

3 July 2026

Dear Sir/Madam,

CSSC response to DE consultation: Leading Together for Excellence: A Transformed Strategy for Teacher Professional Learning

Background

- As the support body for almost half of the schools in Northern Ireland, the Controlled Schools' Support Council (CSSC) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Department of Education's Transformed NI Strategy for Teacher Professional Learning.
- The controlled sector is the largest education sector in Northern Ireland, representing 49% of all schools. CSSC supports a diverse range of schools including Nursery, Primary, Secondary, Grammar, Integrated, Special and Irish-medium schools.

Policy Background

- The Independent Review of Education (IRE) stated that "Education is the greatest investment any society makes in its own future. Responsible citizenship, prosperity and fulfilled lives depend on it. In a world changing at an unprecedented pace, peace and prosperity depend on education more than ever before."
- CSSC continues to be concerned about the impact of longstanding funding pressures on the education system. Sustainable workforce planning, recruitment and retention can only be achieved where schools and education bodies have sufficient resources and certainty to plan effectively.
- As noted in the Transformed NI strategy published in March 2025, "The growing economic power houses of the 21st century are those nations that have placed an absolute premium on getting their education system right. Northern Ireland must do the same." CSSC believes that investment in the education workforce is a critical component of delivering high-quality outcomes for children and young people.

Overall vision and direction: A career long continuum

CSSC notes the Department's publication of *Leading Together for Excellence: A Transformed NI Strategy for Professional Learning* and welcomes the opportunity to provide comments on behalf of the controlled sector.

CSSC acknowledges the Department's vision for professional learning: "To build an expert, confident teaching profession through high-quality, career-long professional learning that drives system excellence." CSSC agrees with the vision but would note that the ambitions of Transformed in relation to teacher professional learning requires sustained investment if it is to be realised.

CSSC notes that the proposed strategy builds upon the foundations established through *Learning Leaders* and notes the Department's acknowledgement that, while *Learning Leaders* articulated a clear vision of empowered teachers, "the absence of sustained investment and system-wide coordination meant that the vision was not fully realised and implementation of the strategy was piecemeal at best." This recognition is important and provides a valuable opportunity to learn from previous experiences.

CSSC shares the Department's view that the quality of teaching is the single most important in school factor in influencing pupil outcomes, closely followed by the quality of school leadership. CSSC supports DE's acknowledgment that the intellectual demands of the teaching profession require that professional learning be placed at the heart of system improvement, not as a peripheral activity but as a foundational condition for educational excellence.'

There is clear and consistent evidence that the quality of teaching has the greatest impact on pupils' learning and experiences. Improving teaching is therefore central to school improvement and requires strong leadership focused on evidence, collaboration and sustained improvement in classroom practice.

CSSC's Building Capacity Programme aligns closely with the Department of Education's Transformed NI Strategy and has been designed in response to international research on effective professional development in high performing education systems. It reflects a shared understanding that improvement is most effective when professional learning is focused on teaching and learning, informed by evidence, collaborative in nature, sustained over time and supported through coaching and mentoring.

Teachers are members of a learning profession who recognise the importance of continuous professional growth. Teacher professional learning must be a career-long continuum, responsive to evolving knowledge, pedagogy, educational research and the changing needs of society. Professional learning should therefore not be viewed as a series of discrete activities but as an ongoing journey that supports teachers at every stage of their careers, from early practice through to leadership and specialist roles.

Research consistently demonstrates that investing in and supporting the adults who work with children and young people leads to improved outcomes for learners. As such,

strengthening professional learning across the workforce is central to achieving the ambitions of the TransformED strategy. CSSC therefore welcomes the Minister's recognition of the need for sustained investment 'in those who make learning happen every day' and supports the vision of a coherent, career-long approach to professional learning that enables all staff to continually develop their knowledge, skills and impact on learner outcomes.

In considering 'those who make learning happen every day,' the draft framework does not explicitly acknowledge non-teaching staff, the vital contribution they make to the educational outcomes and wellbeing of children and young people, or their professional learning needs. The vision for professional learning should adopt a whole-workforce perspective, recognising the development needs of all those who contribute to pupils' learning and the effective operation of schools. Failure to do so risks creating a fragmented approach to professional learning and limiting opportunities for cohesive workforce development.

While CSSC welcomes the overarching vision set out in the framework, a truly comprehensive approach must be inclusive of all members of the school workforce whose collective contributions are essential to creating and sustaining effective learning environments.

Gaps in current professional learning provision

In considering the 'gaps' in professional learning identified by the Department, one principal highlighted the importance of ensuring that such deficits are not misconstrued as deficiencies in the professionalism of the teaching workforce. While principals acknowledged that shortcomings existed in the professional learning available to schools at a system level over a significant period of time, they also noted that school leaders have taken significant responsibility for sourcing high-quality training for staff. Although these efforts have supported capacity building, responsibility for identifying and securing appropriate, quality assured provision largely remains with individual schools adding to workload pressures. While schools would welcome an arrangement which provides enhanced coordination or oversight of professional learning (assumed to be the responsibility of the proposed Centre for Educational Excellence), there were some concerns about the constraints of this approach and potential to limit school autonomy in identifying the best provider of training, professional learning and development, specific to the needs, context and culture of individual schools.

During consultation, school leaders frequently identified gaps in professional learning relating to SEN support and also noted the difficulties in accessing external services through the new Education Authority Graduated Response Framework which, they reported, delays further the potential capacity building which could be provided by professionals from EA Local Impact Teams through role modelling of specific supportive strategies. Some leaders noted that professional learning in supporting schools to meet the needs of children and young people with SEN has not kept pace with the increasing complexity of pupil need and is too dependent on rote generic practices rather than focused on approaches which meet individual need. School leaders note that they often receive the same advice and guidance for all children, and moreover, advice and guidance which staff are already familiar with. CSSC acknowledges that the SEND Reform Agenda includes a range of actions to address these challenges and has, in response to previous consultation opportunities, highlighted the importance of ensuring that these actions are adequately resourced and informed by the lived experience of practitioners.

Time to meaningfully engage with professional learning, especially considering the changes associated with the TransformED strategy, was also raised on several occasions. The challenge extends beyond simply attending training; it also encompasses the time required to effectively disseminate, implement, monitor, and embed new approaches within schools.

At the time of consultation, principals expressed concern about the emphasis within the reformed curriculum on subject-specific pedagogy, particularly at primary level where there is a shift away from broad Areas of Learning. While schools emphasised the professionalism and commitment of staff in engaging with these changes, emphasising the professionalism and adaptability of staff, concerns were raised about the timeline for implementation. School leaders also noted a lack of clarity regarding expectations for TransformED school development days. With school development plans already approved by governors, many principals were apprehensive that any announcements made in September could disrupt arrangements already in place for the forthcoming year's school development days.

Initial Teacher Education Curriculum Framework

CSSC understands that the core content established by the new Initial Teacher Education Curriculum Framework will be delivered from September 2028 and aligns with the Department's TransformED strategy. School leaders are of the view that Initial Teacher Education plays a vital role in supporting the beginning teacher to meet the demands of the role and emphasised that it is crucially important that all Higher Education Institutions work to equip undergraduates to develop the required skills, work ethic, motivation and drive to succeed as educators.

School leaders welcome the publication of the new curriculum framework in the expectation that it will enhance coherence and consistency across all Higher Education Institutions and provide assurances to schools that the beginning teacher, regardless of institution has availed of the same core content and practice expectations.

The enhanced focus on supporting children with special educational needs and the commitment to familiarise students with core knowledge which includes categories of SEN,

specialist provisions in mainstream schools, the Graduated Response Framework and Personal Learning plans will support SEND transformation which schools are already immersed in.

School leaders value the relationship established with all Higher Education Institutions in Northern Ireland and agree with the curriculum framework's purpose of serving as a foundation for a clear continuum, from Initial Teacher Education through induction and early career to career long learning.

A recurring concern in conversations about beginning teacher practices/behaviour focused on the quality of communication skills. CSSC notes that the curriculum framework addresses this and that the practice expectations for pedagogy and assessment require that beginning teachers 'model and explicitly develop high-quality oral language.' School leaders hope that such expectations will serve to address the quality of the beginning teachers' communication skills, recognising the influence of their professional practice on the development of their pupils' communication skills.

School leaders referred CSSC to the fact that while Initial Teacher Education in Northern Ireland will be reflective of the Northern Ireland context, many beginning teachers will complete their Initial Teacher Education in other jurisdictions. CSSC therefore welcomes the commitment to develop a specific element of induction which builds systematically on these beginning teacher's prior learning and addresses the NI Curriculum, assessment and accountability arrangements, statutory frameworks, including for Special Educational Needs; and the professional and cultural context of schools in Northern Ireland.

Making Induction Mandatory

School principals voiced support for teacher induction in Northern Ireland becoming mandatory, recognising as they do the importance of this stage of a beginning teacher's development. School leaders spoke highly of the role of teacher tutors in their respective schools and the contribution that an effective teacher tutor can have on the development of a beginning teacher.

The importance of this role needs to be recognised with the appropriate resourcing of development for the professional tutor. CSSC notes that the teacher professional learning strategy recognises the need for specialist pathways and that high quality professional learning can ensure that school staff are supported to become mentors or instructional coaches who are able to share effective practice with those new to the profession, and as the framework recognises, 'influence improvement beyond their own classrooms.' Investing

in these roles, allowing for appropriate training and time to carry out the role will not only support the development of high-quality teachers but contribute to their retention.

School leaders were of the view that any induction programme must take account of the prevalence of temporary and non-permanent contracts within Northern Ireland's schools recognising the associated risk that some beginning teachers may miss out on consistent and sustained support at a critical early stage of their careers.

School leaders' views on initial teacher education, induction, and early career development strongly support the concept of a career-long continuum for teacher professional learning, as outlined in the consultation document. Strengthening links with ITE providers so that information regarding a teacher's prior learning, experiences and areas for development inform induction planning is vital and would support better development of professional learning opportunities tailored to the needs of early career teachers and also support the role of teacher mentors providing access to current research.

Early Career Development

School leaders emphasised that early professional development is critical in building on existing strengths while fostering the development of new skills. To strengthen this stage of a teacher's career, school leaders highlighted the importance of establishing clear professional standards, alongside accessible guidance on the professional learning opportunities available to support progression.

Strengthening school links with ITE providers should be a consideration for this strategy so that information regarding a teacher's prior learning, experiences and areas for development inform induction planning and strengthen schools' capacity to support the development of professional learning opportunities tailored to the needs of early career teachers. Sustained engagement with ITE providers would not only inform career progression but would also facilitate access to current educational research and emerging evidence-informed practice which is a key priority of the TransformED strategy.

CSSC is conscious that the development of meaningful and sustained partnerships between schools and ITE providers will require appropriate investment and resourcing. Without dedicated resources, there is a risk that such engagement becomes an additional burden on school leaders and teachers. Investment in release time, partnership coordination and collaborative professional learning opportunities will be essential to ensuring that these partnerships are effective and sustainable.

With the increasing opportunities afforded by the digitisation of TPL, CSSC supports the introduction of Personal Learning Passports as a means of providing teachers with a portable and comprehensive record of their professional learning journey, capturing experiences from Initial Teacher Education through to induction, early career development and leadership development. CSSC is conscious that such professional learning records are already available in other jurisdictions including England and Wales and can see their benefits in allowing teachers to record, reflect upon and plan for further professional

growth ensuring that professional learning builds on prior experiences rather than being fragmented or repetitive.

Professional standards and pathways

Teacher competences underpin the role of a teacher at every stage of their career and provide a continuous reference point for what effective teaching looks like across every career stage.

School leaders believe that the current teacher competences remain relevant, covering as they do core teaching domains such as professional values, subject and curriculum knowledge, planning, teaching and assessment however, as they were first established in 2007, there is agreement that the time is right to review the competences and potentially modernise to reflect the changing context for Education.

The current competences do not include an explicit requirement for teachers to engage with research evidence or to apply evidence informed pedagogy which Transformed requires. Other areas which will need to be reflected in the competences include the Transformed emphasis on subject specific pedagogy, cognitive science, the use of AI and while collaboration is referenced in the current competences there is limited emphasis on the development of professional learning communities and the contribution of the wider system.

In reviewing the competences, it is vital that a range of stakeholders inform their development. The Education and Training Inspectorate, Higher Education Institutions, school leaders and other key educational stakeholders should be involved in their development. It will also be important for the reviewed competences to be agreed with teachers to ensure that they reflect the requirements of current teaching and learning and allow teachers to support the requirements. While school leaders spoke of their reference to the teacher competences in the conduct of PRSD, a review is an opportunity to more strongly emphasise the links between teacher competences with PRSD and support Principals in communicating the professional obligations involved.

In acknowledging the role of the competences in encouraging self-evaluation and reflective practice, it is recommended that school leaders be supported to develop their coaching and mentoring skills to help staff set professional goals informed by the competences. CSSC's provision of Executive Coaching and Systemic Team Coaching, a key component of our Ethos and Leadership programme, has had a positive impact in controlled schools with focused

coaching conversations supporting school leaders to think strategically, develop positive mindsets, and build resilient leadership habits.

Coaching and mentoring relationships can provide valuable structured opportunities for professional dialogue to take place. Internationally, systems such as Shanghai place a strong emphasis on mentoring, with teachers benefitting from ongoing support while also being expected to contribute to the development of their colleagues. This creates a culture of professional learning in which both mentor and mentee develop with the mentor also learning through the process of developing others.

Consideration should therefore be given to embedding career-long opportunities for reflection and professional dialogue, supported through coaching and mentoring. While such an approach will require significant investment to provide schools with the protected time and space necessary for meaningful professional dialogue; however, the potential benefits for professional growth, teaching quality and learner outcomes make such an investment worthwhile

Leadership Standards

CSSC agrees with the intention of the strategy to introduce distinct Leadership Standards for Northern Ireland and would agree that the development of such standards is necessary to guide headteachers' professional practice and development. CSSC is conscious that while leadership standards apply to principals in other jurisdictions and these frameworks may well provide a useful reference point, it is crucial that the development of standards for leadership in Northern Ireland is informed by current school leaders and other educational stakeholders such as ETI, the Education Authority and Higher Education Institutions.

CSSC notes the award of a three-year contract to a consortium of Higher Education Institutions to develop and deliver on a programme of professional learning to support newly appointed and aspiring school principals and welcomes this development. School leaders note that there has been a void in leadership development in the absence of the former Professional Qualification for Headship. CSSC looks forward to further detail about this programme and welcomes the intention to provide a structured, evidence-informed programme focused on the key knowledge and skills required by effective principals.

CSSC notes that the former PQH was underpinned by National Standards which were developed in consultation with teachers, principals, professional and subject associations, local authorities, higher education institutions and the Department of Education. It is CSSC's view that the development of new standards should also be similarly informed and be reflective of the known challenges of the role and the key knowledge and skills required to provide effective leadership.

CSSC, together with school leaders, contributed to previous work led by GTCNI on development of leadership competencies. Whilst much has changed in the intervening years this work would be a useful point of reference.

CSSC notes that a first pilot of the new programme will launch in January 2027 and, together with other leadership development components of TransformedED, will be delivered alongside relevant actions outlined in the Departmental response to the Independent Review of Teacher Workload. Addressing teacher workload is a crucial component of realising the success of any proposed leadership programme.

While the role of school leader is inherently demanding, leaders emphasised that the scale of administrative responsibilities, often exacerbated by system resourcing, can detract from their core focus of leading and inspiring their school communities. School leaders referred to several leadership responsibilities assumed in recent years which were previously undertaken by the Managing Authority. Too often school leaders become mired in management responsibilities rather than leadership and this detracts from the important role of creating a culture which fosters a collective growth mindset and supports the development of a community of learning.

School leaders highlighted the significant volume of communications issued by the Department in recent months including invitations to participate in numerous consultations. They also raised concerns about the administrative demands associated with accounting for expenditure across multiple funding streams. One principal queried when the introduction of BROMCOM would deliver the single integrated system anticipated by school leaders and which, it was hoped, would reduce the need to navigate multiple IT platforms including EA Connect, Any Comms, EA's SEND Portal and NISTR among others.

Supporting the leader also requires that senior leadership teams receive the professional development needed to effectively support the principal. Providing the right support at this stage of leadership development may also influence the willingness of individuals to pursue future school leadership roles. Principals noted that the highly demanding nature of the role is affecting staff willingness to consider leadership positions. School leaders spoke of teachers with leadership responsibilities relinquishing their leadership allowances because they felt overwhelmed by workload demands. They also expressed concern about the long-term sustainability of the system if highly capable individuals become reluctant to pursue leadership roles due to the significant demands associated with them.

At the time of writing the detail of the programme is not known, however, school leaders are of the view that it should be informed by what was considered successful in the previous Professional Qualification for Headship (PQH). Engagement with school leaders who experienced the PQH by the Higher Education Institutions is essential as the development of the new qualification progresses.

CSSC is supportive of the Department's recognition that leadership development must extend beyond technical compliance to focus on the development of professional judgement, ethical leadership and high expectations. CSSC believes that leadership programmes should draw upon the work of leading thinkers in these areas, equipping aspiring school leaders with the knowledge, skills and insights needed to lead effectively. This should support them in developing a clear understanding of how to lead teams, foster a culture of trust and collaboration, and create the conditions in which high expectations for both staff and pupils can flourish.

The role of a mentor in the early development of a principal is crucial, and the newly appointed principal should be supported by a mentor who understands the new principal's school context. The process of identifying an appropriate mentor should give consideration given to the qualities, skills and knowledge which make for an effective mentor.

CSSC notes the consultation document's acknowledgment that a cohort of principals has been appointed in the intervening years without access to a dedicated preparation programme and this was raised by school leaders during consultation. Those who did not have access to the PQH would be supportive of a differentiated pathway for experienced principals which recognises their prior learning. CSSC notes the consultation document's reference to international practice and the requirement in high performing systems for formal leadership preparation for the role.

While the current teacher competences refer to teachers' contribution to the life and development of the school and include phase exemplars that suggest leadership responsibilities, revised competences will need to more explicitly recognise the different progression opportunities available within a school setting. CSSC strongly supports the creation of a recognised specialist pathway in Northern Ireland, recognising its alignment with international evidence on effective approaches to strengthening system performance and agrees with the consultation document's identification of a range of leadership and specialist pathways inclusive of subject expertise, mentoring, instructional coaching and curriculum leadership, enabling teachers to influence improvement beyond their own classrooms.

During conversations with school leaders references to international practice included South Australia and Shanghai. In South Australia it is possible for teachers to be acknowledged as leaders in teaching and learning, achieving Highly Accomplished Lead Teacher (HALT) status. Specific professional standards underpin certification of HALT status, and it allows teachers to develop leadership capacity focused on teaching and learning. In Shanghai the role of Master Teacher is a route for career progression that does not require a move into school management but rather allows the teacher to be recognised for their expertise in teaching, curriculum development, mentoring and educational leadership. The Master Teacher is able to exercise system leadership whilst remaining close to classroom practice.

Consideration of the professional learning needs of special schools

CSSC is conscious that the SEND Reform Agenda envisages an enhanced role for special schools with the Delivery Plan outlining the trial and implementation of special schools as

resource hubs/centres of expertise to support inclusion. While CSSC supports the opportunity for mainstream schools to avail of the expertise to be found in special schools it is crucial that the SEND reform agenda realises its goal of addressing the specific challenges within special schools and that the staff of special schools also receive appropriate and relevant professional development. CSSC notes the delivery plan's commitment to link with universities to support research and evidence-based practice development and welcomes the Department's more recent announcement of plans for the design and development of a new tailored curriculum framework for special schools. The Department's commitment to include the expertise, insight and lived experience of local educators is to be commended and CSSC notes at the time of writing that applications are now open for practitioners and school leaders to join dedicated working groups to support this important work. CSSC looks forward to this model of collaboration being taken forward to support the professional development which will be required for implementation of a new curriculum framework for special schools.

Teacher professional learning considerations for the early years

Alongside the development of a specific curriculum for special schools, CSSC notes that the Department is progressing several related workstreams, including the development of an Integrated Early Years Framework. In its response to the Department's Draft Early Learning and Childcare Strategy, CSSC emphasised the importance of meaningful engagement with practitioners in the development of an Integrated Early Years Framework, particularly given the Department's intention for the framework to align with the Foundation Stage of the reformed statutory curriculum.

In developing professional learning opportunities for early years practitioners, it will be important to address concerns raised by nursery school leaders regarding the perceived lack of continuity between pre-school approaches and the delivery of learning at Foundation Stage. It will also be important to recognise the sector's strong confidence in the principles underpinning the pre-school curriculum and to ensure that these principles inform progression into Foundation Stage, providing children with a coherent and developmentally appropriate learning experience.

While the primary curriculum emphasises that children in the Foundation Stage should experience much of their learning through well-planned and challenging play, some pre-school practitioners express concern that this principle is not always consistently reflected in practice.

School leaders in controlled nursery schools have also identified gaps in professional learning opportunities relating to special educational needs (SEN). As with all aspects of professional learning, CSSC strongly recommends ongoing engagement with practitioners to identify priority areas for development and to ensure that learning opportunities are responsive to the needs of the workforce and the children they support.

Northern Ireland Centre for Excellence and Improvement

School leaders welcome the proposal to establish a Northern Ireland Centre for Educational Excellence and Improvement. However, their support was cautious, citing a lack of detail regarding the composition, role, and remit of the proposed centre.

They referred to the former CASS service as an effective model of support for schools, noting that a centre capable of similar provision would be highly beneficial. They highlighted how the previous CASS service facilitated meaningful engagement with subject specialists and, through secondments from schools, ensured that support was delivered by experienced practitioners.

It was emphasised that the introduction of a new curriculum will necessitate significant professional development. The proposed centre could play a vital role in supporting sustained professional learning for teachers over time, as they implement and embed new approaches in practice. School leaders highlighted that the proposed timeline for implementing the new curriculum may prove challenging, particularly as schools are already managing other significant reforms, including (but not limited to) SEND Transformation. Despite these pressures, they expressed strong support for the establishment of a new centre, particularly if it is tasked with developing high-quality, supportive resources to assist schools during this period of change.

In seeking clarification on the centre's role and remit, school leaders raised several key questions:

- Will the Centre deliver or commission training and professional development?
- Will the Centre commission and/or undertake research?
- Will it oversee or inspect organisations delivering teacher professional learning (TPL)?
- Will it be responsible for quality assuring TPL provision across different organisations?

In considering training and development, school leaders emphasised that provision must be of a high standard and while online development has a role to play, it should not be relied on excessively.

During consultation, school leaders highlighted the collaborative work of Area Learning Communities (ALCs) and described the many benefits associated with participation. These included opportunities to share expertise, support ongoing professional learning, address common challenges, and develop collective solutions to issues schools face.

School leaders did, however, express the view that ALCs could benefit from additional support to ensure that their primary focus remains on collaboration, professional learning and school improvement, rather than being constrained by administrative demands.

Consideration could be given to the role of the Managing Authority, or a body such as the proposed Centre for Excellence and Improvement, in providing administrative and coordination support to ALCs. This may include support for organising meetings, managing communications, coordinating joint professional learning events, and maintaining relevant documentation.

In addition, centralised advice and guidance could help to clarify roles and responsibilities, support longer-term planning, reduce duplication of effort, and promote greater consistency of approach across ALCs. Such support would enable school leaders to devote more time to the strategic and developmental aspects of collaborative working, thereby maximising the impact of ALCs on professional learning and school improvement.

The Beijing Municipal Centre for Teacher Training: Learning from International Practice

Drawing on practice observed in Beijing, CSSC notes the value of a coherent, research-informed long-term approach to Teacher Professional Learning (TPL). The Beijing Municipal system develops a five-year strategic plan grounded in evidence, emerging trends and system needs, with strong alignment across municipal, district and school levels. This plan provides clarity and predictability for schools and practitioners, enabling coordinated development pathways and ensuring that professional learning is responsive yet strategically focused.

Crucially, implementation is underpinned by structured requirements, such as defined CPD expectations and strong links between research and classroom practice, supported by collaboration between training centres, higher education and practitioners.

Ongoing, rigorous evaluation is embedded throughout the cycle, with learning from practice feeding back into research and informing subsequent planning.

CSSC considers that a similarly structured, evidence-based and evaluative multiyear planning model would enhance coherence, reduce ad hoc initiative overload, and support sustained improvement in TPL across the system.

Conclusion

CSSC is supportive of the Department's vision for teacher professional learning, including as it does an emphasis on career-long professional development from the point of entry. If the aspiration of a high-performing and continually improving education system is to be realised, professional learning must be viewed as an ongoing process rather than a series of isolated

interventions. Professional learning that is responsive to the needs of staff and which is responsive to the educational needs of children and young people is essential but will rely on sustained and significant investment.

Meaningful opportunities for reflection must be embedded within the system. Professional growth requires dedicated time and protected space for teachers to engage with new learning, to build on existing knowledge, implement new approaches and reflect on their impact. Without such opportunities, the benefits of professional learning are unlikely to be fully realised or sustained.

Conscious of the significant pace and scale of change associated with the TransformED strategy and the implementation of a new curriculum from 2028, it is vital that the workforce is supported through high-quality learning and development opportunities. Investing in the professional growth of staff will be critical in enabling them to navigate change with confidence and deliver high-quality teaching and learning that improves outcomes for all children and young people.

CSSC is happy to discuss this response with the Department.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Baker', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Mr Mark Baker
Chief Executive