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Simon Little  
Managing Director  
Best Practice Network  
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Bristol  
BS1 1LT

Dear Mr Little

### **Lead provider monitoring visit (LPMV) of Best Practice Network**

Following my visit on 10 to 12 May 2022 with Russell Shobrook, Lucy Bruce, Rachel Tordoff and Steve Mellors (Her Majesty's Inspectors), I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the LPMV findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you have taken to date.

This inspection was the first LPMV since the start of your delivery of the early career framework (ECF) and national professional qualification (NPQ) programmes. It was carried out under Part 8 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that, at this time:

**Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action towards ensuring that the ECF training and NPQ professional development are of a high standard.**

#### **The lead provider should take further action to:**

- ensure that the roles of mentors and in-school coaches in the delivery of the ECF and NPQ programmes are made explicit to all stakeholders, including delivery partners and schools.

I am copying this letter to the Department for Education.

This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Susan Aykin  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Context**

Best Practice Network is part of the Supporting Education Group. It delivers a breadth of educational programmes nationally and internationally to a network of over 150 partners and 500 facilitators. The Best Practice Network office is based in Bristol.

Best Practice Network is in its first year of offering an ECF training programme and all of the current NPQs.

Best Practice Network works with delivery partners across all regions, with 43 delivering the NPQs and 30 delivering the ECF programme. There are currently 7,020 participants undertaking the NPQ programmes and 5,675 early career teachers (ECT) studying the ECF.

## **Report**

- Best Practice Network leaders have devised a curriculum to deliver the ECF programme that ensures a 'golden thread' connection with initial teacher training. Through a well-planned curriculum, ECTs are able to build on what they have learned previously and apply it to the context of their current schools. The curriculum provides flexibility in the ways in which ECTs access the ECF programme, without losing fidelity to its contents. Similarly, leaders have tailored the six NPQ programmes to further extend the golden thread of knowledge about teaching, curriculum design and school leadership in a flexible way. For example, leaders have focused one of the leading teaching courses on mathematics, enabling participants to apply their learning to the specific context of their role. Many participants spoke of the powerful impact this programme has already had on their leadership.
- Leaders have established effective systems for managing the delivery of both the NPQ and ECF programmes. Leaders are highly responsive to the needs of ECTs and NPQ participants. This means that they are continually reviewing the effectiveness of delivery systems. Leaders have established strong relationships with delivery partners to ensure consistency of delivery and the speedy resolution of any issues. They check regularly that facilitators are well trained to deliver the respective programmes.
- Best Practice Network leaders have strengthened the role and size of the e-learning team. This has ensured that the programmes' virtual learning platform continues to evolve. Lead performance coaches and leadership mentors support NPQ participants to apply their learning successfully to the context of their schools. However, the role of in-school performance coaches is less clear. Some in-school performance coaches have not accessed the training and this has limited their ability to carry out their role effectively. Similarly, some mentors for the ECF programme have not accessed the high-quality training, thereby impeding the successful implementation of the ECF programme.

- Leaders have developed an effective approach to self-evaluation that draws on a breadth of information about the delivery of the programme. For example, leaders have established effective online systems for gathering NPQ participants' and ECTs' views about the modules they have studied. This information is analysed and informs leaders' continual evaluation of the programmes and enables them to adapt and improve. Lead facilitators oversee the quality of the training delivered by facilitators. They address issues as they emerge. At the end of every module, mentors for the ECF programme conduct a peer review, which enables them to evaluate their impact.
- Best Practice Network leaders continue to strengthen the role of governance. They have established an advisory board, where delivery partners can raise concerns and share their views about the programmes. This information is discussed by the senior leadership team and informs the focus of the executive board. The advisory board provides challenge and support to leaders of the NPQ and ECF programmes in equal measure.
- Leaders ensure that collaboration between Best Practice Network, delivery partners and schools lies at the heart of the continual development of the NPQ and ECF programmes. For example, Best Practice Network leaders have responded swiftly to the concerns posed by some delivery partners about the virtual learning platform.
- Leaders are highly responsive to the feedback from stakeholders. As a result, they continually revise the delivery of the NPQ and ECF programmes to reduce unnecessary workload. For example, leaders have adapted the training for in-school coaches to allow a blended learning approach.
- Leaders are committed to the importance of equalities and inclusion in both NPQ and ECF programmes. They have designed modules that enable NPQ participants and ECTs to apply their theoretical learning to the context of their schools. There are clear safeguarding arrangements in place.

## **Evidence**

The lead inspector observed the lead provider's work, scrutinised documents and met with lead provider representatives and other senior leaders. Inspectors met with delivery partner senior leaders, delivery partner staff, ECTs, NPQ participants, lead facilitators, facilitators, mentors and coaches to discuss the ECF training and NPQ programmes.

The lead inspector also scrutinised the Ofsted inspection survey completed by all stakeholders of the NPQ and ECF programmes.