

1

The context for leadership and management

Introduction

The first edition of this volume, published in 1997, was titled *Managing People in Education*. The addition of 'leading' to the title in the second and third editions illustrates the growing significance of this concept, notably in England, where a National College for School *Leadership* (our emphasis) was opened in November 2000. The inclusion of both terms in the title of this third edition signals the authors' recognition of this trend but also their view that effective 'management' is just as important as visionary leadership if educational organisations are to be successful. Bush (2008, p. 276) asks whether the shift from leadership to management is purely semantic, or whether it represents a genuine change in the ways in which schools and colleges are organised?

Gunter (2004) shows that the labels used to define this field have changed from 'educational administration' to 'educational management' and, more recently, to 'educational leadership'. Bolam (1999, p. 194) defines educational management as 'an executive function for carrying out agreed policy'. He differentiates management from educational leadership which has 'at its core the responsibility for policy formulation and, where appropriate, organisational transformation' (p. 194). Bush (2011) argues that educational management should be centrally concerned with the purpose or aims of education. These purposes or goals provide

the crucial sense of direction which should underpin the management of educational institutions. Management is directed at the achievement of certain educational objectives. Unless this link between purpose and management is clear and close, there is a danger of 'managerialism', 'a stress on procedures at the expense of educational purpose and values' (Bush 1999, p. 240). The emphasis is on managerial efficiency rather than the aims and purposes of education (Gunter 1997). This appears to have been the case in further education in both England (Elliott and Crossley 1997) and Scotland (McTavish 2003). The latter refers to the 'dominance' of business managerialism and points to the prioritisation of managerial rather than educational concerns at one of his case study colleges in Glasgow. (See Chapter Two for an extended discussion of managerialism.)

There are many conceptualisations of leadership and Yukl (2002, pp. 4–5) argues that 'the definition of leadership is arbitrary and very subjective. Some definitions are more useful than others, but there is no "correct" definition'. Three dimensions of leadership may be identified as a basis for developing a working definition:

- 1 Leadership involves a process of influence 'exerted by one person (or group) over other people (or groups) to structure the activities and relationships in a group or organisation' (Yukl 2002, p. 3). Yukl's use of 'person' or 'group' serves to emphasise that leadership may be exercised by teams as well as individuals. Influence is independent of formal authority, vested in positional leaders such as principals, and is intended to lead to certain outcomes or purposes.
- 2 Leadership is often grounded in firm personal and professional values. Day, Harris and Hadfield's (2001) research in 12 'effective' schools concluded that good leaders are informed by personal and educational values. However, Bush (2008, p. 277) argues that the dominant values are those of government and that they are imposed on school leaders. Teachers and leaders are more likely to be enthusiastic about change when they 'own' it rather than having it imposed on them. Hargreaves (2004), drawing on research in Canadian schools, notes that teachers report largely positive emotional experiences of self-initiated change, but predominantly negative ones concerning mandated change.
- 3 Leadership involves developing and articulating a vision for the organisation. The vision needs to be specific to the school or college, and be embedded in the organisation, if leadership is to be successful. However, Bottery (1998) and Bush (2011) are among the

authors who question whether it is possible for leaders to develop school-focused visions within a centralised policy framework supported by a national inspection regime. Hoyle and Wallace (2005, p. 11) are critical of visionary rhetoric; 'any vision you like as long as it's central government's'.

Cuban (1988) provides one of the clearest distinctions between leadership and management. He links leadership with change while management is seen as a maintenance activity. He also stresses the importance of both dimensions of organisational activity. 'I prize both managing and leading and attach no special value to either since different settings and times call for varied responses'. Day et al. (2001) add that management is linked to systems and 'paper', while leadership is about the development of people, an important emphasis, given the focus of this volume.

Leadership and management need to be given equal prominence if schools and colleges are to operate effectively and achieve their objectives. While a clear vision is essential to establish the nature and direction of change, it is equally important to ensure that innovations are implemented efficiently and that the school's residual functions are carried out effectively while certain elements are undergoing change. Hallinger (2003) argues that a leadership perspective on the role of the principal does not diminish the principal's managerial roles. In any case, the differences cannot easily be observed in the day-to-day practices of leaders (Leithwood 1994). Briggs's (2003, p. 434) study of middle managers in English further education colleges suggests that these two dimensions have a symbiotic relationship and need to be kept in balance.

Decentralisation and self-management

Educational institutions operate within a legislative framework set down by national, provincial or state parliaments. One of the key aspects of such a framework is the degree of decentralisation in the educational system. Highly centralised systems tend to be bureaucratic and to allow little discretion to schools and local communities. Decentralised systems devolve significant powers to subordinate levels. Where such powers are devolved to the institutional level, there is 'self-management'.

Lauglo (1997, p. 3) links centralisation to bureaucracy. 'Bureaucratic centralism implies concentrating in a central ('top') authority decision-making on a wide range of matters, leaving only tightly programmed routine implementation to lower levels in the organisation'. Such centralised controls often include curricula, books and teaching materials,

staff recruitment and appointments, budgets, and management of real resources such as staff, buildings and equipment.

Leaders operating in such controlled systems experience particular problems in developing a distinctive vision for their schools and in responding effectively to school needs. When heads and principals are reduced to implementing directives from national, provincial or local government, they lack the scope to articulate school goals. They also cannot lead and manage staff effectively because all the major decisions about staff appointments, promotions and development are made by government officials. This approach is evident in China (Bush et al. 1998), the largest educational system in the world, and also in the Seychelles, one of the smallest (Bush et al. 2008). It is also evident in Greece, where principals are unable to function effectively as instructional leaders (Kaparou 2013).

Decentralisation involves a process of reducing the role of central government in planning and providing education. It can take many different forms, several of which simply devolve power to lower levels in the bureaucracy. Self-management occurs where decentralisation is to the institutional level, as Caldwell and Spinks (1992, p. 4) suggest: 'A self-managing school is a school in a system of education where there has been significant and consistent *decentralisation* to the school level of authority to make decisions related to the allocation of resources'.

Self-managing schools and colleges may be regarded as potentially more efficient and effective but much depends on the nature and quality of internal management if these potential benefits are to be realised. Caldwell (2008, p. 249) argues that 'those at the school level are best placed to determine the particular mix of all the resources available to achieve optimal outcomes'. This view has led governments in many countries, including Australia, England, Hong Kong, New Zealand and South Africa, to locate enhanced powers with school governing boards and principals. Certainly, the scope for leading and managing staff effectively is much greater when the major educational decisions are located within schools and colleges, and not reserved for action outside the school.

Culture and context

Many of the major themes of educational leadership and management have global significance. Notions of bureaucracy, autonomy and control, accountability and quality, for example, are evident in many different countries. However, it is vital to be aware of the powerful differences

between countries and not to overestimate their similarities. Some of the problems may be the same but their solutions often depend more on local circumstances than on importing ready-made answers from very different contexts. 'It is easy to become over-impressed by apparent similarities between "reforms" in various countries and to neglect deep differences at the level of implementation and practice' (Glatter 2002, p. 225).

Some of the differences between educational systems can be attributed to economics. Many developing countries do not have the resources to ensure universal education, even at primary level, or to provide buildings, equipment or staffing of the quality which is taken for granted in the developed world. These countries are caught in a vicious circle. They lack the resources to develop all their children to their full potential. This contributes to a continuing economic weakness because they do not have the skills to compete effectively with fully developed economies. As a result, the tax base is too weak to fund a really effective educational system (Bell and Bush 2002).

Although the economic issues should not be underestimated, the main differences between countries may be cultural. Dimmock and Walker (2002) explain and compare organisational and societal culture:

Societal cultures differ mostly at the level of basic values, while organisational cultures differ mostly at the level of more superficial practices, as reflected in the recognition of particular symbols, heroes, and rituals. This allows organisational cultures to be deliberately managed and changed, whereas societal or national cultures are more enduring and change only gradually over longer time periods. (p. 71)

Cultural differences play an important part in explaining the varied approaches to apparently similar issues in many different countries. One example relates to attitudes to bureaucracy. As we noted earlier, it is the preferred approach to management in many countries, including very large and complex systems, for example in China, and smaller states such as the Seychelles. It is also the dominant model in South America (Newland 1995). In some Western countries, however, it is associated with inefficiency and excessive centralisation. The differences may be explained by alternative perspectives on the nature of authority with those favouring bureaucracy more willing to defer to those holding positional power than people who feel constrained by it (Bell and Bush 2002).

Differences within countries

It is also unwise to assume that educational problems are the same *within* countries let alone between them. In developing countries, there are often considerable differences between urban and rural schools (Bush et al. 1998; Bush et al. 2010). In both developed and developing nations, socio-economic variables inevitably influence the educational context. South Africa, for example, is still coming to terms with the institutionalised differences in its schools arising from the apartheid era. Comparing the best schools in the major cities with those in remote rural areas provides as sharp a contrast as the differences between developed and developing countries (Bush 2007).

There are also significant differences among schools within developed nations. Harris (2002) reports on the particular issues faced by the leaders of schools in challenging circumstances in England. She paints a picture of schools with multiple indicators of difficulty:

- low levels of achievement in public examinations
- high proportions of children eligible for free school meals
- categorised as requiring 'special measures' or having 'serious weaknesses' by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted)
- located in urban areas with low socio-economic status.

She conducted research with ten such schools that were showing evidence of school improvement. Her findings provide valuable evidence about the nature of successful leadership in such schools. The main features of such leadership were:

- 'an alignment to a shared set of values' (Harris 2002, p. 18) and a vision, built around these core values, that was communicated to staff and students
- distributing leadership: a shift from autocratic styles of leadership to a greater focus on teams and distributed leadership as the schools improved
- investing in staff development as a means of maintaining staff morale and motivation as well as improving their capability
- the heads 'placing an emphasis on *people not systems* and inviting others to lead' (p. 22) (present authors' emphasis)

- the heads emphasising the need to establish the interconnectedness of home, school and community, and being aware that forces within the community impeded learning.

Harris (2002: 24) concludes that these successful leaders displayed people-centred qualities and skills: 'The context in which people work and learn together is where they construct and refine meaning leading to a shared purpose or set of goals.'

These dimensions of successful leadership could arguably be applied to schools in any situation. The distinguishing feature is the recognition that leaders' approaches have to be tailored to the specific needs of the school and the context in which it operates. A 'one size fits all' approach is unlikely to be effective, as we argue in Chapter 2.

Leading and managing people

There is ample evidence that high-quality leadership is vital in achieving successful schools and colleges. The Commonwealth Secretariat (1996), for example, states that 'the head . . . plays the most crucial role in ensuring school effectiveness'. Leithwood et al.'s (2006) study of successful school leadership reinforces previous research which stresses that leaders improve teaching and learning *indirectly*. This means developing and sustaining good relationships with teachers, who work *directly* with students. Effective processes are required to enhance classroom practice but they must be supported by an approach which recognises, values and celebrates the achievements of staff and students. This book examines many of these core processes.

There is convincing evidence that successful leaders focus most strongly on motivating and developing people rather than establishing and maintaining systems and structures. The latter is important but should always be a second-order priority. In education, as in many other settings, people are most likely to show commitment if they are valued by those who have responsibility for them. This applies to teachers just as much as to the children and students. It also applies to the many support staff who work in schools and colleges. An inclusive approach, involving all categories of staff, is most likely to produce the teamwork which is also a feature of successful organisations (Bush and Glover 2012).

Conclusion: developing people

There is considerable international interest in teacher and leadership development, evidenced, for example, in the opening of the English NCSL. Bush and Jackson's (2002) review of provision in seven developed countries shows that there are diverse approaches to leadership development but policy-makers in all these systems recognise its vital importance. Such major initiatives suggest that this is a national policy issue in many countries (see Chapter 14), but the purpose of this section is to argue that principals and headteachers also have a role in teacher and leadership development.

The increasing range and complexity of leadership and management responsibilities in schools and colleges means that it is no longer possible, if it ever was, for the principal to be the sole leader. Deputy and assistant heads, and middle-level leaders such as heads of department or subject leaders, are increasingly important for effective management in schools (Woods et al. 2004) and colleges (Briggs 2003). This emphasis requires specific and sustained attention to leadership and management development as a central part of the wider staff development agenda.

Developing middle and senior managers has two main advantages. First, it increases the likelihood that they will perform effectively in their present role. Secondly, it provides a cadre of trained people for advancement to more senior posts as they become available. It is a mode of succession planning, a 'grow your own' model of securing a successful future for the school or college (see Chapter 14).

The development of future leaders may take several forms but it is underpinned by an approach which is 'people' orientated. It begins with the needs of the individual and might involve a formal staff development or appraisal process. It should provide a means of meeting the aspirations of the person while also anticipating the needs of the institution. When it works well, the requirements of the individual and the organisation are harmonised to promote learning for all who work or study in the school or college.

References

- Bell, L. and Bush, T. (2002) 'The policy context', in Bush, T. and Bell, L. (eds), *The Principles and Practice of Educational Management*, London, Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Bolam, R. (1999) 'Educational administration, leadership and management: towards a research agenda', in Bush, T., Bell, L., Bolam, R., Glatton, R. and Ribbins, P. (eds), *Educational Management: Redefining Theory, Policy and Practice*, London, Paul Chapman Publishing.

- Bottery, M. (1998) *Professionals and Policy*, London, Cassell.
- Briggs, A. (2003) 'Finding the balance: exploring the organic and mechanical dimensions of middle manager roles in English further education colleges', *Educational Management and Administration*, 31 (4), 421–436.
- Bush, T. (1999) 'Crisis or crossroads? The discipline of educational management in the late 1990s', *Educational Management and Administration*, 27 (3), 239–252.
- Bush, T. (2007) 'Educational leadership and management: theory, policy and practice', *South African Journal of Education*, 27 (3), 391–406.
- Bush, T. (2008) 'From management to leadership: semantic or meaningful change', *Educational Management, Administration and Leadership*, 36 (2), 271–288.
- Bush, T. (2011) *Theories of Educational Leadership and Management, Fourth Edition*, London, Sage.
- Bush, T. and Jackson, D. (2002) 'Preparation for school leadership: international perspectives', *Educational Management and Administration*, 30 (4), 417–429.
- Bush, T. and Glover, D. (2012) 'Distributed leadership in action: Leading high-performing leadership teams in English schools', *School Leadership and Management*, 32 (1), 21–36.
- Bush, T., Coleman, M. and Si, X. (1998) 'Managing secondary schools in China', *Compare*, 33 (2), 127–138.
- Bush, T., Purvis, M.-T. and Barallon, L. (2008) 'Leadership development in small-island states', in Lumby, J., Crow, G. and Pashiardis, P. (eds), *International Handbook on the Preparation and Development of Leaders*, New York, Routledge.
- Bush, T., Joubert, R., Kiggundu, E. and Van Rooyen, J. (2010) 'Managing teaching and learning in South African schools', *International Journal of Educational Development*, 30 (2), 162–168.
- Caldwell, B. (2008) 'Reconceptualising the self-managing school', *Educational Management, Administration and Leadership*, 36 (2), 235–252.
- Caldwell, B. and Spinks, J. (1992) *Leading the Self-Managing School*, London, Falmer Press.
- Commonwealth Secretariat (1996) *Better Schools: Resource Materials for Heads: Introductory Module*, London, Commonwealth Secretariat.
- Cuban, L. (1988) *The Managerial Imperative and the Practice of Leadership in Schools*, Albany, NY, State University of New York Press.
- Day, C., Harris, A. and Hadfield, M. (2001) 'Challenging the orthodoxy of effective school leadership', *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 4 (1), 39–56.
- Dimmock, C. and Walker, A. (2002) 'School leadership in context – societal and organisational cultures', in Bush, T. and Bell, L. (eds), *The Principles and Practice of Educational Management*, London, Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Elliott, G. and Crossley, M. (1997) 'Contested values in further education: findings from a case study of the management of change', *Educational Management and Administration*, 27 (3), 253–266.
- Glatter, R. (2002) 'Governance, autonomy and accountability in education', in Bush, T. and Bell, L. (eds), *The Principles and Practice of Educational Management*, London, Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Gunter, H. (1997) *Rethinking Education: The Consequences of Jurassic Management*, London, Cassell.
- Gunter, H. (2004) 'Labels and labelling in the field of educational leadership', *Discourse – Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 25 (1), 21–41.

- Hallinger, P. (2003) *Reshaping the Landscape of School Leadership: A Global Perspective*, Lisse, Swets and Zeitlinger.
- Hargreaves, A. (2004) 'Inclusive and exclusive educational change: emotional responses of teachers and implications for leadership', *School Leadership and Management*, 24 (3), 287–306.
- Harris, A. (2002) 'Effective leadership in schools facing challenging circumstances', *School Leadership and Management*, 22 (1), 15–26.
- Hoyle, E. and Wallace, M. (2005) *Educational Leadership: Ambiguity, Professionals and Managerialism*, London, Sage.
- Kaparou, M. (2013) 'Instructional leadership in England and Greece: a cross-country comparative approach', unpublished Ph.D thesis, Coventry, University of Warwick.
- Lauglo, J. (1997) 'Assessing the present importance of different forms of decentralisation in education', in Watson, K., Modgil, C. and Modgil, S. (eds), *Power and Responsibility in Education*, London, Cassell.
- Leithwood, K. (1994) 'Leadership for school restructuring', *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 30 (4), 498–518.
- Leithwood, K., Day, C., Sammons, P., Harris, A. and Hopkins, D. (2006) *Seven Strong Claims about Successful School Leadership*, London, DfES.
- McTavish, D. (2003) 'Aspects of public sector management: a case study of further education ten years from the passage of the Further and Higher Education Act', *Educational Management and Administration*, 31 (2), 175–187.
- Newland, C. (1995) 'Spanish American elementary education 1950–1992: bureaucracy, growth and decentralisation', *International Journal of Educational Development*, 15 (2), 103–114.
- Woods, P., Bennett, N., Harvey, J. and Wise, C. (2004) 'Variabilities and dualities in distributed leadership: findings from a systematic literature review', *Educational Management, Administration and Leadership*, 32 (4), 439–457.
- Yukl, G.A. (2002) *Leadership in Organizations, Fifth Edition*, Upper Saddle River, NJ, Prentice-Hall.