

Footprints

Step by step together

THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
Diocese of Norwich

Your newsletter from the Diocesan Board of Education

January 2024

Developing Leaders



Paul Dunning
Diocesan Director of Education

I hope all reading Footprints have managed to have some true rest over the Christmas period and found time to wonder at the birth of God's son, a gift to us all. With so much going on in the world that we don't understand the hope offered through Jesus can sustain us as individuals and as leaders.

I have just finished reading 'A non-

anxious presence' by Mark Sayers, a leadership book setting out how the world has changed and is more complex. He says "More than a change in our thinking or simply the introduction of new ideas, we are living through a profound and far-reaching change to the very structure of our world. This structural change has enormous implications for how we lead and live." I think we see frequent evidence of this in our schools with the problems and challenges that so often come your way.

Sayers suggests that it is important for leaders to be 'properly orientated' so that they can cope with change and chaos and deal with the reality around them. As a Christian leader he points us towards God for such orientation.

Whatever your personal faith position the theologically rooted Christian vision being lived out by your school community gives such orientation, something you come back to when making decisions and impacting the culture of your school.

In what follows we read about how such vision and orientation flows into practice for example, servant leadership, risk-taking, pupil voice driving change and commitment to individuals in their career journeys.

This edition is entitled 'Developing leaders' and it can be seen that our schools and our academy trusts take this very seriously for both adults and children yielding some excellent outcomes at school and individual level.

Simon Morley

Deputy CEO of The Diocese of Norwich
Education and Academies Trust (DNEAT)

DNEAT expects its leaders to exhibit the character required to be 'servant' leaders within their community for the benefit of the children in their care; whereby Christian distinctiveness becomes the principal foundation of their work in improving outcomes and raising standards.

The Bible (1 Peter 4:10) says that "each of us should use whatever gift we receive to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms."

It is with this mutual responsibility in mind, that DNEAT identifies, develops, and deploys talented leaders and teachers to help build succession and resilience within its schools.

Our staff cannot have greater impact in their work without access to training and development to make them better. Our strategy is therefore underpinned by a 'Joint Practice Development Programme' of around one hundred events a year,



together with opportunity to study for national professional qualifications.

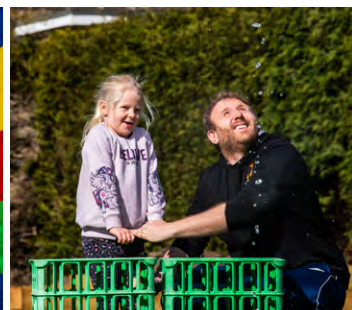
DNEAT's 'Career Pathway Entitlement' demonstrates that the Trust is committed to its workforce, to helping people progress in their career and achieve their aspirations. It is used with headteachers to identify what, how and when to access the right experiences at the right time. We have many examples of TAs becoming teachers through apprenticeship routes, NQTs (ECTs) progressing rapidly to middle leader positions, deputy heads moving through to headship and heads becoming executive heads of partnerships and federations.

'Learning-Centred Leaders' are an essential part of DNEAT's capacity to deliver



school to school support. They are school leaders below that of headteacher who are nationally accredited to support others and have a track record of success in leading change in a specialist area or subject.

How do we know this helps make a difference for children as well as adults? At the end of KS2 (2023) the DNEAT gap to national in the key measure of RWM combined had halved from -12% in 2016 to -6% and at 53%, is 2% above the Norfolk average. The continuing impact over time is also reflected in the proportion of good or better Ofsted grades, rising from 53% in September 2017 to 92% in December 2023. This is 10% higher than for all academies nationally.



Steve Creasey

Headteacher
Ashill VC Primary School

Developing Leaders

In a small, rural Church of England primary school, leadership opportunities may seem rare. As the Headteacher of such a school, where delegation feels like a luxury, it's hard to imagine that I inspire anyone to consider leadership, particularly when others witness me putting on those blue gloves and heading to the toilets...

However, I believe leadership should never be one or two people at the helm of decision making. What works for us is a collaborative culture of leadership, where I see my role more as a facilitator

of conversation and where absolutely anyone across the school can contribute to ideas.

I'm very fortunate, particularly given the current climate, that over the past eight years, I've been able to inherit, appoint, retain, and nurture a fantastic staff team that simply 'get' this approach. Everyone who works here provides an individual and personal approach to the growth of every child.

My view is that any member of staff can become empowered to be part of positive change within school improvement and development; in fact it's something I simply wouldn't want to do alone. I also believe this can only happen in settings where staff feel genuinely valued and trusted. I simply love it when anyone who works at the school brings ideas to the table; it generates enthusiasm

and most importantly opportunities for change. We follow a 'let's give it a try' approach, which is time bound and includes a reflection point. The idea is then developed or discontinued, in consultation with the staff and other relevant stakeholders. As we are all on the journey together; there is a healthy, professional debate without negativity.

In our most recent Ofsted inspection in September, one of our inspectors described us as 'risk takers'. We wholeheartedly agreed. Risk, when done right, is about refining your offering to the children, despite what others around you are doing. It only works well in a collaborative, trusting culture. Developing everyone as a leader, who can deliver on the risk, no matter what position they have chosen to work in, is at the heart of what we do.



Victoria McConnell

Executive Headteacher
Flourish Federation (Stibbard and North Elmham)

Pupil Leadership

"I use my voice today because the people who went ahead of me used theirs."
(Titilope Adedokun)

It is imperative for the future that we teach young people now that they can use their voice for meaningful change.

I have always prioritised pupil voice in the schools in which I work but I am (fairly) new to working in CEVA schools and the SIAMs framework, so when I started exploring it last September, I was

encouraged to read about the importance of pupil voice and courageous advocacy.

In looking at enabling this to happen, we had to carefully look at the structure and use of Pupil Parliament (school council). At the time, it was a group of representatives from the school who were popular within their classes. There were sporadic meetings often not with a senior leader.

We decided that a regular, timetabled meeting with the Headteacher and other relevant staff members (for example, the site manager) was key to ensuring change was imminent and not lost in communication. We also felt it would be more developmental to change the representative every week so that everyone in the class (whether independent or

supported) understood that they could use their voice within this system.

The children of Flourish feel very strongly about environmental issues and are looking at trying to reduce landfill waste in our schools, especially with single use plastic in lunchboxes. This is an important issue for this generation and one I am very keen to support them in changing school systems for.

We need to spend time with our young people working out what they want to change rather than tokenistic groups just ordering play equipment from ESPO!

Our SIAMS inspection in October praised the work started on this and really listened and worked with me to develop a target to enable this to continue.

Jo Cerullo

Executive Headteacher
Diss Junior and Infant, and Scole Primary Academies, St Benet's MAT

I passionately believe in not only giving the best opportunity to children but also to the adults in my school. Supporting staff to further their own learning, whether this is through studying an NPQ, independent research or other qualification such as maths specialist is key. Everything we try to do in our schools is underpinned by evidence and educational research. Therefore keeping up to date with current thinking is vital and is achieved through encouraging staff at all levels to have opportunities to study and lead where appropriate.

When I recognise staff potential, I ensure that there are opportunities for this to be facilitated, once I have instilled a shared vision and moral purpose. Allowing staff the chance to lead is vital in expanding their skill set and allowing

them to grow. Having the theory is just the start however, as putting this into practice is the tricky part. My leaders do not always make the exact decisions that I would make but I have trust in them and they, in turn, know that I will back them up once a decision has been made.

One example is Simon Hipwell, who is currently working as Assistant Headteacher in charge of Curriculum across our partnership of schools, and leader in day to day charge of Scole CofE Primary Academy. Over the last five years, Simon has introduced many new initiatives to our school. He took over leading English, completing an NPQML with a focus on developing a mastery approach to our English curriculum. This was a precursor to our current MAT approach. He took the challenge to move from teaching Year 6 to Year 2, and then into Year 1. During this time revamping the phonics curriculum, with some major changes to our curriculum and how we teach. He is currently studying his NPQH with

the Church of England which is giving him opportunities to study and reflect on various aspects of running a school. There have been many lively discussions behind closed doors which then with a united front have led to some exciting developments within our schools.

Part of developing leaders is knowing that at some point they will move on to new opportunities, especially when they are studying an NPQH. Helping them prepare through transparent, open and honest insights into all aspects of school is essential. This ensures that when they go into headship that they do so with their eyes open and know that they will always have an ear, shoulder and sounding board. While this can be difficult for the school to lose their expertise and experience, I believe that all schools should have a culture where this provides opportunities for staff to progress and fulfil their potential, so that we can share expertise as a commitment to ensure the best education for all our children.

Governor and Clerk update



Bruce Gordon

Governance Improvement Officer

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Developing leaders – Succession Planning

I work as the Governance Improvement Officer for the Diocesan academy trusts. Where a local governing body cannot secure a chair from their number, very often I am asked to step in and work with them until such time as one can be identified.

Succession planning within our governing bodies is a vitally important part of our work. However, it can be complicated as a result of reluctance, or

lack of confidence of board members to be able to commit to the next level of support. Often the role of chair can be seen as too onerous, but it doesn't have to be.

Within your meetings, take the time to discuss planning for the future; it's not good for any board to have the same chair for a prolonged period and certainly no more than two terms of office. At the same time, look at what the role of chair entails over and above the normal responsibilities held by individual governors. Discuss whether some of those responsibilities could be taken on by other board members. Spreading the load means the board as a whole is better informed than would otherwise be the case. It will also make the chair role easier!

When you elect a vice chair, consider if you could, in fact, treat the chair role as a shared one – perhaps alternately chairing your meetings and ensure the vice chair has some real responsibility. Above all, when you do elect a vice

chair, ask if they would consider becoming chair within a defined period of time.

You may find that despite your best efforts, that there is no-one amongst the current membership who is able to consider the role. As a group, think about who you might approach in your community who might be able to take the role on in due course. You might for example, consider recently retired people – maybe grandparents or retired education professionals from within the community. Sometimes you have to think outside of the box a bit to find the right person for the job.

Lastly, it's always good to consider the skill set of your board and think about the training and development available. Whether you are a local governing body in one of our trusts, or governing in a maintained school, there are lots of opportunities for you to upskill the members of your board, and having the knowledge you need does help when it comes to finding a new chair.

Welcome

Diocesan School Support Officer (DSSO)

January 2024

Helen Watson – former Head of Lyng CE VC Primary

REQM congratulations

Silver Award

Open Academy

Federations

St Matthew's Federation –

Gayton CE Primary and Middleton CE Primary Academies

Nightingale Federation –

Thomas Bullock CE Primary and Lyng CE Primary Academies

SIAMS congratulations

Congratulations to the following schools that have had their SIAMS inspections this term.

All Saints CE VA Primary School – Stibbard

Taverham CE VC Primary School

St Andrew's CE VA Primary School, North Lopham