Identify and grow your own leaders

Succession planning

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Introduction

Developing new leaders is becoming a vital area of activity for every 21st century school and can have a profound impact within but also beyond the school walls.

At the individual level, it means equipping staff with the leadership skills, knowledge and understanding to carry out their school role effectively and apply for promoted positions. Putting in place strategies to identify and nurture new talent sends out a clear message that the leadership is committed to its workforce, to helping them to progress in their careers and achieve their aspirations.

At the school level, it supports school improvement planning, increases leadership capacity and provides a set of 'home-grown' leaders ready to step up to roles and promoted posts.

At the system level, it creates a pool of leadership talent able to fulfil leadership needs at local and national level.

This publication offers practical guidance for people working in schools who have a role in developing new leaders. Drawing on good practice from schools in a range of contexts and phases, and a local authority, we aim to encourage leaders to reflect on their schools' existing practices and help them to devise new approaches to improve leadership development in their schools.

It sets out:

- The practical steps that schools and a local authority have taken to identify and grow leaders.

- How they have contributed to individual leaders' development and school improvement.

- How school leaders can develop similar practices in their own schools and contexts.

How to identify leadership talent

Identifying talent can be done in an informal way – for example, by senior leaders sharing their perspectives on an individual's behaviours, attitudes, skills and knowledge. In our case studies, a number of senior leaders said that discussing the leadership potential of staff with each other was helpful as it enabled them to draw on a wide range of observations and experience.

But it is also possible to take an approach using specific criteria.

Dartford Grammar School in Kent uses the characteristics of high leadership potentials (McCall, cited in Creasy et al, 2004, p47) as its criteria. They are included in the school's professional development document so are available to those assessing and to those being assessed. They are:

- seeks opportunities to learn
- acts with integrity
- adapts to cultural differences
- is committed to making a difference
- seeks broad business knowledge
- brings out the best in people
- is insightful – sees things from new angles
- has the courage to take risks
- seeks and uses feedback
- learns from mistakes
- is open to criticism

A Hay Group publication examining how to accelerate the development of leaders in public services (Rush to the Top 2007, p7) drew out senior leaders' views on the traits that they saw as 'early warning signs' of leadership. They are:

> **confidence and credibility**

> **the ability to see the big picture, to make connections and think of the whole organisation**

> **mastering the basics of their role quickly and looking for more**

> **getting involved (doesn't look the other way or walk past incidents)**

> **initiative and self-motivation (the sort of people you can't stop from leading)**

> **intellectual curiosity and capacity (sees the common threads)**

> **resilience and empathy (to survive the pace of acceleration and learn from others)**

Several of these attributes were cited by the school leaders in our case study schools (though they did not necessarily use the same set of criteria).

Senior leaders said that they expected people in middle and senior leadership posts to be high quality classroom practitioners as they were required both to model effective teaching and identify high quality pupil learning. Other important aspects were:

– relationships with others, including pupils, staff and parents

– contribution in and response to issues discussed in meetings

– discussions in and outcomes of performance management reviews

– the ability to meet deadlines

– willingness to request training and learning activities

– feedback from parents, for example, on how a problem has been tackled

Columbus School and College takes a broad view of leadership potential and individuals who may be future candidates for leadership roles have a clear path along which to progress. For example, a learning support assistant (LSA) became a teaching instructor then a teacher before becoming acting head of learning (middle leadership tier) and then head of learning permanently. The opportunity for a LSA with a degree to move to a graduate teacher placement and then to become a teacher is shared at interview and so becomes embedded in the recruitment process.

This approach reflects the value to the special school sector of staff with a high degree of specialist knowledge and acknowledges the potential future recruitment problems faced by the school. 'Growing one's own' is thus a pragmatic approach to a strategic problem but it also enables and encourages staff to develop.

Practical steps

1. Agree a set of leadership potential criteria so that all concerned are clear about the characteristics they should be looking for. It might include:

   – adopting or adapting the criteria set out above

   – using key documents such as the Professional Standards for Teachers from the TDA and the National Standards for Headteachers

2. Using this set of criteria:

   – explore at senior leadership team meetings how to make the best use of the existing leadership pool

   – identify potential leaders who could step up to meet organisational needs, including improvement priorities

   – hold discussions with aspiring leaders – for example within performance management reviews – about their behaviours so they are clear about their strengths and areas they can develop

   – publish the criteria as part of the school's professional development documentation so that all staff are aware of them and understand how the criteria relates to them individually

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How to grow leadership talent

Practical steps

- Provide opportunities to exercise leadership.
- Give staff the opportunity to take risks in trying out leadership tasks and backing them up.
- Promote individual leadership on whole school issues.
- Encourage everybody to see the school holistically so that teachers can see beyond their classroom.
- Put emergent leaders in key roles.

Each of these is illustrated in the examples overleaf.

Identifying individuals' potential and providing them with the type of opportunities listed above is only part of the story. However, it is also important to consider what support the staff may require to lead and manage within their new role and to take on the new responsibilities and accountabilities. As leaders they are likely to have increased responsibility for managing others, for example, and they will need to develop skills associated with enabling others to succeed and develop, such as coaching and delegating tasks with trust (Hay Group, 2007).

The support and leadership-oriented opportunities that will accelerate their growth have been identified as:

- job shadowing to observe and work closely with more senior leaders
- job rotation, where people work in unfamiliar functions or contexts
- participation and consultation on organisation-wide initiatives
- mentoring and coaching to support the interpretation of experience

(Hay Group, 2007)

Such opportunities to try out leadership for size will enable staff to see 'what leadership means in its day-to-day reality'. In addition to the approaches outlined above, there will be opportunities to support and effectively link leadership development in a school-based context with external training programmes such as National College's Leading from the Middle programme.

www.nationalcollege.org.uk/lftm

Case studies

Below are a number of case studies highlighting how different schools and one local authority have approached leadership development. They focus on three themes:

- mentoring and coaching
- emergent leaders leading whole school improvements
- collaborative approaches to leadership development

However, some elements of practice, such as mentoring, feature across the examples.

At the end of each section, practical steps distilled from the case studies help readers to think about what they already do in their own context and what they might do to improve leadership development further. The ideas are drawn from schools in particular phases or circumstances but the learning from them could be applied elsewhere.

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1. Mentoring and coaching

Case study

Chuter Ede Primary School, Nottinghamshire

> **"I think I've been lucky with the opportunities, but also with the support and being able to talk it through and be guided in the right way."**
>
> Anna Reed

Chuder Ede Primary is a large 4–11 school. Anna Reed, Year 3 and 4 department leader and Senco (special needs co-ordinator), has progressed in her career since joining the school as a newly-qualified teacher and has her sights set on deputy headship. Her progression has been aided by a range of activities.

Dialogue with the headteacher, Bob Hattersley, around career aspirations, leadership opportunities that would contribute to their realisation and the type of support required within them, has been important. It was an honest discussion that enabled them both to give their opinions on her perceived readiness and the benefits of taking on additional responsibilities, such as a staff governor role. Discussions took place with the knowledge on both sides that Bob would look to push her beyond her comfort zone but not pressure her into making a decision. He said, "These are the positives from it for your career development... now go away and think about it" says Anna. "I think it is good to have that thinking time and not be forced into anything."

She received mentorship at key points. When moving from being a Year 1 to Year 6 teacher, mentoring by the other Year 6 teacher gave Anna assurance that she "was doing things right". When becoming a NQT mentor she was herself mentored through informal dialogue by another NQT mentor within the school.

On taking up the role of Senco, she was mentored by Bob once a week in her first term. These scheduled after school meetings for between half an hour and an hour (in addition to ad hoc meetings as required) allowed Anna to raise SEN issues and discuss their management – for example, how to deal with parents regarding a specific issue or lead the team of teaching assistants. At the meetings, Anna was prompted in a coaching style to consider how she might deal with such issues. Bob would then suggest additional points or provide advice once Anna had tried an approach. As Anna grew into the role and the need lessened, meetings were more ad hoc and available upon request as issues arose.

Bob attended several early meetings with parents alongside Anna to give support if needed but he also gave verbal and written feedback on Anna's handling of the meetings – for example, the need to balance eye contact with writing notes, time management of meetings and strategies for moving people on without appearing rude.

When Anna became a department leader as well as Senco, there were informal opportunities to discuss balancing the demands of both roles with Bob, such as concerns about time management.

Anna's external training and development included:

- National College's Leading from the Middle programme
- a college-provided NQT mentor training course
- a Master's degree in education, part of which focused on managing teaching assistants more effectively

To help Anna move towards her career aspiration of deputy headship, Bob has agreed with her that she

Case studies

will shadow him for a day and subsequently take responsibility for managing the school on a specified day he is out, adding to her portfolio of leadership experience. Bob will leave some leadership and management tasks for completion and Anna will deal with these alongside any issues that arise

during the day. On the following day they will meet to reflect upon the experience and the leadership learning from it. Anna will talk about issues that arose, how she dealt with them and then Bob will share how he would have tackled them.

Case study

Columbus School and College, Essex

Senior leader development

> **"We're almost on a dry run of headship but with that safety net."**
>
> Ginny Keily

Columbus School and College is a federation of two special schools which serves 3–19-year-old pupils and students. There is a strong commitment from chief executive Malcolm Reeve to developing its two most senior leaders, deputy chief executive Ginny Keily and director of learning Tom Owens, to become headteachers of their own schools, thus growing leaders for the system.

The two sites enable both to exercise campus management roles with each managing one of the two sites in turn for certain periods of the week. Future planned rotation of their respective roles, following a period shadowing each other, will enable Ginny and Tom to gain the range of skills, knowledge and understanding to lead their own schools. Both have progressed from being teachers at the schools to their current positions

and have recently gained the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH).

Development opportunities for both so far have included:

– Leadership coaching by an external business coach following an initial online profiling diagnostic. The diagnostic helped to identify their leadership predispositions, strengths and development areas. Coaching has been face-to-face or over the phone.

– Working alongside an achievement advisor from a consultancy who offers a range of support, including one-to-one on the job training. The consultant offers Ginny and Tom advice, such as personnel management techniques, that can be applied as issues arise during a day. Techniques are tried by the senior leader and their impact discussed in a feedback session: "It is the bit that's personal, that's what makes the difference," Tom says.

– Regular meetings with the chief executive who provides coaching and mentorship linked to their areas of leadership activity and offers guidance on dealing with management issues.

– Chief executive's observation of key leadership activities, eg a meeting with parents and verbal feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of how they handled it.

Case studies

The chief executive and both senior leaders have agreed that his strong commitment to their development should allow for challenge and very frank feedback on, for example, decision-making. Both Ginny and Tom said that this approach was based on both parties wanting them to be the best they can be and it required strong trust on both sides.

Both valued having the scope and remit to lead on areas with a good level of autonomy and decision-making. The chief executive sets clear expectations on outcomes but he also places a high level of trust in the senior leaders to take things forward: "Malcolm believes in dropping us in at the deep end and there's a huge amount of trust there," says Ginny. "We've got that opportunity to come back and say, 'I'm not quite sure if I've got this bit right.'"

The staffing structure devised allows both Ginny and Tom to have more leadership and management time. This has expanded capacity – both their personal capacity to lead and consequently the school's leadership capacity overall. It has also increased opportunities to observe practice at class level and have time to discuss the outcomes of this with teachers, as well as to spend time in class modelling and coaching learning and teaching to staff. This has helped to raise standards in teaching and learning.

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Case studies

Middle leader development

The staffing structure at Columbus includes five middle leaders known as 'heads of learning'. Each is responsible for a key stage and the line management of their learning team, comprising teaching and learning support staff. Coaching and mentoring opportunities include:

- One-to-one weekly meetings with the director of learning to discuss issues. Meetings include a coaching element where appropriate based on the GROW[1] model.

- Joint observations of teaching with the director of learning.

- Peer observation of another head of learning as a learning opportunity to reflect on effective approaches and key learning in leading and managing in this role.

- Participation in National College's Leading from the Middle programme with coaching by a senior leadership team member.

- Half timetable teaching responsibilities so there is opportunity for staff mentoring and lesson observations, some of which are joint observations with another head of learning.

- A programme of one-day training events provided by an independent consultancy and undertaken alongside other leaders from the group of new model special schools in Essex. It includes a day on coaching with the opportunity to apply learning in context and to report back on impact and lessons learnt at the next day.

An assistant head has been appointed as head of professional development and has helped substantially to bring about a range of new approaches. He also has a school improvement objective to embed coaching across the organisation.

[1] The GROW model outlines four basic components or stages in the coaching process:

G - GOAL What do you want?
R - REALITY What is happening now?
O - OPTIONS What could you do?
W - WILL What will you do?

(National College, 2005)

Mini head of learning

This role is an opportunity for a teacher who, in the eyes of the senior leadership team, has leadership potential. It offers the chance to assist as a head of learning and learn in the role. There is no guarantee that it will lead to a promotion to the role itself – there may not be a vacancy – but it develops a successor to the role from within the school. It allows the aspiring leader to see what the role is like and to develop their skills and knowledge in a relatively risk-free and supported manner.

The opportunity includes:

- A conversation with the director of learning around their leadership potential, the leadership and management skills they have shown, their development needs and how these can be addressed.

- Regular one-to-one coaching and mentoring time with the director of learning.

- The opportunity for the staff member to feed back to senior leaders on the process and their decision on whether to progress to a leadership role.

Case studies

Key learning

- Commitment to individuals' leadership development and career progression from the headteacher and chief executive.

- Commitment to personal investment of time and school resources to provide coaching and mentoring.

- Coaching and mentoring individuals at time of transition into new roles.

- Adapting frequency of meetings to meet needs and providing ad hoc mentoring outside of scheduled meetings.

- A focus on the leadership and management of people as well as tasks.

- Giving feedback on performance, eg in meetings, as part of the mentoring process.

- Developing high levels of trust so that mentoring can be honest and open.

Practical steps

- Identify individuals who might benefit from coaching and mentoring, to aid their transition into a new role and development within it.

- Identify the nature of the coaching or mentoring that would best support their induction and development. Include a strong focus on leading and managing people.

- Identify individuals in school who can offer coaching and mentoring, including those who carried out similar roles before and those who have learnt coaching techniques on, for example, National College's Leading from the Middle programme.

- Identify individuals externally who can offer coaching and mentoring, ie through a collaborative arrangement between schools.

- Decide how frequent the activity should be, realistically, and review it periodically so that it meets individual needs. For example, it may need to be more frequent when someone is making the transition to a new role then less frequent, or on a needs-led basis, after a term.

- Use National College's publication, **Leading Coaching in Schools** and the range of practical downloadable tools and processes available from National College's coaching pages to help support planning and provision (see **Further reading and resources** at the end of this publication).

2. Emergent leaders leading whole-school improvements

Case study

The Knights Templar School, Hertfordshire

At The Knights Templar School in Baldock, Hertfordshire, a lead learner programme has been developed to harness the skills of enthusiastic but less experienced teachers. The programme enables these staff to gain whole school leadership and management experience at an early stage in their career.

Staff are interviewed and appointed to one of five school improvement groups:

- raising boys' achievement
- good to outstanding lessons
- ICT in the classroom
- raising Ds to Cs
- mentoring and tracking

The lead learner is given whole school responsibility for this aspect of the school improvement plan. They also hold responsibility for its budget and for the professional development of those in the group, as well as their own in meeting objectives. They are mentored by a senior member of staff.

Jodie Long became a lead learner for improving the quality of teaching and learning in 2007. Prior to this, and with five years' industry experience behind her, she was appointed as a Graduate Teacher Placement student within the school. (Under the GTP scheme graduates spend a year in school learning on the job and qualify at the end of that year.)

The lead learner role was challenging in that Jodie was leading a team where the majority of people had more experience than she did. Improvements in the quality of teaching and learning were achieved and several members of the group gained General Teaching Council for England (GTCE) Teacher Learner Academy (TLA) accreditation for their work. Jodie has now moved on to a more senior role within the school.

Case study

Mountbatten Secondary School, Hampshire

> **"Six months down the line, I'm thinking more like a leader than I was before."**
>
> Sally Wheeler

At Mountbatten, a large 11–16 school, headteacher Heather McIlroy is focusing on developing leadership capacity at all levels as a means of driving school improvement. Her desire to put pedagogy at the centre of the improvement agenda, allied to the success of the work of some teachers in promoting thinking-based approaches to learning and teaching, led her to seek a new and creative approach.

Case studies

The result was the formation of an Innovation Team which created:

- additional leadership capacity and a more distributed leadership approach to help developments take hold earlier and with good levels of support
- opportunities to grow leadership talent

Following an advert for the team in the school, a number of candidates were selected. They were asked to fill out an application and were then interviewed by the senior leadership team and some governors. The interview included the candidate spelling out how they would lead the development of pedagogy within the school and it enabled the panel to establish their skills and potential credibility in delivering training and supporting developments with a large, more experienced staff. Such was the calibre that all six who made the shortlist were appointed to the team: two lead practitioners and four associate lead practitioners with a year's honorarium.

The Innovation Team's participation in a strategic thinking and planning weekend residential, alongside the senior leadership team, heads of faculty and heads of year, helped to establish their credibility, build their confidence and make a statement about the value of their role. It also helped them see the bigger, whole-school picture.

Key activities undertaken by these leaders have included:

- leading staff training
- mentoring staff
- working with external consultants to help develop plans
- conducting surveys, focus groups and analysing data from these
- presenting to a variety of audiences

Support approaches used include:

- Weekly meetings scheduled in school hours between assistant head Jo Scott and the lead practitioners, Sally Wheeler and Sharon Galton, who is also head of art. The approach combines mentoring with coaching. It includes a focus on developing strategy for the pace and nature of developments so that is manageable for those expected to implement change and to lead it. It also covers problem-solving, eg issues related to managing people.
- A half-termly meeting with the whole Innovation Team to focus on developments, their impact and next steps.

Informal support also plays a key role. As well as Jo supporting individuals, team members can coach each other, for example on problem-solving issues related to developing and leading staff. Lynsay Haydock, an associate lead practitioner, at times sought Sharon's advice and support as a sounding board and team members appreciated how mutual support helped them deal with impending activity as well as setbacks or challenges.

The application of coaching-based approaches is important to Heather, who uses such questions in her own coaching of leaders such as: "If you were meeting that staff member again, what would you do differently?" Innovation Team members interviewed described how this approach is cascaded down so that they can reflect on their approaches to people management and which ones they might use in future.

Heather is keen to foster the 'learning by doing' approach to leadership development, seeing it, in part, as a mechanism for pushing people out of their comfort zone and encouraging them to look more creatively at what they do.

Case studies

Sally, Sharon and Lynsay all recognise how their role in the team has developed their leadership skills and has enhanced their confidence and belief in themselves as leaders. This was confirmed by Jo as their line manager. Particular skills and attitudes included:

– developing a more thick-skinned attitude to staff challenge based on their belief in what they are doing with support from the head and assistant head

– listening more to people's viewpoints and using coaching style questioning to understand their issues and concerns in order to adapt their approach

– being more strategic in their thinking – seeing the bigger, whole-school picture

– being clear about goals and taking a methodical approach to achieving them

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Case studies

These opportunities have also helped to develop their career aspirations. They have a better understanding of what the roles entail and of their capacity to fulfil them, thanks to the development they have had at a relatively early stage.

The school believes that its developments in this learning-centred approach have contributed to the rise in its five A–C GCSE pass rate from 73 per cent to 77 per cent in 2008. It is the school's highest pass rate to date and above the predicted figure.

Key learning

- Think creatively and widen the scope of who can lead whole-school developments to make the most of the leadership potential of emergent, enthusiastic staff.

- Inexperience should not be a barrier to opportunity for those with potential and the ability to lead.

- Teams which operate across the school build up leadership capacity and so help drive school improvement priorities.

- Support emergent leadership with mentoring and other backing from senior leader line managers.

- Responsibility for professional development and budgets is seldom offered to less experienced teachers but they provide good opportunities for leadership.

Practical steps

- Set the vision for school improvement and create a leadership strategy to achieve these which includes potential and emergent leaders.

- Create the job descriptions and role profiles to reflect improvement objectives and opportunities for leaders to develop new skills.

- Consider group size – smaller teams can increase the willingness to lead and reduce threat.

- Identify the people who could lead and make selection a rigorous process.

- Find ways to make public the value of emergent leaders' work, eg include them in whole-school strategic meetings.

- Establish how leaders will be supported and ensure it includes regular coaching or mentoring. Part of it should focus on leading and managing people.

- Consider how individuals' work might be accredited, eg through the GTCE TLA programme.

3. Collaborative approaches to leadership development

The four examples that follow highlight different collaborative arrangements to develop future leaders. The arrangements aim to benefit the schools themselves but also potentially the wider system on the basis that the individuals will aspire to promoted posts which may be outside their own organisation.

The case studies are:

Nottinghamshire Primary Greenhouse Network Project – six schools developing middle leaders through triad school enquiry visits.

Chippenham Primary Schools' Emergent Leader Programme – ten schools developing middle leaders through a three day leadership programme.

Leadership Partner School Programme – John Taylor High School.

The Leeds Investing in Diversity Programme – a local programme focused on developing aspiring Black and Minority Ethnic leaders.

Case study

Nottinghamshire Primary Greenhouse Network Project

Birklands, a one-form entry primary school in Mansfield, is involved in a collaborative pilot project focused on succession planning with a group of six other Nottinghamshire primary schools. One strand of activity is a leadership development programme for middle leaders in which the six schools are participating. The overall project responds to the leadership succession issues facing the local authority due to the number of headteachers set to retire in the next ten years.

Working with National College national succession consultant (NSC) Carol Atkinson, the schools' headteachers based the format on existing national programmes, including the triad component of National College's New Visions programme for which three participants carry out visits to each other's schools to investigate the leadership of an aspect of school improvement.

Each head nominated one middle leader with senior leadership potential. At Birklands, this was Stuart Moody who had been teaching for a year at the school when the headteacher, Judi O'Leary, joined three years ago.

The six middle leaders formed two triads, each supported by a designated headteacher from the collaborating schools who acted as a mentor throughout the programme. At an initial one-day training event, the triads set out protocols for their visits to each other's schools and each middle leader selected an aspect of school improvement they had been leading on, to be the focus of the enquiry by their triad colleagues.

Stuart chose the implementation of an ICT pupil target setting system. He pinpointed the aspects of his leadership of the project and the intended benefits to children which he felt would be useful for his triad colleagues to look at on their visit.
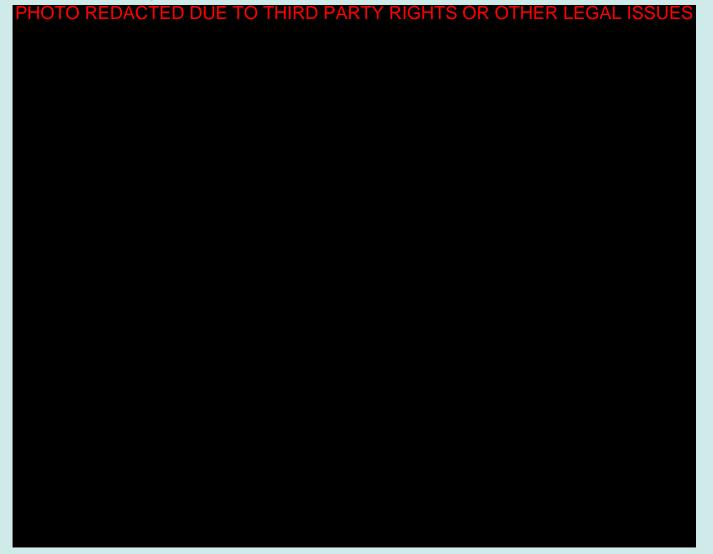
Case studies

The school-based enquiry part of the visit provided an opportunity for Stuart's two triad colleagues to interview a sample of:

- staff members to gain feedback on his leadership of this development
- children to see how the system was working from their perspective

Judi had spoken to staff in advance so they were aware of the nature of the project and that Stuart wanted honest feedback for his leadership development.

The outcomes of the enquiry were fed back by Stuart's triad colleagues at the end of the day, in terms of strengths and areas for development and all three held an open discussion around future leadership actions. Stuart retained his colleague's written notes and then met Judi at the end of the day to discuss the outcomes of the feedback and his leadership learning from it. They discussed development points that arose and how these might be taken forward.

The programme is in its early stages but by offering a supportive but clear and purposeful process, it has significant potential for participants to self-evaluate and gain multiple perspectives on their leadership of school improvement and its associated skills.

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Case studies

Case study

Chippenham Primary Schools' Emergent Leaders Programme, Wiltshire

Primary headteachers in Chippenham bid successfully and secured a local authority leadership collaboration grant to create a three-day emergent leader development course. Its aims were to:

- increase the skills and confidence of middle leaders
- understand their leadership strengths and areas to develop
- use a range of leadership styles and understand leadership activities
- enable them to develop leadership in others

Initial involvement with the local authority and a university helped to shape the programme and provided personnel to lead the course. However, as external funding is no longer available, the course is being funded by the schools themselves and led by headteachers who were involved in training earlier cohorts. Each cohort takes two teachers from each of the ten schools. The course is now approaching its third year.

Components include:

- three face-to-face days over a four-month period, led by headteachers and featuring a variety of approaches, such as drama-based exploration of theory
- visits to other primary schools in the town, including one-to-one discussion time about school leadership with heads
- completion of a leadership styles inventory to assess one's preferences, strengths and areas of development
- completion of leadership activities in their own school
- reflection on leadership learning through writing a three-part impact report, covering impact on self, working with colleagues and other outcomes

Lisa Tudor, headteacher of Monkton Primary School, will co-lead the course for some 20 middle leaders on cohort 3, having shadowed the course for the previous cohort. At her school, previous participants Lucy Harding and Jan Douglas have recently gained TLR 2 posts as key stage leaders. Lucy felt her involvement in the course had contributed to her growth as a leader in the following ways:

- shaping her concept of herself as a leader and enabling her to recognise her potential in this role
- adding to her understanding of what leadership entails
- deepening her appreciation of what kind of a leader she is
- improving her understanding of how to lead in their different situations
- improving her confidence in undertaking leadership activities such as leading staff meetings

Both Lucy and Jan identified how they had used learning from the course in their roles within school, eg modelling teaching and learning to others and carrying out peer support work. Jan says the programme has been well-received by participants who see it as a sign that their headteachers value the development of their middle leaders.

It is also contributing to school capacity and the growth of leadership potential within the town, so aiding the system. Previous participants have subsequently been promoted to leadership roles, such as deputy headship, and Lisa Tudor is confident that the pool of leadership talent being developed by the course will further enhance Chippenham's primary schools and the wider system.

Case studies

Case study

John Taylor High School, Staffordshire

John Taylor High School is a larger than average comprehensive for boys and girls with nearly 1,500 11–18 pupils and a sixth form of around 330. Leadership development has always been a high priority with a dedicated section in the school improvement plan each year.

The school is now a Leadership Partner School – a strategic initiative jointly developed by National College and the Youth Sport Trust (YST) to help tackle current leadership and succession planning opportunities and challenges. Schools with any specialism that meet the 'high-performing specialist school' (HPSS) criteria can become a Leadership Partner School and focus their second specialism on leadership. The additional capacity for working with others that being a leadership partner school would bring was seen as a very positive element of the programme.

Opportunities for development for staff at all levels at the school are available, including:

- 'lead teacher' roles for everyone with a TLR
- internal Advanced Skills Teachers
- a middle leader programme that wraps around National College's Leading from the Middle and Leadership Pathways programmes
- access to many of the leadership activities that the school is supporting through its partnership work

Since becoming a Leadership Partner School staff have been working with other schools, the local authority succession planning team and the regional National College national succession consultant to produce a manifesto for leadership development and succession planning in Staffordshire. The plans include:

- a Virtual Leadership Centre
- mentoring and coaching provision for aspiring leaders
- a succession planning network for heads that will also examine 'future leadership'
- a flexible internship programme.

Through the networking arrangements associated with the YST the school also hopes to work with a number of sports colleges over the next few years.

Case studies

Case study

Investing in Diversity Programme, Leeds

Education Leeds is piloting a programme for black and minority ethnic (BME) teachers who aspire to leadership roles. The initiative is part of its commitment to develop the diversity of its workforce; take positive action to address current under-representation at senior school leadership level; and grow its potential as an integral contributor to Leeds' succession planning strategy. The intention is that in 5–10 years' time, the programme will have enabled those aspiring to headship to realise their potential and secure posts, which in turn will have a positive impact on diversity in Leeds.

The Investing in Diversity programme is championed by Dorothy Smith, director of school improvement, and Education Leeds colleagues in collaboration with the Institute of Education (IOE) and National College diversity succession consultant Rosemary Campbell-Stephens. Both the IOE and Rosemary bring a wealth of experience from a similar approach used as part of the London Challenge which was very successful in developing BME leaders.

The pilot cohort was recruited through:

- a personal invitation to all teaching staff of BME heritage who were aspiring to leadership roles, or close to applying for one, to attend a briefing
- two briefings setting out the intentions of the programme and how it would contribute to individuals' leadership development, including how it would support other programmes such as Leading from the Middle or NPQH, as well as a talk on the impact of the London Challenge's equivalent programme
- a rigorous selection procedure, including written applications focused on leadership aspirations and achievements to date, plus interviews held on a Saturday and supported by 14 Education Leeds School Improvement staff

The aim of this approach was to attract the most talented aspirant leaders. But it also helped to highlight to applicants how many other aspirant BME leaders there were within the authority and this helped generate an impetus for pursuing aspirations as well as supporting informal peer networking.

The programme consists of:

- a launch weekend residential, opened by the chief executive of Education Leeds and facilitated by Rosemary Campbell-Stephens. It includes keynote speakers, such as BME headteachers from other authorities, and a series of workshops aimed partly at highlighting role models and supporting aspirations
- eleven twilight sessions focused on leadership development modules
- an inter-sessional support programme agreed with participating schools to give participants experience of aspects of school leadership they do not normally undertake, such as finance

Case studies

- a mentor to support them throughout the programme, eg Education Leeds advisory staff or a headteacher from another authority

A training session for the trainers themselves focused on the principles and values behind the programme and how it will contribute to the leadership of schools in Leeds, as well as the programme content.

The programme highlights the leadership potential of BME staff in the authority and the positive contribution they can make to the school system. Communication of this potential, including why diversity is important will help raise awareness within the wider school community, including among governors.

The impact of the programme will be assessed through the difference it makes to individuals and the leadership positions they later secure. However, Dorothy highlights the clear short-term impact it has already had on participants' aspirations and their confidence to pursue their goals.

Key learning

- Collaborative approaches can encourage leaders to emerge, aspire to leadership roles and gain confidence in their ability to lead.
- The importance of identifying key groups for whom collaborative activity and programmes will help support their leadership development and the system's succession needs, including a representatively diverse workforce.
- Drawing on elements of existing programmes can help provide a structure that can be used locally.
- Relating programmes to the school context and participants' roles and responsibilities makes them immediately relevant and easier to apply back in school.
- Local programmes can support and link with external, nationally provided programmes.
- Local collaboration can help develop a sustainable network of leaders able to support each other.
- Engaging with local authority officers, consultants such as National College national succession consultants and other organisations such as universities can add valuable capacity and thinking.
- Investment in programmes for local leaders has a positive impact on participants' confidence and makes them feel valued.
- Mentoring for participants enhances the experience.
- Benchmarking starting points and assessing impact on the individual and the school will help in evaluation.

Case studies

Practical steps

The key point here is that collaboration may be a small-scale venture between a few local schools wishing to work together to provide leadership development opportunities. The scale and type of provision offered will depend on individuals' capacity, existing networks and other factor such as external support.

- Engage in dialogue with others. For example, discuss leadership development in existing local networks, such as headteacher groups, and with local authority colleagues to identify current and future needs and ideas for what provision would be useful.

- Identify individuals, including external agency support, who would add capacity and strategic thinking, such as National College national succession consultants.

- Look out for potential funding sources or partnership arrangements that might act as a springboard to development and/or add value in terms of the time individuals can offer.

- Create leadership development opportunities that:
  - are publicly valued and therefore seen as high status
  - enable networking so that their development is peer-supported
  - focus on extending participants' understanding of what leading and managing entails
  - link directly to school-based activity
  - enable participants to reflect on their practice, particularly their leadership and management of colleagues
  - include mentoring by a senior colleague
  - offer opportunities to hear role model leaders' perspectives on their work and career journey
  - include shadowing and other peer activity, eg triad work, so that they can see leadership in different settings

- Plan internships or job swaps for limited periods of time with partner schools.

- Benchmark individuals at the start and end of the development activity so the impact on their skills, attitudes and aspirations can be evaluated by, eg a questionnaire or impact diary.

Conclusion

In all of the examples studied, investment in leadership potential was initiated and developed by those at the top of the organisation supported by local authorities and governing bodies. The key focus of their strategic thinking and planning was school improvement and how it should be led. Decisions about leadership development were linked to the needs of the school and local authority. Aspiring leaders were identified and recruited on the basis that they could help meet these needs. Senior leadership team away days or residentials were ways of creating time and space for leaders to sit down and pinpoint how to identify talent and encourage new leaders.

Each school and local authority had three strategic targets for its leadership development:

- individual – actively enhancing individuals' career potential

- school – adding value to schools' improvement agendas and building capacity to meet those demands

- system – nurturing a pool of talented leaders for the future able to apply for leadership roles within their own or other schools

Those who participated in leadership development activities correspondingly reported benefits at all three levels:

Individual

Individuals reported increased confidence and self-belief. Their awareness of the role of leaders and the skills needed to fulfil these roles was raised. Their leadership and management skills improved, particularly in relation to managing people. They are now keener to aspire to a leadership role in future and, in a number of cases, their careers have progressed.

School

Staff felt that an investment was being made in their development, which reinforced their commitment to their schools and so helped the school to retain them. In a number of cases, the schools were able to grow leaders into successively higher level roles. Staff motivation levels rose and the capacity of the school increased.

Leaders were focused on school improvement which had a direct influence on the quality of provision and pupil outcomes including achievement. Leaders were also better able to contribute to strategic thinking. It also gave leaders a sense of personal investment in the development of staff who they line manage or support.

The development of leaders gave positive messages to others relating to expectations and opportunity, fostering a new culture of aspiration.

System

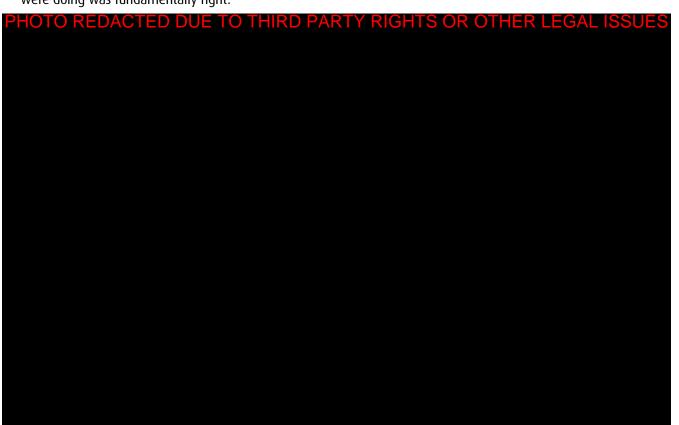The pool of leadership talent available within a local area and further afield was expanded.

Collaboration sent out the message that schools were working together for each other's good and promotions to leadership roles had been developed through opportunities offered by system leadership.

Aside from lack of time and finance, interviewees highlighted two specific barriers to progress in their schools:

- the view that talented leaders should be retained within the school rather than feed the system persists
- there is some resistance to the idea of younger, less experienced staff assuming a leadership role

However, school leaders were committed to finding creative solutions to overcome these barriers and change thinking, inspired by the belief that what they were doing was fundamentally right.

Practices they used to bring about this culture change included:

- prioritising professional development and investing in it both financially and in terms of people's time, for example, to support others through mentoring
- headteachers leading by example by making a personal commitment to the development of others
- identifying opportunities for emergent leaders to lead key priorities, sending out the message that the school is a place where staff can develop their careers
- clearly articulating the school's vision in all it did so that leadership activity supported its achievements

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Next steps

1. Consider your current practices

Use this publication with your senior leadership team or with governors, for example, to consider how your school's existing practices:

- enable the school to identify leadership potential

- help aspiring leaders at different levels to emerge and play a role in leading school improvement

- help aspiring leaders and those supporting them to understand their strengths and areas for development

- enable those supporting aspiring leaders to provide relevant, timely and informed support, eg use of mentoring and coaching

- use external training and development opportunities, including links with other schools and/or organisations locally, regionally and nationally

This list is not exhaustive and school leaders may well consider other foci that have potential application in their own context. The benchmarking activity on pages 35-6 of Meeting the Challenge: Growing Tomorrow's School Leaders, (National College, 2004) provides a helpful starting point for establishing school's existing practices. This is downloadable from **www.nationalcollege.org.uk/publications**.

2. Identify ways to develop provision

Having considered the questions, select the key learning and practical steps statements in this publication that will help further develop practice. They will need to be set in the context of your own organisation but they will help stimulate thinking around potential developments and how they might be put into practice.

3. Measuring impact

Consider the impact of leadership development on:

- individuals – the skills, knowledge and understanding of participants, their career progress, as well as those who support development, eg mentors

- the school – what difference it has made to the school's capacity, improvement agenda and pupil outcomes

- the system – what difference it has made to others within the system, eg other school leaders through collaborative activities and leadership succession across schools

Before embarking on leadership development activities, all concerned should agree how the impact at each level will be evaluated. This will subsequently inform the school's wider self-evaluation processes and recording formats such as the SEF (Self Evaluation Form). For example, the impact reports written by participants in the Chippenham programme focused on what difference engagement had made to themselves and their schools, as well as any wider impact.

School leaders will wish to consider both the potential sources of impact data, such as reports, questionnaires and interviews, and the people who can contribute to evaluations. Benchmarking starting points through these sources and final outcomes will establish the impact of any provision.

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Leading Coaching in Schools, Nottingham, National College

National College, 2006, Leadership Succession: An overview. Securing the next generation of school leaders, Nottingham, National College

Further reading and resources

Barnes I & Ireson J, 2006, Greenhouse Schools: Lessons from schools that grow their own leaders, Nottingham, National College, download only.

Creasy J, Barnes I, Smith P, West-Burnham J, 2004, Meeting the Challenge: Growing Tomorrow's School Leaders, Nottingham, National College

East Sussex School Improvement Service 2008, East Sussex Greenhouse Schools Project, Eastbourne

National College coaching tools and processes are available for download at:

www.nationalcollege.org.uk/index/ leadershiplibrary/leadingschools/leading-an-effective-organisation/developing-leadership-within-your-school/coaching-and-mentoring

National College Women into Headship available at:

www.nationalcollege.org.uk/index/ leadershiplibrary/leadingschools/leading-an-effective-organisation/successionplanning/ identifying-developing-talent/identifying-developing-talent-video-audio/women-into-headship.htm?

Acknowledgements