

Case Study 1



Dowdales School, Cumbria

Type of school: Mixed Community Comprehensive (Specialist in Performing Arts)
Age range: 11 to 16
Number of pupils: 1054

Dowdales School in Cumbria was awarded the CPD Mark in March 2010 – Assistant Headteacher Paul Beach talks us through his thoughts on the process.

Why did you want to work towards the CPD Mark?

Although we were aware of how much CPD work is done in our school, we wanted a way of developing a 'bigger picture' to enable us to see how all our individual CPD strategies fit together on a larger scale. We decided to sign up to the CPD Mark process as we hoped that it would help us to identify any gaps or areas for improvement.

We also realised that the large amount of CPD work going on in our school was a positive thing and that the CPD Mark would be a way of gaining some recognition for this commitment.

How did you manage the process?

We appointed a co-ordinator (me) to identify the staff members within the school who had the best knowledge to provide evidence for each stage of the framework. I would certainly recommend to other schools that this is a useful way of managing the process.

How would you describe the CPD Mark process?

The best word to describe the CPD Mark framework would be 'enlightening'. It was incredibly thorough and covered a wide range of areas, from the roles of the Governors and the SLT to pupils, ancillary staff and the community. At first sight the length of the framework document may seem rather daunting, but the CPD Mark Team provided very clear exemplars of the types of evidence needed and they were always on hand either over the telephone or via email.

Completing the framework certainly did help us see the bigger picture for CPD and immediately we began to identify areas where we were strong but also areas in which we still had work to do. There were also several sections which raised CPD issues that we had never even considered, and straight away we began to look at ways of how we could fill these gaps.

How did you find the assessment?

The two-day assessment that we had was an extremely positive experience. The Assessor was friendly and quickly put us at our ease, but at the same time he was extremely thorough. We were impressed with the detail he managed to go into and the ground that he covered during his visit.

His report back to us was uplifting, highlighting our good practice and pointing out suggested areas for improvement – another positive aspect of this process was that at no time did we feel that we were being told what to do, rather that we were given suggestions of how to move forward if we wanted to move in that direction. We also felt that it was good that we were able to read the draft report and make corrections as necessary.

Would you recommend the process to other schools?

All in all the CPD Mark process is something that I would strongly recommend to any school which recognises the importance of CPD and which is looking to further identify and implement good practice in the field.