



Evidence Summary: Reflective Practice & School Improvement

Context

Reflect (within Blippit Boards) provides teachers with a private, low-friction space to capture in-the-moment reflections. This aligns with a well-established evidence base showing that structured reflection is a key driver of professional growth, wellbeing, and sustained improvement in schools.

1. Teacher Wellbeing and Retention

Teacher wellbeing is a significant national concern. Teaching staff report some of the highest levels of work-related stress in the UK, with workload and intensity cited as primary drivers.

Retention remains a challenge, with only 67% of teachers still in the profession after five years.

Research consistently shows that wellbeing is closely linked to professional agency and a sense of control. When teachers have space to process their experiences, they are more likely to maintain motivation and resilience.

Reflective practice supports this by:

- Allowing teachers to process emotional and complex experiences, rather than carrying them forward unexamined
- Reducing cognitive load by “offloading” thinking, particularly in high-pressure environments
- Reinforcing a sense of progress and purpose in day-to-day work

As Schön’s concept of *reflection-in-action* highlights, professionals who can think about their work as it happens are better able to respond effectively and maintain confidence in their decisions.

In practical terms, providing a private, non-judgemental space for reflection supports wellbeing not by adding support programmes, but by strengthening everyday professional coping and sense-making.

2. Professional Development

Reflective practice is widely recognised as a core mechanism for professional learning. It turns experience into improvement.

- Schön (1983) positions reflection as central to how professionals develop expertise in real-world contexts.
- Gibbs’ reflective cycle (1988) demonstrates how structured reflection leads to clear next steps and changes in practice.

Crucially, experience alone does not lead to improvement - reflection on experience does.

For teachers, this means:

- Identifying what worked and why
- Adapting practice in response to specific contexts
- Developing judgement, not just following strategies

Reflective practitioners are more likely to self-direct their development, reducing reliance on one-off CPD and increasing the impact of everyday practice.

3. Measurable School Improvement Outcomes

At a system level, reflective practice contributes to improvement by strengthening the quality and consistency of teaching.

Evidence suggests that:

- Teachers who systematically reflect are more likely to adapt and refine their teaching, leading to improved classroom effectiveness
- Teacher quality is the most significant in-school factor affecting pupil outcomes, and retention of effective teachers is critical to sustaining this
- Wellbeing and retention are directly linked to school performance, as loss of experienced staff disrupts continuity and increases workload for others

In addition, DfE-aligned research highlights that workload reduction and supportive professional cultures are key to retention and performance.

Embedding reflection:

- Improves decision-making at classroom level
- Builds a cumulative evidence-base of practice over time
- Strengthens professional dialogue when teachers choose to share insights

Why Private, In-the-Moment Reflection Matters

Most professional reflection currently happens informally and is rarely captured due to time constraints. When it is delayed, its impact is reduced.

Tools like Reflect address this by:

- Capturing thinking **at the point it happens**

- Keeping reflection **private and low-stakes**, increasing honesty and consistency
- Allowing insights to be revisited, shared, or developed later if needed

Conclusion

Private reflection is not an add-on to professional practice - it is the mechanism through which experience becomes improvement.

When embedded at scale, it shifts reflection from an individual habit to a system-level driver of wellbeing, retention, and sustained school improvement.

References

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