

Buckinghamshire Academy of School Leadership

8th March 2012

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Chief Executive
National College

Four key things to consider:

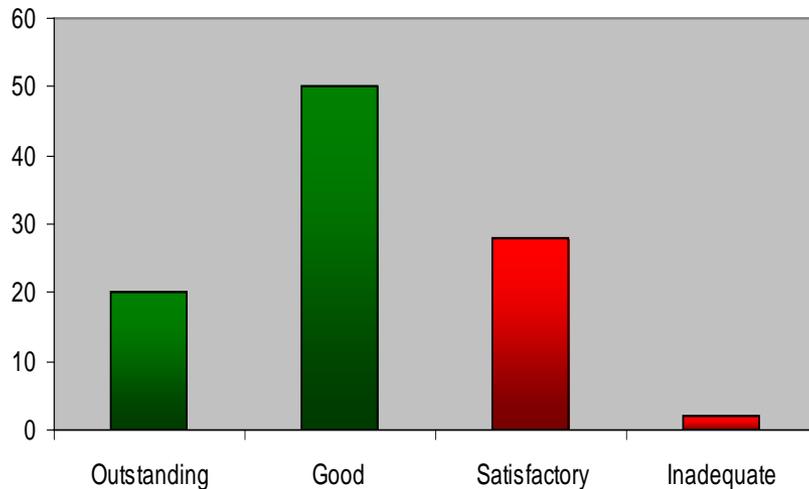
- The characteristics of our current school system
- The significance of effective leadership
- The importance of developing social capital
- Getting the balance right on support and challenge in our leadership.

1. The Characteristics of our current school system

The major challenge: Achieving high standards for all

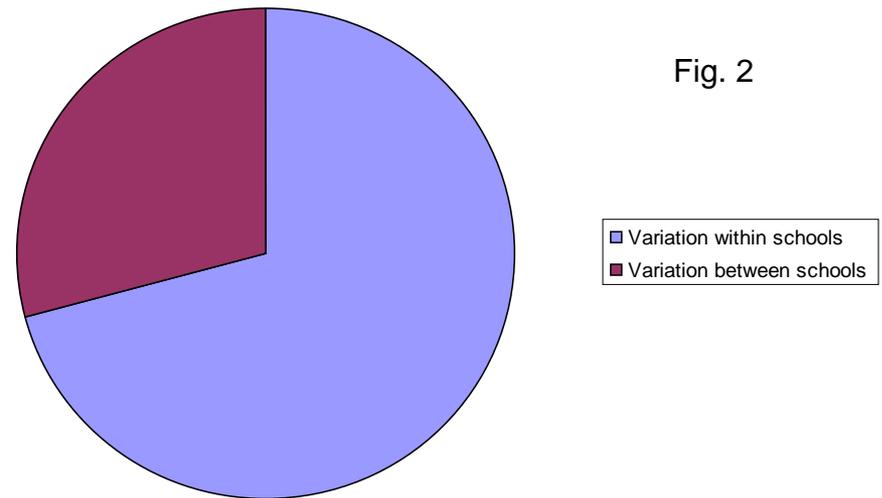
Variation across schools: almost one third judged inadequate or satisfactory in latest Ofsted inspection (fig.1).

Fig. 1



Variation within schools: accounts for more than two thirds of the total variation in the English system and well above the international average (fig.2). **OECD 2009**

Fig. 2



The characteristics of our current school system: opportunities and risks for system-wide success?

1. Highly autonomous

England has the second most devolved system in the world, second only to the Netherlands (OECD, 2008). The growth of academies in the last eighteen months will enhance this characteristic.

Potential for system wide success:

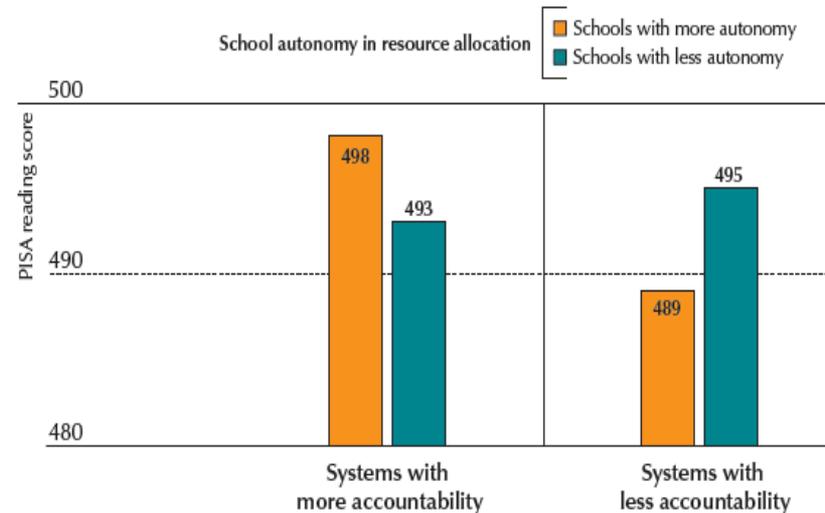
In (sponsored) academies, there was a **5.3%** rise in the number of pupils achieving 5 A* - C inc. Maths & English (based on the 166 sponsored academies results for both 2010 and 2011 (nb. 2011 results are provisional)). This is more than double the national average rate of improvement.

2. High accountability

Floor standards at both primary & secondary level, annual performance tables, and monitoring of all schools by OFSTED. Satisfactory will now be “requires improvement”

Potential for system wide success:

Research shows that autonomy leads to ‘system wide’ success when combined with an emphasis on accountability. (fig.1) **PISA in focus, October 2011.**



The characteristics of our current school system: opportunities and risks for system-wide success?



3. Increasingly diverse

There are approximately 21,000 schools in England, including Academies, Faith Schools, Free Schools, Grammar Schools and comprehensive schools.

Potential for system-wide success:

“champions of Charter schools argue that they deliver a wider benefit by creating a competitive pressure on other public schools and so help to raise standards.”

Lessons from US Charter Schools, a literature review, National College, 2011

However, these characteristics present potential risks to system wide success:

- With increased autonomy comes a risk of greater isolationism, with schools failing to share expertise or high quality practice. *“While there were some exciting pockets of change they remained pockets”* **Sustaining Developments in a Decentralised System, Lessons from New Zealand, 2003, p.3**
- Diversity can create a barrier that prevents schools from sharing practice and expertise. The main reason for schools not working together to deliver CPD is that they perceive other schools to be ‘too different’. **National College Annual Survey, 2010/11**

Is diversity and autonomy with accountability enough to drive system wide improvement?

2. The significance of effective leadership:

'School leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on pupil learning'

Leithwood et al, 2008

" student achievement in a school almost never exceeds the quality of its leadership and management and improvements in performance almost never occur in the absence of good leadership. "

Fenton Whelan, Lessons Learned, 2009

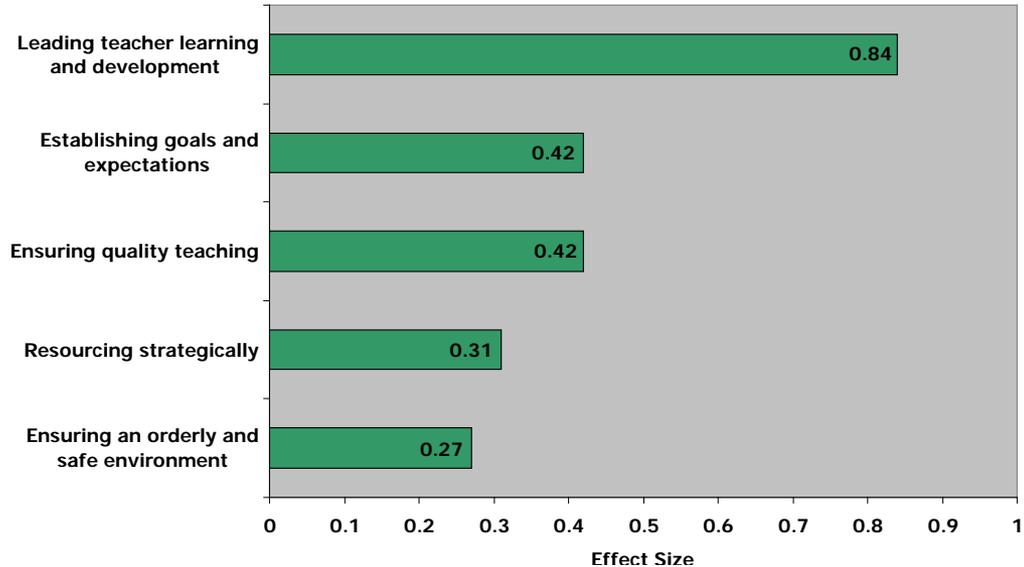
"Given the importance of leadership and management in securing school improvement, there is an urgent need to build more capacity among school leaders in those schools that are not making enough progress, and particularly to tackle the variability of teaching within them. "

Ofsted annual report 2010/11

Drawing on the capacity of great teachers and leaders to drive wide-scale success:

Within schools

“In previously stuck schools making good progress there had been a transformation in their approach to professional development and their drive for consistency, especially in teaching. These schools had created an environment where key leaders focused relentlessly on improving the consistency and quality of teaching and ensured that staff learnt continually from the influence of the best practice in and beyond the school.” OFSTED Annual Report, 2010/11



Leaders are at their most powerful and influential when promoting and participating in teacher learning and development.
Professor Viviane Robinson, Student-Centred Leadership, 2011

“The more leaders focus their relationships, their work and their (own) learning on the core business of teaching and learning, the greater their influence on student outcomes.”

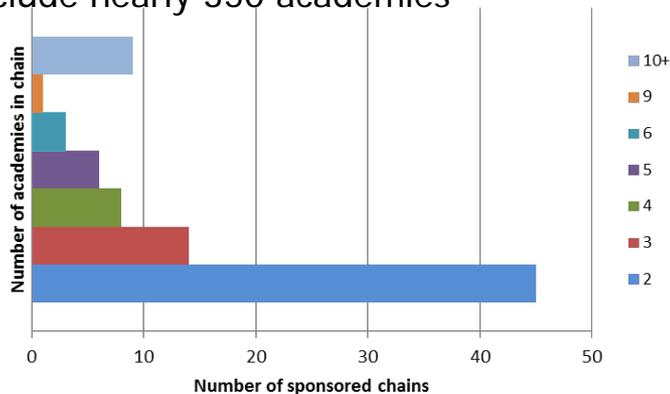
Robinson, 2011

Drawing on the capacity of great teachers and leaders to drive wide-scale success:

Across schools:

“school-to-school support structures will become increasingly common and their effectiveness will be a critical determinant of school improvement.” *Ofsted annual report 2010/11*

Chains of Schools: The improvement in 5 A*-Cs between 2009-2011 for sponsored chains of 3 or more academies was 15.0 percentage points (pp) compared to 12.2 and 11.0 pp for standalone and chains of 2 academies, respectively. Sponsored chains of 3 or more now include nearly 350 academies



National Support Schools are achieving well above average rates of improvement in their client schools at both primary and secondary level:

Federations: It is those federations led by effective schools – with a focus on supporting improvement in other schools – that had by far the greatest impact on pupil outcomes when compared with other schools: *A Study of the impact of federation on student outcomes, National College, 2011*

Role of Teaching Schools

As well as offering training and support for their **alliance** themselves, Teaching Schools will **identify and co-ordinate** expertise from their alliance, using the best leaders and teachers to:

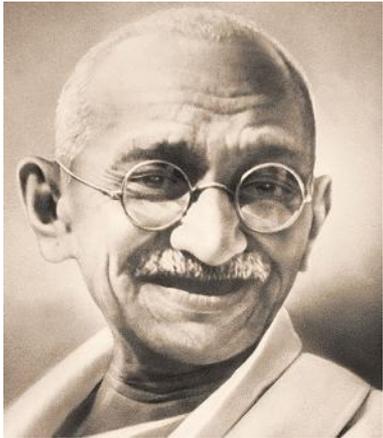
- 1 play a greater role in training **new entrants** to the profession
- 2 lead **peer-to-peer** professional and leadership development
- 3 identify and develop **leadership potential**
- 4 provide **support** for other schools
- 5 designate and broker Specialist Leaders of Education (**SLEs**)
- 6 engage in **research and development**

The BIG 6

Barriers to wide-spread success:

1. 3 in 10 schools are not working in partnership with other schools to deliver CPD (**NC Annual Survey 2011**)
 2. What about the many outstanding academy converters that are working on a free-standing basis?
 3. Is there a tension between school autonomy and chains of schools?
 4. Is there enough capacity in the system and in all geographical areas to enable a self-improving system to work?
 5. Can a self-managing group of schools have “courageous conversations” with each other about performance and what about the ones who don’t want to participate?
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3. The importance of developing social capital



“I suppose leadership at one time meant muscles; but today it means getting along with people”

Mohandas Gandhi

The importance of developing Social Capital

- The Silicon Valley Experience
- The experience of high performing systems such as Singapore, South Korea - sense of national belonging and mission
- The experience of high performing systems such as Ontario and Alberta – strong relationships and a sense of working together at all levels.
- The experience of highly effective academy chains –sense of driving mission, huge energy and common purpose
- The experience of collaborative ventures such as Challenge Partners - joint ownership/mutuality and building in external challenge
- A commitment to a common moral purpose can help to provide the social capital and the challenge.

“There is a heap of evidence staring policy makers in the face that it is the collaborative group that accelerates performance. These results occur because day to day pressure and support is built into the work. It is social capital that has the quality and speed essential for whole system reform.”

Michael Fullan



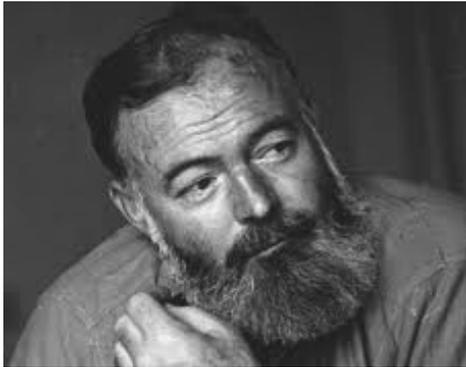
“ A person with ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished.”

Desmond Tutu

4. Getting the balance right on support and challenge in our leadership

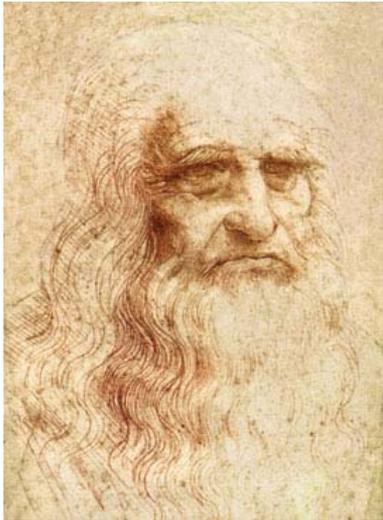
“The mindset.....entails being willing to let go and let other people perform, develop, learn and make mistakes. It is hard to build a system where others can succeed if the leader believes he or she needs to make every important decision, and knows better than anyone else what to do and how to do it. It is in finding the balance between guidance and listening, between directing and learning, that those in leadership roles can make their most useful contributions to organisation performance.”

Pfeffer and Sutton



*“When people talk, listen completely.
Most people never listen”*

Ernest Hemingway

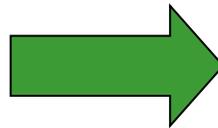


“People of accomplishment rarely let things happen to them. They went out and happened to things.”

Leonardo Di Vinci

Taking on a role with the National College

The National College makes use of educational professionals as College Associates – our outward facing team of experts. Most of these are part-time roles and are filled by serving or recently-retired heads. If you are considering next steps and feel you have the skills required to engage leaders in their own development and that of the system, then



- Log onto our website
- Follow the link to our Framework
- Register
- Look out for notifications

NB. The National College's Annual Conference "Seizing Success" is in Birmingham on 13-15 June 2012. To reserve a place go to the web-site.