St John the Baptist Catholic Multi Academy Trust

Professional Learning Networks (PLNs)

Rationale

In St John the Baptist Catholic Multi Academy Trust we value working in networks, collaborations and partnerships, as these provide teachers with professional learning communities to support the changing of professional practice.

Professional Learning Networks rest on the following assumptions about how staff in schools and localities learn and change their practice.

1. Teaching is complex, so ongoing learning is necessary
2. A great deal of untapped knowledge and expertise exists in schools
3. Many challenges staff face are local challenges and need to be addressed 'on the ground'
4. Staff improve their practice by analysing, evaluating and making changes with peers.

Purpose and Aims

We aim to create a climate across our trust that fosters opportunities for educators to engage in collaborative professional learning and to apply their learning to problem-solve around teaching and learning issues, with the core focus of improving existing classroom practices and generating new teaching practices to improve pupils' learning experiences and outcomes.

This core purpose is guided by the MAT strategic aims:

1. **To enhance the distinctive Catholic nature of the schools and the Trust**
2. **To ensure every child and young person receives the very best education so that they are empowered to develop, learn and achieve**
3. **To develop and embed sustainable, high quality and robust leadership across the Trust and its schools**
4. **To strengthen engagement between our schools and our communities**
5. **To achieve excellence in facilities, staffing, professional development and resourcing.**

In line with our MAT Trust Curriculum Overview and Curriculum Essential Principles , leaders at all levels collaborate and participate in PLNs "to share knowledge and practice, innovate and develop new ideas." A key principal is that colleagues engage in open and reflective professional dialogue, leading to actions in school which will drive up standards, as well as transforming their own practice and leadership skills.

Professional Learning Networks enable teachers and leaders from different schools to:

- engage in collaborative working to increase their teaching and leadership expertise;

- meet together to discuss and evaluate various solutions to educational challenges;

- engage in collective enquiry into best practice locally, nationally or further afield;

- facilitate the sharing of outstanding practice;

- innovate and experiment with new instructional practices and review and adjust them before implementing more widely in schools;

- share strategies, resources and ideas;

- discuss topics of interest;

- offer support, advice and feedback;

- stay up to date on latest teaching techniques, pedagogies and other changes;

- develop subject knowledge and expertise in order to respond to and lead changes in own schools.

Our Professional Learning Networks (PLNs)

Networks are set up to support curriculum subjects (e.g. RE, Maths), specialisms (e.g. SEND; EYFS) or MAT priorities (e.g. Curriculum Development; Moderation). Each year the number and range of PLNs is reviewed by Headteachers and the Trust Teaching & Learning Lead, in the light of Trust and School Improvement Plans. Currently the Trust has the following PLNs:

- Art & Design and DT
- Computing
- English
- EYFS
- Geography & History
- Maths
- MFL
- Music
- PE
- RE
- Science
- SENDCOs
- Wellbeing & PSHE
- Y2, Y3 and Y6 Moderation

<u>Meeting Checklist</u>

All meetings

- PLNs meet once per term – usually after school

- Meetings are held over Zoom (potentially rotate round schools in non-COVID situation)

- The Trust Teaching & Learning Lead/Deputy CEO/CEO will attend some meetings and will keep in touch with the leader of each PLN between meetings.

- Stick to an agenda and keep minutes - include main ideas from the meeting discussions, decisions made, and plans for the next meeting. Agenda and minutes are recorded on a live Google doc template, saved in the PLN's Google Drive folder, so that they are accessible for all members.

[PLN Agenda and Minutes template](#)
• Use PLN's Google folder to store agendas, action plans, minutes and shared resources:
[PLN Shared Google Drive](#)
• Agree what leaders will do back in their own school between meetings

• Agree the main focus, date and time of the next meeting.

Initial meeting

• Take care of logistics – e.g. hosting, chairing and minute taking

• Agree ground rules

• Action Planning. Determine 2 or 3 key goals/priorities for the year ahead, by:

1. Agreeing desired goals and final outcomes[1]. This might include looking at a variety of pupil data and other information and evidence, such as Trust and schools' Improvement & Development Plans or subject Action Plans, identifying outcomes that need to improve.
2. Identifying a few essential aspects of professional practice that need to change in order to achieve these goals. Identify schools in the Trust where there may be strengths or expertise in this area.
3. Agreeing what needs to be put in place and how these changes/practices will be implemented, including the role of leaders in this process – e.g. key actions; resources; training; sharing practice.
4. Deciding how the impact of actions taken will evaluated
5. Recording steps 2-4 above on the [PLN Action Plan](#). This is a live Google doc.

• Agree what leaders will do back in their own schools before the next meeting.

• Feedback on local networks/hubs, training attended and share relevant information with the group

• Update minutes using the Trust template provided. **NB: A copy of the original template document should be made, renamed and moved to the appropriate PLN folder.**

Spring & Summer term Meetings

• Monitor the team's progress toward Action Plan goals and update Action Plan

• Reflect on and discuss classroom application of any changes implemented and pupil responses and agree necessary adjustments, based on collective reflection and wisdom

• Examine new ideas, plan the implementation of new teaching strategies and ways to evaluate the impact on pupil learning

• Share research and information (books, articles, etc.)

• Share examples of excellent practice

• Feedback on CPD and other networks attended

• Discuss the effectiveness of teaching strategies and approaches

• Update minutes using the Trust template provided.

Between Meetings – activities to undertake and feed back to network group

• Introduce, co-ordinate and systematically implement agreed actions/changes in own school

• Monitor pupil responses and impact

• Gather feedback from staff

• Research and information gathering, including engaging in action research

• Attend relevant CPD.

• Joint or coordinated lessons

• Monitoring activities, including peer monitoring activities – e.g. observe other team members or teachers using specific activities with students; joint work scrutiny

• Develop a toolkit of resources, information and practices that can serve as a resource for other teachers

• Keep the network's work public. Post minutes on Google Drive, e-mail minutes and/or activities school-wide, engage other teachers and Headteachers.

Ground Rules for Meetings:

• **Be punctual:** start on time and maintain time limits. The network leader will arrange the date, time and location of each meeting/send out a Zoom invitation

• **Be clear about the purpose and be prepared**: read minutes and other materials before the meeting and add brief agenda items in advance. The agenda and minutes are completed on agreed template, saved in the appropriate PLN folder on the Trust Google Drive.

• **Establish fair and productive protocols:** e.g. all voices heard; no monopolising; respect each other's opinions; agree to disagree but still seek an agreed consensus

• **Be Present:** everyone participates; no phones; Zoom camera on

• **Have courage:** challenge one another, e.g. in maintaining the ground rules, agreed protocols or in completion of agreed actions/tasks

• **Communicate:** use minutes and action plans as a tool for sharing information to ensure Headteachers and the Trust Teaching & Learning Lead is kept informed and can ensure alignment with CPD in school

• **Hospitality:** the host school network member will be responsible for sending and organising directions, parking, lunch arrangements etc.

Professional Learning Network Learning Cycle

Professional Learning Network Learning Cycle