to 1997 is characterised here as the era of New Public Management although, as already noted, the boundaries between one period and another are permeable. The 1988 Education Reform Act has been taken as a starting point as it is widely regarded as a watershed in educational policy in England and Wales. Maclure (1992) argued that it was the most important piece of legislation since the 1944 Education Act because it instituted a major shift in power, from the local education authorities back to the Department for Education. In the late 1980s and 1990s, features of new public management, which had profound implications for the maintained school system, were introduced in England and Wales. Two powerful contextual factors influenced these developments. First, was the pressure from the DES for schools to become more managerial in their approach (Levacic, 1999), and second, the growing influence of research on school effectiveness and school improvement (Reynolds and Farrell, 1996) which highlighted, among other factors, the importance of strong leadership for effective schools (DfE, 1992a, para 1.33). The Government was keen to raise educational standards and policy makers became much more interventionist, pushing through reforms that promised improvement. Central government control was increased through the introduction of a national curriculum and national systems of testing and assessment. Local authorities were required to delegate substantial financial responsibility to schools, including for staffing costs, and governors were given increased powers in the selection, appointment and management of staff. The concept of parental choice of school was introduced and, since school budgets were linked to the number of students

on roll, many schools were put in a position where they had to compete with one another to attract pupils. Governors and parents could also vote for their school to seek Grant Maintained status thereby taking it out of local authority control and rendering it qualified to receive direct Government funding. All these reforms are consistent with, indeed may be used as indicators of, the rise of the managerial state (Clarke and Newman, 1997).

The significant increase in the number of Government education policies and the quantity and scope of the changes required of teachers and schools meant that the pressure was relentless and schools struggled to implement multiple innovations (Wallace and McMahon, 1994). Control of education was progressively removed from the local education authorities and centralised in the DES although the size and complexity of the education system made it difficult to supervise and some tasks were delegated to quasi autonomous non-governmental organisations (quangos), one example being the schools inspection system (OFSTED). The powers of the Secretary of State for Education were considerably increased. There are numerous topics and issues that could be explored to illustrate change during this period but I will focus on three themes: teacher appraisal; continuing professional development; effective leadership and leadership development for school improvement.

(i) Teacher and headteacher appraisal

As noted above, there were several unsuccessful policy initiatives on appraisal in the early and mid 1980s. Eventually, these culminated in a national pilot scheme for teacher and head teacher appraisal, funded by the DES from January 1987 to July 1989. Considered in retrospect, the experience of the teacher appraisal scheme provides a fascinating illustration of a change process at a point of transition from partnership in policy making to a more centralist, managerialist approach. First, it is important to note that there were no agreed procedures for teacher appraisal until Government Regulations making appraisal compulsory were introduced in 1991 (DES, 1991a). Despite this, interest in teacher appraisal had increased in the 1980s, the DES had been developing an argument in support of appraisal (e.g. DES, 1983 and 1985a) and surveys by James and Newman (1985) and Turner and Clift (1987) revealed that there had been an ad hoc growth of schemes developed by individual schools. Despite Government messages about the need for teacher accountability, the majority of the school schemes had a developmental purpose and were designed to facilitate staff development and identify INSET needs. 1986 was marked by acrimonious disputes between the DES and the teacher unions about salary and conditions of service which culminated in teachers losing their salary bargaining rights and the Government deciding what should be the teachers' conditions of service. During this dispute the Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) was called in to assist negotiations between the teacher unions, the LEA employers and the DES and, though the negotiations as a whole were not successful, a working party set up to discuss teacher appraisal did agree on a set of principles that the members felt should underpin any appraisal scheme. These principles emphasised teacher professional development, made no reference to pay and explicitly stated that disciplinary procedures would be separate:

> *… what the Working Party has in mind is a positive process, intended to raise the quality of education in schools by providing teachers with better job satisfaction, more appropriate in-service training and better planned career development based upon more informed decisions*.
>
> (ACAS, 1986: 3)

A pilot scheme was set up to develop and trial procedures for implementing appraisal following the principles agreed in the ACAS report. The pilot project was not unproblematic, nevertheless, in 1989 a report on the scheme signed by all three stakeholder groups (teacher representatives, LEAs and the DES), was published (DES, 1989a). The framework presented in the report conceptualised appraisal as a professional school-based process. It was recommended that appraisal statements should be treated as "*personnel documents of a particularly sensitive kind*" and should be kept by the headteacher and the appraisee and made available, on request, only to officers authorised by the LEA Chief Education Officer (and not to school governors). Information about professional development needs could be recorded separately and given to those responsible for planning training and development. At a comparatively late stage questions had been raised by the DES about the criteria for appraisal. This proved to be a very sensitive issue and the statement about criteria was carefully worded.

> *… it is clear that appraisal cannot and should not be designed to provide a simplified account of the appraisee's performance against a set of fixed criteria of good practice. We would therefore strongly oppose the mechanistic use in appraisal of standard check lists of performance*.
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> *Clearly, however, if appraisal is to be meaningful, it must be conducted against the background of certain expectations about teachers and teaching, and in the case of headteachers, the management and leadership of schools. Indeed it must be conducted against the background of sound professional criteria if it is to lead to improved learning for pupils. Furthermore, teachers and headteachers have a right to know what these criteria are*.
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> (DES, 1989a, para 61 and 62)

All the stakeholder groups felt able to commit themselves to the NSG report which included the comment that:"*… we believe that the experience of the pilots provides a sound basis for the development of appraisal throughout England and Wales*" (DES, 1989a, para 6). Plans had been made for a national appraisal scheme to be implemented from Autumn 1989. In the event this didn't happen. The main explanation given by the DES was that schools already had a heavy innovation load following the 1988 Education Act. However, the costs of providing release time for classroom observation and appraisal training, as well as a concern that the framework had too strong an emphasis on development as opposed to accountability, could also have been reasons for delaying implementation (McMahon, 1995).

Nevertheless, the national scheme for teacher appraisal that was introduced in 1991 was very similar to the scheme recommended by the NSG at the end of the pilot project. A significant difference was that the accountability aspect had been strengthened by the inclusion of a clause in the regulations that information from the appraisal statement could be used "*… in advising those responsible for taking decisions on the promotion, dismissal or discipline of school teachers or on the*

use of any discretion in relation to pay" (DES, 1991a). The scheme was to be phased in for all teachers over a four year period. Initial implementation went smoothly but in many schools teachers were appraised once and then appraisal was quietly abandoned, despite being a legal requirement. The extent of DES commitment to the scheme must be questioned as it continued to press for performance-related pay. In its evidence to the School Teachers Review Body in 1992 the DES comment was that:

> *The Government has made clear its belief that regular and direct links should be established, across all public services, between a person's contribution to the standards of service provided and his or her reward. The development of performance related pay (PRP) is an essential component of the Government's strategy for raising standards in the public sector.*
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> (DES, 1992: para 1)

The appraisal project is an instructive illustration of the transition from partnership to a more managerial approach to policy design and implementation. Although the framework for appraisal had been developed through a partnership of DES, LEA employers and teacher associations the DES finally lost faith in the agreement that had been reached.

(ii) Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for Teachers and Headteachers

During this period the Government also adopted a more coercive and directive approach to professional development, one which challenged teachers' autonomy in the classroom and seemed to signal a reduction of trust in their professionalism. Policies were developed to make explicit the expectations held of teachers and to try and ensure that they all participated in professional development which was viewed as a key strategy for school improvement. Several policies had direct implications for the teacher's role. One example was the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (DES, 1988) which set out for the first time a generic job description for teachers and prescribed their hours of work. These included five non-teaching days which could be used for teacher professional development. The mission to clarify objectives for teachers progressed further with the introduction of a privatised inspection force coordinated by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) following the 1992 Education Act. The inspection framework set out criteria for practice against which the schools and individual teachers would be assessed (see OFSTED, 1993). As pupil results at the different Key Stages and OFSTED school inspection reports were published, data about the perceived outcomes of teachers' work entered the public domain. In 1994 the Government established a Teacher Training Agency (TTA) with a brief covering teacher supply and recruitment, initial teacher training and induction and continuing professional development and research. The TTA was a Government quango, the purpose of which was to: "*improve the quality of teaching, to raise the standards of teacher education and training, and to promote teaching as a profession, in order to improve the standards of pupils' achievement and the quality of their learning*" (TTA, 1996: 12). A key component of this strategy was to develop a national framework

of standards for professional development which would set out the knowledge, understanding, skills and attributes required for the job at different levels as well as the key tasks and expected outcomes. The standards for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) were developed into formal assessed qualifications (TTA, 1998).

As Government expectations of teachers became more explicit these in turn influenced the content and methodology of teacher professional development programmes. The 1988 Act had introduced a major reform agenda, and many of the reforms, particularly the national curriculum and the national testing programme, required many teachers to modify their approach to teaching and learning. The five "professional development" days included in the teacher's contract were typically used for one-day, school-based training events which all members of staff were expected to attend. At the risk of over generalisation, it can be said that the greater part of this training focused on briefing staff about the reforms. External training courses were typically short, not more than one or two days in duration and often less. A "cascade" model was adopted whereby teachers with a specific responsibility for an area would receive training "first hand" and then would be expected to teach the same material to their colleagues in school. Arrangements for funding in-service education changed and a quasi-market was introduced in professional development as INSET funding was progressively delegated to the schools within a framework of DES designated priority areas. Schools were expected to select and buy-in training provision, either from their LEA or from independent consultants. The requirement for schools to draw up a development plan (DES, 1989b) had, at least in theory, simplified the task of identifying organisational needs and schools were encouraged to develop school based staff development programmes. Bolam suggested that the emerging model for CPD was "*based on the idea of self-developing professionals working in self-managing schools which have access to diverse forms of internal and external CPD provision*" (1993: 21). However, the thrust of DES advice was that priority should be given to meeting school needs with the result that a teacher of a priority subject (e.g. maths) might have more CPD opportunities than say, a music teacher.

This approach did have consequences; although the number of teachers engaging in professional development undoubtedly increased they did not necessarily feel that what they received was contributing to their individual professional growth. Subsequent research on secondary teachers' perceptions of CPD (McMahon, 1998) led me to conclude that teachers' understanding of professional development was rather instrumental; essentially they saw it as the training and experiences needed to enable them to do their job. Few of them spoke of engaging in CPD for its intrinsic value: they saw it being linked to their immediate job or to future career development. Where there were no obvious opportunities for career development motivation could be adversely affected. Teacher workloads were heavy, there were relatively few opportunities to participate in any training or education courses and day-to-day tasks had priority. Opportunities to reflect more broadly about their professional values and to engage in challenging intellectual study rather than skill training were rare.

(iii) Effective leadership and leadership development for school improvement

Given the ideology of new public management, it is not surprising that considerable attention was focused on management training for headteachers and senior staff in schools. The DES-funded National Development Centre (NDC) for school management training in the 1980s (1983–1988) had been university-based and was essentially a research and development project, although the DES did nominate the chair and members of the Steering Committee. The successor body to the NDC was the School Management Task Force (1989–1992), again government funded but under much tighter control as it was located in the DES. The brief for this body was to work with regional consortia of LEAs to support the introduction of delegated budgets and to promote more effective management of schools. Appraisal for headteachers was introduced as part of the national appraisal scheme in 1991. In 1992 support was provided for newly appointed headteachers through the, admittedly short lived, government-funded pilot schemes on mentoring for new headteachers (Bolam et al., 1993). In 1995 the TTA introduced the Headlamp scheme for supporting new headteachers. Hoyle and Wallace (2005: 105) argue that these policies were moves to increase the professionalization of school leaders, aimed at underlining the importance of leading and managing in relation to teaching and learning, and thus that one consequence was to curb teacher professionalism.

Strengthening Central Control?

In the years 1988–1997 the former "Partnership" between the DES, LEAs and the schools was replaced by a system in which policy was developed by the DES, considerable responsibility was devolved to schools and the LEA role was weakened. Ostensibly schools had greater power but in reality responsibility was devolved within a strong regulatory framework in which governors and head teachers were held accountable for the implementation of the reform agenda and for pupil achievement. The balance of control rested firmly with the DES and it drove through a series of reforms relating to the curriculum, assessment and testing, and school inspection which, though intended to raise standards, were not wholly supported by teachers. Was there a reduction in teacher professionalism? It is difficult to make any clear judgement about this but professional autonomy was certainly challenged as teachers' freedom to shape the curriculum they taught, their patterns of work and their opportunities to select the forms of professional development that met their individual needs were constrained. It is also questionable whether the stronger central control imposed by Government actually led to school improvement. Research evidence about school effectiveness and improvement underlined the importance of a school culture in which staff had shared vision and goals and relationships were collegial and collaborative. It is difficult to build such a culture when the context in which the school is operating emphasises target setting and accountability, performance management and performance related pay for staff, measures which often focus on the

work of individual teachers and are more likely to promote competition than collaboration. (McMahon, 2001). In these years of new public management teacher workload increased and the profession came under greater control and scrutiny, some negative consequences were a reported reduction in teacher morale (DfEE, 1999) and growing concern about recruitment into the profession and the difficulty of filling senior school management and headteacher posts.

(c) Modernisation – promoting professional development and school improvement after 1997

The label used for the third section, which is roughly the period from 1997 to 2006, coinciding with a "New Labour" government, is Modernisation. This term, although used by government ministers and in policy documents, has not been widely adopted in educational circles. A 1999 paper titled *Modernising Government* presented this rather vague definition:

> *Modernising government means identifying, and defeating, the problems we face. It means freeing the public service so that it can build on its strengths to innovate and to rise to these challenges. It means raising all standards until they match the best within and outside the public service, and continue improving. It means transforming government, so that it is organised around what the public wants and needs, rather than around the needs or convenience of institutions.*
>
> (Cabinet Office, 1999: 1.18)

Newman has suggested that the Labour government worked to build a consensus around, "*an agenda of modernising reforms designed to remedy deep-seated social problems such as poor schooling, ill health*" (Newman, 2001: 2) and she argues that this was a partial retreat from the ideological commitment to market mechanisms as the driver of reform in the public sector. However, she also noted that in practice the modernisation project led to an intensification of the reforms and a steady flow of targets, performance indicators, audits and inspection. The Government's ambitious aims for education were outlined in the White Paper, Excellence in Schools,"… *to change attitudes towards education and foster a realisation that education matters to everyone.… We must replace the culture of complacency with commitment to success*" (DfEE, 1997: 3). Clearly, earlier educational reforms were not judged to have produced satisfactory outcomes. Raising standards in schools was still the core aim, teachers were recognised as being central to achieving this aim and they were to be valued, provided with extensive in-service training and their success celebrated.

Initially the proposed methods for raising standards outlined in the report did not differ significantly from those introduced by successive Conservative governments, although it was implied that they would be more rigorous. OFSTED inspections would continue and failing schools would have to improve, make a fresh start or close. A Standards and Effectiveness unit was to be set up in the re-named Department for Education and Employment (DfEE). There was to be a push to raise standards of literacy and numeracy. More data about pupil and school achievement were to be published, the focus was to be on outcomes rather

than process. However, there were some changes in language, fewer references were made to management and more emphasis was placed on leadership. Improvement was to be achieved through a partnership of schools, LEAs, OFSTED and the DfEE. But, in this partnership the DfEE pre-decided what should be the role of each party.

> *The main responsibility for raising standards lies with schools themselves. But they will be more effective in doing so if they work in active partnership with LEAs, OFSTED and the DfEE. The LEAs' role is to help schools set and meet their targets. OFSTED's role is to inspect performance by individual schools and LEAs, and provide an external assessment of the state of the school system as a whole. The DfEE's role is to set the policy framework, promote best practice, and to provide pressure and support in relation to LEAs as LEAs themselves do for their schools.*
>
> (DfEE, 1997: para 3.16)

Since 1997 education reform has stayed top of the political agenda. Numerous initiatives and innovations have been introduced, the majority, if not all, have been driven by a determination to raise standards of achievement. Schools and teachers are constantly challenged to improve. Newman (2001) argued that the Government was attempting to control both the outputs and processes of professional work. This could be problematic as demonstrated in policies for performance management and continuing professional development including leadership development.

(i) Performance management and continuing professional development

An early step in the push to raise standards was to re-introduce a tougher scheme for teacher appraisal. The existing appraisal scheme had effectively ceased in many schools and was criticised in the 1997 White Paper as being an inadequate means of checking on teacher performance and failing to lead to increased teacher effectiveness. (DfEE, 1997, 5.23). The requirements for the new system of appraisal, henceforth known as performance management (DfEE, 1998 and 1999) not only introduced performance related-pay for the first time but also directed that salary rewards should be linked to measurable improvements in pupil performance. This was in sharp contrast to the earlier appraisal framework (DES, 1989a) which had emphasised teacher professional development. At the same time a new system of Threshold Assessment was introduced. This was effectively a salary bar at nine points on the salary scale (since reduced); teachers had to demonstrate their competency against national standards to pass the threshold and so get access to higher pay ranges. The re-introduction of appraisal with threshold assessment meant that teachers had to demonstrate, and convince their assessors, that their work was contributing in measurable ways to raising standards of learning and teaching. The push was to use evidence based criteria rather than, or as well as, professional judgement to assess the quality of a teacher's contribution.

The policy position on professional development for teachers was also rather different, not least because more money was allocated to support CPD. The principles outlined in the paper, *Professional Development* (DfEE, 2000), show how thinking about CPD was changing. Three of the principles that were especially important were: the view that individual teachers should take ownership of and give priority to

their own professional development; the strong recommendation that CPD should be focused on raising standards of pupil achievement; and an acceptance that a wide range of development opportunities should be available to suit different needs. In some respects, this strategy seemed to move back to a recognition of teacher autonomy in CPD. The DfEE appeared to respond to the criticism that professional development opportunities had focused too much on national and school priorities and that individual teacher needs had been neglected. Earmarked funding was provided for a number of CPD initiatives, for example, Best Practice Research Scholarships; International Exchanges and Study Visits; Business Placements; Teacher Sabbaticals. All of these provided opportunities for individual teachers and headteachers to engage in CPD activities which met their individual needs and would also address the raising standards agenda in some way. Nevertheless, research indicated that it remained difficult to achieve a balance between individual and organisational needs (Hustler, 2003; Bolam and Weindling, 2006; OFSTED, 2006). Despite positive evaluations of many of these initiatives their specific funding was not renewed and there was a change in Government policy in 2004. In future, decisions about CPD provision and specific professional development activities were to be taken by schools and teachers themselves, informed by performance management reviews and linked to plans for school improvement. Funding for CPD would be included in the school budget and there was to be a greater emphasis on in-school and across-school activities such as coaching and mentoring, classroom observation, training and other forms of collaboration. The importance of subject knowledge for teachers was emphasized and teacher appraisals were to be refocused to become teaching and learning reviews intended to stimulate demand for high quality training and encourage teachers to take more responsibility for their own development. Significantly, professional development was described as a key element in a new form of teacher professionalism:

> *a new professionalism for teachers, in which career progression and financial rewards will go to those who are making the biggest contributions to improving pupil attainment, those who are continually developing their own expertise, and those who help to develop expertise in other teachers.*
>
> (DfES, 2004: 5, para 39)

Teachers were to be encouraged to be more proactive in their own professional development and would be rewarded if this was judged to have contributed to raising pupil attainment, although how such judgements would be made was unclear.

(ii) Leadership development and professional learning communities

Government belief in the importance of training for headteachers and senior staff (school leaders) continued after 1997. Significant funding was provided to establish a National College for School Leadership (NCSL) which opened in November 2000 with a brief to provide a single focus for research and training in school leadership. The NCSL's achievements in a relatively short period of time have been impressive (Bush, 2004): a number of leadership development programmes have been developed; the college has invested in online learning, web-based learning, and is promoting electronic means of communication and learning for school leaders; it commissions, undertakes and disseminates research on leader-

ship. The NCSL also set up the Networked Learning Communities Group which facilitated staff from different schools working together in partnership with other educational organisations and individuals to promote learning and share good practice (Southworth, 2004).

A further development was the establishment of the General Teaching Council (GTC) for England which began work in September 2000. Set up by government legislation in 1998, its brief was to act as a voice for the teaching profession and give advice to the Secretary of State on professional matters about teachers, including their professional development (Saunders, 2004). In practice, in establishing the GTC, the government provided a channel for the teachers' voice into the policy making arena bypassing the local authorities and teacher associations. The pattern of staffing in schools has also changed through the "Re-modelling the Workforce" initiative which led to a big increase in numbers of support staff (e.g. teaching assistants, technicians). Theoretically this would free teachers from many bureaucratic tasks and enable them to concentrate on raising standards in classrooms although there would clearly be implications for their role, not least some additional responsibility for the management and training of support staff.

It is significant that the concept of the school as a professional learning community (PLC) (Bolam et al., 2005) has become central to the government's strategy for raising standards. For policy makers, interest in a learning community stems from the belief that when teachers and other school staff work together collaboratively with a clear focus on learning, the school's overall capacity to raise standards is enhanced. Clearly, if school staff are working to establish themselves as a PLC then it is more likely that teachers, support staff, parents, governors, etc. will have a shared understanding about what can be done to maximise learning and how they can contribute to this.

A Focus on What Works?

In a number of respects the "Modernisation" period can be seen as a continuation of managerialism rather than a move away from it, certainly there has been no diminution in central government control. The core educational policy goal has continued to be to raise educational standards yet there have been some changes in approach. In policy development the focus has been on finding "what works" and on the implementation of policies that seem to promise the desired results. Spending on education has significantly increased and the emphasis on competition seems to have diminished slightly. Use of the web and electronic mail has made it much easier for the DfES to disseminate information directly to schools and consult teachers without recourse to the LEA. But the pressure to implement reforms continues unabated and, although teachers are expected to be more proactive about their own CPD, this is within a clear framework of national standards of good practice and expectations about pupil learning outcomes.

Conclusion

What conclusions might be drawn from this review of practice and policy in continuing professional development? Certainly there have been considerable changes since the 1970s. Most notable is the increasing centralisation of policy-making as demonstrated in the changing relationships between the Department for Education (the precise title of the department has changed over the years), the local education authorities and the teachers as represented by their professional associations. This has moved from the notion of partnership to a position where the roles of the LEA and the teacher associations are considerably weaker, schools are self-managing and there is a more direct relationship between the individual school and central government. But centralisation of policy making has not been accompanied by a growing certainty about the strategies that are most likely to promote teacher learning and growth and school improvement. Questions about appropriate forms of appraisal/performance management, school self-evaluation/inspection and headteacher/leadership training reoccur on a regular basis. Policy on CPD has shifted from a situation where the teacher was seen as an autonomous professional, responsible for the development of their own knowledge and skills, someone who should be supported and encouraged but not directed in their development, to a position where the headteacher and senior staff are expected to make provision for the CPD of school staff within the context of a framework of national standards for the profession, performance management and school improvement planning.

Does this represent the emergence of a new teacher professionalism? For Hoyle and Wallace new professionalism means that "… *practitioners [are] required to demonstrate competence in delivering an externally-determined service*" (2005: 167). This is an accurate description of what is happening given the current policy framework for teachers' work. The expectation of the DfES is that a characteristic of new professionalism is that teachers will be continually developing their own expertise and helping other teachers to develop (2004). It is questionable whether there is enough flexibility in the system to enable this growth of expertise as regulations and guidelines about the curriculum, pedagogy and teaching and learning priorities coupled with a rigorous assessment and performance management system leave little scope for individual teacher innovation and creativity. Indeed the core tasks may be so prescribed that there is risk of the job becoming boring. As Hoyle and Wallace note, the new professionalism approach is, "… *in danger of impoverishing the quality of professional practice and inhibiting the very incremental innovation that is vital for improving its effectiveness*" (2005: 167). If teachers are to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to cope successfully with the current pace of educational change they will require opportunities for reflection and challenging study to help them become independent thinkers and problem solvers. Successive governments have clarified expectations for teachers and have set standards for professional practice which are monitored and assessed through pupil outcomes and OFSTED inspections. But is this the correct balance of power and influence? There are likely to be unique features in every school context, a common national solution

cannot be applied for every problem that arises. A more productive interpretation of new professionalism would be one which allowed headteachers and their staff more space for creative problem solving and developing their professional skills albeit within a regulatory framework. Hoyle and Wallace make a plea for temperate leadership and management which nurtures teachers and supports them to "*do things professionally*" and "*act professionally*" (2005: 190). If policy makers were to place more trust in teachers and a greater reliance on their professional judgement, if they were to re-balance the policy making process so as to facilitate a greater input from Local Authorities and Associations for Headteachers, Teachers and other staff, then we might witness new shared understandings of professionalism which are about creativity and innovative problem solving as well as competency.

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