

With the introduction of the School Workforce Advisor role into Dudley Children's Services and the commitment to provide 'CPD for the whole school workforce' there was a burning need to audit the training and development needs of the whole school workforce.

After reviewing various products and options, we decided to go with the STAR/2develop online audit tool as it was the only option that provided a complete solution for both teaching staff based on teacher standards and for support staff based on NVQ standards for a wide variety of roles in schools.

A real key to the success of the audit with schools was that we are able to shape the questionnaires and the website to meet our specific needs, and STAR/2develop was very supportive of this.

Initially we carried out 2 pilot sessions at St James's primary school and Dormston secondary school and this was a really useful exercise. It enabled us to finalise any user amendments to the format of the questionnaires, usage and reporting.

St James's utilised directed time, this included an initial 20 minute meeting and then 20-30 minutes to complete questionnaires. They elected to ask everyone to complete a general questionnaire and one job role questionnaire. Linda Perkins, Deputy Head teacher stated:

'We asked staff to do 'best fit' answers, we encouraged staff to be honest, we also found the 'learning stairway' provided by the SWA very useful and positive.'



'It was easy and useful. It took minutes to complete. Most of the statements were job-relevant.'

Leah Thompson, Teaching Assistant

Christian Hamilton, Key Stage 2 Manager stated:

'Identifit was useful for providing you with the tools you need to further your own professional development, career and skills base. It enabled you to see the things you needed to do next and showed you next step career progression and gaps in your CPD.'

Dale Harbach, Lunchtime Supervisor also added that *'The system was easy to use. It flagged up gaps and I used it to identify First Aid courses needed for my staff.'*

The audit was rolled out to around 30 primary and secondary schools through a series of training days. We then supported each school as required, through telephone support to hosting INSET days to roll out the audit tool as an integral part of CPD,

linking to the importance of the standards and the latest thinking on CPD. These sessions were well received by staff and were integral to the success of the online tool in schools and allowed the questionnaires to be positioned positively; not as a tool to monitor failure, but as way of measuring strengths and how these strength areas can be developed to coach and support colleagues.

Vicki Jordan, School Workforce Adviser ran the project for Dudley and stated that:

'Using the online tool heightened the awareness in schools of establishing the needs of the 'whole' school workforce and not just teaching staff. Schools used an approach that brought the whole school workforce together and this really helped support staff to feel valued and to know that their roles are important and do have an impact on the learning and teaching of all pupils.'

The approach that we decided to take with schools was to focus on people's professional strengths and expertise and that the questionnaire was a positive guide to assessing CPD needs and not a focus for negative aspects. It also helped to develop an ethos of identifying developmental strengths which, in turn, could be used to the benefit of other colleagues i.e. through coaching and mentoring or in-house CPD activities.

We have used overall information collected from all schools who took part in the audit to inform training providers across the LA of strengths and areas of CPD. The information has been particularly useful to help to develop improved information about accredited opportunities for

support staff. We are currently working with FE providers to build a picture of current provision and develop training to meet future needs.

We are also looking to develop further the Identifit tool so that it supports a skills analysis for colleagues about to embark on accredited training.

**Sam Nolan, School Workforce Coordinator
Dudley Local Authority**

For more information or advice on this online tool please contact STAR using the details below.