

CASE STUDY:

EMBRACING THE ECF AND NPQS TO DRIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AND TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

ULLSWATER COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Tina Beddoe

Deputy Director, One Cumbria TSH

India Campbell

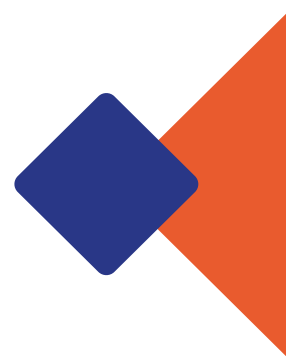
Assistant Head with responsibility for
Quality of Education

*Exemplifying the Golden
Thread in different contexts*



OUR SETTING:

Ullswater Community College (UCC) is a large mixed comprehensive school in Penrith, Cumbria. It currently has around 1,555 students, including about 200 in the sixth form. The school has embraced the Early Career Framework (ECF) and the reformed National Professional Qualifications (NPQs) and they are a key part of the school's recruitment and retention strategy. The school prioritises effective, long term professional development so that staff members are empowered to achieve their own career progression goals, as well as having a positive impact on pupil outcomes.

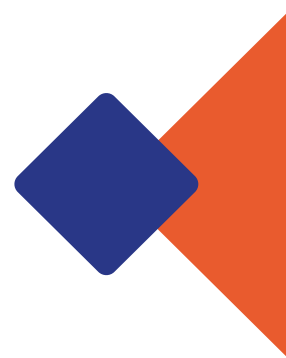


“ *The ECF and NPQs are the golden thread drawing everything together into our strategic approach to professional development.* **”**

UCC has made the ECF a core part of their teacher development and school improvement strategy. Since the reforms, UCC has employed 20 Early Career Teachers (ECTs) and 25% of staff are now trained in instructional coaching. They have taken the decision to implement the culture of instructional coaching throughout the school to both improve pupil progress and staff recruitment and retention. Feedback from ECTs who were finishing the ECF, was that they would welcome continued mentoring and support in the form of coaching. This is in sharp contrast to those who had completed induction as newly qualified teachers. The ECTs who started in September 2021 report that the ECF programme has had a positive impact on their effectiveness as a teacher and they valued the coaching support they had received from mentors. A working party to implement instructional coaching as the key part of appraisal and performance management, is now in place. Early adopter subject departments (usually those who have had ECTs) will implement coaching conversations, following short lesson drop ins, instead of full lesson observations. The instructional coaching process will give structure to follow up conversations. The plan is to develop this fully across all departments and to align it with the ongoing curriculum development and associated pedagogical skills.

Alongside the ECF, the school has also ensured that specialist and leadership NPQs are a core part of both teacher development and school improvement. NPQs have developed staff confidence within their role, have enabled staff members to plan their career progression and implement school improvement strategies. For example, one staff member who was new to SLT completed the NPQ in Senior Leadership (NPQSL). She discussed how she used the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) implementation guidance to inform the development plan for her department as well as the whole school literacy across the curriculum strategy. Other programme members reported that the networking opportunities were beneficial and the NPQs widened their knowledge, so that they could then bring that learning into the school.

“ The ECTs who started in September 2021 report that the ECF programme has had a positive impact on their effectiveness as a teacher and they valued the coaching support they had received from mentors.”



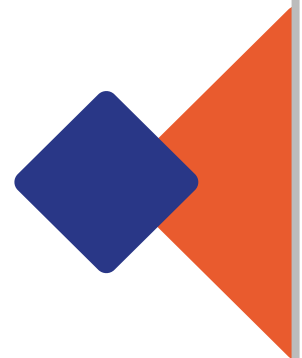
The school has seen a positive difference as a result of aligning the golden thread suite to teacher and leader development needs. Members of the leadership team, including the head teacher, facilitate both the ECF and NPQ programmes with One Cumbria. This insight into the content of the ECF and NPQs has allowed the leadership of the school to adopt the idea of the golden thread. 'The ECF and NPQs are the golden thread drawing everything together into our strategic approach to professional development.' The school uses the EEF resources and guidance alongside the ECF and NPQ content to explore effective implementation of key teaching strategies. All the teachers use a shared language across the school, when discussing how and what they teach.

One example of how the school has responded to the needs of staff within the golden thread is that they recognised that the needs of the ECTs and mentors following the ECF were twofold. Alongside the induction lead needing to quality assure and check that the ECF was effective and organised, ECTs and mentors needed more pastoral support. To this end there is now an induction lead who has a strategic overview of induction and the ECF, and an ECF coordinator, who regularly meets with mentors and ECTs. The induction coordinator has a newsletter which celebrates the work of the ECTs and mentors to the whole school community as well as listening to ECT and mentor concerns. Having two people with a leadership role across the ECF means that there is a shared perspective and the opportunity for succession planning within the school too.

As with everything UCC, the school has ambitious plans for the future development of the golden thread. They will continue to develop and implement instructional coaching across the school, for all staff. They want to become better at sharing good practice and resources across the whole school community. The shared language of pedagogy will be prevalent and universally understood. They will measure the impact of NPQs on pupil progress, as well as staff retention. More staff will be engaged as facilitators in delivering Initial Teacher Training (ITT), ECF and NPQs.

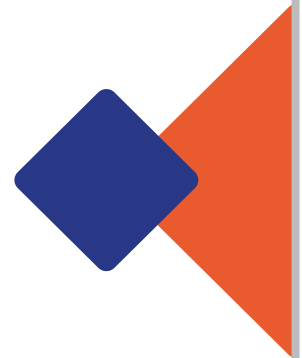
SUMMARY:

In summary, Ullswater Community College has used the ECF and NPQs to drive forward their teacher development and school improvement strategy. They fulfil their aim to provide a high-quality education for the community that they serve, encouraging a culture of aspiration and ambition, both for their pupils and their staff.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. ECF and NPQs are integral to school improvement and teacher development.
2. Leadership of the school are fully aware and have a deep understanding of both ECF and NPQs and use this to drive the school's recruitment and retention strategy.
3. A shared language, brought about by the ECF and NPQs, empowers teachers and learning and teaching are front and centre throughout the school.



Published by TSHC | Spring 2024

The Teaching School Hubs Council (TSHC) are supporters, advocates, and facilitators for the national network of teaching school hubs in England.

