How can we generate enough capacity to change?

I think the key message of any school that wants to really change and embed their technology and their use of technology is the fact that you often talk about giving pupils a voice, about giving them an audience for their work, but it's very rare that we hear about staff being given that same opportunity. And in schools where you want staff to drive content, and where you want staff to change the way that teaching and learning is happening, or embrace a new product, for example, you have to give them time. Every teacher will tell you there's not enough time. So you have to give them time.

You have to give them time to explore, time to make mistakes, time to embrace new content. And if you give them that time and then you give them a platform for their results of what they've done and an audience for that, then you tend to get teachers that will really begin to drive other teachers.

So our school vision is very much about having a creative approach to learning and in order to ensure that happens, we need to make sure that we give teachers the time to be creative. Teachers will always tell you that they don't have enough time. You have to be able to give them that chance, to have the time to be able to breathe while they think.

Because it's really when you open up teachers to the chance of what they could do with a piece of technology, that something amazing happens because they've got really time to digest what that technology can do, what they can do with it, and how it's going to impact on their learners. So for us, as part of our vision, it's really important that when we call the staff together and we talk to them, we're not having meetings just for meeting's sake, but we're having meetings that really mean something. And when we're saying to them you don't have a meeting this week but there is time for you to be able to digest this new piece of content or understand this particular piece of policy, they then generally go and do that! Because it's giving them the time that they so desperately crave and there is no expectation of them then coming back and saying well this is what I did with the time. It's really about them using the time to explore what's possible.

We then need to give platforms at certain points for them to be able to share that learning and to be able to inspire others. And that will often happen within our team approach, or it may well happen as our whole staff, including all of our teaching assistants as well, because what we learn from each other can really help us to accelerate the progress of the children. But it is very much about giving people time, not necessarily buying that in and releasing people from the job that they're doing, but actually thinking where in our timetable, where is our capacity to be able to say to teachers, just go and explore? You've got freedom to really think, what can I do with this piece of kit and how would it make a difference?

There's very much a work-life balance to the approach in most education settings now. It's a high priority on mental health and wellbeing. And in order to make that happen, you've really got to think very carefully about what you demand of your staff and where the workload can be done. So we are not a school that invites planning to come in every week. We are a school with a very light marking policy, where actually what we're looking to do is for teachers to look at what's happened in a lesson and that inform their next

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lesson. That, of course, is supported by technology; capturing learning and looking at that as well and sharing that. But if you reduce the workload in other areas, you give people the chance to have the freedom to be able to explore how they want to do things differently.

Our teachers are constantly evolving our curriculum, so it's never really the same. We're hitting the same national curriculum, but in very different ways. Because teachers have got the time to explore the possibilities of what's out there as well. So that we can, particularly now in this particular moment, in this particular time, with so many people in professional industries offering their time online over meeting platforms. We can bring people into the classroom that we couldn't bring in two years ago, three years ago. And that for us is allowing our teachers to really think, well, what's possible here?

How can I actually change the system? And they can do that because they've not got the old draconian methods of: I need this document in this particular time, I need this amount of books marked, I've got to get this done. No - you've got teaching and learning to happen. As long as we're seeing progress; how that happens is down to you as an individual with your teaching team around you.