Understanding and Leading Change

Shaping the next phase of school improvement

Malcolm Groves   **John West-Burnham**

Understanding and Leading Change

The Final Beauchamp Paper

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Finding your way round this publication

This publication is organised in four chapters. Although each can be read independently, they do follow a sequence of thought and development. The three main chapters follow a brief recap of the origins and development of the whole series of Beauchamp Papers.

Chapter 1 - In Understanding Change, Malcolm Groves sets out the relevance of complexity thinking in building a new understanding of change and a different way of thinking about the next stage of school improvement.

Chapter 2 - John West-Burnham examines the implications for leadership in thinking differently about change.

Chapter 3 - Cameos of Change
Four autobiographical case studies written by school leaders explore how they have attempted to initiate in their own context changes needed for tomorrow whilst meeting the demands of today.

Chapter 4 - This short final chapter sets out the next steps in Schools of Tomorrow's plans to take forward these ideas in practice during 2015, particularly in terms of using a different understanding of change to underpin the next phase of school improvement.

The Journey So Far

Schools of Tomorrow was launched at the RSA in October 2013. Since then, as well as building a membership of school leaders and launching, with them, a range of development initiatives, we have committed to producing a series of linked publications, The Beauchamp Papers, so named because of the college where we first met and produced the founding Beauchamp Manifesto from which our work has grown.

Starting from this essentially moral values-base, Schools of Tomorrow believes truly outstanding schools offer much more than consistently high levels of achievement. They also lie at the heart of their communities.

As a new organisation founded by and for school leaders, we are gathering evidence of how this is being achieved by school leaders in practice and beginning to define how this can be validated rigorously. It has also been important for us to find ways to involve students in this work, with ten schools currently acting as learner hubs for student-led research and development.

The emerging SoTo Framework identified four fundamentals of equal importance if a school of tomorrow is to be of the highest quality, and thus beyond outstanding. It is able to secure at the same time:

- Highest levels of achievement and progress for all;

- Highest levels of well-being for all;

- Highly effective preparation for adult and working life.

- Highly effective family and community engagement;

If this Framework is to provide a basis for redefining what we mean by an outstanding school, then it is essential to think about these four fundamentals as inter-related and inter-connected – not as separate parts, but as constituent elements that will demonstrate themselves in different ways at different times and in different contexts. Outstanding in one community context may appear very different to another, but the outcomes for all children and young people will be defined in terms of preparation for the future, not a limited measure of some of the things they have achieved (or not achieved) at points of time in the past.

Highest levels of achievement	Highest levels of wellbeing
	Outstanding School of Tomorrow
Highly effective preparation for the future	Highly effective family and community engagement

The Outstanding School of Tomorrow Model

Understanding Change
Malcolm Groves

1

In this opening chapter, Malcolm draws on insights from complexity thinking to help understand the nature and process of change, and to explore their implications for thinking about the next phase of school improvement.

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Understanding change

Purpose

The roots of this paper lie in the four quadrant model for the high achieving school of the future outlined in the first Beauchamp Paper, *'Towards a new understanding of outstanding schools*' (SoTo 2013). Alongside high levels of achievement for all pupils in relation to their individual starting points, it posited the equal importance of achieving high levels of well being for all, highly effective preparation for adult and working life, and high levels of family and community engagement. John West-Burnham expounded the research evidence and ethical arguments to support this model on the basis of four propositions:

Proposition 1

The outstanding school of tomorrow is one in which every child is entitled to a holistic educational experience which is rooted in personal well-being, delivered on the basis of equity and responsive to the personal needs of every learner.

Proposition 2

Tomorrow's outstanding school recognises that, to secure equity, it has to engage with the factors that are most significant and influential in determining educational success and enhanced life chances. This means that it is actively engaged in securing positive outcomes in terms of family life, community, poverty and social class, according to its context.

Proposition 3

Learning is a social experience rooted in family, community and school that is outstanding in the extent to which it is both personalized and rooted in authentic social relationships.

Proposition 4

Leadership for the school of tomorrow has to be seen in terms of collective capacity rather than personal, hierarchical status. Leadership is a resource to be developed as and when it is needed irrespective of age, status, or formal role. Equally, leadership needs to be seen in terms of a community rather than an organisation, and in terms of collaborative relationships.

The partial perceptions of current school improvement models

Working from these propositions, one of our starting points has been to suggest that existing models of school improvement have significant limitations. It is not so much that current improvement goals are wrong as that they are insufficient on their own, and inherently self-defeating if pursued in isolation.

The reason for this is partly demonstrated in the growing critique of the statistical basis by which school effectiveness has come to be judged, yet the data this generates still form the underpinning basis of most school improvement thinking. Gorard (2009: 756) argues that, overall, the field "*simply ignores … quite elementary logical problems, while devising more and more complex models comprehended by fewer and fewer people*".

To understand what he is getting at, perhaps consider this extract from a recent blog by one leading headteacher.

> "*Getting ready for the term ahead, I've been analysing my school's RAISEOnline and, after I suspend disbelief and start working within the (slightly bonkers) framework of convoluted algorithms, it's a complicated story. Some areas are Green; some are White and one or two are Blue. Our figures for Disadvantaged Pupils are strong – mostly Green. Despite being well below national average on raw overall*

> *outcomes, the cohort was 70% disadvantaged with a low entry profile and VA is very strong. You see, it's a complex picture. I'm starting to think about the likely inspection this term and our SEF and I'm not sure what line to take. We'll probably go for 'Good'. It's a 'best fit'. But what's that about? Why should we need to find a best fit? Why can't we tell our complicated story? Who benefits from reducing it all to one-word descriptor? I can't think of a good reason to do it.*" (http://headguruteacher.com/2014/12/30/ofsted-outstanding-just-gimme-some-truth)

But Gorard also continues by relating the statistical problem to a wider, deeper criticism of current models for school effectiveness:

> "*School effectiveness is associated with a narrow understanding of what education is for. It encourages, unwittingly, an emphasis on assessment and test scores—and teaching to the test - because over time we tend to get the system we measure for and so privilege*". (ibid p. 759)

Inadequate goals give rise to limitations in understanding of methods. In particular, this has sometimes meant:

- An over-focus on teaching at the expense of learning

- A focus on subject knowledge but insufficient emphasis on learning skills and on character development at the same time

- An under-appreciation of the relevance of context and engagement

- An over-emphasis on a consumerist model of schooling at the expense of a shared responsibility for learning across schools, families and communities

An explanation as to why current thinking about school improvement can only take us so far is perhaps most starkly captured in the significant comment made by Moreno, Mulford and Hargreaves (2007: 8): *"The tragedy of school change is that only about 30% of the explanation for variations in school achievement appears to be attributable to factors in the school"*.

In other words, if we are serious about far-reaching long-term change in school achievement we have to start to think differently both about what that means and how it can be achieved. As John West-Burnham put it at the launch of Schools of Tomorrow:

"Let us not imagine that we are going to create the outstanding school of tomorrow by continuing to try to incrementally improve the school of today …. we need to re-conceptualise completely".

This fundamental re-appraisal in turn requires new approaches to leadership and innovation but also perhaps more importantly new understandings of the processes of change.

The relevance of complexity thinking

Our own research and school case studies across the series of Beauchamp Papers have begun to identify the potential significance of complexity thinking in this task, and of understanding a school and the environments it relates to as complex adaptive organisms rather than as machines or factories, if we are to get a better understanding of the processes of change and of school improvement for the school of tomorrow.

Professor Lynn Davies argues in the third Beauchamp Paper (SoTo 2014) that in contrast to linear, hierarchical assumptions about change, using a complexity mind-set permits a different way of contemplating intervention. She identifies six interlinked features of this:

1. **Being comfortable with experimentation, seeing 'mistakes' or apparent failures simply as information, not as disasters, and being content with divergence from the original plan.** There needs to be turbulence for creativity to emerge. This means being relaxed about having only short-term goals, about using constant revisions, and about the means to achieve these goals being established in partnership with the participants, not pre-decided.

2. **The need for multiple connectivity and multiple-way consultation vertically and horizontally, so that the maximum information channels are opened and responses gauged through a variety of feedback loops**. Do we know enough about local multipliers and their networks? What are the co-systems surrounding education? Can we understand the varied influences, including negative ones, rather than just deploring them?

3. **A stress on horizontalism rather than top-down leadership, learning from how social movements and protests work, and especially from how social media work.** Students and teachers have to be recognised as 'activists' or agents within these types of social change, creating and recreating the links, not as recipients. Democracy these days is about retweeting, not referendums.

4. **The need for political organisation, networking and creating alliances.** A 'principled pragmatism' is called for. Networking also provides greater understanding of 'the opposition' and their motivations.

5. **The search for combinations and pivotal points for change that can be amplified.** If this seems opportunistic, it is because it is.

6. **The need to unfreeze compartmentalised ice-trays, such as segregated schools, or to identify and release locked-in mentalities,** especially surrounding the use of violence or revenge. Schools are often vengeful places, full of punishments rather than restorative justice. Even if corporal punishment is banned, there are other ways that symbolic violence is inflicted. It may not be surprising that cycles of bullying persist.

Complexity thinking requires a move from linear to organic understandings of change. Three associated concepts seem particularly pertinent to explore here; emergence, connectedness and feedback. The concept of emergence implies that, given a sufficient degree of complexity in a particular environment, new (and to some extent unexpected) properties and behaviours emerge in that environment. New properties and behaviours emerge not only from the elements

that constitute a system, but also from the myriad connections among them, which multiply exponentially when the scale is right. The part played by positive feedback is crucial in this process. Whilst the circumstances that give rise to feedback may have been random, self-reinforcement leads to lock-in of a particular phenomenon through a process of autocatalysis, that is, where the product of the reaction is itself the catalyst for that reaction.

All of these concepts of complexity theory seem to have some resonance in illuminating the processes of change fleetingly observed in the case studies reported in this and previous Beauchamp Papers. They may, therefore, be able to help shape the foundations for a more organic and holistic theory of school change than the current paradigm of school improvement. At the heart of that paradigm lies a belief that it is most effective for a school to focus all its energy on that which is in its direct control and influence. This has led to an increasingly exclusive focus on the importance of teaching, particular subject knowledge, and a single type of assessment measure.

The counter-argument derived from the evidence of the case studies rests on the belief, not that any of those things are unimportant, but that they are not sufficient, on their own, to grow confidence, self-esteem and motivation to learn, to equip students to thrive in a changing world, or to sustain raised aspirations in a challenging environment. Those improvements, the case study heads suggest, come most effectively from two inter-connected dynamics.

These involve a focus that also moves beyond the school on engagement with learners and with their families and communities around common purposes. And they involve an understanding of organisational change which would be more akin to the growth of a living organism.   A body does not grow an arm and then grow a leg. But, for both to grow in concert, certain other developmental conditions, such as nutrition or age, need to have been met.

So the underlying processes of change may be better understood as a series of expanding waves, or perhaps rather as a growth model strengthening in all directions simultaneously, albeit with certain sequences possibly inbuilt.

Constructing an alternative model of school improvement drawing on complexity insights

The implications of our developing thinking has therefore begun to suggest that the next stage of school improvement requires a more complex understanding of the relationships between schools and learners, schools and families and communities, and between learners and their families and communities. It

also means paying closer attention than is often currently given to a much wider set of learning outcomes in the personal and social domains, even though their measurement may not be as precise, whilst at the same time scaling down some of the preeminence given to purely academic outcomes, bringing both into a new and mutually supportive relationship. This is because of a belief that fundamentally everyone is a learner and has a desire and ability to learn

Within this thinking, there is a critical role for new models of school leadership, which we have begun to term connected leadership. By locating leadership more broadly than just within the organisation of the school, the dynamics of relationships are shifted, with students and families empowered to take increased responsibility for their learning.

It is important to note that the model of connected leadership being proposed here goes beyond the current concept of 'system leadership', as derived, for example, from the work of Hargreaves (2011), even though there are similarities, for instance in the emphasis of both on the importance of trust and reciprocity.

System leadership is about the connections between schools and the way schools can support other schools to achieve school-focused ends:

"A maturity model of a self-improving school system is a statement of the organisational and professional practices and processes of two or more schools in partnership by which they progressively achieve shared goals, both local and systemic". (ibid. p.8)

By contrast, connected leadership re-locates the locus of leadership between the school, the learner, and their families and communities, seeking to act on and to cause each to interact differently with the other, so as to promote broader and improved learning outcomes. Whilst, in the three case studies, it was the headteacher who was the main instigator and driver of connected leadership, it is not intended to suggest that such leadership resides only in one individual. Indeed each case study head was developing strategies to draw others into that role and saw clearly a need to extend that further.

This understanding of connected leadership resonates strongly with notions of responsible leadership (Maak 2007). Most recently Stone-Johnson (2013), drawing on three school case studies identified as part of the Performing Beyond Expectations large-scale international study, follows Maak in characterising the responsible leader as '*a weaver of relationships*'.

"Responsible leadership in practice means weaving those who have typically only been recipients of leadership to full-fledged participants, and developing relationships with them that serve to benefit not only students but also the stakeholders themselves". (p. 670)

It represents an explicit challenge to the view that schools should only focus on those factors directly within their control which is reflected in much current political orthodoxy (e.g. DfE 2010). It would also present a challenge to some research orthodoxy, represented, for example, by Silins and Mulford's (2002b) comment that:

> *"We suspect a school's community focus may act to counteract system, teacher and student learning outcomes because of the additional demands it makes on student and teacher time".* (p. 443)

For many years, school improvement has been associated with the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms (e.g. Hopkins, Reynolds and Gray 2005). The necessity for that focus is not in any way challenged here. Rather, the argument is that, on its own, this can only achieve so much, and it is insufficient either to develop fully that broader set of skills and attitudes which will equip young people to flourish in a rapidly changing world, described here in shorthand as 'personal and social development outcomes', or to bring about sustainable change where there are local cultures of educational indifference and low aspiration.

The diagram below represents a first attempt to understand and represent the interaction of these wider insights, as glimpsed in the case studies, and to begin to theorise around them is one attempt to capture some of this emergent thinking. It suggests that traditional school improvement thinking only addresses half the picture – the grey area in the top/left area of the diagram.

Broadly speaking, this area represents the insights and focus of the established literature on school improvement, focused on the school as a self-contained entity and the quality of teaching and learning therein. Leadership exerts a major influence (the blue arrows) on that and on securing recognised attainment outcomes for learners (purple and red arrows).

Of course the great majority of schools also pay some attention to outcomes connected with personal and social development for learners. These are not however in most cases the prime concern and are only partially addressed. Moreover, parents and students often feel excluded from leadership for school improvement. (Foster 2005).

In contrast, the pink triangle (the bottom/right area) represents the area of additional emerging understanding and leadership which, if secured, might afford a more complete picture of educational achievement. In this view, students and their

families and communities share significant responsibility for outcomes, both attainment outcomes in the accepted sense of the term but also those wider personal and social development outcomes which are crucial for the learner, citizen and worker of tomorrow.

The diagram is further suggesting that these wider outcomes have importance in their own right, but in addition can also contribute to the achievement of more recognised attainment outcomes through increased motivation, confidence and self-esteem. Moreover, those qualities of confidence and self-esteem and motivation may influence the long-term development of families and communities. The green arrows represent the potential new gains from this more holistic understanding of improvement.

The notion of connected leadership stands at the centre of these two arenas of school improvement and wider engagement. It seeks to harness the forces of growth and impact within each and to bring greater alignment between them in order to improve learning both within and beyond the school. The role of both trust and engagement is central to developing the conditions for such growth.

The school of tomorrow needs to find ways to address the pink area as well as the grey. By working differently in such ways and by supporting a broader range of learning outcomes for children and young people, the impact will flow through to other

areas of attainment whilst producing stronger communities and character development in students themselves.
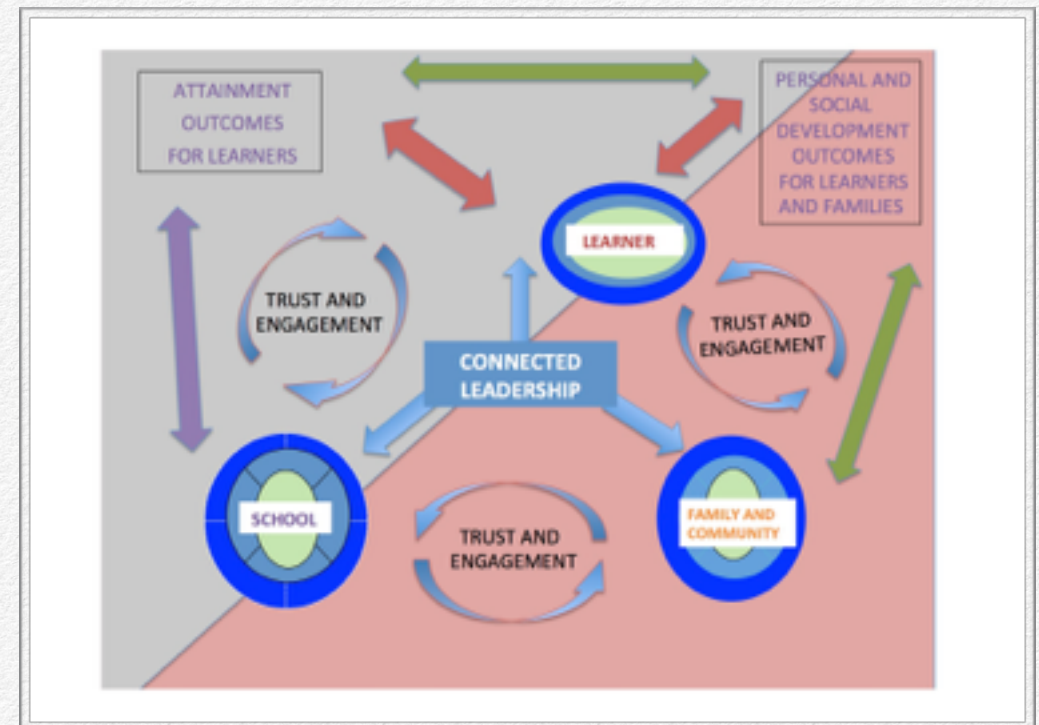
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Key:

Straight blue arrows   -   The mutually reinforcing influence of connected leadership on learners, school and   family/community

Curved blue arrows - Trust and engagement - the catalyst for change

Purple and orange arrows   -   Reciprocal effect of leadership on outcomes

Green arrows -   The potential gain for a complexity-based future school improvement model

The basis of our emerging SoTo approach to re-thinking school improvement

Our approach to understanding change begins with schools who see the importance of pursuing this broader vision of school improvement. However, there is an important caveat. A key challenge facing schools of tomorrow is that tomorrow never comes. Or perhaps rather that there is always a new tomorrow. It is equally the case that today never goes away. There is no option simply to ignore the demands of today and wait until 'tomorrow' has somehow miraculously arrived. Therefore, there is always an inherent tension for leadership, and a key theme of our approach to understanding change and promoting quality needs to be concerned with the balance that is struck between these competing forces.

Our analysis suggests a number of principles need to underpin our approach to seeking an alternative model for thinking about change and school improvement. It is not our intention that this should replace those models of accountability and inspection determined by national government policy of the day, even though we might hope to be able to exert some positive influence on those in terms of their improvement. Rather we hope to recognise and validate the efforts being made by schools and school leaders to look beyond those perhaps necessarily limited confines towards a broader view of school purpose.

In summary, we think there is a case for promoting a new model of school improvement. whose key features are that it:

- Is developmental rather than compliance-led

- Recognises complex rather than linear models of change.

- Is congruent with, but moving beyond, national expectations rather than adding an additional layer to these.

- Recognises the significance of context.

- Allows for a central role to be actively played by both children and young people, and their families and communities, in informing judgements.

- Makes a distinctive contribution in terms of its methodology based on new understanding of change.

A possible image by which to envisage such an approach

When grappling with new and difficult ideas, it can be helpful to try to find an image that helps to capture the direction being sought and guide imagination. In this case, we are perhaps looking for interlocking and self-reinforcing cycles of review and development with a particular focus on the balance of today and tomorrow and against the implications of the four quadrants.

The diagram below which visualises this to a degree is not intended to be representational – rather an image that may stimulate thought and ideas.
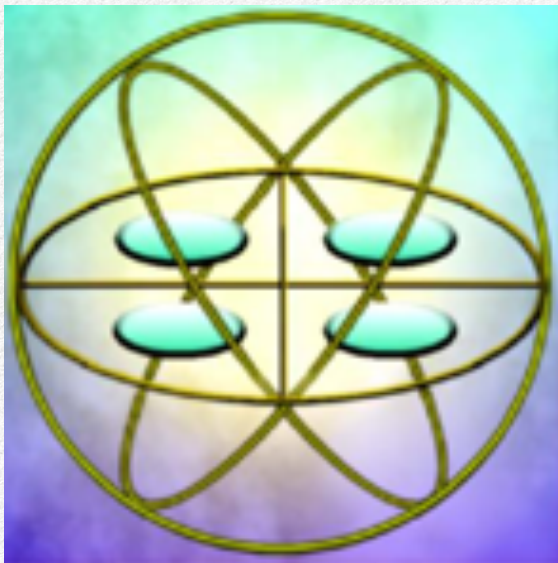
Component Elements

The four quadrants of the Schools of Tomorrow model provide the heart of the emerging process:

Achievement

- *Good progress for all in required learning*

- *Development of deeper learning*

Wellbeing

- *Students and their families*

- *Staff*

Preparation for the future

- *Skills and knowledge*

- *Shaping and agency (including the nature and role of character development and personal identity in local and global communities and networks)*

Engagement

- *Family*

- *Community*

Overarching processes

Alongside the quadrants are some core processes which allow school leaders to pursue effectively and developmentally the balance of today and tomorrow:

- Leadership

- Pursuit of values

- Innovation and research

- Collaboration

Integrated cycles of peer review and development

The four quadrants and their components and those four overarching processes can comprise a framework for rigorous and validated peer review and development among aspiring schools of tomorrow. This is now being developed into the concept of a 'Fellowship' of schools of tomorrow with the following elements:

A. Structured reciprocal peer review for/by senior leaders from another 'Fellowship' school

B. Student review and validation, using trained student validators

C. Wider input from families and communities

D. Context analysis and impact assessment

E. Thoughtful use of an extended range of performance data

The notion of a 'Fellowship' as the basis for supporting and validating improvement

The emerging model of a 'Fellowship' of schools, described in outline in chapter 4, derives from our thinking about how these ideas can come together to best support schools and school leaders who are committed to reaching out to tomorrow and the pursuit of that broader vision in the context of their school, whilst at the same time responding to the pressures of today.

As we develop this thinking and approach, with our partners and with schools, in the coming months, we invite all those for whom such an understanding resonates to join us on this journey.

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Leading Change
John West-Burnham

2

In this chapter, John examines the implications for school leadership of understanding change as a more complex and organic process, and one in which the quality of inter-personal relationships play a fundamental part.

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Leading Change

There is a very strong case for arguing that one way of cutting the Gordian Knot of the debate about the nature and components of effective leadership is to simply assert that leadership is, primarily, about change. We have leaders because we need to change – the moral and strategic imperatives usually associated with leadership are, in effect, dimensions of change.

Popular discourse about change seems to broadly reflect two perspectives, firstly change as an event to be managed and, secondly, change as a fundamental component of the human experience – change as a continuing process. There now seems to be a broad consensus that change cannot be viewed as a sequence of events. If such key concepts as improvement and transformation are seen as fundamental to the work of leaders then change becomes the core leadership process. It would be wrong to confuse successful project management with the leadership of change as a process. Advocates of leadership as change often cite the Greek philosopher

Heraclitus (mistakenly) as the originator of a powerful metaphor for change:

> "*Everything changes and nothing remains still . . .*
> *you cannot step twice into the same stream*".

This image is usually interpreted as the inevitability of change in the world – the continuous flow of the river. However, it is more appropriately understood as both the world and the person changing. We do not remain the same over time. Thus change needs to be seen as both public - the world changes - and private - the person changes. Everything is in state of flux.

The complex interaction of public and private approaches to change and change strategies is what makes the successful leadership of change so challenging. A great deal of the literature on leading change has tended to focus on change as a public process, but it is worth speculating as to the extent to which the successful leadership of change is more attributable to the private dimension – motivation, engagement, commitment and the emotional response to both what is being changed and the actual change process itself.

A useful insight into this tension is provided by Linsky and Lawrence (2011:7) who distinguish between technical and affective issues in leading change:

"While technical problems may be very complex and critically important (like replacing a faulty heart valve during cardiac surgery), they have known solutions. They can be resolved through the application of authoritative expertise and through the organization's current values and ways of doing things.

Adaptive challenges can only be addressed through changes in people's values, beliefs, habits, and loyalties. Making progress on them requires going far beyond any authoritative expertise . . ."

The diagram in Figure 1 attempts to identify the key variables and possible relationships involved in understanding the leadership of any change process. Each sector has validity in certain contexts but the effective leadership of change is probably to be found in the diagonal grey rectangle. The effective leadership of change involves being able to move with confidence between the bottom left and top right quadrants depending on the school context and the particular focus of any change initiative.

In an ideal world leaders would be able to move the rectangle so that it gradually occupies the top right quadrant, i.e. the leadership of change is primarily understood in terms of moral and relational imperatives. However the rational and pragmatic frames are necessary and appropriate at certain stages of leadership and organisational development, maturity and

effectiveness. What might be seen as an immature culture in time, hopefully, will move into the more sophisticated and mature strategies and behaviours associated with occupying the top right hand quadrant.
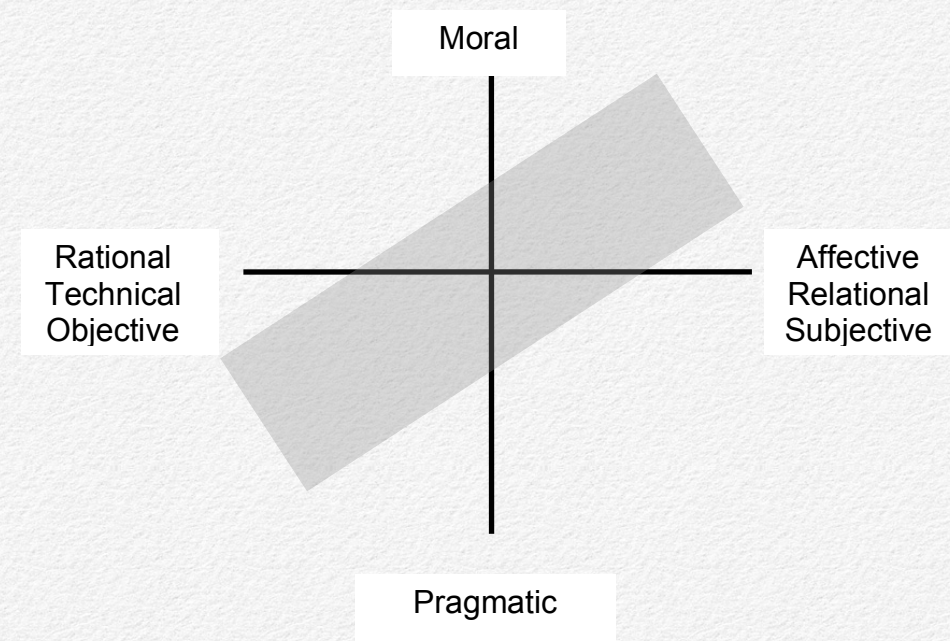

Figure 1: The alternative perspectives informing the leadership of change

These four broad categories of possible approaches to leading change might be best understood in the following terms:

The moral imperative: this is very much related to the most basic understanding of leadership i.e. leadership is about 'doing the right things'. From this perspective leadership is very much a process of engaging in change in order to secure an outcome that has been defined as a moral imperative. Thus, in one sense, the imperative to 'close the gap' can be seen as essentially moral as it is concerned with securing equity across the system. In other words change in education is primarily concerned with securing social justice by working to secure consistently high quality of teaching and learning and educational opportunity for all. It is the moral imperative that can serve to help us understand the role of innovation in leadership.

The pragmatic imperative: this is not so much cynical or realistic but rather an acknowledgement that for the vast majority of educationalists education is a public service – funded through taxation and therefore with commensurate accountability. In this context most change initiatives are generated through external policies that are explicitly linked to funding and accountability. Thus an approach to securing equity might be implemented through a system wide strategy such as Every Child Matters. The ratio of externally generated change to local initiatives may be one of the very significant factors in explaining the potential success or failure of a policy initiative.

An equally significant perspective is what might be described as rate of change. There is a world of difference between the 'slow creep' of a graduated incremental approach to change and the challenge of a high impact radical innovation.

Rational, technical, objective approaches: this perspective works from two premises, firstly that change can actually be managed and that change is essentially linear and so can be controlled, predicted and manipulated. The second premise covers what might be called evidence based approaches to initiating changes in policy and practice.

The belief that change can be a rational, managed, process may well be true in some contexts however it only takes a very cursory analysis to recognise that Robert Burns was highly perceptive when he wrote

> "*The best laid schemes o' Mice an' Men,*
> *Gang aft agley,*
> *An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain,*
> *For promis'd joy!*"

It would be highly instructive to find out just how many school improvement plans have actually delivered 'promis'd joy' and have been implemented as intended. In exactly the same way

very few human beings actually live a life planned out in detail in childhood. The world is too complex, there are too many intervening variables and much management thinking is still posited on the rationalistic fallacy – totally ignoring the impact of ambiguous values and beliefs, organisational power politics and the multiple competing realities found in any human endeavour. If the world is understood as a complex adaptive system then the leadership of change has to start from the premise that leadership strategies have to be sensitive to that context and 'fit for purpose'.

The evidence based approach to educational policy and practice is intellectually compelling but practically challenging. Educational practice in British schools tends to be craft based rather than evidence based – hence the deference to perceived successful practice and the rejection of empirical studies, e.g. the evidence on class size and its impact on learning and achievement.

Affective, relational and subjective approaches: this is the perspective that dominates most human interactions, it is the world of feelings and relationships and it the basis of how we make sense of our subjective experience of the world. This is the context where authentic collaboration, empathy, trust a common language built around a shared sense of community

become the key elements of any attempt to secure significant change.

Obviously these four elements do not exist in isolation from each other and the various permutations that are available reflect the complexity of leadership. Any model of leadership has to reflect the complex interaction of these variables that in turn will be significantly driven by the national policy context, the history of the school, the prevailing culture and ethos and morale in the school. In addition to these variables the actual focus of any proposed change will be a significant variable – most school leaders will have had the experience of underestimating the significance attached by staff to an apparently innocuous proposal to change what seemed to be low significance and low status matters.

Any internet search focusing on the words leadership and change will produce dozens of strategies, toolkits, resources and techniques. No doubt many of them are useful in providing analytical structures and processes to support effective leadership but of themselves they are no answer. In the final analysis the successful leadership of change is a balance of moral imperatives and high quality relationships.

Implications for the leadership of change

Why change?

In an education system that has been under almost continual pressure to improve and subject to a wide range of often contradictory policy initiatives it is essential that leaders are able to provide a compelling justification for any proposed innovation or initiative. Howard Gardner provides the most basic rationale for change – something no longer works or it is no longer relevant or appropriate:

> "*I discern two legitimate reasons for undertaking new educational practices. The first reason is that current practices are not actually working...*
>
> *The second reason is that conditions in the world are changing significantly. Consequent on these changes, certain goals, capacities, and practices might no longer be indicated, or even come to be seen as counterproductive.*"
>
> Gardner (2006:10)

A third rationale might be that there is a better way, that research or innovative practice offers an alternative way of working that appears to be vindicated by appropriate evidence.

So, for example, the Sutton Trust (2011) research into the deployment of teachers demonstrates the impact on the progress of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils of being taught by the most effective teachers.

What is increasingly clear is that people are motivated and engaged not by approaches based on essentially arbitrary rewards and punishments, but rather that:

> "*The science shows us that the secret to high performance (is) . . . our deep-seated desire to direct our own lives, to extend and expand our abilities, and to live a life of purpose.*"   Pink (2009:145)

The most compelling reason to change is not the imperative of external requirements but rather the need to enhance our potential as human beings. This requires a movement away from authoritarian dogma underpinned by a power-coercive model to a world of authoritative evidence rooted in common values and mutual respect. There is one caveat to this approach - where a child's education is being compromised then perhaps there is a higher order imperative to intervene in order to secure appropriate provision. Consensual approaches to change are proportionate to confidence in the effectiveness of teaching and learning approaches.

What is to be changed?

A potentially helpful way of understanding what might be described as the change agenda is to use the conceptual model presented in the 'Three Horizons Model" first published in The Alchemy of Growth, by Baghai, Coley, and White (1999) and developed by Curry and Hodgson (2008). The model works on the premise of the relationship between change over time and its impact on the integrity and validity of prevailing models of working. The 1st Horizon is the prevailing system as it continues into the future and which loses suitability and integrity over time as its external environment changes or it becomes increasingly irrelevant and counterproductive.

The 3rd Horizon offers ideas and scenarios about the future that are, at best, essentially hypothetical in the present, but which over time may have the potential to displace the world of the first horizon, because they represent a more effective response to the changing environment and are potentially more appropriate and effective. In many respects the 3rd horizon can be seen as alternative strategic scenarios – descriptions of the future that may range from the philosophically utopian to the deeply pragmatic.
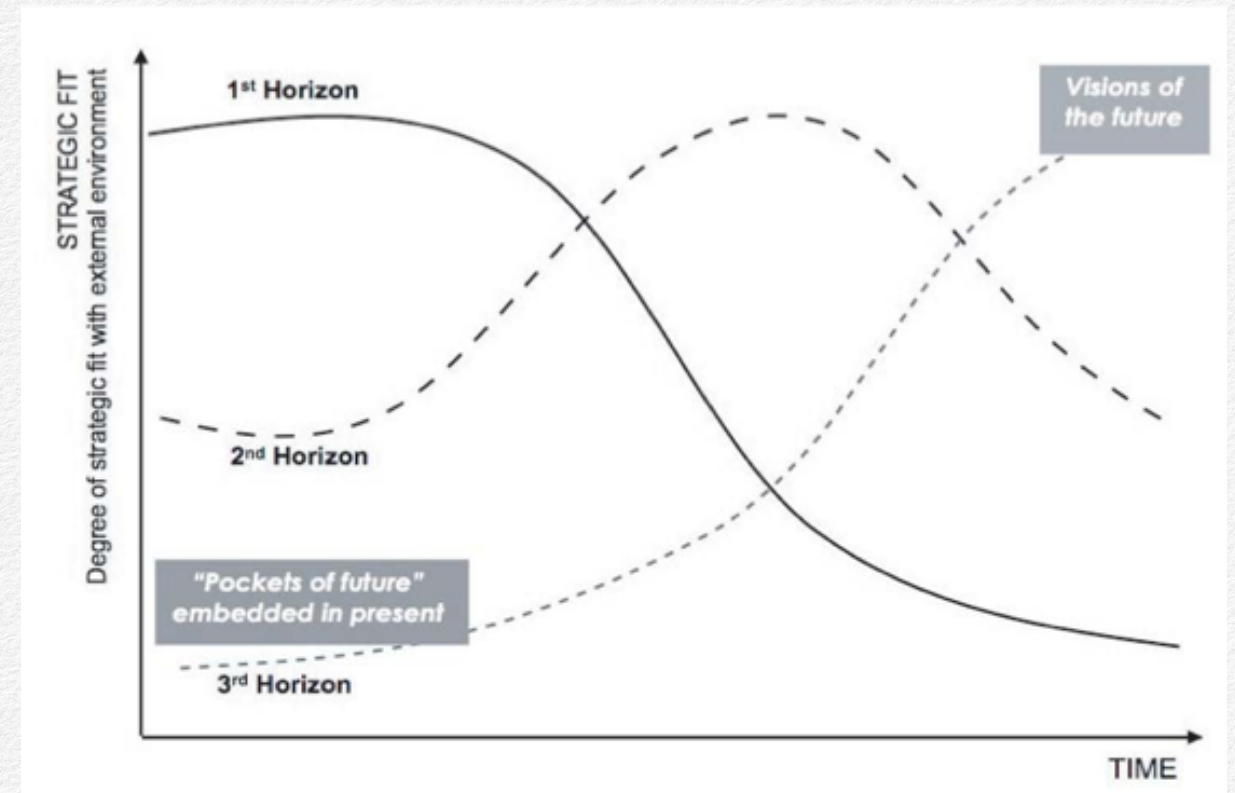
Figure 2: The three horizons model (Curry and Hodgson 2008)

The 2nd horizon might be best understood as the interaction between the 1st and 3rd horizons - this is a place of transition, ambiguity and uncertainty which is often perceived to be unstable or lacking historical clarity and consensus. It may be characterised by tensions about values in which competing perspectives support alternative and possibly competing paths to the future.

Moving through the 2nd horizon is very much about the leadership of change working through a dynamic interaction between all the various actors and agencies who have an input into the change process – rather as a complex adaptive system.

The leadership agenda for change emerges from an analysis of the current issues that might well have to be developed in response to the issues informing the emergence of the 3rd horizon. The broad themes to be considered for any model of the components of the 3rd horizon might include:

1. Securing consistently excellent teaching and learning irrespective of context.

2. Developing authentic equity and inclusion so that the disadvantaged and vulnerable are in no way systemically disadvantaged and working to compensate for an increasingly polarized society.

3. Moving towards personalization of learning that is rooted in respect for the dignity and uniqueness of every learner.

4. Developing the school as a learning community that is designed as a key element in community renewal and building a democratic society.

5. Collaborative working between schools becoming the norm with a genuinely school driven education system.

6. Building partnerships with communities and agencies so that parents and the wider community are full partners in education.

7. Working towards education for sustainability recognising the issues emerging from climate change.

This list generates another issue around the extent to which a proposed change is within existing boundaries or horizons or seeks to redefine those boundaries. What is clear is that as the potential to challenge the status quo increases so does the potential for turbulence.

The more radical the change the greater will be the potential for resistance or rejection. For example, it might be argued that all of the work on the improvement of primary schools would have been better invested, according to the evidence (Desforges 2004), in improving the family, whatever that might mean. Given the evidence around the relative impact of family and school then focusing on the quality of family literacy might be a more appropriate approach than the literacy hour, however fundamentally challenging to prevailing orthodoxies.

Leading change through quality relationships

There are numerous formulations of quality personal relationships but trust seems to be a superordinate human quality and the quintessential example of the need to move from individual skills and characteristics to a culture based on shared qualities. In many ways, trust appears to act as an integrating factor in human relationships and to be the pivotal component in social relationships. Covey (2006:19) is unambiguous about the status and role of trust in personal and organisational life:

> *"When trust is high, the dividend you receive is like a performance multiplier...In a company high trust materially improves communication, collaboration, execution, innovation ... In your personal life, high trust significantly improves your excitement, energy, passion, creativity and joy in your relationships..."*

Trust can therefore be seen to be essential to any model of leadership for change. In fact it is very difficult to contemplate and change strategy working in the absence of trust. In our personal lives our willingness to change our personal situation is almost directly contingent on the level of trust. Change almost always involves loss and mourning – innovation usually involves a challenge to a personal history and establishes

beliefs and practice and is therefore an essentially emotional issue. Hargreaves and Fink (2006:213) reinforce the power and significance of trust:

> *"Trust is a resource. It creates and consolidates energy, commitment, and relationships. When trust is broken, people lessen their commitment and withdraw from relationships, and entropy abounds".*

They describe trust as the '*connective tissue*' that binds schools together, and this image helps to reinforce the importance of healthy networks, neural and social, to effective learning. In the final analysis, as De Waal (2009:167) points out:

> *"Trust is the lubricant that makes a society run smoothly. If we had to test everyone all the time before doing something together, we'd never achieve anything."*

In essence, the focus on trust is all about building social capital, creating learning communities which are exemplified in the strength of social networks, interdependency, engagement, shared purpose, parity of esteem and genuine reciprocity.

> *"We are traders in ideas, goods favors and information and not simply the competitors that traditional market thinking would make us. In each area of our lives, we*

develop a network of trusted relationships and favor those ties over others. Exchanges within this network of trusted social ties facilitate idea flow, create an inclusive vigorous culture, and are responsible for the collective intelligence of our society."
(Pentland 2014:1230)

However, trust is not just about high quality relationships and the integrity of social interactions – it also has a direct impact on the performance of individuals, teams and organisations and, specifically, in schools:

> "*Absent the social energy provided by trust, improvement initiatives are unlikely to culminate in meaningful change, regardless of their intrinsic merit."* (2010:157)

Clearly, the building of trust is a cumulative process and this again reinforces the importance of leaders modelling trusting relationships alongside the actual change agenda – the rational and the affective have to be balanced and reconciled in order to enable people to adopt alternative ways of working and engaging.

Leading change through collaboration

Hargreaves and Harris in their study 'Performance beyond Expectations' identify collaboration and cooperation as fundamental to high performance:

> "*. . . organisations that perform beyond expectations relate to their peers and even their opponents through creative and counter-intuitive combinations of competition and collaboration where success partly rests on the success of others and a sense of social justice inspires service to neighbours who are less fortunate."*
> (Hargreaves and Harris 2011:58)

For most purposes, leading change almost always requires collaboration and cooperation. Although there will always be a place for the hero innovator, people need to come together to collaborate and cooperate in order to solve problems by initiating and enabling change that they are then committed to, and so embed it into their practice. Thus the leadership of change can in many ways be understood as leadership that is working through cooperation.

It could be argued that, irrespective of context, culture or era, people spend most of their lives working with others to bring about change by solving problems of varying degrees of significance and complexity. There is a very high correlation between participation and commitment – the more involved I am, the more the greater the likelihood that I will become an advocate for the change. The more individuals feel a sense of ownership of problem, the process adopted and solution identified, the more likely they are to adopt the change and argue for others to adopt it.

> "*Collaborative schools do better than individualistic ones. Within high schools, too, collaborative departments with strong professional communities perform more effectively than weaker ones. Although what counts as collaboration might vary, the overall evidence is consistent – teachers who work in professional cultures of collaboration tend to perform better than teachers who work alone.*"
>
> (Hargreaves and Fullan 2012:112)

Strauss offers a model of problem solving that focuses on the process issues i.e. problem solving as a change process, in particular the dynamics of relationships and the centrality of cooperative and collaborative working. For Strauss (2001

31-33), collaborative problem solving needs to be based in the following principles:

1. Problem solving is heuristic – there is no one best way and it essentially a process of trial and error.

2. Problem solving goes through stages and there is a need to recognise the need to adopt an alternative strategy

3. Problem solving skills can be learned – individuals and groups can develop a repertoire of strategies to help in the problem solving process.

4. Those involved in a collaborative problem situation need a common language, a shared vocabulary in order to communicate and engage with each other effectively.

An alternative perspective, and a vindication of the principles, is given by Saxenian in her analysis of the reasons for the continuing success of Silicon Valley as world centre of innovation and creativity:

> "*Silicon Valley's supportive social structures, institutions and collaborative practices provided a framework for mutual learning and adjustment. Thus, while competitive rivalries spurred technological advance*

among local producers, the regional economy was far from the simple free market of economic theory." (Saxenian 1994:45)

A key element in the creation of the culture of openness and sharing is the extent to which networking is seen as a necessary component of leadership and leaders both model and enable the sharing of practice and ideas on a systematic basis with high status being given to networking activities.

Leading change by building community capacity

The leadership of change in schools can lead to two highly dysfunctional outcomes. Firstly, the complexity of the change process and, sometimes, the lack of skill and experience in leading change can result senior staff acting unilaterally ' to save time and get things done'.

Secondly, the high stakes that can be associated with successful change in terms of influence and power mean that the leadership of change can degenerate into micro-political on a par with an Italian Renaissance court, where Machiavelli is the most appropriate guide. The antidote to these two is partly to do with creating a moral consensus and partly to do with creating a sense of community based on a superordinate sense of shared purpose and strategies and processes focused on

high quality relationships. In simple terms, this implies that the leadership of change should be an activity based in community principles and practices.

The linking of leadership, change and community can perhaps be best understood from two closely related perspectives firstly community as social capital – the quality of relationships and secondly the potential for learning through community. It is worth highlighting how rarely personal and organisational change is seen as a learning process but in fact learning is all about change and one of the challenges of leading change is that it often involves a process of unlearning and then relearning.

There are numerous formulations of the elements of social capital but most definitions would include the following elements:

- A high degree of consensus around norms and values that actively inform day-to-day interactions.

- A shared language with a specialist vocabulary that enables open and lateral communication.

- A strong sense of shared identity and interdependence working through rich networks and a sense of mutual responsibility.

- Active involvement and participation in working of the community – standing for office, voting and accepting civic responsibility.

- A commitment to openness and sharing of ideas and wisdom.

- A shared sense of purpose and optimism for the future

Wenger's model of communities of practice has much in common with social capital as being essential to process of change or development:

> "*An organization's ability to deepen and renew its learning thus depends on fostering – or at the very least not impeding – the formation, development, and transformation of communities of practice, old and new.*" (1998:253)

A community of practice is made up of three elements:

The domain: a shared area of interest that creates a commitment and a shared competence in working in that domain.

The community: In pursuing their interest in their domain, members engage in joint activities and discussions, help each other, and share information. They build relationships that enable them to learn from each other.

The practice: members of a community of practice are practitioners. They develop a shared repertoire: experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems – in short a shared practice. (www.wenger-trayner.com/theory/)

In practical terms, the chances are that a highly effective school has most of the characteristics of a community high in social capital. In effect, the school functions as a sophisticated community, especially in terms of the quality of relationships. Such an environment is likely to foster a wide range of communities of practice – most of them focused on improvement, innovation and change. For example:

- The leadership team take it in turns to present a summary of recently published research or books and to lead a discussion on possible implications for the school.

- A group of middle leaders are working on shared strategies to enhance their monitoring of teaching and learning.

- A number of communities of practice involving teachers and teaching assistants are focusing on strategies to support learning for understanding.

- Pupils are being supported to work as communities of practice to explore the possibilities of personalizing learning.

- Parents and governors are working to explore extending the school's engagement with the wider community.

Conclusion

The leadership of change is complex, demanding and highly ambiguous. The more educationally significant the change, the greater the potential for uncertainty, and the greater the potential for alternative perceptions, competing rationalities and abuses of power.

In order to lead change it does seem that school leaders need to develop a range of qualities that are not available through PowerPoint-driven training or off-the-shelf packages. Those necessary qualities include:

- Moral confidence and professional courage

- The ability to think strategically and engage with abstraction

- High tolerance of ambiguity

- High order social skills and emotional literacy

- Personal authenticity and the ability to engender trust

- Strategies for networking and building coalitions

- Personal learning and growth

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Cameos of Change

3

In these autobiographical case studies, four school leaders reflect on their experience of understanding and leading change, and, in particular, on finding their own balance between addressing the pressures and demands of today whilst seeking to respond to the needs of tomorrow for their students.

1. David Hadley-Pryce

Changing the curriculum and the culture

"Sustainable leadership matters. It preserves, protects, and promotes deep and broad learning for all in relationships of care for others."

(Hargreaves & Fink: 2006)

David Hadley-Pryce is Headteacher of North Bromsgrove High School

Context

'North', a mixed comprehensive high school with around 900 pupils aged 13-18, was placed in 'Special Measures' in 2003 for a complex set of reasons before the current 'performance measures' became fashionable. The school emerged to 'satisfactory' in subsequent inspections with recognition of improvement. In 2010 the Big 5 (5 A*-C GCSEs including English and Maths) stood at 53%. Sadly, this fell to 52% in 2011 and 47% (with Ofqual GCSE English interference) in 2012. 'Expected (3 levels) Progress' in 2012 was 57% in English and 55% in Maths. The school was in trouble again.

It was inspected in April 2013, seven months ahead of schedule where it was found to be 'requiring improvement'. According to the '2013 KS4 Performance Tables' the Big 5 was 70% with English progress at 79% and maths progress at 78%.

The outcomes in 2014 are still subject to debate but similar to 2013. In 2015 these measures will be used for the final time. However in December 2014, OFSTED judged the schools to be 'good'.

It would be very easy to claim that this improvement was solely due to the arrival of the author as new head in September 2012 and his new deputy, promoted internally from assistant headship. Indeed, Ofsted generously observed in their 2013

report: "*Too much responsibility for improving the school rests on the shoulders of the senior leadership team, particularly the headteacher and deputy headteacher*", though, as with most of their theatre critic style observations, there were sadly no suggestions of how this might change, or indeed what evidence this observation was based on. The reality, however, is much more interesting.

Dealing with today

The leadership challenges at this time were many and complex. The school had significantly restructured the senior team as a result of financial constraints during 2010-2011, moving from a 1:2:5 structure to a 1:1:3 structure, with the loss of a deputy and two assistant heads through compulsory redundancy. Although a full year had passed the team was still very bruised and fragmented. The need for rapid change was so urgent that any further change to the senior team structure had to be put on hold. The greater challenge was to create decision making habits which fully empowered leaders who had in the very recent past been subject to a highly directive and hierarchic culture.

At a personal level, with significant technical work around curriculum structure to be done there was a strong imperative to genuinely distribute other tasks throughout the team. The creation of a culture of intervention was driven entirely by the deputy head whilst one of the two remaining assistants spear-headed the task of transforming school culture in the guise of staff and student relationships. This very focussed and responsive leadership culture helped to clarify a common sense of purpose whilst building trust with very capable middle leaders, who had in the recent past themselves been disempowered. It quickly became obvious how damaging the 'hierarchy' had been to both collaborative improvement and to morale, and, as positive change was seen to rapidly have impact, a whole school momentum began to develop.

The necessary changes were an example of technical rather than adaptive change. Whilst it might be perceived to have involved significant risk, it did not in reality, as it would have been difficult to make things harder for a very hard working and committed teaching staff. The school timetable was based on a diploma model at key stage 4. It is probably worth noting here that Bromsgrove has a middle school system so the children do not arrive until they are in year 9. It is therefore pretty important to get the curriculum structure right. The diploma-style timetable meant that in both year 10 and year 11 all option subjects were crammed into 2 days. This also meant that core subjects, PE and some other bits and pieces were crammed into the other 3 days. Half of year 10 had their first of four maths lessons at 9.15 on a Tuesday with the last at 10.05 on a Wednesday, with effectively three in a row from Tuesday afternoon into

Wednesday morning. There were no students studying any diploma courses.

Year 11 also had one PSE lesson and one RE lesson. As they had completed short-course RE in year 10, this RE lesson was actually a general studies lesson. I cannot criticise this methodology as it does reflect the over-emphasis on collection of qualifications for everything, which the government has been pressing for years.

However … the solution? We increased timetable allocation in both English and maths in years 10 and 11 from 4 (50 minute) lessons per week to 5. The casualties in year 11 were obvious with PSE and general studies (timetabled as RE) going. Year 10 was trickier as these slots were occupied by a compulsory ICT OCR National diploma which the curriculum leader had fought hard for, so this was a much tougher casualty. We moved ICT to the options and put after school classes on for those who did not wish to shift options. We started a new timetable on 1 November 2012 with all year 10 and 11 classes having an English lesson and a maths lesson every day.

This new timetabling strategy coupled with a lot of 'National Challenge' style highly targeted interventions, involving student focussed and very regular (weekly) meetings with core subject leaders rapidly bore fruit. Additional funds, with the support of the Local Authority, were put into staffing in English and Maths. This facilitated not only greater contact time but also more

responsive support for those falling behind. The impact on progress in both English and maths increasing by around 20-25% was sustained from 2013 to 2014 and has had a very positive impact on morale throughout the school. Interestingly the students now believe that 'teachers care about them' and that 'the school is good'. This was reflected in the schools recent Ofsted inspection in December 2014, which judged the school to have moved from 'borderline inadequate' (requires improvement by 'the skin of the teeth') to 'good' in four terms.

The greatest challenge moving into 2013-14 was the broadening and deepening of leadership. With the retirement of one of the two remaining assistants in summer 2013, two new assistant head appointments were made and middle leadership was restructured to create heads of upper (sixth form) and lower (years 9, 10 & 11) school. This new structure was accompanied by opportunities for 'informal leadership', through a policy approved by governors and based around MSc action research. The underlying hypothesis was based on the relationship between autonomy and intrinsic motivation as derived from self-determination theory (Deci: 1980, 1995) and the opportunity was taken up by 14 teachers. This will be an important component of building sustainable and deep leadership across the school. The new senior team was also supported by leadership coaching through Worcester University.

One of the more difficult tensions to resolve has been the interplay between a fairly tight core of 5 senior leaders and a more extended team who effect change across the school. The ready-fire-aim principle (Fullan: 2010) used extensively in 2012-13 needed more careful management and having a clear, concise and simple means of communication became evident.

The school improvement planning format which was based around the Ofsted framework with significant analysis and self-evaluation built into the plan rapidly became unwieldy. It was an interesting learning experience that to be dynamic and effective, larger teams need simpler and more coherent plans. What had been effective for a team of three became increasingly difficult as the team flexed and leadership was genuinely distributed.

Building the culture of tomorrow

The school, in its attempt to build its reputation and resolve its perceived inadequacies, had adopted a 'tick box' mentality to respond to external change. New national priorities had been met with an additional 'compartmentalised' layers of work and administration, with 'off the shelf' solutions which had no coherent sense of purpose, for example for areas such as PSE.

Teaching staff were clearly exhausted with knee-jerk responses to the 'latest initiatives', and the curriculum was loaded to

'deliver points' at the expense of core provision. The notion of accountability was enacted through a very top-down structure. Perceived poor outcomes for pupils triggered data-driven punitive style meetings, in which capable middle leaders were made to feel wholly inadequate. Whilst very detailed and thorough data analysis was shared constantly, it was never used as a basis for problem solving. It was a very low trust environment in which the emphasis was very much about 'fixing the blame' rather than 'fixing the problem'.

The result of this was a 'fractured hierarchy' with each layer in the structure largely alienated from and blaming the other layers for the schools difficulties. A by-product of this was, sadly, the creation of a fairly toxic environment within the school building. Good leadership was perceived to be 'shouting at children who weren't where they were supposed to be'.   This model was even applied during break and lunch times where large amounts of energy was expended 'herding children' and 'guarding empty spaces'. Even teachers who had positive and productive in-class relationships with students clearly felt obliged to either disengage or mirror this confrontational model of behaviour.

This model of 'pouring accelerant' on any conflict situation supports the 'child deficit model', and reasonable people are shifted towards a culture where a child's inability to engage with learning is seen as 'a fault in themselves'. Visitors to the school

would comment on the caring and committed nature of teaching and support staff when they spoke to them individually, but this was not reflected in the school's day to day climate.

A shift in 'organisational behaviour towards children' is a subtle matter, and longer term in its effect than the 'technical changes' which were rapidly enacted. The intervention model of prioritisation supports learning conversations with children and shifts the emphasis away from 'assuming malign intent' on the part of children to 'trusting their motives' and responding appropriately. This has brought about significant relaxation in relationships. There is a tension here as some teaching staff have perceived this as a relaxation in some imaginary 'standards'. The reality is unquestionable that more positive relationships support more engaging and effective learning for a larger proportion of the school community. It is not necessarily the case that making things better for one group will disadvantage another, but this is sometimes a difficult concept to grasp.

An accompanying shift in 'organisational behaviour towards adults' has supported this process, with the deliberate breaking down of hierarchy and a flattening of leadership across the school. This is only sustainable long-term if the momentum leads to both a deepening of leadership understanding and a 'spirit of inquiry' into how learning happens. A recognition of the complexity of the relationship between the two, it is hoped, may result in the creation of a complex adaptive system.

Ofsted were asked to visit the school during the autumn of 2014 and as hope of a visit was fading an inspection team arrived in early December. One key component of the overall good judgement was the shift in attitude of students. Where, in the past, more truculent students had been keen to seek out inspectors to inform them of the schools many 'perceived deficiencies', on this occasion the converse was true. Much of the energy expended in ensuring appropriate interventions, was directed at the most disenfranchised. As a result, their support for the school was strong and unwavering. Leadership has this year had to manage the tensions of continuing with a highly focussed short-term intervention support strategy whilst building for the future.

Next Steps: Organic Change

Effective organisational change, it seems to me, begins with a recognition of our humanity. From this we then have to ask what it means to be human, what matters to us, why we behave the way that we do, and what we wish to achieve. It is critical that a shared understanding of our vision and values, and how these are interpreted through our guiding principles is established. The principle difficulty in fostering such a

philosophical position is its contrary nature to the autocratic, assessment-driven, ideological, top-down, political leadership education is continually subjected to. The only rational place to begin is to counter the ideology with a 'body of evidence' on which to base decision making. As such there are two underpinning themes which drive our current thinking:

- o Leadership is a process of continual responsive change characterised by complex system responses mediated through deepening trust, sophisticated analysis and egalitarian problem solving.

- o Learning is central to all thinking, focusing critically on the knowledge and skills of students, teachers and leaders, in developing from a basic to an integrated framework for professional learning.

These two facets are sides of the same coin, which is the currency of a professional learning community, and which we might also define as a complex adaptive system. Our movement as a 'thinking organisation' is reflected in our school improvement priorities for the current year, expressed through these 3 intentions:

1. Learning should be driven by learning goals rather than performance goals. We will develop in our learners a growing sense of inquiry and desire to learn new skills and knowledge for their own intrinsic pleasure.

2. Imposed control brings either compliance or defiance. True motivation is intrinsic and generated from within. We will offer structured opportunities for all to develop their own autonomous decision making.

3. Communication: All learning is dependent on a shared understanding of meaning and purpose. We will seek to create simplicity and clarity of meaning and purpose in all that we do and equip our learners with the skills to engage fully with the school.

Whilst the links between these intentions may not be explicit, it is not a huge leap of faith to suppose that deeper learning and greater well-being will contribute to greater motivation and achievement; clarity of purpose may contribute to both better preparation for the future and better family engagement.

In terms of process, we have two key elements of learning from our recent experience which will inform our strategies for the next stage:

- o **Leadership has to be creative and responsive as well as being evidence based.** We have learned that group size as well as composition is critical in terms of 'dynamic effectiveness'. We have found that as soon as groups

extend beyond 5 or 6 people they shift from being creative forums where trust can be built and ideas 'let go' without emotional trauma, to political negotiating platforms where ideas are clung to for their 'political weight' and 'garnered support' rather than the quality of the argument. Our three strategic intentions then, are driven by 10 small action planning groups, each with a key 'area of operation', for example, 'core subjects', 'curriculum support', 'sixth form' and 'teaching'.

o **Professional Learning (CPD – RIP); the act of shifting emphasis from what 'leaders want to tell' to 'what teachers want to learn';** through the act of teacher inquiry, creating a framework for 'Professional Learning'. This will be largely based on the New Zealand framework for professional teacher learning developed by Professor Helen Timperley. (Timperley: 2011)

Conclusion

The continuing challenge for leadership in this context is the balancing of the demands of an ever-changing political landscape, so as to keep the 'Ofsted wolf from the door', with that unswerving sense of moral purpose which puts the holistic needs of every child's well-being, engagement and learning at the heart of sustainable leadership (Timperley: 2011:10).

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A Journey to Inclusive Excellence

"***Change is a process of building ownership and capacity in others as you proceed.***"

Fullan (2008)

Aimee Mitchell is Vice-Principal of Tavistock Community College, Devon

Context

Tavistock College is an 11-18 Cooperative Trust School with a comprehensive intake, set in rural Devon on a large campus with over 1300 students. The Principal and Vice Principal were first seconded over 4 years ago to support the college, before being appointed permanently to raise standards and improve provision, not least inclusion.

The College was in special measures and the scale of system redesign required over the period of 4 years seemed insurmountable at times with layer upon layer of dysfunction evident, despite many hard working and committed staff.

In December 2011 the school came out of special measures with a Satisfactory judgement and in the most recent inspection report in December 2013, the school was judged as Good and was recognised as being a "*highly inclusive school*". Ofsted also judged that, "*The ethos in this college is now firmly based on the personal, social and moral values promoted by the governing body and college leaders*".

Why was there a need for change?

Prior to and during the period that the College was in special measures, attendance and behaviour required improvement and exclusions were high, with many students following inappropriate curriculum pathways that did not meet their needs or lead to appropriate progression routes. The college was deemed to be non-inclusive and this was highlighted by Ofsted as a key area for improvement.

Outcomes as a result were poor, given the attainment on entry of the students. Students and staff were not proud of the school and many areas of support and provision were inadequate, often students were placed on courses that were not suitable and that they were unable to access.

Many of the systems within the school were not working or were non-existent and so with special measures came a great opportunity to de-couple existing structures and re-build new ones in a much more holistic and strategic way, creating something that was far more effective by bringing together the sum parts of the whole and creating a new Inclusion team.

Within the area of inclusion and pastoral support there was a silo culture where staff worked independently of each other. Therefore sharing of expertise, information and resources were uncommon or ad-hoc. This meant that some of the students were being 'missed' in terms of targeted support and appropriate intervention. The SEN team were based in huts that were external to the main college building as was the behaviour team. This led to a culture of exclusion rather than inclusion due to the site of the buildings and the access for the students to resources. There was also no cohesion between student attendance, pastoral support, academic outcomes, safeguarding, behaviour intervention and learning support; often leading to inadequate provision, duplication of resources or no provision at all. The impact of this was evident in student behaviour, poor attendance and, ultimately, unacceptable student outcomes.

Addressing the Pressures of Today - making change happen

The first part of the change process was to create a new vision for Inclusion at the college and to generate staff 'buy in' and ownership. This began with evidence-gathering of the strengths and areas for development of the current system and resources (including staff). More importantly, giving staff and students a voice at the start of the process in shaping the provision and planning for the future was critical. This was achieved through in-depth consultation, the creation of working parties, and by involving staff and students at each phase of development, providing regular updates and a detailed plan.

One definition of inclusion within education could be having high aspirations and expectations of every student, linked to equality of opportunity across the organisation; or simply spotting early what is going right or wrong for all students, then formulating actions to support improvement, with regular review. Having a joined up approach across all systems within the school is key.

The vision at Tavistock College was developed around an inclusion provision and team that would be available to all students regardless of age or need. In all communication, planning and training, traditional labels were no longer used such as SEN, and this was replaced with the use of the word inclusion or inclusive practice across the whole college. This was a monumental culture shift not only in language but in our approach and values.

The work on leading effective change at the college was underpinned by research from Michael Fullan – Leading in a Culture of Change (2001) and more recently The Six Secrets of Change: What the Best Leaders Do to Help Their Organizations Survive and Thrive (2008).

The picture below gives a summary of the Six Secrets explained in that book.

The research stemmed from the Masters dissertation that I was also doing at the time which focused on situational leadership for change within the context of school improvement from special measures to Good and beyond.

The strength of any new system would need the staff to feel empowered and to value what was being proposed as a model for school improvement. Part of this work was centred on celebrating the skills and success of the existing team, whilst recognising that, in order to create an effective model moving forward, there was a need to refocus and create a new vision and action plan for change within which they each had a part.

This can be summarised by Fullan (2008) as 'Love your Employees – secret number one'. This was not always easy as some of the stakeholders did not welcome change and therefore the vision and plan needed to convince staff and students that improvement would follow for all. Everything was therefore evidence-based and context-specific, enabling all to see that being a part of this new way would create opportunities for success for everyone, staff and students.

The next phase of the change process was to connect a team of talented individuals within a new system, all of whom held a shared purpose and understanding of what needed to be done and the ultimate goal in doing so. In creating this team, some staff left; primarily those who felt that the new direction was not for them or that their role had changed to something that they no longer felt they could fulfil. Other team members were employed, to strengthen this team, enabling the new Inclusion system to be introduced as well as building the capacity of the team.

Some of the new roles included an Inclusion Hub Co-ordinator and Key Stage Administrators who would support the Heads of Year. Throughout the whole process transparency was critical, both in terms of the team but also with the wider staff and community. This was achieved through a clarity and consistency of message. It was imperative at this point to regularly communicate with the existing staff about any

changes and for them to be involved in the new direction. Some staff felt threatened when new staff joined and part of the leadership challenge was to create a culture of one team which supported and learnt from each other and who recognised the skills of each team member in their own right to bring about positive outcomes for the students of the College.

Creating the team was not about hierarchy but more about creating a self-sustaining team who worked for and with each other and not for one person. The work of the leader was to create opportunities and systems that supported purposeful peer-interactions. With this in mind clear processes were set up within which the team would operate. One way that we did this was to set up fortnightly meetings to discuss and plan for students in all year groups who may have a barrier to their success. The meetings were and still are purposeful, focused and with clear outcomes for each of the team members. Another way that we did this was to re-structure the pastoral system. This created a 'double leadership' system whereby the year groups were zoned in faculty areas with the tutors being faculty teams as well as pastoral teams.

The Inclusion team developed their practice throughout the first 12 months, learning from each other and sharing together both what went well and what needed to change or improve, they truly began to understand and learn what inclusion meant and the power of an inclusive culture for the students and for the

college. Initially this was centred on student wellbeing but later became much more than this. The inclusion support model offered a 'hook' for the team to develop their practice to ensure that every student had their needs met and could succeed at the College.

The culture became one of constant improvement for the benefit of the students and closing the attainment gaps became a vehicle for measuring this improvement (this was a resultant factor following improved student wellbeing and safety). This was coupled with the creation of 2 central systems for recording provision and intervention; accessible to all staff. The intervention spreadsheets tracked individual intervention against outcomes as a mechanism for measuring the impact of any intervention or support. Outcomes included academic data, attendance and behaviour/reward points. This also allowed the team to target intervention and curriculum provision to students who needed it most at any point in the year with a regular review mechanism built in through the fortnightly meetings.

The final phase of changing the climate was a geographical move of the inclusion team into the Inclusion Hub. This meant that the SEN team, student support and behaviour teams were no longer situated in external huts or separate offices but were all centrally located within the school into the new Inclusion Hub. All of the rooms had the title inclusion rather than any

reference to behaviour or SEN. This has been instrumental in shifting the culture within the College and also no longer excludes students who have a specific need for support. The geographical move has also created opportunities for staff to have valuable peer to peer conversations and to share information on a regular basis as they are co-located within the hub. This also offers opportunities for mutual support and sharing of good practice. The move along with creating the new team and structures has resulted in a self-sustaining team leading on Inclusion within the college and driving forward improvements in provision and support for the benefit of the students.

This move itself was difficult to manage initially because the Inclusion Hub is located in the centre of the College and opposite to some existing classrooms. Therefore the staff who taught there were concerned that their lessons would be disturbed as a result of this move with the perception that students who were perhaps exhibiting challenging behaviour would be disruptive. I listened to the staff and agreed that we would constantly review the situation and adapt if we needed to. Keeping the communication channels open was imperative and helped to reassure staff. In fact the move has been extremely positive. Due to the culture and ethos change prior to the geographical move, there had been significant improvements in student behaviour and attitudes so the

numbers accessing the hub were significantly lower than anticipated for behaviour reasons.

Outcomes and Impact – Ofsted and Student Outcomes

In the most recent inspection report in December 2013, the school was judged as Good and was recognised as being a "highly inclusive school". Ofsted also judged that, *"The ethos in this college is now firmly based on the personal, social and moral values promoted by the governing body and college leaders"*.

The high level of inclusion at the College can be seen in terms of support for the 36% of the college population of students with additional learning and communication needs, 49% of gifted and talented students are also included. Through the development of a highly personalised, demand-led curriculum pathway, students can achieve qualifications through a very different approach and this coupled with effective support mechanisms for students who have barriers to learning has resulted in the college having 0% NEET's and 100% A*-G for the last 3 years. Re-engagement was judged as an area of strength in the most recent Ofsted inspection and comments from Ofsted included *"elements of a personalised curriculum, improved confidence and self-esteem, for those most at risk"*

and *"opportunities to work with animals are provided to support and motivate students, where appropriate"*.

There have been no permanent exclusions in over 2 years and fixed term exclusions are low. All of this along with a narrowing of the attainment gap by over 10% led to the College being nationally recognised for the work on Inclusion, receiving an Inclusive Excellence Award.

Leading a School of Tomorrow – relationship to the four quadrants

The diagram below shows some of the areas of work that sought to address each of the 4 quadrants for developing an Outstanding School of Tomorrow from the case study described above.

The work outlined in the case study was focused primarily on improving the levels of achievement for all students at the college through creating the highest levels of wellbeing for our staff and students. In doing this work to develop inclusive practices, ethos, effective provision mapping and intervention we have in fact had a significant impact on all three of the other quadrants too.

However through regular review of our provision and in planning for the future we have recognised that we still have work to do in unlocking the potential of the family in making a significant difference to the outcomes of our students.

In particular we need to focus on the hard to reach families but also the families of the 'hidden middle'. This is also an area of focus for the college in terms of our data outcomes too with great improvements in support and challenge for the most able, the least able and vulnerable students but certainly more work needs to be done to support the students within the middle. These are the students who are largely un-noticed and may be coasting but would benefit from a greater input from their family in their learning journey and experience.

This is the next phase of the journey where we are creating family action plans as part of the intervention package for students who are underachieving. We are currently consulting with students and families on this in order to create a model that has high value with everyone and ultimately leads to

improved outcomes and suitable progression opportunities for the students.

Conclusion - Leadership Challenges for an Outstanding School of Tomorrow

- Engaging with the whole community on a far deeper level to unlock their skill and knowledge in supporting our students to learn and develop as successful and effective citizens and also the school being seen at the heart of the community for its involvement in community development and sustainability.

- Equipping our students with the skills and knowledge to be highly effective and to function in an economy and society that may not exist yet.

- Developing creative approaches to education that continue to inspire our staff, students and community, creating an ethos of enjoyment and achievement. This may include breaking free of the traditional formula within which schools currently operate.

- Balancing the expectations of government targets / expectations with the moral imperative of providing the appropriate provision for the individual students within our school.

- Knowing what success looks like for each individual student, and allowing the students and staff freedom to achieve this without being 'blinded' by society's perception of success.

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A more inclusive rewards system through authentic collaboration

'*The old system needed changing and the way this change has been researched, constructed, presented and implemented has been excellent*'

(Member of staff – Evaluation Survey)

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Context

Since July 2011, Pershore High School has been an Academy for girls and boys aged 12 to 18 serving the large, predominantly rural area, between Worcester and Evesham. There are some 1115 students on roll, around 250 of whom are in the Sixth Form. MidYIS tests reveal that 75% of our intake is generally in bands A and B and the average KS2 fine points score is at, or slightly above, national average, with student achievement broadly in line with national averages on entry to the school. Most pupils join the school at Year 8 from one of three middle schools (Years 5 to 7), meaning that transfer is not at the end of Key Stage 2.

The school operates a vertical pastoral system of three Houses, with Tutor Groups in each House comprising around 5 students from each of the year groups in the main school and a similar number from the Sixth Form made up of both Year 12 and Year 13 students. The student population is very stable, with few non-standard admissions. The deprivation indicator is 0.10. Despite this, 7.9% of children below the age of 16 live in income poverty (CLG). By far the largest section of our students (23.8%) comes from an area where the percentages of high social class households (18.8%) and adults with higher

education qualifications (17.6%) are below the average for England.

The need for change at this time was centred on the need to raise aspirations and to examine the role an effective rewards system could play in this. Whilst not a universal claim, some students at the school exhibit low aspirational behaviours, whether for reasons of confidence, self-esteem or the availability of positive role models. It was hoped that an updated rewards system would help raise aspirations and increase the motivation of all students to learn.

Addressing the pressure of today

Our primary objective was to create a new rewards system that motivated students, encouraging the whole school community to participate in its design and use. 'Buy-in' for the system in place was low. The perception was that the quiet majority received little recognition, as they neither produced work of an exceptionally high standard, nor were disruptive enough to receive recognition for moments of positive behaviour.

Consequently a proportionately small number of students were recognised, whilst the quiet majority who made sound progress and met expectations received minimal credit, giving them little encouragement to raise their aspirations. Therefore, whilst the system relied upon intrinsic motivation to encourage students to strive to achieve, in reality it did not feel entirely equitable or inclusive. In addition, the system's application was not consistent across the school which engendered a lack of trust in its utility and validity. The main motivation for collecting points in the existing system were the presentation of certificates (for academic achievements) and earned participation in reward trips (for meeting pastoral expectations) at the end of the Autumn and Spring Terms.

Whilst believing there was a strong moral justification for a change, a clearly developed purpose for the new system would be required. This would centre on the fact that there are a variety of reasons underpinning students' motivation, so there should be both a range of ways for students to be recognised and to be rewarded. More importantly, knowledge of the long-term dangers of extrinsic rewards meant the students had to see a deeper, albeit moral, purpose to the enterprise beyond the perceived bribery of material rewards.

Thus it was hoped that the fostering of growth mindsets amongst the students would not be compromised by our new rewards system. Ideally, the new system would encourage more students to participate in House and wider community events, whilst also gaining personal reward. Recognition

would be there for those who were already engaging and would be an additional motivation to do so for those who were not.

Further, as learning has become more personalised, surely the rewards should also be more bespoke, rather than setting universal benchmarks which are either unachievable for some or set so low that they offer little motivation? The rewards in the old system were imposed upon students with little opportunity for discussion or choice. As a result some opted out, as they provided little motivation, or cost made them unattainable.
The aim was to provide more immediate recognition of positive behaviours through more frequent and smaller rewards, to supplement the popular reward trips, with an opportunity for students to be empowered by having a choice of rewards. Making sure these rewards were relevant and inclusive was crucial in ensuring that no student would be disadvantaged and therefore encouraging the academic and personal potential of every child.

The intention was also to provide a system which enabled students to understand their own capacity to influence their personal position, as well as the collective position of their House. The lack of transparency in the existing system led to cynicism from some stakeholders that undermined the status of the House System as a mechanism to promote competition and reward. It was also not possible to monitor staff who did not apply policies consistently, as there was no way of knowing

who they were. With transparency and the value of the system enhanced, staff would feel empowered to reflect on their use of the system which in turn would lead to external monitoring becoming a secondary issue.

Reflections

In many ways, the characteristics we were looking to embed within our new rewards system were the very same characteristics that, as part of the process of change, were likely to lead to a successful outcome.

It became clear that fostering authentic equity and inclusion in the development of the system itself would create the 'buy-in' that was previously lacking. This was enhanced by the perception that we were 'doing the right thing' both in changing the existing system and through the initial proposals for the new system.

In turn this gave rise to innovative thinking to devise solutions for potential barriers and answers to the question of how. For example, adapting the system to avoid the potential dangers of the seemingly arbitrary rewards on long-term student motivation. From the outset there was a recognition that time would be taken over the process of development and implementation centred upon the engagement of all those with

an interest. Consideration of a variety of options and transparency in decision made would enhance the process further. Taking on board these views was likely to lead to constant revisions and updates. This would be an acceptable part of the process.

Building the culture of tomorrow

From the outset, system development conversations were open, with no preconceived ideas being presented, just a clear understanding of the remit of the project. Goals were to be achieved in partnership with the system participants. Once an initial proposal had been agreed, the first step was to put this to parents, staff and students for their thoughts, along with those on the existing system, its strengths and weaknesses, and the opportunities presented by the change. Meaningful discussion followed in a variety of settings for a variety of groups. All sessions were open to all, and required structured, recorded feedback. The process, like the eventual system, was equitable and inclusive.

These discussions resulted in both a clear set of values for the new rewards system and some initial procedures and strategies. Recognition for all students for the contribution they make to the school and wider community was the guiding principle. The staff working party identified a variety of contexts

in which 'achievement' could be recognised, and after further consultation it was agreed that Effort; Achievement; Participation; Good Student and Community would be the attributes underpinning the rewards system. However, if the system was to be a success it needed to address the inequality of the existing rewards system, creating a process that would ensure every member of the school could be rewarded for contributing to these key values.

The first stage in this process was to decouple the rewards and sanctions systems so that positive achievement became the emphasis. Secondly, it was equally important that the awarding of points was more consistent, allowing the quiet middle to receive the rewards they deserved, whilst still recognising outstanding achievement of others. For this reason, one point per lesson was established as a standard for all students who met minimum expectations, with the ability to add, or not award points accordingly. Finally, the system looked to embed the characteristics evidenced when performance exceeded expectations. Individual points earned would be 'House' points. Success contributes to, and is based upon, the success of others in the collective House sense – there is an element of competition. The system also motivates through the inclusion of a sense of social justice. Instead of earning personal, often material, rewards for personal achievements, students can donate their points, and therefore their monetary value, to charity. The system created has motivated the students to

engage due to its collectively accepted purpose. The process itself motivated its participants for a similar reason.

Developing the system involved making decisions in a number of areas. In the past not all students contributed equally and Sixth Form received few rewards. So after strong feedback, the decision was taken to integrate Sixth Form into the rewards system, particularly as Vertical Tutoring is at the heart of our House system. This has been a huge success with Year 12 and 13 students logging into the new system as frequently as younger students, as well as utilising the rewards earned. Detailed investigation was undertaken to ensure the system developed was fit for purpose and not purely 'off the shelf'. Central to this choice was the desire to develop a stronger interaction with parents, enabling them to share in students' success to complete the triangle of parent-school-student partnership. Parents are able to login and access their child's profile, as well as engaging with the overall House Competition. Parents receive emails at key Milestones, helping them to act as co-educators, being fully involved in recognising academic success. For those parents without internet access the plan is to add House Points to school reports ensuring all families are included. Finally, the rewards available are of a sufficient range to provide an appropriate choice for the students. The process, like the eventual system, offered relevant, transparent choices to those involved in developing it

Reflections

To date the program has been a huge success with 80% of students and 79% of staff stating that the new rewards system has made students more motivated, showing a really positive effect on learning and achievement. The points totals for students to date has clearly justified this approach, as it now reflects student performance and is clearly more equitable. Analysis of significant groups also shows the system is inclusive, as students in these groups are earning comparable points. This has been a result of staff engaging with the system chosen. This is partly due to the acceptance that it was the right thing to do, partly due to a shared purpose creating an optimism regarding its likely ultimate success, and partly as a result of the careful choice of system due to its intuitive design. However the main reason for engagement has been the effective management of the change, in addition to the management of the project itself.

Interested parties felt involved in the process of change, rather than being led by it, which created trust in those colleagues charged with leading the process and in the process itself. This often manifested itself in a suitable allocation of time. The trial phase gave staff confidence in using an electronic system and was timed for the Summer Term when staff had more opportunity to experiment with the system. In addition they were told after the trial that the system would be reset, so they

could experiment without fear. Since then 100% of staff have been making use of the system. The potentially thorny issue of accountability has been approached sensitively, as the process has reassured students, parents and staff that the system is fair and equitable.

Implications for leadership and next steps

- The moral justification was that something within our control was not working to optimum effect, but had huge potential were it to be improved.

- The process enabled all stakeholders to have confidence and trust in the process going forward and the fact that they would continue to be able to shape the future of the rewards system. Such a process revealed some strong opinions, developed and defined clear patterns between all groups involved and provided a remit for quite dramatic changes.

- The importance of keeping the original objectives, and initial stakeholder concerns, at the forefront of any decision-making during system implementation.

- As milestones in the project were crossed, there was a process of ongoing evaluation, based upon feedback from the stakeholders. The original objectives were clearly

grounded in our local context. Those stakeholders demonstrated that they were more willing to try a new approach if they felt that they had been able to comment upon it and that these comments had been be listened to.

- Making change based upon such an approach gives a greater sense of ownership and therefore purpose to the overall change, which is likely to result in a greater probability of success.

    Thus, a wide ranging evaluation after the first half-term 'live' trial was completed by staff and students. This provided an opportunity to mutually review the system, reinforcing the opinion that the system was not a fait accompli and that the whole community had the opportunity to judge outcomes and define changes. The results of this survey were shared in their entirety with staff and students and included a section which covered the implementation process with very positive responses to statements regarding 'opportunity to contribute to development'. Responses included; 'my ideas were listened to' and 'the new system meets the needs of the students'. Some change, such as the one outlined in this paper, can be something of a 'Pandora's box' in this regard, so whilst well intentioned or with very positive outcomes in most respects, all implications should be considered and

planned for, guided by the school's shared vision and values. This often requires complex thinking.

- Change has the ability build capacity and sustainability through leadership development within the school community.

  As the change was led by a middle leader, the school leadership team recognised the value of having colleagues who are willing and able to instigate change. This requires faith in individual colleagues, support structures to allow them to achieve and a belief that the colleague will deliver an outcome that is in the best interests of, and to the required standard expected by, the school. The middle leader has recognised the need for different types of leadership approaches, dependent upon the implementation stage of the initiative focusing primarily on collaboration and consultation. The process involved genuinely listening to and incorporating the views of those involved. In this sense it was equitable and inclusive.

- The next phase of leadership will focus on the reinforcement of expectations to ensure consistency over an extended period following the initiative's

implementation, and preventing divergence from the original objectives and purpose.

The first formal evaluation, based upon the initial 'live' trial, used the framework of 'summary of feedback', 'the issues identified' and 'recommendations for consideration'. The ethos and tone of this evaluation went a long way to securing ongoing stakeholder support for the initiative, with feedback and responses reported back in full to those who had contributed. This philosophy of cyclical evaluation must continue as the system's participants are the real agents of change.

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Working towards highly effective parent and community engagement as one key component of a change strategy

'It takes a whole village to raise a child'

African Proverb

Alison Elliott is Headteacher of Lakers School, Forest of Dean.

The Context of the school

Our school is a Cooperative Foundation School of 650 students, aged 11-16. The following offers a brief, accurate picture of the school in relation to the key factors that do or could affect student outcomes of any kind.

The school is set within a rural community serving a wide catchment area. The area has been designated as an area of rural deprivation. Over 70% of workers have to leave the area and travel to Gloucester and beyond for work. Much local work is part-time and poorly paid. Many parents have several jobs allowing little time or energy to support children with literacy development or homework. There is a sense of working class pride with many families reluctant to rely on benefits. The Tressle Trust Food Bank literally offers a life-line for a significant number of families.

The impact on learning is such that, year-on-year, students arrive in year 7 with poor literacy skills, and find engagement in the secondary school curriculum a serious challenge. For example, of the current year 7 intake, 31% had a literacy level of between two and five years below their chronological age. This pattern is repeated across the age range. Following a variety of literacy interventions to address this deficit there has been a direct improvement

with between 30 and 40% of students who were two years behind now reaching their chronological age.

The multiple deprivation factors affecting students, in pockets of the catchment, are manifested in a lack of opportunities because of restricted access. Poverty of aspiration is real and explained by contentment with living in a beautiful place, cosseted by close and traditional family ties. Currently 26% of students are identified as having special educational needs and another 8% are serious social services cases. It is our judgement that a further 8% of families would benefit from help from social services; service limitations preclude access to help.

Our school is in the south west. This region has the lowest attainment profile for any region of England. Our county is one of the poorest performing counties within that region. Serving one of the poorest areas within that county, our daily life is coloured by constant external pressure to improve academic outcomes with students.   The school is currently judged by Ofsted as requiring improvement.

Beyond rhetoric, community here is authentic. The current 'one size fits all' agenda sees schools obliged to relate the education they offer to their community almost exclusively to student academic progress and attainment data. This framework for judgements offers scarce opportunity to celebrate what is valued within this special cohesive

community, where the school operates as the hub of the community.

The school has made steady progress over a number of years, gradually embedding improvements in student achievement. Community engagement in the school has seen attendance improving significantly, currently 94.91%. This reflects significant improvements in learner self-esteem, and engagement in independent learning, boosted by improvements in the quality of teaching. Attainment on entry is below national average, with literacy levels significantly low, yet there is much good and outstanding practice across the school with: Business Studies, ICT, Art, PE, Maths and single Sciences in line or above national standards at GCSE. A Local Authority Review, autumn 2014, confirmed this whilst also highlighting significant areas of variability.

Good links with local FE providers enable students to access a broad, personalised curriculum enhanced by in-school provision. This led to the school having a positive residual of 0.13 in relation to the soon to be introduced Progress 8 measure. The school has a long history of effective and intensive careers and vocational provision. We are equally proud of the student who was offered four different apprenticeships when he left our school this summer, as we are of the student who achieved '11A*'s and

3 'A's at GCSE level. The impact of our careers and vocational provision has been the maintenance of 0% NEETs over the last three years and beyond.

Addressing the pressure of today

The leadership challenge in our context is about raising expectations and aspirations in a way that is consistent with people's sense of identity, and not just that which is externally imposed. Learning together as a community, taking as broad a range of people with us as we further develop our education offer, is crucial to help students and their families believe in their potential for success in school as well as their potential in further education and employment.   Positive outcomes have to feel attainable.

Meeting the needs of this community requires a different kind of performance to a different kind of agenda. Whilst pressure to define ourselves solely according to attainment data prevails, we know that, to meet the needs of our learners, leadership needs to focus on cultural transformation. That transformation needs to be sympathetic to local values and traditions whilst challenging all stakeholders to open their minds to future opportunities, energised by threats.

Emerging from a shared analysis of need, the importance of student leadership, stakeholder voice and, in particular, the role of leadership in handling competing voices, are thrown into stark relief.

The school carried out a full public consultation in 2010 to convert to become a cooperative trust. This generated a great deal of community interest and support. Our clarity of purpose around the six cooperative values, self-help, self-responsibility, equality, equity, democracy and solidarity, made sense to a range of local stakeholders. Living these values, day-by-day, leaves us with an obligation to continue to listen carefully to our community needs. Structures, systems and policies, are shaped around those values and evolve in response to changing needs; they work on the basis of the trusting relationships we forge.

The community was galvanised into a defensive position soon after the consultation when it faced two very real threats to things that it valued. The HOOF, 'Hands Off Our Forest' campaign saw a government retreat on plans to sell off the Forest. The FANS, 'Five Acres Not for Sale', campaign sought to prevent the Further Education College leaving our campus or to secure the land for the community. In both cases the school was recognised as a natural hub for community meetings and consultation. Students were actively engaged in both campaigns. Education and the

ability to be articulate became both relevant and urgent. The school has been able to capitalise on the energy and enhanced interest in education that arose.

Within an environment of higher levels of community involvement, our local Under Fives' facility decided to relocate to our school. This demonstrated to our community the first steps toward establishing an all-age campus. Active involvement in each other's work, secondary students working with the Under Fives, an Under Fives section in the secondary library, weekly readings by secondary staff, and a programme of shared events enables us to begin improving attainment outcomes for learners, alongside their social development, from an early age.

Action research has long pervaded the work of this school. This enables us to see beyond our immediate concerns and mediate the pressures we experience. Leadership identity and behaviours continue to be influenced by the context. As head teacher/head learner I believe my role is context-specific, and that context influences how I must practise that role

Fig. 1 describes my current experience as head teacher and action researcher within the case study context. We are reminded on a six weekly basis, through our Local Authority review meetings, that our school is 'below average' in attainment. Meanwhile a fundamental belief in the value of

freedom and democracy in unlocking the potential for engagement in education sees us committed to listening to all stakeholders as the foundations for democratic leadership, whilst at the same time we are feeling dragged down by the political undertow of the current policy framework.
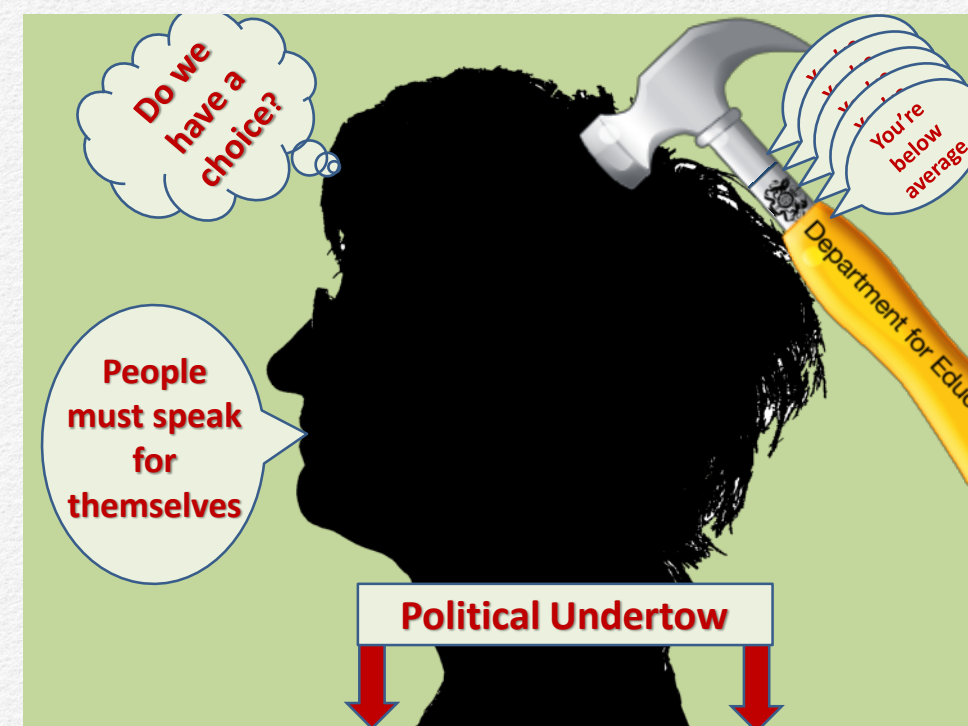

Fig 1. The Pressures of Today

Our students do a great deal of that listening. Students are encouraged to be actively involved to a high level in monitoring, evaluating and reviewing school progress and in their community. They have been awarded the prestigious 'Princess Diana Award' for the last four years for a variety of projects. Their huge contribution to the work of the

Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group, working with local councillors and community groups, has helped our community to achieve the 'Village of the Year' award for cohesive community planning for County this summer.

The Investors in People Gold award framework, alongside robust appraisal targets, has been used to challenge staff to maintain the highest levels of continuing professional development. Willingness to respond to changing community needs sees staff expecting their roles to evolve and teams, such as the Progress Leaders, tackle the pressure for accelerated learner progress, planning interventions and parent consultations in close collaborations with other schools and the community.

Building leadership capacity in this context is a challenge. Staff recruitment has improved markedly as the school has developed an explicit value system. However, with competition from local schools with sixth forms, coupled with deprivation factors, staff who apply fall into two divergent groups. There are those who are passionate about working with the disadvantaged to improve their life chances; there are those who cannot get a job elsewhere. In shortage subjects this presents a difficulty and is the most significant contributing factor to the school's lack of consistency.

A similar pattern impacts on Governance and Trusteeship. Recruiting governors with the skills and understanding required to enhance leadership capacity is a challenge. There are few of ability with time to devote; plenty with time and little to offer. Setting up our Cooperative Trust was a strategic move to attempt to build further capacity. This could not be considered a success. Initially a range of local companies and community representatives were involved. As the recession hit, time became more pressing. We became prey to external consultants attempting to influence change in a context about which they had a superficial understanding. It became apparent that their agenda was about selling courses to the school rather than a commitment to a long-term, sustained transformational agenda. This contributes to a poverty of opportunity and is incredibly frustrating as we can see what a difference a higher level of active challenge and support could make.

In this context, the challenge and support offered through networks: the South West Cooperative Schools' Society, Schools of Tomorrow and the PiXL Club, has offered the most significant help. These networks have enabled the school to develop middle and senior leader knowledge, understanding and capability in relation to all the Schools of Tomorrow propositions.

Building the culture of tomorrow

The key to unlocking motivation and potential within this community lies in cooperative leadership. This demands recognition of all community members as learners. Leadership is then focused on the needs of all learners and becomes a cooperative, collaborative process, based on developing a community growth mind-set. Such leadership seeks to promote and pursue clear shared vision and values. Maximising our community potential involves drawing everyone together and focusing on what we describe as 'tough love' – caring enough to make a radical difference. This is a slow and frequently frustrating process, in which innovation is underpinned by action research.

Our vision has been focused on developing an all-age campus, with community sports and leisure facilities and an upgraded theatre. This sees the agendas of education and the Neighbourhood Development Plan carefully aligned through a process of meetings and open communication. Following the relocation of the Under Fives facility onto the secondary site, integration of a Primary School is a gap to be addressed into the future. As a community we are learning about change together through the engagement of a wide range of stakeholders forging trusting relationships and challenging closed mind-sets.

Our Voice Groups have met, for 'Super Saturday' Trust Visioning Days, to plan our cooperative future, five times over the last year. These Visioning Days have gathered momentum as the school has been used for community consultations by the parish and district councils and is positioned at the heart of the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

This momentum has seen our Student Voice Group leading the most recent Visioning Day and the local council responding with a commitment to including them as District Council members. The participation of our County Councillor and the Leader of the Opposition in the House of Lords, as well as consultations with our MP and MEP, were highly significant milestones.

Reflection and implications for leadership

In many ways, our school and its community can be seen to be nudging themselves along together. In parallel with community-based developments, which are influencing our concept of the scope of the education we offer, the school is restructuring middle leadership. We have embarked on a process of internal appointments which challenge candidates to develop their own ideas about how school should be reshaped to meet changing learning needs. With

a team of Progress Leaders carrying out impact assessments, challenging and supporting students toward accelerated progress, the restructuring is focused on building new structures to support a broader approach to learning beyond the traditional subject silo approaches. This remains work in progress. We are seeking to establish a middle leadership embodying clarity of purpose and disciplined action. The new team will be launched in January 2015. Leadership in our context is conceived as an integrated process of challenge and support within teams whose work forms a framework of overlapping circles, a safety net for all aspects of learning.

Underlying this analysis lie the concepts of emancipatory politics and critical theory in particular (Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, Habermas). Why does this community need emancipation? To be freed from the oppressive influence of the imposed 'one size fits all' policy. Our Cooperative approach sees leadership '*in terms of collective capacity rather than personal, hierarchical status*' (Schools of Tomorrow Proposition 4). In the words of Paulo Friere: '*Leaders who do not act dialogically, but insist on imposing their decisions, do not organise the people—they manipulate them. They do not liberate, nor are they liberated: they oppress.*'

Context- specific leadership takes this into account in the sense of offering our community a voice through elucidating and responding to stakeholder views. At a time when *'the common good is left to the vagaries of the marketplace and management, not to collective deliberation and reflective practice; and constant action has substituted for argument and thought'* (Fielding and Moss 2011:21*)*, in order to meet the learning needs of our communities schools must promote a *'richer deeper discourse about education'* (ibid: 37) which moves *'beyond the tyrannies of improvement, efficiency and standardisation to recover a language of and for education articulated in terms of ethics, moral obligations and values*' (Ball 2007:191).

For people to conduct a meaningful discourse, to challenge their own assumptions and make their own judgements, they first need to understand. Schools which place themselves at the heart of their communities are in a position to engage that community in meaningful collaborative discourse and so challenge expectations and build more positive shared futures. Collaborative rethinking is the core task in re-educating about education. The Schools of Tomorrow propositions offer a framework for that re-education and a secure position from which to nurture students '*poised to become agents of change*' in their families, neighbourhoods, and wider community.

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Concluding Summary

The case studies and reflections of leaders involved in change reinforce much of the more theoretical perspectives that preceded them, particularly in regard to their awareness of process and a strong focus on developing high-quality relationships at every level. The case studies have also explored the realities and tensions involved in bringing tomorrow into today.

The successful leadership of change is always context-specific with a range of complex variables that will have significant implications which are modified and informed by the particular circumstances of the school. However, certain principles do seem to apply (albeit in varying degrees) to most successful change strategies in these schools:

1. There is a very clear understanding of the nature of the change in terms of prescription, resourcing, accountability, and required outcomes.

2. Leadership for change prioritises the moral and relational dimensions of the change process – notably trust

3. There is a clear rationale and justification for the change.

4. Any particular change initiative is clearly set within a strategic view of the future of the school.

5. The leadership of change is seen as a collaborative process that is open and inclusive.

6. Successful change is most likely to be found in effective communities.

Perhaps the central issue in the leadership of change is to create a culture in schools that is not just comfortable with change but actually recognises that change is fundamental to the essential processes of education. The most significant system-wide changes start at the deepest neurological level.

A key hypothesis in securing Schools of Tomorrow is that those who are confident learners are also confident in leading change and contributing positively to the change process.

As the case studies demonstrate learning and working in teams is a key element in the effective leadership of change and shared learning. It therefore becomes even more important that leadership and learning are seen as mutually inter-dependent, and that community and organisational change are rooted in personal change.

It is that understanding that sits at the heart of the developing notion of a new 'Fellowship' for aspiring schools of tomorrow, described in Chapter 4.

Agenda for change
The next steps

4

Schools of Tomorrow is committed to doing all it can to take forward the aims of the 2012 Manifesto and the resulting four-quadrant framework. This final chapter sets out our plans for the next phase of development, and also how you might contribute.

We want to work with, and to learn from, all who share our goals.

Launching the 'Fellowship'

Schools of Tomorrow established early in 2013 a working group, with our partners, SSAT and Momentum World, and with support from ASCL, to try to develop a new approach to looking at quality which recognises and builds on both the Schools of Tomorrow model and the emerging understanding of change and the next phase of school improvement described in this publication.

This group is now working on finalising criteria and process for piloting a Schools of Tomorrow 'Quality Fellowship'. This builds on all the thinking set out in this paper, and seeks to turn it into a practical scheme to support schools wanting to think differently about improvement and about change.

The notion of a 'Fellowship' of schools as the basis for supporting and validating improvement

The emerging model for a 'Fellowship' of schools derives from our thinking about how the ideas set out in the opening chapter can come together to best support schools and school leaders who are committed to reaching out to tomorrow and the pursuit of that broader vision in the context of their school, whilst responding to the pressures of today, in understanding and leading change.

Joining the 'Fellowship' will require a commitment to engaging in a process or journey, committing to goals to implement and progress the SoTo Framework and emerging essential components for each aspect. The 'Fellowship' will recognise that practice could be different in each context whist committing to core principles and elements, or, in other words, unity of purpose yet diversity of practice.

Self-review is a fundamental principle of such a journey, identifying the choice of route between key landmarks and the reasons for choices and changes made, akin to a ship's log of its voyage, in effect, including the effects of winds and currents on charting a course.

But, for support, consistency, and the appropriate degree of rigour, effective self-review requires an element of external validation. This validation will include an external peer review by a partner school sharing a similar voyage, partly at headteacher level, but, importantly, also including the involvement of students as co-validators as well as the engagement of families and community partners to evaluate and give testimony of progress being made.

Validation seeks to recognise progress being made rather than stages reached or levels attained, in the knowledge that that schools will have different starting points in contexts that can both facilitate and inhibit progress.

As we develop this thinking and approach, with our partners and with schools, in the coming months, we invite all those for whom such an understanding resonates to join us on this journey.

We will be launching the 'Fellowship' as a pilot in September 2015 for around 20 schools, and welcome enquiries now from any school interested in joining this or finding out more about it.

There will be an opportunity for interested schools to explore the idea further at our event on June 3 2015 at Manchester Metropolitan University.

Our other plans for 2015

Next events and publications

We will continue to build understanding and evidence around the School of Tomorrow Framework and link these to leading-edge seminars.

- June 3 2015   Manchester Metropolitan University
  Re-thinking quality: John West-Burnham

  With launch of the 'Quality Fellowship' pilot as well as our joint publication with SSAT on student-led research

- November 6 2015   ***Education for Character Development***

Leadership for Tomorrow

We have launched a 4-module 12-month development programme for leaders aspiring to lead Schools of Tomorrow. The first cohort has started. We are now recruiting a second cohort to start in October 2015. Please contact us for information.

Learner Hubs

We will continue to find ways to involve young people directly in contributing to our work through our learner hub schools. Currently 10 schools have student researchers looking at the ways their schools think about the future.

Partnerships

We will continue to develop active partnerships with organisations who share our aspirations, particularly in relation to quality. We have in place or are developing partnership agreements to pursue joint goals here with:

Momentum World

RSA Education

SSAT

Structure and Membership

Schools of Tomorrow CIC is a community interest company, limited by guarantee and owned by our members, school leaders, who elect a council each year. The council are responsible for appointing the directors of the company. and for advising the directors on our strategic development.

Become involved

What can you do to help?

Your Personal Check List Of Actions

☑ **Support the 2012 Manifesto**
Visit our **website** to sign up to it.

☑ **Join our mailing list**
Free regular update mailing for all Manifesto supporters.

☑ **Become a member**
You can do this through the **website** or by emailing us at **info@schoolsoftomorrow.org**

☑ **Make a donation**
You can do this through our **website**. Every little helps us. We make no profit, and rely entirely on voluntary input for all our work.

☑ **Work with us**
Consider joining one of our working groups, but we'd also be pleased to discuss other ways you might be able to help out.

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