3 Leadership

Introduction

Since the implementation of the 1988 Education Reform Act, which introduced the National Curriculum, parental choice and the devolution of funding to schools, the leadership and management of schools and colleges has continued to evolve. The first phase of changes led to a headship which was dominated by the need to manage budgets and recruitment to schools and colleges. Following the introduction of the non-statutory Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs (DfES, 2001), the second phase focused on the pendulum swinging towards inclusion and the community. The next phase has seen the dominance of leadership over management in the development of schools, colleges and, more recently, higher education institutions as organisations that are market-led, collegial learning communities.

This chapter considers the role and function of leadership in education to be primarily that of leading learning, but paradoxically not one that focuses on the role of the head teacher. Leaders have power, influence and control yet they may not be the lead professional. This is the role of others in a dispersed model where competencies and attributes of the individual contribute to the extended team of leaders. The need for collaboration is self-evident. Teachers are ready to take responsibility as they develop into accountable academic leaders within their communities.

Communities require collaboration and therefore meetings. Although meetings have a bad press, not all are pointless – and are less so, as with the introduction of workforce reform teachers' contracted time is now under greater scrutiny (DfES, 2003a). The

purpose of formal and informal meetings can be framed by the vision, values and principles of the school or college.

As one of the major drivers in the change to educational leadership, budgets have now been further devolved. Schools and colleges have responsibility for a significant proportion of the local and national purse; it is time for teachers with some professional development to gain experience as budget holders. After all, each teacher is well placed to become the leader of their own learning community.

Time for individual needs to take priority

As schools prepare for the next academic year, there are many adverts for leadership posts. Some make reference to the person vacating the post while others present a vision for a new future in schools through the restructuring or re-engineering of leadership teams. This gives some cause for concern when you recognise the multiple changes that have been imposed on the management of schools over the last 15 years – in practice, three generations of secondary school pupils.

Historically, the leader of a school was the head teacher, a senior colleague with expert learning and teaching skills who led by example. The emphasis was on creating a learning community. The structure was seemingly straightforward: a head, deputy and teams of teachers who taught a class or number of classes according to their subject.

Everyone appeared to know and recognise the systems that supported the structure and there were few changes.

Local management of schools and the introduction of the National Curriculum were two features of the government's grand design known as the Education Reform Act. Devolution of funding to schools was coupled with the introduction of a prescribed national curriculum. The government's aim was to raise achievement. Systems were generated to support this new structure. The position of head teachers became that of a managing director of a company, whose product is education and whose clients are pupils and parents. In the process of implementing the design, school management teams and teachers became accountable to a range of

stakeholders: national and local government, governors, parents, pupils and inspectors. This was not too dissimilar to other changes within the public sector.

The response was passive and restructuring of all aspects of schooling continued apace. The government now felt the need to change the design year on year. Head teachers were trained as project managers to implement and manage budgets and in some cases become architects of new buildings. Having redesigned their schools, they now marketed their product. The head teacher became an estate agent promoting their schools in an attempt to recruit large numbers of pupils and, for additional income, the use of the building.

One outcome of this has been a growth of individual and outstanding schools. When visiting a local authority recently, I found that within a three-mile radius there were a variety of designs where unwittingly the management structure reflected the design of the building.

The emphasis had been on difference and competition but the government now wants schools to come together in the form of commonwealths, clusters, collegiates or federations. These are collective nouns for a number of schools joining together to share and develop learning communities.

What next? As tastes and needs differ I would imagine that the pendulum will swing back to individual choice. The future, I believe, will embrace the need for each learning community to respond to local and individual needs.

Questions for discussion

Leadership of schools and colleges is emerging as a priority in the majority of local authorities in England and Wales. There is significant evidence that schools and colleges are having difficulty in appointing suitable senior managers and the profession must take responsibility for the development of its own leaders. Consider:

1. What are the characteristics of an effective head teacher or principal?
2. Is it a case of 'fit for purpose' in that each school or college has its own needs?

Questions for discussion continued

3. What is the leadership structure of your school or college?
4. What leadership style predominates in your educational area?
5. How do structure and style impact on the practice experienced by you and your colleagues?
6. How collegiate is your school or college?
7. Are you invited to discuss leadership in your school or college?

All teachers can be managers and leaders

It's behind you! Christmas, New Year have been and gone, and we are now into the pantomime season. Pantomimes were originally created by travelling players who took traditional folk tales to the stage. In many ways this is what happens in schools – the traditions of teaching are rooted in folklore substantiated by repeated practice.

Central to a pantomime are the key characters with whom audiences can identify by the end of the opening scenes. Are there parallels within school communities? Can you identify with any of the following?

● The king or duke who tries to manage his kingdom in a kind, benevolent way but is hindered by the demands of his villagers and the need to find an appropriate suitor for his single daughter.
● The dame who has been around for generations and never does

what he/she is told, totally unmanageable but quite loveable.
● The village idiot, who wants to fall in love but lacks the wit and wherewithal to change and is destined to take on the role of dame in later life.
● The character that always saves the day is the principal boy (in reality a female) who, as a strong leader from humble origins (sometimes the son of the dame) identifies the problem, tackles the monsters in his/her path and manages to have a life along the way.

In the finale, there are the inevitable celebrations as the principal boy marries the princess (quite acceptable in any form). While the dame enjoys his/her newfound status as a senior member of the community the village idiot is recognised for his humility and finds a mate. The village is happy, the king can retire

having led his kingdom through a period of change resulting in a positive and happy community.

Are there similar characters in your school? Given such generic characteristics, there will be schools that will feel closer than others to a pantomime. Schools as organisations find themselves being led and managed in different ways. The culture of school management is changing from a 'top-down' hierarchical model to a flatter structure, which will involve the majority of staff in the management and leadership of their school. Within the profession teachers now have to consider management to be part of their daily practice.

The process by which teachers become leaders is unclear. Training for the role is not compulsory in initial or continuing professional development until headship. In practice, all teachers are managers and leaders of the classrooms and increasingly they manage and coordinate other adults on a daily basis. A teacher is a manager of learning, managing the development of knowledge and understanding, skills and abilities of pupils.

A leader is someone who gets the job done, by knowing what he/she wants to happen, and causes it to happen by managing resources and ensuring that they are put to good use, thus promoting effectiveness. In a search for continual improvement, a leader is accountable for the performance of the unit he or she is managing, of which he or she is a part. Essentially, a leader sets a climate or tone conducive to enabling people to give of their best.

If your school is to give of its best, the key characters will need to be identified and, as in the pantomime finale, led to a point of joint and equitable celebration, perhaps?

Questions for discussion

Each character in a school or college plays his/her part in the running of the organisation. Consider:

1. Have you considered the part you play?
2. What is successful leadership?
3. Would you consider yourself to be a leader or a follower?

> ### Questions for discussion continued
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> 4. How established are the leaders in your school or college?
> 5. How were they prepared for that role?
> 6. Does the leadership team work within their capabilities?
> 7. Is the school or college performing well?
> 8. Do you celebrate success?

A team doesn't pull together without effective leadership

The bells toll. The team of campanologists is practising for a new season. There are probably no more that six members, all committed to getting the sequence right. Living as I do near the normally peaceful church, I have no choice but to listen to the two-hour rehearsal held on a Thursday evening. As the bells do not stop at all in any two-hour session, I can only surmise that they are driven to perfection by a leader who is not given to reflection, discussion or team decision-making. Eventually, the limping bell ringer who has fallen a fraction of a second behind their colleagues for almost the full rehearsal clicks into place and the sequence becomes free-flowing without the 'da-dum' interruption of the previous 119 minutes. Persistence, it appears, is the key, until next week's rehearsal when the 'da-dum' returns.

The management of teams is a critical feature of effective management and leadership in schools. In the broadest sense, a team is a group of people that can effectively tackle any task that it has been set to do. Many readers will be familiar with Tuckman's stages of team development. *Forming*: at this stage the team is task-focused; followed by *storming*, as conflict arises and assumptions are challenged; successful handling at this point will enable the team to reach fresh agreement on purpose and procedures. Having negotiated the storm, a *norming* stage is reached with agreed norms and practices. All being well, the team will then be ready to perform, producing solutions rather than problems.

As a team performs, the contribution drawn from each member is of the highest possible quality, and one that could not have been called into play other than in the context of a supportive team. However, teams do not act as teams simply because they are described as such. Teamwork extends beyond the common task. In my humble view, if the bells were to stop for a few minutes, the 'da-dum' problem with appropriate support could be resolved.

In essence, a school creates its identity as a team by means of a group of people working together. Successful teams are those based on shared values and perceptions, commitment and cooperation that underpin a common purpose. To manage an effective team takes confident leadership and clear direction. The importance of reflection, discussion and decision-making cannot be overestimated.

Teachers and leaders should be in a position to recognise their place in the sequence. It is for the individual and their line manager to identify whether they are among the 'da- dummers' and in need of further support and guidance.

In the context of the daily routine, schools are all too often driven by the bells that indicate the times to move, change and refocus. Thirty-five minutes for a lesson, an hour for a meeting, rehearsals, sports and home-time. Every teacher is used to schedules and the sounds that structure the day. The sequence can appear relentless. The development of a team that allows for personal and professional growth may not be as difficult as it may seem. There comes a time when it might be opportune to stop the daily sequence of events in order to be rid of the noise. If only our campanologists would agree.

Questions for discussion

Leadership is now dispersed within schools and colleges – you are all leaders. Consider:

1. What is your leadership role within your learning community?
2. How do you relate to those who lead you?

Questions for discussion continued

3. What are your professional development needs as you pre-pare/ function as a leader?
4. What is your leadership style?
5. Are you a self-managing networker?

No teacher is an island – they need to collaborate

Many of you will have read *All in a Day*, devised almost 20 years ago by Mitsumasa Anno. The principal theme of the book is peace, a message to be shared by the members of the global village in which we live, learn and, for some, teach.

As the authors of the book describe, children's activities are related to the very different conditions in which they live, created in part by time and climate. The book focuses on New Year's day in eight time zones, highlighting the differences in the way we look while emphasising that we are all fundamentally the same.

The main actors in the text are children of a similar age: waking, sleeping, playing, eating, interacting with the environment in which they live. The children who attend schools and colleges across the UK are also representative of a number of cultures, heritages and background, yet all have the same desire and need for food, warmth, communication and peace.

While teachers are responsible for the transmission of knowledge, this is never in isolation from the experiences learners bring to the classroom. Increasingly, schools are the only places where some children can find the peace they need to grow.

As Anno and his collaborators demonstrate, there are strong similarities and differences between children from around the globe. But teachers have similar, yet different characteristics. The similarities could include a desire to be part of a community of learners who through their practice and lives are committed to value-based education.

This is described in the European Commission report,

Learning for the 21st Century, in which the authors explain learning is a composite of learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be. Applying this to practice would extend the role of the teacher, for in addition to the transmission of knowledge that prepares the learner for a job, there is also a responsibility for preparing them to become citizens.

Social commentators inform us that there is a social and economic need for people to be lifelong learners. Nowadays, irrespective of location, people rarely find a job for life; there is a need for lifelong learning. In theory, there has never been a better time to be a teacher.

Within the cycle of learning teachers are also lifelong learners with a need to develop further their skills. Teachers need support in maintaining and improving the achievements of the learner; fundamentally they require a basic set of tools that encompasses working with knowledge regardless of subject or discipline.

The tools will also include the training and education required to develop an ability to collaborate and work with an increasingly diverse range of professionals and learners. Returning to the simple yet powerful message of Anno's book, teachers also require the tools to develop the voice of the learner, be that adult or child.

Anno concludes the introduction by commenting that each country has a neighbourhood in which children live, beyond which there is another country that shares the same sun and moon. In this text, no child is isolated from the others. The same could be said of learners and teachers.

Questions for discussion

Education does not happen in isolation. There is an interaction with knowledge which is created, generated and delivered within a social context. Our knowledge of the world is increasing as is our ability to communicate and collaborate within a global setting (DfES, 2004e). Yet collaboration remains a difficult concept for those who fail to grasp the fundamentals of networking. Consider:

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Questions for discussion continued

1. How wide is your professional network?
2. Have you a sense of the learner's place when you teach?
3. Do you collaborate with others?
4. How do your collaborative networks impact on your learning and teaching?
5. Do you use your knowledge to develop an understanding of the world for yourself and others?

Meetings are not a waste of teachers' time

The first meeting I chaired as a head of faculty in a secondary school will remain forever in my memory. I had set an agenda that I considered to be full, challenging and with a sense of purpose. That was the theory. In practice, the response from colleagues was muted almost to the point of a silent revolution.

I had failed to consult them on what was their meeting: papers had not been circulated; and there was little preparation and a great pile of material that could have been circulated in other ways. I had failed to respect my colleagues as members of a learning community.

It has to be said that attending meetings is not always a productive use of a teacher's time. It is useful to consider before planning a meeting whether it is necessary. This is not to say that there are not many advantages to holding a meeting: increased communication, the opportunity to improve staff decision-making skills while creating a sense of involvement and ownership. The quality of decision-making and communication are dependent on the quality of the meeting. A good meeting, if democratic, can improve job satisfaction.

The size and culture of the school will determine the number, culture and style of meetings and determine their effectiveness. If the quality of school meetings is to improve, it is necessary for all staff to understand the function of each meeting. Chairs are required to plan, lead and participate in meetings, to influence (and understand) policy, to monitor and evaluate, to solve problems

and plan, to develop cooperation and commitment and, most importantly, to motivate.

There are usually two key roles in formal meetings: chair and secretary (minute-taker). It may be that teachers will be required to chair team meetings and to act as secretary to senior management or staff meetings. It is not advisable to chair and take minutes simultaneously. The collective functions of the chair and secretary are to move the meeting along efficiently and to maintain the meeting as a viable working group.

As I learnt from my initial experience of chairing, if a meeting is to be worthwhile, an agenda could be prepared in advance to allow members to consider each point and allow other points to be added to the agenda. And remember, distribute the necessary papers. Open the meeting and state its purpose, then take those

present through the agenda, leaving time for reflection and discussion. Listen and value all participants in the meeting and close with a summary of the way forward and thanks.

There are a few guiding rules that will assist with the meeting's progress: ensure fair play, and stay in charge by controlling the length and depth of discussions. Take decisions in the appropriate manner – conduct a vote or check consensus, as this will encourage participation. All being well, there will be some actions that will need to be pursued and outcomes can be presented again at future meetings.

As with teaching, effective chairing requires good interpersonal skills – participants need to feel valued. A meeting will be a learning experience when the alternative uses of the participants' time are forgotten from the outset.

Questions for discussion

When we meet with others in a professional setting, there is a clear sense of purpose: to network, to engage with professionals and to learn from the experience. The knowledge and experience generated by the collective experience of the team will inform the practice, which underpins the delivery of the curriculum in schools and colleges. Consider:

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> ### Questions for discussion continued
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> 1. What is the purpose of each meeting you attend?
> 2. Is your role within each meeting passive or active?
> 3. How do you disseminate the knowledge gained from a meeting?
> 4. Do you follow up on the information generated at each meeting?
> 5. How do you ensure that meetings contribute to the function of education, i.e. the discovery and exchange of information and knowledge?

Teachers should seize the chance to become budget holders

When preparing a budget for a bid, extra-curricular activity or an increase in curriculum funding, many teachers are left floundering. This is due not to a lack of ability so much as a lack of experience, a consequence of limited opportunities created by a particular style of leadership and administration.

Limited opportunities could arise from concerns over external accountability, which tends to drive the management of school finances. Budget management is not contingent on schools alone – the actions of central and local government set the framework and content of a school's funding arrangements.

Within a framework of collaborative management, teachers would have an opportunity to develop professionally through involvement in financial management. They could become a budget holder with responsibility for a sum of money to be spent on a particular subject, year group or other specific purpose.

As my colleague Simon Hughes suggests (Hughes, 2004) in his forthcoming book on *Resource Management for Subject Leaders*, successful budget management is facilitated by the individual skills and attributes of each person. Such individual skills will thrive in a context that has effective and efficient managerial systems.

I believe that success in financial management requires a shared sense of responsibility on the part of the staff in the school to enhance both the pupil

performance and the physical environment. Once these principles and values have been determined, the capacity for growth can be informed by organisational intelligence that will assist planning for the future.

A useful starting point for a budget holder is to compare financial statements from the previous years within similar departments and teams. This will help to identify areas where money could be saved and those that need funding, beginning with basic needs and concluding with additional operational expenditure.

Linked to the school development plan, this budget planning would involve identifying priorities and targets. It is usually advisable to aim to spend all of the allocated funds for teaching materials and staff. Remember, schools are places of learning, not global businesses seeking to accrue wealth. I would suggest that allocation models that identify costs set against actual needs will provide the best financial and educational returns.

Be warned: there are consequences of operating devolved budget management and accountability systems in schools. The change in the power relationship between budget holder and management might possibly lead to distrust and a tendency to resist change culminating in internal conflict.

However, the dangers of pseudo-participation – where all stakeholders are involved at the planning and decision-making stages but decisions are made by management – are far greater. Budgets that assist the drive to meet agreed educational targets will be more successful than those designed to lead. My advice to teachers is to become a budget holder, then understand and contribute to the principles and values that underpin your school's financial management.

Questions for discussion

Financial management in schools and colleges is often misunderstood (Blandford and Blackburn, 2004). Myths can be generated by those who feel uninformed and marginalised by practices that are owned by the few but impact on the many. Professional practice is about taking charge, including financial matters. Consider:

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Questions for discussion continued

1. How transparent are the financial management systems within your school or college?
2. Do you have sufficient information on the availability of resources prior to developing the curriculum?
3. Are you responsible for the management of budgets allocated to your area?
4. What professional development opportunities are available to enhance your budget management?
5. Do you engage with budget management in a collaborative environment?

Summary

In educational organisations, leadership is a complex phenomenon. There are many definitions of leadership which share the common themes of power, culture and influence. It is evident that leadership happens in groups or teams, a social context that embraces organisations including schools and colleges. As in teaching, leaders direct a group in order to achieve something together. With leadership there is fellowship. A further dimension to consider is the global context in which we live. This creates an additional responsibility for teachers who might be viewed as cultural negotiators and workers. Whatever the context, education leadership begins within our own setting – the classroom. How we interact with others will be informed by a range of factors that are influenced by the individual and collaborative contexts in which we work.

The economic status of the organisation is rarely understood in education, yet it is a significant factor in teaching and managing practice. In a collaborative model of leadership, an understanding of budgets will inform those responsible for practice. This would also facilitate an understanding of the relationship between profes-

sional values and financial management (Blandford and Blackburn, 2004). Leadership is a domain that has its own repertoire, theories and practice that encourage the self-managing networker.