Growing Tomorrow's School Leaders: The challenge

Full Report

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NCSL

National College for School Leadership

Contents

1 Executive summary

- Schools are facing a potential crisis in the recruitment and retention of staff to middle and senior leadership positions. This situation is likely to worsen over the next 10 years.

- Many organisations in other sectors face a similar crisis.

- Some organisations have developed successful practices which help them recruit, develop and retain sufficient numbers of leaders for future needs. The critical characteristics of those practices are that they are:
  - integrated with other HR processes
  - operating within clearly defined frameworks
  - flexible
  - fluid
  - focused on the development of skills and behaviours

- Schools can learn from the successful practices in other sectors but will need to adapt these practices to fit their distinctive culture and emerging models of school leadership.

- These new models of school leadership place a greater emphasis on distributed leadership, learner-centred leadership and collaborative leadership. They will have a significant impact on the leadership succession/leadership development practices adopted in schools.

- Many schools and some local education authorities (LEAs) are employing innovative practices in developing their own leaders. However, the practice of structured leadership succession is not widespread in the schools sector.

- Leadership succession is about developing leadership talent at all levels and, as such, requires more attention and focus by all schools and LEAs.

- All schools should adopt a six step approach to leadership talent development:
  - create a culture for growth
  - benchmark current practice
  - define the leadership qualities you want
  - identify the leadership talent pool
  - assess individual talent
  - grow leadership talent

- Schools, LEAs and national bodies should regard leadership talent development as a key strategic issue. The development of staff to take on more senior roles should be seen by all school leaders, at all levels, as the major part of their leadership role. Collective and integrated action at national, local and school levels is required to meet the future demands for school leaders.

2 Introduction

The schools sector is facing serious recruitment and retention problems for teaching and leadership posts. More than half of teachers are over 45 years of age and less than 20 per cent under 30. These problems are especially severe for the recruitment to headteacher positions, particularly in inner city and rural primary schools, and are set to worsen. Forty-five per cent of England's heads, deputies and assistant heads are now aged over 50 which means there will be a big exodus in the next 5–10 years. This will create a serious leadership succession problem.

However, it is not too late for action. We have between 6 and 10 years before the retirement bulge kicks in. This gives schools ample time to develop existing young deputies and other senior managers and bring in a new generation of colleagues who will eventually be heads-in-waiting. But all schools, and school leaders, must regard leadership talent development as a priority for today, not tomorrow. It could be that schools need to look for alternative ways to address this problem. The identification of the best options may in part be inspired by an examination of those practices that have worked well in other organisations, in both public and private sectors.

This report has been written to capture and summarise how other organisations are tackling this problem and also to highlight good practice within the schools sector. It draws together the themes and principles that are now widely accepted in connection with developing tomorrow's leaders. It also provides some examples of the steps that other organisations have taken to ensure that they have a steady flow of leadership talent to satisfy their likely future requirements.

Not all such practices will be transferable to the schools sector. We look at emerging models of school leadership and recommend actions that all schools and LEAs could take to grow their own leaders. Such recommendations focus specifically on those actions that will supply sufficient numbers of qualified and experienced applicants for future senior leadership roles.

3 Meeting the demand for leaders in schools

3.1 The demographic time-bomb

Demographic studies (IPPR 2002) of the teaching profession paint a bleak picture for the future supply of school leaders. Many teacher training places remain unfilled; fewer pupils are planning to become teachers; over half of the teaching profession will be over 50 by 2006; one-third of non-retiring teachers intend to leave the profession within five years; approximately 20 per cent of PGCE and BEd graduates never enter teaching, and 25 per cent leave the profession within five years.

Given that school leaders are recruited almost exclusively from the teaching population, the trends in the recruitment and the retention of teachers will pose major problems in securing sufficient numbers of school leaders for the future. But this is a problem today. A report by EDS (Education Data Services) in 2003, indicates a record number of adverts for headships and a high level (18%) of re-advertisements for these posts. Above average re-advertisement rates were recorded in some areas, notably the south west of England for small village schools and in other areas for large urban primary schools over 400 pupils. The pool of experienced deputy heads in Primary Schools is getting smaller, with more than one-third aged over 50 and nearing retirement.

At the same time, it is now widely recognised that the traditional model of school leadership – that of the headteachers as powerful heroic single person leaders is becoming outmoded and is unlikely to deliver future reform agendas set by successive governments. Effective leadership is widely accepted as being a key component in achieving school improvement. It is consistently argued that the quality of leadership matters greatly in the motivation of staff and the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. However, the trend in school leadership is towards a multiple model of school leadership – where leadership is distributed amongst the staff and where collaborative practices within and between schools prevail. Thus the challenge of 'growing leaders' for the schools sector is intensified because the number of potential leaders is much higher in the distributed leadership model. Instead of having to develop sufficient numbers to fill the 25,000 headteacher posts, it could be as many as 250,000 leaders to be developed to cover all senior and middle manager posts in schools. Many will be young teachers with only a few years of experience and they will need substantial help and effective leadership to develop their own leadership potential and skills.

A further twist to the leadership supply problem is the continuing decline in the number of men entering teaching. Recent surveys indicate that women will account for two-thirds of teachers in secondary schools in little more than a decade, and for 90 per cent of teachers in primary schools. The government has already warned that educational underachievement by boys is linked to a lack of positive male role models in primary schools, particularly for pupils from single-parent families.

So, against this background, the key questions are:

- Where will future school leadership talent come from?
- How will it be identified?
- How will it be developed?
- Whose responsibility is it to develop leadership talent throughout the school system?

4 What can we learn from other sectors?

4.1 A universal problem

The schools sector isn't alone in having a leadership supply crisis. Today more and more organisations face a shortage of leaders at both the executive and general management levels. This shortage is driven by a variety of factors, including rapid growth during the 1990s, a rise in early retirements, the poaching of key people by competitors and the difficulty of retaining key people. This is happening at a time when leadership is regarded as increasingly important to an organisation's success.

UK companies are starting to realise that recent downsizing has left them with a smaller pool of high-potential candidates. The report (2002) by the Government's Council for Excellence in Management and Leadership (CEML) was unequivocal:

> The UK's economic performance is being held back by a shortage of appropriate and practiced leadership skills. These skills are in short supply from the top to the bottom of organisations.

Organisations have never had a harder time filling key leadership positions. The report finds that the managers who are there don't have the range of experience and skills necessary today, not because they lack talent but because they have lacked the opportunities to develop themselves at an earlier stage in their career.

It is not just a private sector issue and not just restricted to the UK. By 2005, for example, 70 per cent of the senior managers in the US public service will be eligible for retirement. Similar patterns are reported in Canada and Australia. If leadership supply is perceived as a major issue in the business world, the literature on the issue in the public sector views leadership recruitment, identification and development as being in crisis (Scholl 1997).

It is true to say that a genuine 'war for talent' exists throughout all sectors.

4.2 The concept of a 'leadership pipeline'

A systematic approach to supplying leadership positions has existed in some organisations for many years. This process is a deliberate and systematic effort to project leadership requirements, to identify a pool of high potential candidates, develop leadership competencies in those candidates through intentional learning experiences, and then select leaders from among the pool of potential leaders. The aim of this process is to create a 'leadership pipeline' which matches an organisation's available talent to its future talent needs; having the right people at the right places at the right time to do the right things. Clearly this task is made easier if the organisation is able to recruit people with the potential to rise to future leadership roles.

The leadership pipeline

Effective leadership succession planning ensures that there is a leadership pipeline which maintains a steady flow of leaders to all levels of the organisation. The leadership pipeline model is based on the principle that there is a hierarchy of work which gets more complex as the individual works up through the organisation. A generic version of the pipeline (adapted from Charan, Drotter and Noel (2001) may be represented as follows:

Figure 1: The leadership pipeline model

Passage Five

Manage Business

Passage Four

Manage Function

Passage Three

Manage Managers

Passage Two

Manage Others

Passage One

Manage Self
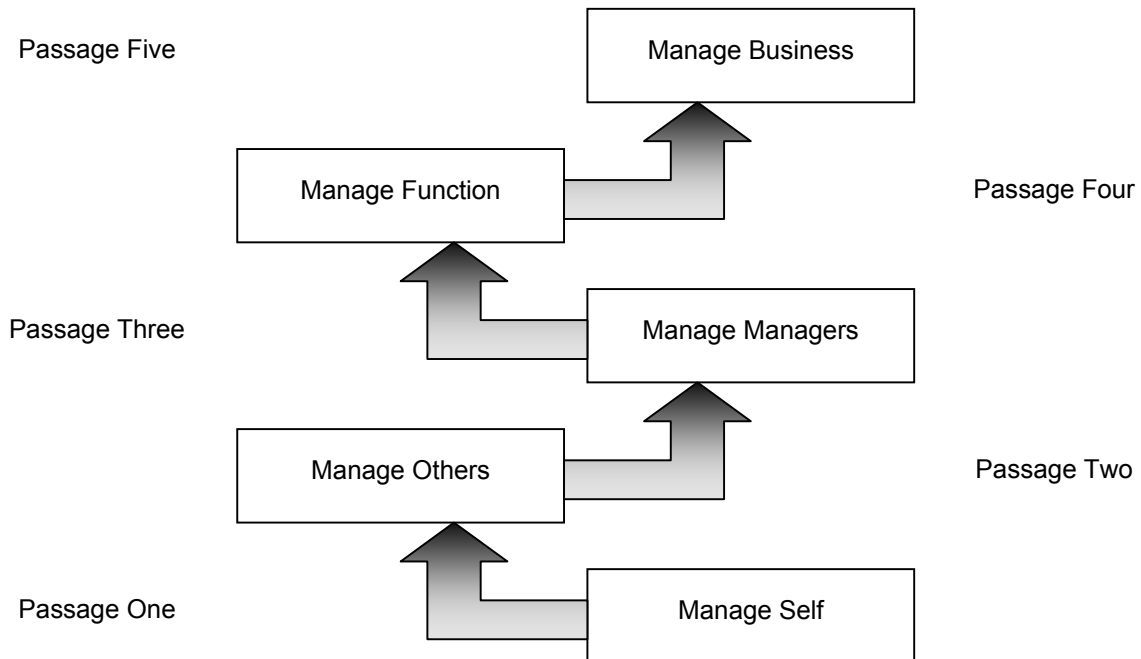
The pipeline comprises a number of distinct steps (or passages), each of which is characterised by separate skill requirements. This traditional process was designed to operate in a stable business environment of unchanging structures and long-term career paths and the process was seen to be linear, as individuals moved from level to level, acquiring new skills and competencies before the next move was implemented.

However, today's organisations need to be more flexible and fast-moving and the requirements of leaders at all levels are more demanding. The emphasis is now on finding a balance between achieving the aspirations of employees and those of the organisation. It is based on a recognition that employees take more responsibility for their career development.

Not a one-size-fits-all approach

What we are seeing now is the development of different approaches to leadership identification, development and succession. There is no longer a 'one size fits all' approach.

We have examined the range of leadership succession and development practices that are used successfully in other organisations, and drawn together the themes and principles that underpin these good practices.

In essence the development of leaders for tomorrow's needs calls on two processes: a leadership succession process which identifies and develops individuals for leadership posts, and a leadership development process which provides development activities for specific individuals at different levels within the organisation.

In Section 4.3 we present a summary of leadership succession practices across a variety of organisations and sectors. We summarise the key principles that underpin these successful practices. In Section 4.4 we draw on evidence from other writers to capture the development activities that make most impact. In Section 4.5 we consider the implications of these practices

for schools. We have drawn up three case studies – one from the private sector and two from the public sector – to illustrate how different organisations are applying these practices (Appendix B).

Not all such practices are transferable to schools, or even desirable. Our recommendations for action by schools are set out in Section 8.9.

4.3 Summary of leadership succession practices

This section summarises the key principles that, in our view, underpin current leadership succession planning practices.

4.3.1 Leadership succession planning is not a stand-alone process

Perhaps in recognition of the fact that leadership succession planning cannot work effectively in isolation, even this term, with its overtones of 1970s-style mechanistic workforce planning, is becoming outmoded. The notion that organisations have specified 'ready-now' successors for each of their leadership posts has been replaced by a more fluid leadership 'talent pool' concept. Instead of making the assumption that specific accountabilities and attributes for a particular leadership position will remain static over time, organisations are instead focusing on the broad range of attributes they are likely to need across the whole leadership population going forward. This shift in approach takes account of the fact that as the pace of change continues, it is increasingly difficult to predict the shape of specific leadership roles and the qualities required to do them effectively.

In spite of this environmental uncertainty, most successful organisations have clear strategic objectives and plans. These, in turn, serve as the foundation for defining the required organisational core competences, and also for shaping future leadership requirements. Tangible links are drawn between strategic objectives and the consequent attributes required within the leadership talent pool.

Even in times of economic uncertainty and increasing unemployment, competition for particular types of leadership talent continues to grow. The need for high quality leadership is universal and increasingly organisations realise that this requirement needs be addressed through **all** of the people management processes. Going outside to hire for the top job may be desirable (or indeed the only option) in certain circumstances, but many organisations are now investing considerable resources to develop homegrown leaders.

Thus leadership succession planning now transcends the move from 'deputy' to 'chief' level, and, for many organisations, encompasses the full employee journey from entry levels onwards through a variety of leadership roles at different levels. In practice, this means that all people management processes support and facilitate the growth of the specific leadership attributes that are required to secure an organisation's future health. Leadership succession planning has therefore evolved into a set of activities that are continuous integrated, and focused on the long-term.

However, human resource processes are not seen as the only driver for effective leadership succession. Many organisations perceive the issue to be broader still. The competition for world-class leaders and the sheer magnitude of the impact that such individuals generate, has meant that the need to feed the leadership talent pool is often a priority for shaping organisation culture. In other words, organisations increasingly recognise the need to develop a culture in which, for example, the leadership attributes and values required are modelled by those in existing leadership positions, and where systems, processes and organisational norms actively support (or at least, do not impede) the development of such attributes and values. Similarly the

need to instil a culture in which those who have the greatest leadership potential are fully engaged and motivated is considered critically important.

The development of today's and tomorrow's leaders touches all of the HR processes for recruitment, retention, development and reward.

4.3.2 Leadership succession planning is based upon a clearly defined framework of leadership qualities

It is universally the case that the organisations which are investing in the growth of their future leaders have a clear and shared view of what qualities future leadership will need to encompass. These frameworks of leadership expectations are generally multi-dimensional. In other words, they cover more than one of:

- previous performance and results delivered (consistent, reliable delivery of results is always a core factor in the framework)
- behaviours, attributes and attitudes – on the basis that these are the strongest predictor of future behaviour and are intrinsically associated with performance and results
- skills, knowledge and experience
- values

These frameworks, or models, of leadership are essential for the following reasons. First, they offer some certainty from a macro-organisational perspective that the development of a leadership cadre is being aligned to future organisational needs. Second, they form the basic building blocks for all organisational initiatives that are implemented to improve the leadership talent pool. Third, they provide a level of clarity to individuals that is sufficient to enable well-informed personal development and career decisions.

Perhaps most importantly of all, a clear leadership framework serves as the unifying foundation for integrating the full range of processes that will ensure a high quality leadership talent pool. These include for example, performance management, recruitment and selection, and reward and recognition, all of which must support development of the desired attributes if they are to be fully effective.

Many organisations are recognising that there may not be one single model of leadership effectiveness required going forward. The traditional view of the leader as 'general manager' is being replaced by views that take account of different:

- routes to leadership excellence, such as technical, expertise leadership or client account leadership
- 'levels' of organisational leadership, with associated different priorities, values and expectations
- forms of leadership dependent on context, which might include for example, existing levels of performance being achieved, the stage in the organisational life-cycle, the nature of the customer-base, and so on

4.3.3 Effective leadership succession emphasises flexibility

Just as the external environment changes constantly, so too must an organisation's response to it in order to survive. In leadership succession terms, this means a number of things:

- The strategic planning cycle is shorter now than it has ever been. As organisations review the changing external climate and identify their responses to it, they are also taking leadership attributes into consideration. It is common now for organisations to review their leadership frameworks regularly, not necessarily with a view to rebuilding

these from scratch, but certainly to ensure continued alignment with developing strategic aspirations.

- Whereas traditional leadership succession planning processes have typically been top-down, there is increasing emphasis now on the need to play to differing individual motives and priorities. In other words, in an environment in which competition for leadership talent is fierce, retention of those individuals who show the greatest potential is a key priority. Effective retention can however only be achieved by recognising the diverse factors that can serve to motivate and engage those in the talent pool. These range from work/life balance issues, to mechanisms for recognition: some organisations invest significant efforts to identify the particular factors that make the greatest difference to individual retention efforts.

- Linked to the above point about responding to individual preferences is the trend towards recognising and defining different career path options. Whereas the traditional model for leadership progression has been via a single route, it is becoming increasingly common for organisations to encourage and to be explicit about a broader range of routes to the top of the organisation. This not only responds to the need for a portfolio of leadership attributes (which may well extend beyond what can be offered by a single individual), but also takes account of the fact that different individuals have different interests, talents, and preferences.

4.3.4 Leadership succession pools are fluid

Whilst the way in which organisations manage their leadership talent pools varies, some core principles and practices are nevertheless widespread. The single most important principle is that the leadership talent pool should not be set in stone. Instead, it needs to be regularly re-evaluated not only because leadership requirements will continue to evolve with changing organisational priorities, but also because individual performance is often situational, ie success in one job doesn't guarantee success in a different role, particularly if the context is changing rapidly. Individual competencies develop over time and, by the same token, individuals who are outstanding in some situations may be much less effective in others and vice versa. Processes for keeping talent pools refreshed typically have the following features:

- **Team leader involvement:** Identification of leadership talent is driven by team leaders. The role that they should play in managing leadership talent cannot be under-emphasised. Even in those organisations that have implemented tightly defined processes for leadership succession, the team leader's role remains pivotal. Delegation of this responsibility to the HR function is simply not seen as a viable option.

  Nevertheless, team leaders are frequently provided with support in this regard. Whilst HR does not typically have primary accountability for leadership succession processes, most organisations would closely involve their HR professionals in decisions regarding the talent pool. In addition, HR frequently provides guidance and toolkits, often plays a significant role in gathering the data that underpin decisions taken, and facilitates the discussions that generate talent pool decisions.

- **Data driven:** As noted in sections 4.3.1 and 4.3.2, there are a number of elements to a leadership framework. A range of organisational data are typically used to determine the extent to which such elements exist in the talent pool. Data from performance management processes are often important, particularly when these are forward-looking as well as retrospective (ie measure future potential as well as past performance).

Another common source of data is 360-degree feedback. Some organisations augment this with other diagnostics, such as psychometric instruments. Robust, tailor-made assessment procedures (often in the form of assessment centres, the output from which also feeds development planning) are relatively common as a means to gathering comprehensive, unbiased data on individual potential, strengths and development priorities.

- **Transparency for individuals:** Whilst it was previously commonly the case that individuals were unaware of the organisation's assessment of their leadership potential, the current trend is to be much more open about this. Even in those organisations that do not single out a specific group of 'high potentials' for focused development input, it is reasonably common now for individuals to have regular opportunities for both formal and informal career development discussions. These will typically be informed by some degree of clarity about others' views of their likely potential and progression.

4.3.5 Effective leadership succession starts with personal development

The long-term perspective that many organisations are taking towards leadership succession means that focused individual development is a real priority. Development is no longer seen as programmatic, or characterised by classroom training. Instead, in line with the assumption that the most effective development takes place on the job, it is common to see organisations implementing actions that are intended to maximise such development.

The more enlightened organisations are recognising the value of personal development as a retention tool. A recent HayGroup study on retention showed that the primary reason employees leave organisations is that they feel they are not adequately using their skills and abilities. Most employees think long term about their careers and want to know that they are able to use their skills, and develop new ones, in order to make career progress. Examples include:

- Increased focus on formal or informal coaching and mentoring programmes.
- A managed approach to job moves, one that takes account of individual development priorities as well as the defined job accountabilities required. It may explicitly countenance a degree of risk or compromise with respect to short-term job deliverables, if the longer-term outcome is effective development.
- A development focused approach to role design, that pays attention to the creation of the best possible development opportunities within roles as well as the more tangible job outputs required.
- Programmes to facilitate less traditional job moves, such as lateral cross-functional transfers, or international secondments, which broaden and enrich individual experience.
- In recognition of the fact that development does not result only from job moves, a developing tendency to identify wide-ranging project opportunities with specific development objectives attached.
- Creation of more formal infrastructures to identify and capitalise upon existing on-the-job development opportunities.
- An emphasis that is now more on opportunity planning than career planning, in order to help individuals and their managers to focus on how best to develop the required attributes rather than the next step up the career ladder.
- Individually-driven development contracts, based on an honest view of the organisation's assessment of current potential and supported by the organisation, but ultimately owned by the individual.

4.4 Evidence of what leadership development activities work

In a McKinsey report (1998) it was reported that only 3 per cent of the 6,000 executives occupying the top 200 positions in 50 large US corporations strongly agreed that their organisation developed talent quickly and effectively. In no area of executive development – job rotation, traditional (internal and external) training programmes or mentoring – did a majority of these executives believe that their employers were doing a good job.

Organisations develop executives in various ways; for example, by giving them feedback, coaching, mentoring, job re-design, assignments and training. There is now a substantial amount of research showing which specific experiences have the most developmental potential. These experiences can be sorted into four broad categories: on-the-job assignments; working with other people (specifically hierarchical superiors); hardship and setbacks ('learning from experience'); and 'other' which includes training programmes and experiences outside of work. McCall (1998) identified 16 different developmental experiences:

Assignments

- Early work experiences
- First time supervision
- Building something from nothing
- Fix it/turn it around
- Project/task force
- Increase in job scope

Hardships and setbacks

- Ideas failure and mistakes
- Demotions/missed promotions
- Subordinate performance problem
- Breaking a rut
- Personal traumas

Other people

- Role models (superiors with exceptional qualities)
- Values playing out (snapshots of senior leadership behaviour that demonstrate corporate values)

Other events

- Coursework (formal courses)
- Purely personal (experiences outside of work)

This list is highly significant in that it indicates the wide variety of activities, other than formal training programmes, which impact on the development of potential leaders, and underlines the fact that leadership development begins long before a person reaches 'executive' level. It is often in the pre-supervisory roles that people get their first taste of the difficulties of working with other people.

In a survey of 60 UK companies (Oliver and Vincent 2000), the three most effective ways of developing people at work were found to be coaching, work-based assignments and internal training. If coaching is done effectively it does not require major investments in training provision or time away from the workplace. Coaching is directly related to work which removes the

problem of how to transfer learning from training courses and other types of development back to the job.

But there are issues about how effective generally is coaching. The study found that the group which is least committed to the development of people is the line managers, the very people who many organisations rely on to do the coaching. The implications of this finding for schools are considered in Section 8.

A study by the Centre for Organisational Research (2001) identified the characteristics of high-impact leadership development systems. They incorporate some or all of the following principles. They:

- use action and experiential learning to make the learning process 'real'
- encourage leaders to take responsibility for planning and implementing their own learning experiences to meet their needs
- encourage development at three levels: self, team and organisation
- have a core mission statement or all-encompassing purpose around which the system and programmes are built, which drives all initiatives and behaviours, is aligned with corporate strategy and is clearly communicated to all staff
- provide development experiences that involve innovation, creativity, strategising and thinking outside of the box
- build a culture that is supportive of leadership development at all levels
- encourage multi-disciplinary experiences to drive breakthrough thinking and innovation (through job rotations, global assignments, development assignments)
- use formal and/or internal mentoring to help leaders develop leaders
- assess the development of leaders from all perspectives (peer reviews, review by superior and subordinates)
- leverage technology and e-learning

4.5 Implications for schools

What lessons from the leadership succession and development practices in other organisations are relevant for schools? We recognise that there are some significant differences in approach and cultures between the public and private sectors as there are between organisations in both sectors. Historically the public sector approach to leadership succession and development has been passive – it has let candidates emerge, whereas in the private sector some organisations have actively recruited and developed potential leaders. In the schools sector the tradition has been for individuals to choose their own development/career options. Until recently there has been little evidence of systematic personalised career/leadership development, and succession planning, at school or LEA level.

Whilst recognising that there is no single approach to leadership succession and development that works for all organisation, we believe that schools and LEAs can learn from approaches in other organisations. The identification and development of potential leaders requires a systematic and creative approach and it is too important a task to be regarded as a peripheral activity or one that should be left entirely to individual choice. Modern leadership succession planning must be linked to the strategy of the organisation if it is to be of value. It is critical to the schools' and school system's long-term success. We look more closely at the lessons to be learnt in Section 7.3.

5 New thinking on school leadership

In Section 8 we make recommendations to schools on what they can do to grow their leaders in order to ensure a more plentiful supply of school leaders, at all levels, for future years. But it is very clear that there is some new thinking on the nature of school leadership today and in the future. In this section we want to explore these new ideas and assess their implications for the development of tomorrow's school leaders.

5.1 The leadership development framework

The National College for School Leadership (NCSL) is a principal source of advice to government and policy-makers on school leadership issues. It has set out a national framework for leadership development which provides a professional development route for the preparation, induction, development and regeneration of school leaders. It sets out its 10 school leadership propositions (NCSL 2001):

> School leadership must:

- be purposeful, inclusive and values driven
- embrace the distinctive and inclusive context of the school
- promote an active view of learning
- be instructionally focused
- be a function that is distributed throughout the school community
- build capacity by developing the school as a learning community
- be future oriented and strategically driven
- be developed through experiential and innovative technologies
- be served by a support and policy context that is coherent and implementation driven
- be supported by a National College that leads the discourse around leadership for learning.

The framework identifies five stages of school leadership:

- emergent leadership – when a teacher takes on management and leadership responsibilities for the first time
- established leadership – experienced leaders, such as assistant and deputy heads, who do not intend to pursue headship
- entry to leadership – a teacher's preparation for and induction into a senior leadership post in the school
- advanced leadership – mature school leaders (after 3–4 years in the role)
- consultant leadership – able and experienced leaders taking on the training, mentoring and coaching of other headteachers

These five stages present possible progression routes through the profession for teachers aspiring to headteacher posts, although the framework is not designed as a linear system.

Against this national framework, the model for school leadership is being re-framed by some new ideas around leadership. In the next sections we will explore four of these new ideas: distributed leadership, learning-centred leadership, leaders as lead learners and collaborative leadership, and examine their implications for the development of tomorrow's school leaders.

5.2 Distributed leadership

The current educational context in the UK is one of rapid and unrelenting change. The pressures on schools to improve and raise standards of pupil achievement are unlikely to recede in the next few years. The real challenge to schools is around 'sustainability' – how can real improvements be sustained over the years? Even in the case of the most highly successful interventions and initiatives, there will be an inevitable reduction in momentum and impetus over time. Sustainability will depend upon the school's internal capacity to maintain and support developmental work.

It is in this context that the development of the concept of distributed leadership has taken root. Research has shown that schools can sustain improvement through capacity building and equipping teachers to lead innovation and development. The clear message is that to sustain improvement requires the leadership capability of the many rather than the few and that improvements in learning are more likely to be achieved when leadership is located closest to the classroom and distributed throughout the school.

Everybody is a leader

The group for which most change is envisaged is in the 'middle tier' of schools, ie heads of department in secondary schools; subject leader/key stage co-ordinators in primary schools.

In primary schools, most teachers lead one or more curricular areas, as subject and specialist leaders. These roles play a very significant part in the implementation of school policy. For example, the introduction of performance management, literacy and numeracy strategies and workforce transformation are dependent upon the middle managers' ability to bring these changes into the day-to-day working of the school. There are an estimated 250,000 teachers who have middle leadership roles. These emergent leaders will have to combine a strategic role with a heavy teaching commitment. The development of this middle tier presents a critical challenge to policy-makers and current school leaders. Equally it provides an opportunity to secure the longer-term supply of future senior school leaders.

The concept of school leadership is now being applied to the teacher level – the 'teacher as leader' in the classroom. Harris and Muijs (2002) have defined teacher leadership as being primarily concerned with developing high quality learning and teaching in school. It has at its core a focus upon improving learning and is a mode of leadership premised upon the principles of professional collaboration, development and growth. Teachers lead within and beyond the classroom, they identify with and contribute to a community of teachers and influence others towards improved educational practice.

Harris and Muijs identify three main activities associated with teacher leadership:

- leadership of other teachers through coaching, mentoring, leading working groups
- leadership of developmental tasks that are central to improved learning and teaching
- leadership of pedagogy through the development and modelling of effective forms of teaching

Teacher leaders can be curriculum developers, bid writers, leaders of a school improvement team, mentors and action researchers with a strong link to the classroom. The important point is that teacher leaders are, first and foremost, expert teachers, who spend the majority of their time in the classroom but take on leadership roles at times when development and innovation are needed.

To generate and sustain teacher leadership will require:

- **empowerment** and encouragement of teachers to become leaders and to provide opportunities for teachers to develop their leadership skills
- **time** to be set aside for teachers' leadership work including time for professional development and collaborative work, planning together, building teacher networks, and visiting classrooms
- **opportunities** for continuous professional development that focus not just on the development of teachers' skills and knowledge but on aspects specific to their leadership role, such as leading groups and workshops, collaborative work, mentoring, teaching adults and action research

At a policy level, teacher leadership points towards a 'new professionalism' based upon mutual trust, recognition, empowerment and support.

5.3 Learning-centred leadership

School leadership is essentially concerned with teaching and learning. Much of the late 20th century educational thinking was preoccupied with teaching. It is now recognised that we should pay more attention to pupils' learning. A growing body of research indicates that, to implement the change in teaching and learning that we require in order to improve, schools need to adopt learning-centred leadership. Southworth (2003) suggests that such changes in classrooms rests upon leaders focusing on five levels of learning:

- teacher learning
- collaborative group learning
- organisational learning
- leadership learning
- learning networks

By developing these levels of learning school leaders will create the conditions in their schools that will enable the workplace to be a positive, professional learning environment for adults as well as for students.

Stoll, Fink and Earl (2003) set out the seven inter-related learnings for 'leaders for learning':

- understanding learning
- making connections
- futures thinking
- contextual knowledge
- critical thinking
- political acumen
- emotional understanding

This is a very different set of qualities from those which are found in the National Standards for Headteachers. These seven learnings present school leadership in a holistic rather than reductionist way. In so doing they present a possible leadership journey for 21st century school leaders. A key point – from a developmental perspective – is that leaders of learning have to enhance their own learning as well as enhancing others' learning. This links to the concept of leaders as lead learners.
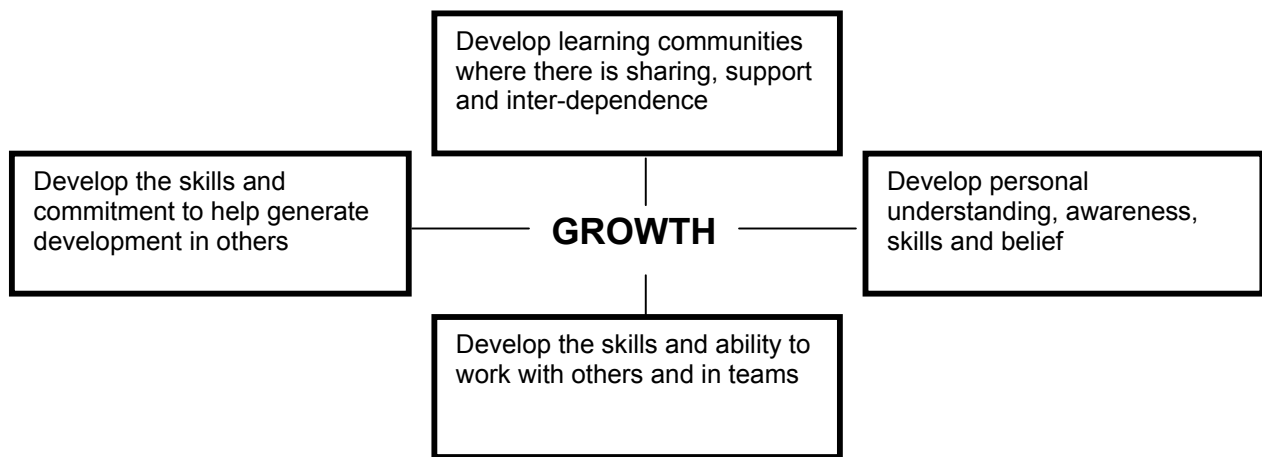
5.4 Leaders as lead learners

> If we are to fully prepare and equip our school leaders for their roles we must concentrate on the individual growth of leaders and those they are responsible for. (Kenning 2002)

Kenning argues that the type of leader needed in today's schools is a lead learner who is constantly re-interpreting the things which are already understood, then 'letting go' in order to move the school forward in the interests of the individual learner.

To encourage such qualities, leaders need an 'intelligent gaze', to be able to look at themselves in the mirror of self-awareness and reflect on who they are as people. One way of doing this is for individuals, teams and organisations to embark on a journey of continuous self-discovery, during which individuals move towards the accomplishment of personal mastery and develop the skills to work with and support the development of others.

Figure 2: The components of individual, team and organisational growth (Kenning)

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                    ┌──────────────────────────┐
                    │ Develop learning         │
                    │ communities where there  │
                    │ is sharing, support      │
                    │ and inter-dependence     │
                    └────────────┬─────────────┘
┌──────────────────────┐        │        ┌──────────────────────┐
│ Develop the skills   │        │        │ Develop personal     │
│ and commitment to    │──── GROWTH ─────│ understanding,       │
│ help generate        │        │        │ awareness, skills    │
│ development in others │        │        │ and belief           │
└──────────────────────┘        │        └──────────────────────┘
                    ┌────────────┴─────────────┐
                    │ Develop the skills and   │
                    │ ability to work with     │
                    │ others and in teams      │
                    └──────────────────────────┘
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Through focusing on individual growth we can develop the self-confidence of our leaders. For this to happen effectively will require some schools to change fundamentally, with the leaders in these schools becoming lead learners, actively leading their own development and helping others to grow.

5.5 Collaborative leadership

Another idea which is making a significant impact on current thinking about leadership in schools is the concept of collaborative working. Networked learning communities, within and between schools, are now accepted as a more effective way of bringing about and sustaining school improvements. In this context school leaders needs to operate on a wider canvas, and they need to demonstrate collaborative, rather than competitive, leadership behaviours.

5.6 The new leadership curriculum

We are making the point that leadership development activities must be future-focused as well as addressing present day needs. The emerging models of school leadership will have a significant impact on the 'what' and the 'how' of future leadership development and succession practices. The new models put a greater emphasis on team working, working collaboratively across school communities, influencing across networks, and sharing leadership with others, as

well as being learning-centred. The focus of school leaders should be to build capacity – the ability of the school to respond to change – by creating a genuine learning organisation which places a higher premium on people's skills, imagination and capabilities. The new models require the development of leaders' skills (at all levels) in the following areas:

- a high level of interpersonal skills and the ability to communicate, motivate and mobilise people towards shared goals
- the ability to create a positive working climate so that people feel free to challenge and communicate their ideas
- involving more people in the decision-making and decision-taking processes so that many other are able to contribute and enjoy enhanced levels of commitment to the aims and objectives of the school
- leadership of learning – the leaders must be experts on how adults and students learn
- skilled coaches – if schools are to become leader-full communities, it will require significant amounts of skilled coaching from those in senior leadership positions

One key issue which needs to be addressed is the progression to leadership. The Leadership Development Framework presents a route way from emergent to experienced to consultant leadership. In future schools will there be only one pathway to leadership? As schools move away from the 'one leader' model, could we envisage a school with different types of leader? For example Senge (1999) identifies executive leaders, line leaders and network leaders. As more and different leadership roles are identified, different pathways through the profession to different leadership roles are opened up. That, in turn, influences the leadership curriculum which is provided to prepare people for these roles.

The implications of these changes, and possible changes, to the leadership curriculum have been identified by NCSL (2001). They are that the school leadership curriculum must:

- be designed around principles of knowledge creation and transfer
- be focused on the promotion of learning, the context of the school and capacity building
- be inclusive and skills focused on the instructional, the organisational/strategic and personal/interpersonal domains
- promote skill acquisition, innovation and inquiry
- assist in the implementation of the transformation agenda, and, in so doing, promotes a discourse around leadership for learning

6 Innovative practices in some schools

We have looked for evidence of leadership succession and development practices in schools. If we refer back to the definition of leadership succession planning as set out in Section 4, ie "a process of identifying successors for key posts and planning their careers accordingly", then strictly speaking we haven't come across this practice in schools. Historically, there has been a strong tradition of individuals being responsible for planning their own careers in schools. Also it is a widespread practice generally within the schools sector of not 'to appoint from within'. Deputies have been encouraged to seek the top posts in other schools. In essence, schools are very altruistic – growing staff to become leaders in other schools. Many schools provide excellent development opportunities for those teachers who want to progress to leadership roles. But there are signs that schools are beginning to focus on 'growing their own leaders'. Increased competition between schools and the growing problems of recruitment and retention are causing schools to be more self-serving. Many are realising that the provision of customised and individualised development programmes is a powerful attraction to potential applicants.

In some LEAs, there has been a more systematic approach to 'growing leaders'. An LEA can operate an 'internal market' for leadership development and placement – there are economies of scale. There are some examples of individuals being targeted for growth and development within the LEA's schools. This is as close as we get to structured leadership succession practices in the schools sector.

However, we have found many examples of excellent leadership development practices in schools and these are illustrated in the case studies below.

6.1 Case studies from schools and LEAs

This section illustrates a range of leadership development activities operating in primary and secondary schools, and a few LEAs. We have grouped them into a number of connecting themes:

These primary schools set about creating a positive climate for development

> I disbanded the senior management team. It was ineffective and didn't exercise any leadership on educational matters. We have tried to create a culture in which all staff takes on senior management roles. We have allocated leadership roles to all of our staff (20). My Deputy and I are the 'leadership team'; everyone is clear of their responsibilities and is empowered to lead in their specific areas. They have to prepare a vision statement, action plans and budgets for their own areas. We find now that we are much more together and take a holistic view of school development. (Headteacher, Primary School)

> I took up my headship five years ago. Prior to my arrival the school received a very critical Ofsted report. Leadership was regarded as weak. So I set about improving the quality of leadership at all levels in the school. Over the last five years, we have developed an excellent track record in professional development. Now we have a good number of talented teachers some of whom will certainly 'make the grade' to headship. They are being given opportunities and developmental support. How have we turned around the situation?

> - We have used Investors in People to target abilities/skills of teachers and to set targets around CPD.
> - We have developed a new management structure to give the infants' teachers more responsibilities.

- Two middle managers were brought in from outside to strengthen our 'leadership capacity'.
- We look for new teachers who have 'that spark'. We don't expect them to stay here for ever. We see our job as helping them move on in order to realise their potential.
- We have developed a reputation for developing staff. This has helped us attract good quality applicants. It's a virtuous circle. Good young teachers replace the ones who move on.
- All staff are involved in 'blue sky thinking'. We don't see strategic thinking as a monopoly of the senior management team.
- We look for leadership potential, and create opportunities for teachers to exercise it and we trust them to get on with the job.

(Headteacher, Primary School)

Growing leaders in small primary schools requires a lot of energy, determination and creating thinking

I took over my Group 2 primary school 18 months ago. There was no management system in the school… the previous head had been on sick leave for two years due to stress. I set about creating a management structure and I am very pleased with the progress we have made and the positive culture that we are developing. Basically, I made every teacher in the school a 'leader' in their own specific areas.

How did I achieve this culture? Each teacher has to:

- agree to a revised job description making clear their accountabilities
- report back to the whole staff on progress in their 'area'
- lead staff room discussions in their own area
- monitor work in classrooms
- monitor the progress of school development plan in their area
- allocate and monitor their area's budget
- develop links with the governing body

These are not particularly innovative, but I do feel they are based on sound practice which considers the needs and aspirations of all those included in the management of the school on a variety of levels.

(Headteacher, Primary School)

As a new head of a small primary school, I am currently focusing on leadership from within the school at various levels.

When I arrived at the school the staff/children had not been empowered to be leaders and we have spent time considering how best to develop leadership with a small school (five staff). What practices are we introducing?

Create a culture in which 'everybody is a leader' (children and staff). We do this by involving everyone in discussing whole-school initiatives and inviting each member of staff to lead a particular initiative or area of interest. For example, when we introduced accelerated learning, we asked the children to design a curriculum and we addressed children's learning styles in our teaching practice.

Each member of staff is entitled to coaching sessions. Some staff have been trained as coaches (I used my Headlamp funds to receive 'coaching on coaching').

We link up with other schools. Staff are released to work on joint projects with other schools. We get great value from neighbouring Beacon schools.

I facilitate release time for my teachers (by taking on additional teaching duties).

All teachers have clear focused action plans which are monitored regularly.

All teachers have got a laptop. This is to encourage them to 'work smarter' and to work more collaboratively with each other and other schools.

(Headteacher, Primary School)

It is often difficult to find adequate support and quality time for potential leaders. However, creative thinking is the answer I believe! Following performance management interviews and from my own observations it was clear that the teacher currently responsible for the foundation stage and also for ICT and science had leadership qualities which needed developing and supporting. We approached it at two levels:

- Planning for and organising the setting up of the early years outdoor classroom which included looking at finance, visiting other early years settings, encouraging visits from other schools planning to develop their early years facilities and allowing opportunity for discussion.
- Planning for non-contact time so that leadership in ICT could be effective and supportive to staff individually and the school generally and also to allow own personal development. With regard to ICT, ensuring that the county's ICT department was aware of the teaching expertise of this member of staff and looking for bursaries to explore developing ICT content. Ensuring that the NOF training was adequately followed up by this member of staff and thus creating a leadership status.
- Giving opportunity to become 'headteacher' for a day – this included all decision-making! This opportunity was the most eye opening for the person concerned as it gave her a real insight into the time management of a head in a small school!

(Headteacher, Infants School)

These training schools start early in identifying potential leaders and have developed their own growing leaders programmes

The process of supporting staff towards the leadership and management of the school begins early in their career. At whatever point they are appointed, a speedy assessment is made as to whether they have potential for high-level leadership. It is often at interview stage that they are ambitious although we must remember that this is not a suitable career path for everyone and some will make it despite their ambition. Performance management reviews also look out for developing signs of high quality leadership. A number of 'home grown' leaders have been internally appointed at the school. Others have left for other schools.

There are a number of stages in the process – some formal but most informal. It is often through informal dialogue that staff who want to progress through the management tiers often 'come out'. It is the task of all staff but senior staff in particular to make sure that advice, support and training is provided to empower them to take the challenge of a whole school role alongside their existing responsibilities. I do not believe there is a standard route to headship. We are finding that our staff increasingly wishes to take the route of the advanced skills teacher as an alternative to the managerial role of senior leadership team members.

One of the strongest ways we have used to open up the leadership functions of the school is through simple actions that do not require high levels of resourcing, high-level training programmes or expensive mentoring schemes. Distributed leadership has been at the core of our work for the past eight years:

- Our *duty team leaders* who control buses at the start and the end of the day and monitor break time duties are taken from the ordinary ranks of the school staff.
- Engaging in *project management* teams also helps less experienced teachers see the importance of leadership in their school.
- We have also operated a higher-level *immersion programme* by taking middle managers and seconding them onto the leadership team for one or two years.
- We have also supported staff in *teacher exchange* as well as *secondment* to the SCITT programme.
- At senior level, the three vice principals are given frequent opportunities to *run the school*. Each VP takes it in turn to run the school in my absence over a full teaching term.
- There is a *rotation of roles* for all senior staff to ensure that they each have a broad range of experience across all of the headship standards.
- All staff are supported through a *quality training system* that involves internal and external courses as well as regular *coaching* sessions. All middle managers are give a weekly coaching session with a member of the senior team.

In my role I have undertaken an MA in education management and MBA in educational leadership. I have also completed the Leadership Programme for Serving Headteachers (LPSH) programme. Leading from example is a useful practice which has to come from the top.

(Headteacher, Secondary Community School)

- Initial teacher training as SCITT school.
- NQT induction week with training for the Literacy Hour, Numeracy Hour, planning, assessment and record keeping, target setting and classroom organisation and management.
- Two mentors – one is a professional mentor; the second is a friend mentor. One sets the standards, the other supports the pace!
- A shadow co-ordinator role is given by end of the first year. This is the learning curve.
- A curriculum co-ordinator role is encouraged in the second year. If they hold a co-ordinator role and they are teachers in one key stage then they are asked to shadow a role for a co-ordinator who is a teacher in the other key stage. This allows collaboration and more learning across the breadth of the primary range. For ICT we have a management team, which is essential to carry the load but also to ensure that if one member leaves the succession plan allows continuity and progression in an area, which is crucial to school development.
- Middle managers are trained as mentors and lead projects, eg Chartermark, Quality Mark, Investors. This give them kudos and credibility for their leadership within the school community and shows them what they are capable of. For some elements of school work they join the senior management team, eg staff

- development and performance management is led by the investors manager working with the senior management team.
- Senior managers have a real working partnership where each is valued for the skill they bring to the team. They then take on the major school improvement roles, eg school improvement officer, staff development (investors manager), SEN in a school which is a challenging school.
- Senior managers not only deputise within school they represent the leadership and the school at large scale conferences. They therefore develop confidence in their own ability and their own knowledge and understanding of the leadership role. This gives a practical implementation of the succession plan.
- Beacon status means that each has to be able to articulate the vision and share the practice. It is crucial for our own development as a school and for the message we are giving others that we are 'singing from the same hymn sheet'.

You can see from all the above that this is about a strong training programme which supports development within a system which all subscribe to and support. We won the SE training awards this year within the National Training Awards scheme and were delighted with this as these awards normally celebrate best practice within large-scale organisations in the business world.

The essential factors are that this system strongly develops dispersed and succession leadership. It is the practical exemplar of what NCSL is calling leadership at every level. It is not coercive, but inviting! Coaching ensures that standards are maintained. Small successes are celebrated and grow to larger successes. Staff are positively motivated to reach for greater heights and then supported to achieve sometimes the 'impossible dream'.

This is about creating a 'can do' culture!

(Headteacher, Secondary School)

I believe that one of the real advantages of schools being heavily involved in Initial Teacher Education is to be able to spot and nurture talent from an early stage. Once you have seen the potential or you spot the potential in the first term, when they have not been trained by you, it is really critical that you nurture and develop that potential.

What is often forgotten is that the credibility of any person in a leadership capacity beneath headship is their ability in the classroom. Teaching and learning is at the total heart of everything we do. As a consequence, any person aspiring to leadership at head of department level or above, must be at least a 'good' classroom practitioner and preferably 'very good' to 'excellent'. It is, therefore, essential that in the early stages, ie the NQT year, when you spot talent, you ensure that their teaching development is nurtured as much as possible. This may mean that if you have seen them in training, you deliberately give them one demanding group whether that be a more difficult behavioural group or a top exam group. You will then want to see how they manage the pressure, as well as take advice and guidance on how to deal with the situation.

Once the teaching has begun (this will continue throughout their career, even with leadership responsibility) we then look to see how we can introduce them into leadership in either a pastoral capacity or departmentally. In their second year they are given a small responsibility under an experienced head of department, head of key stage or member of the senior management team. It is at this stage that I will also take a major part in their development. In my annual interview with them I will discuss not only their performance with classes but also their leadership development. It is critical at

this stage that we try to widen their perspective by enrolling them on external courses and arranging for them to visit other schools to talk with people in similar positions; giving them the widest possible perspective is vitally important.

For talented middle managers it is then essential that they be given role changes to broaden their experience if they are going to move on to senior management. I, therefore, embark them on the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) and if they have been a head of department, I have moved them from head of department to a pastoral responsibility to give them wider experience and then on to assistant head level in the school if they showed the capacity. For the young talented staff I purposely ensure that they have a width of experience encompassing pastoral and academic, so that they have experience of all areas of school life.

When they are embarked on external courses I allow them to attend governors sub-committee meetings so that they can develop the all-school responsibility perspective in terms of finance, personnel management and the governance of schools. It used to be that a number of headteachers were reticent to promote their staff due to the fact that these people would leave the school. Thankfully many headteachers today see that they have a responsibility to the profession and not simply a parochial responsibility to their school.

Once I have people at assistant head level I see it then as my responsibility to give them as much experience as possible, not just within the school but also with boundary management. Not just my deputy but also my assistant heads will represent me at different meetings so that they become familiar with dealing with other headteachers and representing the school. When I am out I designate the assistant heads to take responsibility for each period of each day I am out. I also encourage them to brief governors on their areas of responsibility so that they gain experience of working with governors.

I really believe that more use should be made of the consultant leaders in post at present and the training schools so that leading from the middle, NPQH and, indeed, LPSH developments, offer the opportunity as an integral part of the programme, to spend time in other schools. The perspective gained from other schools is essential to the growing of future leaders and not enough is done in this area on a formal basis.

Finally, a critical aspect of preparing people for future leadership is to encourage them to gain a Masters qualification and offer them support both financially and in terms of time to complete this.

To complete the loop, from the time they embark on the leadership ladder they work with trainee teachers. They are coached in feedback on lesson observation, involved in observation moderation and have trainees observe them teaching. They are brought up to believe in the leadership responsibility of developing others.

(Headteacher, Secondary School)

Some headteachers believe they can spot leadership potential in newly qualified teachers quickly and develop it

There was no hesitation by many heads that they could identify leaders of the future in their own school and within a two to three year period of beginning teaching. These teachers are successful class teachers, highly motivated, hard-working people who began to look 'beyond the classroom' very early on: There was a 50/50 split in

agreement on whether personality traits were inherited. However, six agreed attributes were identified by the focus group: (1) empathy, (2) aura, (3) reflexibility (4) realistic self-belief, (5) drive, (6) astuteness. (Barker, 2002)

The word 'capacity' was widely used, as heads considered what they saw in the teachers… the capacity to cope with the demands of the role, which the heads felt in many ways defied training. Many felt that they had learned leadership (including headship) on the job.

The heads took very seriously their responsibility to train and develop the teachers within their own schools. They most frequently used role-play, temporary responsibilities and were openly preparing them for future vacancies in their own schools. The incidence of the heads actively becoming involved in external initiatives, in order to give the teachers new and demanding experiences, was significant.

The heads felt they were already preparing teachers for fast track. They could not envisage the national Fast Track programme in place at the moment working. The heads could not agree about how fast, fast track could be. There was some doubt as to how teachers would acquire the necessary interpersonal skills for leadership in a short time.

And this secondary school has a very structured approach to leadership development

- All members of the leadership team will take a flexible approach to rotating roles and responsibilities. Areas of responsibility are reviewed on an annual basis.
- All members of the leadership team are line managed by the headteacher on a weekly basis.
- All members of the leadership team are expected to use a team approach, submitting draft proposals and documents for further development by the team and accepting and supporting final leadership team decisions.
- There is an annual residential leadership team conference for planning evaluation.
- All members of the leadership team are actively involved in line management and curriculum monitoring and review.
- All members of the leadership team will use 360-degree exercises within their performance review. These involve drawing the views and perspectives of those who work for and with them about their performance.

(Headteacher, Large Secondary School)

This school is on a mission to create a leaderful community by developing staff and pupil leaders

We involve students in the leadership of the college. They are involved in leadership at all levels and make an essential contribution to the development of ethos within the college. Students are accountable for initiatives and develop skills in strategic planning, policy-making, development planning, high-powered presentations, monitoring and evaluation. We have developed a number of student leadership activities:

- A college council – 150 students representing the whole college community.
- Ambassadors – work closely with the principal on conveying and discussing plans for the future of the college to governors, staff, fellow students and business partners.
- Prefects and monitors – representatives from each peer group work closely with pastoral managers.

- The college cabinet – has the responsibility of creating the strategic direction for student responsibility. Members are accountable to the college council."

(Principal, Technology College)

The college provides opportunities for staff to develop their leadership capabilities. They have devised their own middle manager programme, provide mentors for all staff and organise an annual leadership conference. Four programmes are run jointly with the college governors.

The value of schools working together on leadership development is emphasised by this programme provider

Working in partnership with Catholic dioceses and schools, we manage a leadership programme from subject leader through to experienced headteacher. The notion of 'community' is important within the catholic tradition and complements effective practice in schools to engage individuals who might otherwise not have considered leadership. There are several case histories, including the teacher who said:

"You're a classroom teacher and you don't' think you can get into management."

She was explicitly encouraged by a course tutor to apply for a deputy headship course. Within a year she got a deputy headship. Several others have followed the same route. Schools can do a great deal, but there is a real opportunity to leadership development by participants working together on a well-structured course.

Progression to headship normally takes place outside school not within. Therefore, it is important for potential leaders to mix with others and to get experience outside of their own school. Potential leaders need positive support over the long-term.

(Programme Director, Higher Education College)

These schools also operate an open-access policy to senior leadership posts

I have an open policy towards my SMT. Staff can apply to join with a simple brief outline of their reasons. I know other schools do this – but we do not put a limit on the numbers or the time someone can serve. I think it can take at least a term for people to find their feet. We have four such additional members at the moment. After a period of getting to see how it works, I then discuss with the staff running a school improvement project and then allow them to get on with it. I have supported one mature entrant to the profession to apply for NPQH – and another young teacher will be encouraged to join the Specialist School Trust Leaders of Tomorrow programme. A third member of staff is focusing on e-learning; he has led some staff training and now will lead a staff meeting – as well as giving one to one support. He has been to another school to share his practice with a number of departments. All members of the SMT in this role are also invited to attend our termly SMT residentials and will be increasingly encouraged to work with governors.

(Headteacher, Technology College)

At our school we invite colleagues to join the senior leadership team for a fixed term – one year. Positions are open to middle managers who are all invited to apply to join the team. They make a case for why they should be considered and what they hope to gain from the experience. We try to develop leadership in our colleagues as well as in ourselves. Once they have been successful in their application to join the team, they take part in, and contribute towards, all discussions, including the decision-making

process. They may be asked to take on a specific task with a colleague from the team and work with them in terms of researching, planning or presenting information about the development of an area of the school. Currently, we are carrying out a full curriculum review. It is good experience for our new colleagues to go through this process from the perspective of a senior leader, rather than a middle manager. The team benefits from the presence of two new colleagues who bring fresh eyes and minds to the work of the group.

(Deputy Headteacher, Secondary School)

This LEA offers professional development as an entitlement for all school leaders and encourages collaborative learning between schools

We see leaders as leaders of learning and leadership at all levels of the school, from the classroom to headship. We are encouraging schools to work collaboratively with others – as genuine, cross-phase, learning networks – in order to create a common language about leadership and learning.

(Head of School Improvement, LEA)

This LEA has developed its own Growing our Leaders programme

This LEA is fully committed to promoting inspired and effective leadership at all levels. It recognises its role in securing continuing professional development and valuing and building on good practice for school leaders. In partnership with another LEA, it has developed a Tomorrow's Leaders programme with the key objective of nurturing leaders and potential leaders at all levels in schools.

(Head of Education Standards, LEA)

So far, working closely with its schools, it has identified over 500 potential leaders in primary and secondary schools, each of whom is given an entitlement to an individual development plan with full support from their school and the authority. Much of their development experience takes place in partnership with other schools and other potential leaders in the authority and involves leading projects across the authority on behalf of the LEA.

The authority has found that this programme has increased the numbers of high quality staff working for senior management posts and has increased the retention of staff in its schools. Also, it has revealed a pool of 'hidden talent' in the schools.

This LEA has set up a network of professional development schools

Twenty schools each year, over the next three years, are invited to develop exemplary practices in professional development. Schools which become professional development schools will have strengths in induction, mentoring, tutoring, peer training, coaching, and have a commitment to enquiry-based leadership and action research within the school context.

(Head of School Improvement, LEA)

In addition, this LEA is hoping to establish an academy of school leadership in order to develop future school leaders. It encourages all schools to maintain a professional development portfolio for all teaching staff.

Interestingly, it has developed its own progression route for professional development based on the national standards developed by the Teacher Training Agency. Its framework explores how a particular strand of professional development relates to a teacher at the end of the induction year, a skilled practitioner, or middle manager and a headteacher.

This Education Action Zone uses an external programme to develop leadership skills

We are using the Critical Skills programme as a means of nurturing learning in pupils, staff and with leaders. Our latest training has been critical on heads and deputies but we use different parts of the programme at the majority of our meetings and CPD activities with all staff. Our hopes are that the model leads to a sustainable programme of leadership development. It is based on leading the learning school and relies heavily on the coaching model as a means of enhancing learning capability.

(Director, Education Action Zone)

7 What can schools learn from other organisations?

7.1 The distinctive culture of the English schools system

We acknowledge that the English schools system has generally operated as a closed system in terms of recruitment and career development. Generally most recruitment to schools has come from Initial Teacher Training establishments and schools have developed leaders for roles in their and others' schools. It is a very altruistic system – schools and LEAs have willingly developed teachers knowing that they are likely, indeed encouraged to move to another school or LEA. Collaboration between schools has prevailed, rather than competition.

Decisions about career development/professional development have largely rested with individuals, not with schools or LEAs. Over the years, leadership development has developed in schools as a highly individualised and 'voluntary' activity. There has been little attempt to create formal succession plans at either school or LEA level. This distinctive culture has a strong influence on the ways in which schools and LEA's approach leadership/talent development and is a critical factor in assessing what schools can learn from other sectors. Also, we have to bear in mind that the majority of schools are small-scale organisations – with fewer than 20 teachers. Unlike many private sector organisations, which are generally larger scale, most schools do not have specialist HR professionals who would be responsible for succession planning/leadership development. This impacts what schools are able to do in this area.

7.2 Meeting the future needs of schools

Distributed leadership

It is important that any leadership development practices fit with emerging models of school leadership. There has been a significant shift towards new models of school leadership for the future – the emphasis being placed on involving other staff in the leadership of the school. The reasons why schools are adopting distributed leadership vary. For small primary schools it may be simply a matter of sharing the leadership burden because it is too demanding for a single person, ie the headteacher. Larger schools are more complex organisations and the response is to increase the number of leaders/managers on the grounds that this ensures greater effectiveness.

But this model of school leadership requires individuals to take more 'risks' and step outside their normal role and responsibilities.

> The establishment of leadership at all levels requires a change of culture and structures within schools which challenges not just current ideas of authority and staffing but also issues of pay and career progression. (NCSL, 2002)

Clearly, distributed leadership offers more opportunities to put more individuals into leadership roles. At the same time it calls for an environment in which they are given continuous support, guidance and development.

New organisational forms

Also, possible changes in the organisation of school systems will impact on the nature of school leadership and the leadership qualities required. For example, the move towards creating collaborative systems such as federations, school twinning, collegiate systems – based on collaboration between schools and their leaders. These systems require leaders who are outward-looking, able and willing to work with other good networkers, and influencers.

It is essential that any programme of leadership succession addresses 'future' models of school leadership and provides activities which develop the leadership qualities that will be required in a future school system. In addressing future leadership needs, Fullan (2003) says:

> We need leaders who are good operating at three levels – at school, district and nationally – which means that leaders must be highly effective within their level, and in interaction with other levels… Effective school leaders need to have hope, enthusiasm and energy… and combine a strong sense of moral purpose, an understanding of the dynamics of change, great emotional intelligence as they build relationships, a commitment to new knowledge development and sharing, and a capacity for coherence-making.

In this new culture, leadership development should provide many opportunities to engage in learning to lead (bearing in mind Fullan's contention that it takes 10 years to develop capable leaders). Furthermore, we need policies which change the context in which leaders learn. Learning with other leaders inside and outside of the school is part of this new situation.

7.3 Lessons for the schools sector

Clearly with such a distinctive culture and with the emerging models of leadership within the schools sector, we have to be cautious about drawing too many lessons from leadership succession/development practices in other organisations, particularly from the private sector. Alimo-Metcalfe (2001) conducted a study of leadership development in 30 UK organisations and attempted to draw lessons for the NHS. She concluded that though there are significant differences in cultures and practices between the NHS and other organisations, the NHS could learn some important points from practices elsewhere:

- Leadership is a 'woolly' concept. The term 'leader' is widely used but ill defined. The NHS should ensure there is a clear vision of what leadership means in all sections of the organisation.
- Many out-of-date models of leadership are still dominant in all organisations. Those commissioning training and development programmes (in the NHS) should ensure that trainers and programmes are not clinging to those out-moded concepts.
- Practices of leadership development are in an early stage of evolution with much work to be done to ensure that UK organisations generally can develop the most talented individuals to lead their organisations in the 21st century. Rather than accepting models which have evolved in the private sector – health organisations might offer the private sector lessons in the development of leaders.
- There is, however, much that can be hailed as 'good practice', much of which is UK-based.
- Leadership development should be seen as a set of activities and not as a discrete separate activity akin to a job-related skills development training programme. Health organisations concerned to develop the best leaders need to plan actively how to avoid the dangers of short programmes which may have little chance of contributing to organisational objectives.
- The success and acceptability of leadership development appears strongly related to the robustness of the human resource function and how well it is regarded in the organisation. Those organisations most proud of their leadership development programmes have well-regarded HR processes, including appraisal, people development reviews and succession planning, which we used to stimulate development activities.
- What is clear from the study of leadership succession and development practices in many organisations is the widespread acceptance that improving the leadership capacity

is critical for the successful execution of strategy and delivery of results.
(Alimo-Metcalfe, 2001)

We believe these lessons are appropriate for the schools sector.

7.4 It's about leadership talent management

Leadership succession planning and leadership development is perhaps better termed leadership talent management. This reflects the fact that effective leadership succession planning will be the result of recruiting and nurturing individuals who will grow to fill key leadership roles within the school. Leadership talent management is concerned with:

- identifying 'pools of talent' within organisations that may be developed towards taking on key leadership roles within the organisation
- identifying talent at a number of levels in the organisation
- positioning individuals against leadership roles with different levels of complexity

In an increasingly competitive environment, private sector organisations are recognising that leadership talent management is a prime source of sustainable advantage. In the school sector, leadership talent management is an essential part of system capacity building to ensure that all schools have sufficient numbers of high calibre leaders.

Fullan (2003) makes interesting observations about creating the conditions in which school leaders can learn and develop:

> It takes some 10 years of purposeful, day-to-day learning on and off the job to become proficient enough to keep on learning and leading…

> We need policies and practices that are directed at changing the conditions under which leaders learn. Learning with other leaders inside and outside the school is part of this... we have to work directly with schools as organisations, and use school districts as local system organizers to create new contexts which do better at student learning precisely because they provide better environments for teacher leaders and school leaders to develop in those organisations. All the way up and down the line we are talking about increasing system capacity – the capacity of the district to work with schools, the capacity of the state to work with districts and schools.

> Leaders at many levels and their associated leadership succession needs separate attention… we should be selecting leaders in terms of their capacity to create the conditions to flourish and make a continuing impact. In this sense, the main mark of successful leaders is not their impact on the bottom line (of profit or student achievement) in the short run, but rather how many effective leaders there are in the organisation at the end of their tenures.

> We will only get quality principals in numbers if we have quality teachers in numbers, because it is from the teacher ranks that future leadership derives.

Since the school sector operates largely as a closed system for recruitment and retention, it is critical that leadership talent management becomes a priority and starts at an early stage of a teacher's career, in all schools. The system 'grows its own leaders' and the crisis in the filling of headteacher posts now and in the future requires greater effort by schools to create a leadership pipeline which will meet future requirements.

7.5 A general model for leadership talent development

We have identified a number of key features and policy issues that need to be addressed in order to develop an effective leadership talent development process. In essence the approach is simple: people with the ability to learn from experience, when given key experiences as determined by the strategy of the school, will learn the needed skills if given the right kind of support.

McCall (1999) has produced a general model for developing leadership talent which pulls together the key elements:

Figure 3: A General model for leadership talent development
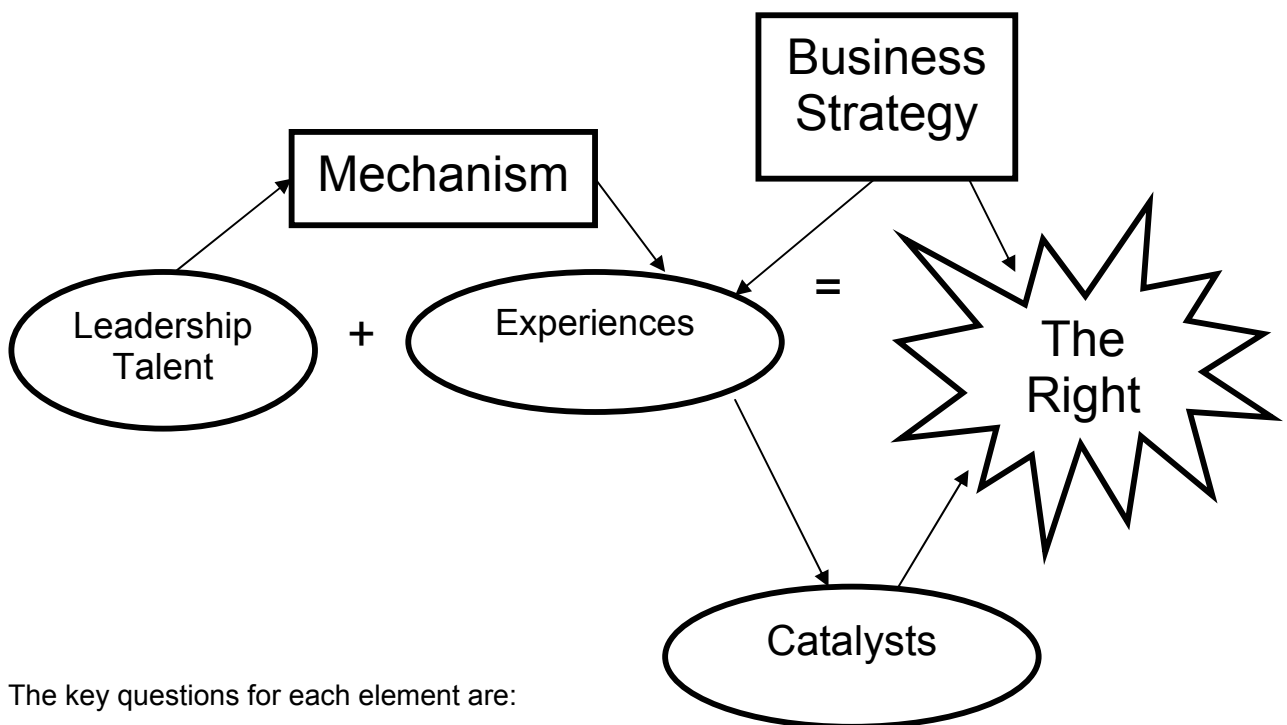
The key questions for each element are:

Business strategy

- What is the school trying to achieve?
- What qualities of leadership do you want to develop?
- How will leadership skills and attributes change over time?
- How high a priority is leadership talent development?
- What are the strengths/weaknesses in current leadership?

Leadership talent

- How do you define 'leadership talent' in the school?
- How do you identify leadership talent?
- How do you assess leadership talent?

Mechanisms

- What are the mechanisms for getting talented staff into the opportunities they need to grow?
- What tolerance is there for risk-taking or possible failure in new, more challenging assignments?
- How do you track development experiences and progress?

Experiences

- What experiences do you offer which will support leadership talent development?
- What experiences are available in the school and elsewhere?
- Who are the best coaches and role models in the school/school systems?

Catalysts

- What is the accountability of team leaders for leadership talent development?
- What is the extent of individual responsibility for development?
- How do people learn from their experiences?
- How does the school learn from these experiences?
- How is feedback given to individuals?

The right stuff

- What must effective school leaders be able to do, now and in the future?
- What are the qualities that you are looking for your leaders of tomorrow?

7.6 A joined up approach

Some schools and LEAs are recognising the links between leadership succession planning and leadership talent management and other 'people management' processes within the school/LEA. Some are offering a guarantee of professional/career development to new recruits. This is seen as a recruitment and retention device and there is evidence that schools which develop a reputation as 'a place which will enable you to grow and get on' will attract higher calibre applicants. Also, they are more likely to lose fewer staff if internal conditions encourage personal growth and development.

One of the lessons from our study of these practices in other organisations is that successful leadership succession planning/talent management is not a 'stand alone' process – it is integrated into a broader HR system which seeks to link and resolve these issues:

- What is our organisation's core purpose?
- What are our strategies to fulfil this purpose?
- What leadership roles do we need to help us achieve this purpose?
- What knowledge, skills, experience and competencies do school leaders need to be successful?
- How do we recruit people with these qualities?
- How do we develop them?
- How do we manage individual performance?
- How do we reward and recognise individual leaders' contributions?
- How do we retain key staff?
- How do we fill leadership positions when people leave?

Leadership and talent management is a core aspect of all of these decisions.

7.7 Managing the tensions

Many of the organisations in our sample took a proactive stance in planning for individual career development in order to meet the organisation's future requirements. To a degree the organisation's needs prevailed over the individuals' needs. There is an inbuilt tension between organisational and individual needs. In the schools sector it seems, to date, that individual preferences have prevailed over those of the school. The freedom of the individual teacher to choose development opportunities and career progression is deeply ingrained in school culture. A key question facing policy-makers at all levels in the school sector is what is the 'right' balance between the school and the individual in this area? Will the current imbalance deliver the 'leadership pipeline' for future leadership roles? This is not to suggest that individuals have to be coerced into leadership development. The successful outcome is to secure a win/win situation in which both school and individual needs are satisfied.

Similarly, organisations outside the schools sector are largely competing with each other. Therefore, leadership succession planning and talent management is a critical process in order to recruit and retain staff who otherwise might go to a competitor organisation. It is a process that has a direct impact on the 'bottom line'. In the schools sector, schools have operated altruistically – developing potential teachers so that they could go on to more senior leadership roles in other schools. Indeed the conventional wisdom given to all aspirants for senior leadership roles in schools has been to 'get experience elsewhere' and 'never to appoint headteachers from within'.

Should this practice be sustained as schools and LEAs face ever more difficult problems in recruiting to senior leadership positions, particularly into headteachers roles? Will guarantees of professional/ career development be used as retention devices? Will key leaders be locked into 'golden hand-cuffs' to secure their future commitment to a particular school and LEA? How realistic is it to ask schools and LEAs to invest more resources into leadership talent management for the benefit of others in the national school system?

7.8 Traps to avoid

One of the advantages of studying how other organisations have developed leadership succession planning/talent management practices over many years is that we can learn from their mistakes!

This study has been produced by Grensing-Pophal (2001). These are the mistakes that have arisen (in mainly private-sector organisations).

Keeping the leadership succession plan a secret

Organisations have lost 'stars' to competitors because they haven't known that they have been marked out for future leadership roles.

Being narrow minded

Defining the qualities required for leadership in too narrow terms.

Try to abandon labels like 'too old', 'too young', 'too rough round the edges', or 'too different'.

Underestimating the talent within

It is important to take a good look at your staff's strengths. Don't overlook the expertise that another school may recognise (and subsequently lure away).

Focusing exclusively on 'hard' skills

'Soft skills' like emotional intelligence are greater determinants of potential leadership success than technical and cognitive skills.

Expecting staff to identify themselves as future leaders

Both employers and employees share the responsibility to find those with the potential to lead in the future.

Failure to hold team managers accountable for succession planning/talent management

Team managers have a critical role to play in the talent management process in terms of the identification, coaching and assessment of individuals.

Considering only 'upward' succession

Lateral moves may fill needs in your school, offering staff new challenges and opportunities to move on within. This is particularly relevant in small/medium-sized schools.

Developing a 'one size fits all' programme

Generic leadership programmes by themselves are not the way to plan for leadership succession. You need individual plans, based on specific school and individual needs.

8 What can you do to develop tomorrow's leaders?

8.1 A call to action

We have looked at good practice in a wide range of organisations including schools and LEAs. We have found many excellent examples of organisations 'growing their own leaders' in a systematic, focused way. We have found evidence that many organisations are facing a 'leadership crisis' – there aren't enough leaders to fill the demand or not enough people wanting 'to step up to leadership positions'. The willingness, and ability of all schools to grow leaders, for themselves and for the wider school system, is of vital importance for the future of schools. But the task of growing leaders has to be forward-looking; the development activities and models of leadership used to develop people have to match the emerging patterns of school leadership and school organisation. And the focus of school-based leadership growth activities has to be rooted in the culture of a learning community:

> Schools that sustain deep learning experiences for all pupils should address the breadth of school leadership in supporting and promoting the learning of present and future school leadership themselves. They should address the length and sustainability of school leadership over time, helping leaders to plan for their own professional obsolescence, and to think about the school's need for continuity as well as change. School systems will have to acknowledge and create conditions that distribute school leadership far beyond the headteacher's office for the entire culture of the school… And they will need to concentrate on the leadership skills and qualities that will sustain leaders into the future rather than merely help them manage and survive in the present. Successful leadership is sustainable leadership; nothing simpler, nothing less.
>
> (Fink and Hargreaves 2003)

This is a call to action for all schools to do something now. In the rest of this chapter we examine key issues which impact on this activity, such as workforce reforms, school culture, the division of responsibility and starting-points. Finally, in Section 8.9 we set out a practical six-step approach which we urge all schools to adopt.

8.2 Reforming the workforce

In 2003, DfES issued a strategy paper, *Time for Standards*, which sets out the strategy for reforming the workforce in schools until 2007. Two of the seven aims have a direct bearing on the leadership development issue:

- The recruitment of new managers, including business and personnel managers, and others with experience from outside education. It is envisaged that such recruits could take responsibility in the areas of facilities management, financial planning, marketing and human resources.
- Headteachers and other leaders to have dedicated time for their leadership responsibilities. This will mean that leaders in schools should have time allocated in their working week for their management and leadership responsibilities. Distributed leadership responsibilities among staff mean that this is an issue for nearly all teachers.

How much time should be set aside for leadership and how it will be incorporated into teachers' timetabled hours has not yet been worked out and will be the subject of consultations in 2003.

Despite recognising that leadership is a responsibility shared across many staff, the strategy paper identifies headteachers as the group who are most clearly denied sufficient time to meet

their responsibilities within reasonable hours. So they will be the focus of more specific initiatives to take effect by September 2005.

8.3 The importance of school culture

> The career development of teachers is too important to be left to individual schools, and too complex to take place outside of the right kind of schools. (NCSL 2002)

NCSL's report, *Building Capacity*, recognises that there is a fundamental tension in the development of individual leadership capacity over the long-term. Many of the headteachers in the study felt that key to capacity building was to introduce teachers to the right type of school culture early within their career.

However, they also recognised that it was often impossible to provide sufficient opportunities for development within their own school. In some schools where there are staff shortages it was possible to give extra responsibilities and promotion at a point that was beneficial to both schools and individuals. And already successful schools, in areas where there were not 'extreme' staff shortages, could 'suck in' high calibre replacements to replace those who had left to develop their careers. Schools with strong positive cultures have the capacity to buy in new teachers into their way of working. However, other schools are more limited in their ability to offer new development opportunities. This was either because the headteachers faced more ingrained and inflexible structures, which would take time to change, or they had very stable senior staff that were not likely to move on.

8.4 A system-wide responsibility

Fullan (2003) makes a strong case that educational transformation will require changes (new capacities) within each of the three levels – state, district and school:

> We need more internal interaction within schools, across schools within districts, across districts and between districts and the state.

Clearly leadership talent development must be a priority at the three levels in order to ensure that the national school system acquires sufficient numbers of capable leaders in the future. Schools cannot do it alone – they need to work with other schools (for job placements, exchanges, joint ventures, etc), with LEAs (and the new regional affiliated centres) for the provision of district-wide development programmes and networks, and with national bodies, such as NCSL, the General Teaching Council, the Teacher Training Agency and teacher training providers. The district and national bodies should provide a supportive context for schools, through technical assistance, resources, information systems and a reward/accountability system.

NCSL has provided a Leadership Development Framework which provides the framework for national school leadership programmes. Currently it is looking at the issues of progression and coherence within this Framework. We need a system whereby schools and LEAs provide the context in which leaders learn, within a national framework. All the way up and down the line we are talking about increasing system capacity – the capacity of the district to work with schools, the capacity of the state to work with districts and schools. At the present time, the accountability for ensuring that the national leadership pipeline is adequate to meet the demands is not clear. Who 'owns' the problem? It seems to sit between the three levels. What is clear is that the national demand for school leaders will not be met unless all schools play an active part in the development of leadership talent, with the support of local and national bodies.

8.5 The role of the governing body

At school level, it is surely a key role for the personnel committee of the governing body to ensure that the school has a well thought out policy for leadership talent development which meets the needs of the school for the foreseeable future. This policy should be an integral part of the school development plan, and, as such, has to be kept under continuous review.

8.6 What about the individual's responsibility?

> There is nothing you can do about your early life now, except to understand it. You can, however, do everything about the rest of your life. (Bennis, 1989)

> If you don't know where you're going, you'll probably end up somewhere else. (McCall, 1998)

By creating the expectation that everyone has a leadership role, schools are giving a signal that the individual should exercise some responsibility for their professional/career development. This is the fourth level of leadership talent development. It is a strong feature in most schools. As McCall (1999) says:

> Change is inevitable; people who do not grow to meet the challenges presented by change will not continue to be successful; and the person with the greatest vested interest in your success is you.

Taking charge of personal development means knowing yourself, knowing what you want to achieve, identifying opportunities for growth in that direction, being proactive in getting those opportunities, and helping to create an environment that promotes learning from them.

8.7 The importance of coaching

In Section 4.4 we highlighted a report by Oliver and Vincent (2000) which found that line managers were least committed to the development of people (in terms of the actions they took through coaching, etc).

If leadership development is to be more widespread in all schools, then more effective coaching has to take place within schools. And team leaders need to be effective coaches. Both individuals and teams require expert coaching. The scarcity of skilled coaches who are good is a matter that needs to be addressed.

8.8 At what level should schools start?

The Leadership Development Framework set out by NCSL identifies emergent leaders at the point when 'teachers' assume some leadership role – such as subject/key stage co-ordinators and department responsibilities. However, some schools start the process of identifying potential leaders at an earlier stage. Barker (2003) reports that the six headteachers in her study (representing a range of primary school size, rural and urban locations and the length of service of the head) all felt that they could identify leaders of the future in their own schools within a two to three year period of entry to teaching. These teachers are successful class teachers, highly motivated, hard working people who look 'beyond the classroom' very early on in their careers. Other schools (see Section 6) start the process of identification of leadership potential at first interview for a post in the school and begin 'talent development' at a very early stage. This is similar to the practices we found outside of the schools sector. Successful organisations look to recruit people with leadership potential and may focus development on key groups of employees

(mostly typically the graduate entry, fast track intakes). However, this has been halted by some as it has been perceived as 'elitist'.
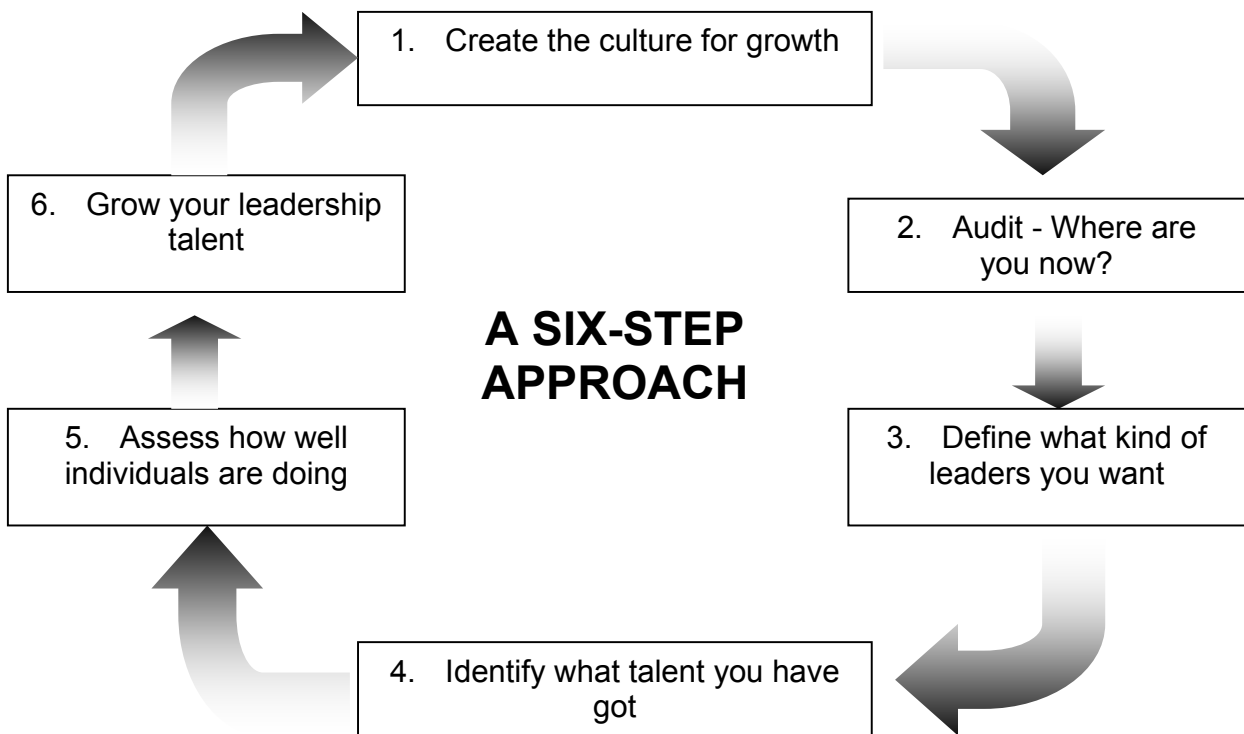
Best practice suggests that a leadership talent management process should be established in order to track and encourage talent at lower levels within the organisation (particularly where retention is a problem and talent pools to fill senior positions are weak).

In the schools sector, there is no doubt that the foundation for effective school leadership lies in being a highly effective teacher. So this argues for resources to be targeted in improving individual classroom practices, from NQT upwards, before embarking on 'leadership development' activities. However, for some outstanding new teachers, they could be fast-tracked into leadership roles within one or two year's entry to the profession. In smaller schools the imperative is surely to use the talents of all staff at the earliest possible time in order to ensure that the (many) leadership tasks are looked after.

8.9 What can you do to develop tomorrow's leaders? – a six-step approach

Having looked at successful practices in other organisations, and identified innovative practices in some schools and LEAs, what practical steps could all schools take in order to give opportunities for teachers to develop leadership potential? From all of this information we have pulled together a six-step approach:

Figure 4: A six-step a

pproach

1. Create the culture for growth
2. Audit - Where are you now?
3. Define what kind of leaders you want
4. Identify what talent you have got
5. Assess how well individuals are doing
6. Grow your leadership talent

A SIX-STEP APPROACH

Step 1 : Create the culture for growth – build a high capacity organisation

Schools must create their own conditions for learning, for both students and staff. Setting the proper context for learning and personal growth is an essential first step. NCSL (2002) has produced a model for building leadership capacity within a school. Capacity, as a concept, describes the degree to which a school, and its leaders, can manage the process of change, handle, generate and learn from change and thereby create the context for sustained renewal.

The model of capacity has two components. First is the concept of the professional learning community – the personal, interpersonal and organisational dimensions of the school working in a developmental or learning synergy. Second is the idea of leadership capacity as a route to generating the moral purpose, shared values, social cohesion and trust to make this happen and to create impetus and alignment.

Figure 5: Build capacity within the school: The three building blocks
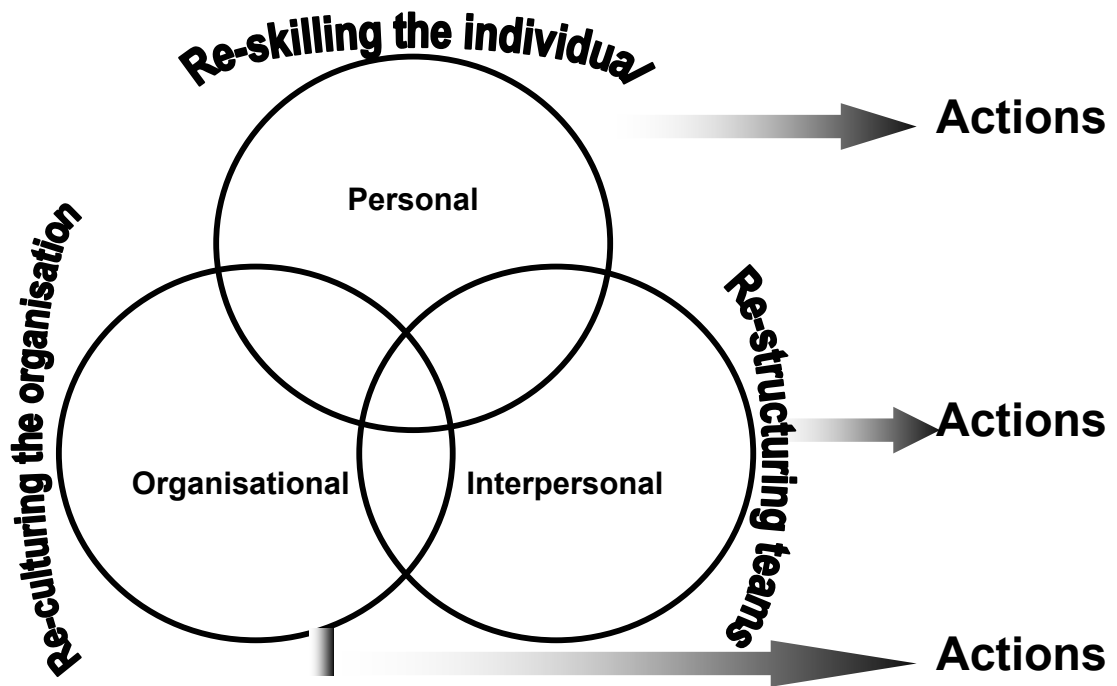
Although the focus of leadership talent development is primarily on the 'personal' area, ie up-skilling the individual, effective practices cannot operate unless there is a supportive 'organisational context'. Developing leadership talent is about schools growing leadership capacity by dispersing leadership roles and functions to a greater extent than most do currently. However, we know that many current school structures do not easily facilitate either the growth of leadership talent, or its wider distribution. School structures need to offer leadership roles at all levels. In order to develop the context in which the growth of leadership capacity will happen, some organisational redesign may be required. Similarly, it is vital to create a positive climate in which all staff willingly share information and engage in collaborative learning. There has to be a high degree of trust, participation and challenge. A positive climate will create the expectation that everyone has a leadership role.

> It should be inbuilt into the culture and ethos of the school right from the NQT coming in with the induction programme, right up through middle management to the deputy and headteacher. Right from the word go the NQT would have clear expectations that a leadership role would be expected of some capacity or other. For instance, running a club, liaising with parents, looking at the role of the NNEB or teaching assistants they would have to manage that right from the beginning. (NCSL, 2002)

The NCSL report, *Building Capacity*, outlines the steps to be taken in order to develop a high-capacity organisation. It includes a headteacher's view of what a high capacity school looks like:

> You would see a very strong team of subject leaders who has clear lines of accountability and job descriptions. For instance they would be leading workshops for parents as well as staff and staff meetings… There would be clear lines of management and a good team structure. For example, the key stage meetings would be led by key stage managers and they would be feeding back to the headteacher… Taking on a leadership role would be inbuilt into the culture and ethos of the school. (Primary School Headteacher)

Step 2: Where are you now? Assess your current process

This step enables schools to compare their current process for leadership talent development with best practice in other organisations. Over time we hope that it will be possible to build up a benchmark against best practice in other schools. It may be interesting to ask staff at different levels of the school to complete the questionnaire and review responses to see whether others agree with your view.

Leadership Talent Development Process Audit	**Consistently**	**Occasionally**	**Rarely**
1 We place a high priority on the development of our leadership talent	☐	☐	☐
2 We have a policy in place for identifying and managing talent	☐	☐	☐
3 We focus our leadership talent development resources on truly high-potential staff	☐	☐	☐
4 The assessment of leadership potential is based on multiple points of view	☐	☐	☐
5 Leadership potential is identified early in a teacher's career for development to have maximum impact	☐	☐	☐
6 We routinely solicit staff input about their career aspirations	☐	☐	☐
7 Our professional development reviews result in tangible action plans	☐	☐	☐
8 The execution of individual action plans is rigorously tracked	☐	☐	☐
9 Action plans are based on a thorough assessment of on-the-job performance and development needs	☐	☐	☐
10 We identify high leverage development assignments in the school	☐	☐	☐
11 We identify critical leadership behaviours and competencies for different roles	☐	☐	☐
12 We provide opportunities for staff to receive objective feedback on these competencies	☐	☐	☐
13 We send clear signals to our team leaders that developing talent is a priority	☐	☐	☐
14 We are clear with individuals regarding our view of their potential	☐	☐	☐
15 We actively manage the careers of talented individuals within the school	☐	☐	☐
16 We offer talented staff stretching assignments to challenge them and maintain their interest	☐	☐	☐
17 We ensure appropriate rewards and recognition for our high-potential staff	☐	☐	☐
18 Talented staff are offered ongoing support in their development, eg coaching, mentoring, action learning sets to supplement any formal leadership development programmes	☐	☐	☐

Step 3: Define what kind of leaders you want

Growing school leadership talent requires that leadership tasks within the school and the qualities required to do them effectively are defined and understood. In all schools there is usually a range of leadership roles – at a number of 'levels' of leadership representing varying degrees of complexity and 'accountability', eg subject/key stage co-ordinator; deputy head; headteacher.

Developing leadership potential over time requires placing individuals in a variety of roles, with an expanding range of responsibilities and accountabilities. Normally it is possible to identify a number of 'levels' of leadership work within the school:

Figure 6: Levels of leadership roles within a school

Level 1	Teacher as leader:	managing self and having some whole-school leadership responsibilities

Level 2	Leads team:	managing other's in team

Level 3	Leads teams across school:	managing teams on whole-school issues

Level 4	Leads school:	primary responsibility for leading school

In larger schools these are hierarchical positions, and progression is made through levels 1 to 4; in smaller schools, the roles are condensed and progression might be made through lateral as well as vertical moves. As far as possible roles should be designed around the individual – to provide roles that will intrigue and challenge your best talent.

It is critical to define what excellence looks like for each leadership role within the school. What are the knowledge and skills required to be effective at each level? What behaviours (or competencies) do the 'best' school leaders display?

There are a number of ways of defining 'excellence', from a fully researched model (eg the Hay McBer Models of Excellence for Headteachers) to an entirely subjective approach. The National Standards lie between these two approaches. They define a comprehensive list of tasks, responsibilities, skills and behaviours for a number of key roles within school. Barker (2003), working with groups of headteachers, sets out six agreed attributes of school leaders: astuteness, aura, empathy, reflectivity, drive and realistic self belief. There are many leadership models around. The important point is that each school should be clear of the criteria that define success in leadership roles and should have a means of identifying staff with these qualities (or potential to develop them).

Step 4: Identify what talent you have got

Identifying leadership talent

Succession planning logic suggests that certain roles would provide pools of successors for other, more senior roles. It is a 'next in line' logic.

Leadership talent management emphasises the management of individuals rather than roles. By identifying individual aspirations and having a clear idea of the key differences in knowledge, skills, experience and behaviours required to move between levels of leadership work the two can be mapped and plans formed to develop individuals. In this approach the focus shifts from the preparation of individuals for particular roles to preparing them to move to another level of leadership work within the school. This provides the flexibility that is required in practice by most organisations.

The use of competency models and National Standards as 'templates' to identify leadership talent (as described in Step 3) is considered by Tranter (2003). Also, she strongly supports the role of an effective performance management process providing ongoing evidence of a teacher's potential for leadership.

'Acceleration pools'

Many organisations are abandoning traditional succession planning practice in favour of a system which grooms high-potential people for organisational levels rather than for specific jobs. Decisions about moving high-potential people up the organisation ladder are now made by senior executives, who balance the company's need to fill certain positions with the needs of the individuals being developed.

This approach, which is advocated by Byham et al (2003), is known as creating an 'acceleration pool system' which develops groups of individuals for executive levels, rather than targeting one or two handpicked people for each executive position. Pool members are assigned to stretch jobs and projects that offer the best learning and highest visibility, and accelerate individual development. Candidates have an assigned mentor, receive more feedback, coaching and training, and participate in special developmental experiences such as in-company action learning sessions.

Acceleration pools attempt to provide two things traditional succession planning systems often do not: an accurate diagnosis of individual development needs and an environment that motivates individuals to change. Also the acceleration pools are likely to create a bigger pool of potential leaders, than the traditional succession planning process.

Early identification of leadership talent

The basic premise of any leadership development model is that people will learn from experiences and will, over time, acquire the qualities that are required to be effective leaders in the future.

The possibility that 'learning from experience' is an ability that might prove useful in identifying leadership talent was identified in a research project by the International Consortium for Executive Development Research (see McCall (1999) p1, Chapter 5). Ratings from the senior managers of 838 managers in six international corporations identified eleven characteristics that distinguished 'high potentials' from solid performers:

1. seeks opportunities to learn

2. acts with integrity

3. adapts to cultural differences

4. is committed to making a difference

5. seeks broad business knowledge

6. brings out the best in people

7. is insightful – sees things from new angles

8. has the courage to take risks

9. seeks and uses feedback

10. learns from mistakes

11. is open to criticism

There are two ways to think about senior leadership talent. The traditional approach is to identify the common characteristics of effective leaders and try to identify the people with those characteristics, through a selection process. From another perspective – taking a developmental approach, the logical way is to identify those best able to take advantage of developmental opportunities, if provided. Obviously the two perspectives would converge at some point in a person's career. The successful outcome of leadership development would be senior leaders who possesses the required qualities to be effective in their role.

> Leadership for learning isn't a destination with fixed co-ordinates on a compass, but a journey with plenty of detours and even some dead ends. Effective educational leaders are continuously open to new learning because the journey keeps changing. (Stoll, Fink and Earl 2003)
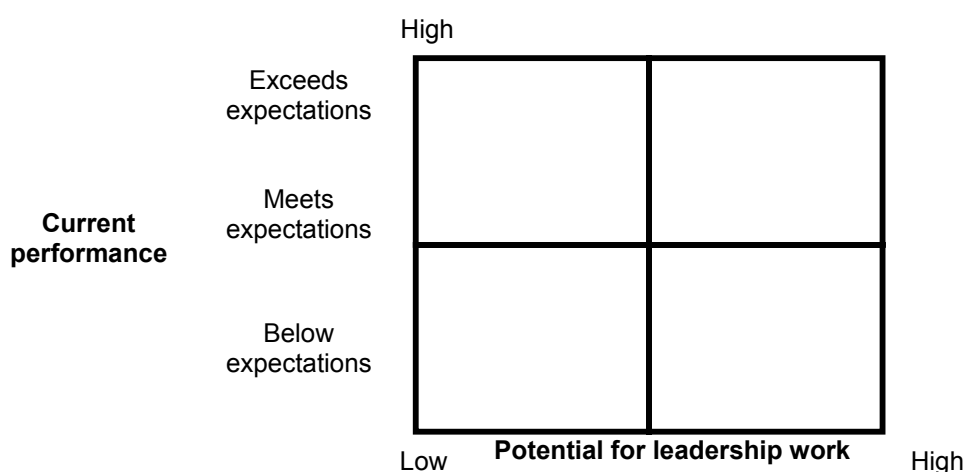
Step 5: Assess how well individuals are doing

Organisations adopt different approaches to assessing leadership talent. Auditing leadership talent could include a number of components:

Performance management

An effective performance management process will deliver informed judgements on an individual's current performance. Also, it might give an indication of the individual's potential to take on leadership work within the organisation.

Figure 7: The performance/potential matrix

High

Exceeds expectations		
Meets expectations		
Below expectations		

Current performance

Low   **Potential for leadership work**   High

The performance/potential matrix is a tool for assessing how well an individual is doing in current job against future potential for leadership work. Clearly high performance/high potential individuals need to be channeled into more challenging levels of work. Current performance may be indicative of potential but, because of differences in knowledge, skills and behaviours required at each level it is no guarantor.

Professional development/talent management reviews

Some organisations separate talent management from the performance management process. Separate discussions are held regarding the potential and progress of high-performing individuals and the talent pool is managed in a less formal way.

Assessment centres

Many large organisations use assessment centres to measure talent in a more objective way. These use simulations to explore individual's level of skills, knowledge and behaviours and measure these against requirements for different leadership levels. Assessment centres can determine an individual's entry into a particular talent pool or indeed removal from it.

This approach has been pioneered in the schools sector by Oxford Brookes University, working with the Secondary Heads Association, to assess individuals' readiness for headship.

Assessing individual strengths and development needs

Below is a framework which could be used to assess the strengths and development needs of those individuals who might be identified for 'leadership potential'. This model has been adopted from Byham (2003). There are four factors: knowledge about the school; job challenges; qualities; potential derailers.

Figure 8: A framework for assessing individual strengths and development needs

Knowledge about the school	Job challenges
• What should a 'leader' know about the school systems, processes, culture, etc? • What does he/she know?	• What kind of experiences/ responsibilities should an individual entering senior/middle management roles have had in school? • What has he/she done?
• What are the critical skills, behaviours and competencies that lead to success in leadership roles in the school? • What does he/she have? **Personal characteristics**	• What personality traits could cause an otherwise effective school leader to fail in their job? • Any evidence of these behaviours/attitudes? **Potential derailers**

Step 6: Grow your leadership talent

A talented individual is valuable to the school and is also likely to be in demand in other schools.

Growing and retaining leadership talent may appear to be a paradox: if talent is developed it becomes more 'marketable' and therefore more at risk. But if all schools accept that they are contributing to a 'national pool' of leadership talent, then there is much that could be done at school level to grow leadership talent. The NCSL report on capacity building (2002) identifies three key activities for schools:

- provide opportunities to exercise leadership
- giving staff the opportunity to take the risks in terms of 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 the classroom
- place emergent leaders in key roles

> What is fundamental in our culture is that there is nobody who is not understudying someone else. (headteacher)

What are the experiences that have the most development potential?

In Section 4.4 we referred to the substantial amount of research showing which specific experiences have the most developmental potential (McCall 1999; Oliver and Vincent 2000; Alimo-Metcalfe, 2001). These experiences fall into four broad categories: on-the-job assignments, working with other people, hardships and setbacks, and 'others', which includes formal programmes and non-work experiences.

Based on this analysis, traditional approaches which usually result in individuals 'progressing through the ranks' are called into question. Development experiences which result in more of the same (small step up in responsibility), assignments with little or modest challenge (exposure) and working with managers who are pretty much alike are likely to have relatively small developmental impact. The decision as to which development experiences are going to be most useful should be guided by the overall strategy of the school. This should indicate the kinds of experiences that it needs its leaders to go through in order to be effective leaders in the future.

What are the kinds of practical activities in schools that will develop leadership talents?

In Section 6 we illustrated a range of innovative practices that are being applied in some schools and LEAs. The NCSL report, *Building Capacity*, listed some activities that would support the building of leadership capacity in schools. We have selected out those activities that are relevant to the development of leadership talent:

Organisational

- Temporary teams are created which take a lead on change initiatives (high performance teams). These have membership from across the areas of the school and positions of staff.
- Leadership roles are rotated annually, to ensure that staff gain experience in different areas and hence expand their repertoires.
- All temporary teams are assigned a member of the SMT who meets them regularly to review progress and provides feedback on how well they are addressing the task.
- A structure is established that ensures experienced staff, who have been mentored themselves, act as mentors to all new staff. The arrangements cut across hierarchical structures.
- Monitoring programmes are aligned to examine professional skills and progress in relation to the implementation of new initiatives.

Interpersonal

- Staff are paired with more experienced staff to fulfil temporary or permanent leadership roles.
- At the onset of new initiatives staff are systematically encouraged to reflect on past change experiences in determining the methods to be used on this occasion. The SMT talent spot potential leaders and encourage them to further develop their skills through leading aspects of the school's work.
- Floating responsibilities are used to encourage enthusiastic staff to gain leadership experience.
- Team leaders have profiles of their individual team members' strengths and weaknesses gained through careful appraisal of their work.
- Staff who are enthusiastic about new initiatives are used as change agents to encourage and motivate established staff.
- Regular discussions take place between the headteacher and team leaders about how well staff are performing.

- A highly supportive interpersonal culture is present in the school, which provides a safety net for staff who are pursuing new and untested strategies.

Personal

- Tasks are matched to individual's abilities and experiences, not to their seniority within the school.
- All team leaders, led by the headteacher, undertake an annual 360-degree review appraisal of their leadership approaches, successes and shortcomings.
- Staff are supported and encouraged to identify their individual training needs.
- All staff have personal agendas that highlight short, medium and long term development targets and relate to whole school priorities.
- Recognition and value is given to individuals' life and career experiences.
- Staff are deployed to work in areas that develop their weaknesses as well as maximise their strengths.
- There is a regular and frequent programme of termly professional development interviews that are used to review achievements and set personal targets.
- The annual training programme includes opportunities to develop leadership skills as well as professional competencies.

9 Summary: The case for strategic leadership talent development

Throughout this report we have argued the case for leadership talent development to be taken seriously by all schools. Given the problems expected in finding sufficient numbers of school leaders in the future, it is absolutely critical that all schools are proactive in this area. Unless more focused and formal leadership talent development takes place within all schools, many schools will continue to face a leadership recruitment crisis.

The case for strategic school leadership talent development rests on 10 propositions:

1. School leadership makes a difference. The more change that lies ahead for schools, the more will be asked of school leaders to lead schools through these changes.

2. The quality of leadership can be improved through focused professional development.

3. Preparation for senior leadership roles takes a long time (10 years?)

4. The schools sector is a closed system for recruitment. It must grow its own leaders or suffer the consequences of not doing so.

5. Derailments are expensive and damaging. The higher the level, the more damaging they are.

6. Survival of the fittest is not the same as survival of the best. Leaving leadership development to chance or individual whim is short-sighted.

7. Most of the cost of development is sunk. Assignments exist and are filled. Some kind of training is going on, somewhere. The question is, are all of these experiences being used in ways that develop 'the right' leadership skills? Is there a sufficient return from the investment of money, time and effort?

8. Creating a positive climate for personal growth is critical. This is to encourage staff to take on more leadership responsibility, assume more risk, and solve whole-school problems.

9. A well through out and effective leadership development programme enhances the reputation of the school/school system. Talented people prefer to work for organisations that invest in their development.

10. It improves the quality of teaching and learning, which is the core purpose of schools.

The systematic development of leadership talent is, in the long run, the only strategy to secure the requisite leadership 'pipeline' for the future. This development process should be tailored to the leadership challenges facing schools today and in the future and to the range of developmental experiences available to schools.

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Appendix A: Outline of the project

This small-scale project started in January 2003 as part of the NCSL's research into leadership development and capacity building.

Aims of the project

The project had four main aims:

- gather and assess leadership succession planning practices in organisations outside of the education sector
- identify innovative practices in this area in schools and LEAs
- assess what schools could learn from these practices in other organisations
- make recommendations of actions that all schools could take to develop leadership talent

The focus of the project was on the development of staff for headteacher positions.

Design of the project

The project was carried out in three stages:

1. Data gathering and analysis from outside of the education sector

- Gathering of data from organisations outside of the education sector; primarily through the HayGroup client base
- Review of literature in this area
- Analysis of this data into key themes/good practices
- Presentation and discussion of this analysis with NCSL

2. Data gathering and analysis of practices within schools and LEAs

- Gathering data from schools and LEAs through the NCSL e-newsletter
- Discussions with all respondents
- Interviews/visits with some respondents
- Analysis of data into key themes

3. Preparation and discussion of report

- Preparation of draft report
- Presentation to NCSL
- Discussion with a group from NCSL's research associates network
- Revisions to report
- Production of and presentation of final report to NCSL

Appendix B: Three case studies

Case Study A: Financial Services Company (UK and Europe)

The business

The core business is financial service – life assurance, pensions and investment products. The UK and Europe operation employees about 8,000 staff. The business has a stable history with a 'talent-management system' (the company's preferred term) that is flexible enough to respond to a changing environment. People-planning systems have developed into an integrated, constantly evolving process.

Drivers for leadership succession planning

The talent-management system is influenced by many different requirements:

- Creating an infrastructure that includes functional specialists, eg marketing, finance, personnel, as well as rounded general managers
- Developing the human capital in the organisation in order to meet financial and business goals
- Having a health mix based on developing talent already within the organisation and injecting new talent from outside
- Having a people-led process and personal development
- Being an employer of choice

Talent management process

The company sees leadership succession as just one element of a process of managing its human capital – an integrated talent-management system within links to performance appraisal, capability (competency) frameworks and development, learning and training mechanisms. These links ensure a cross-organisational approach to choosing talent and supporting the business-planning process.

The choice of terminology is deliberate. The company believe 'capability' reflects a less mechanical, more behaviourally oriented approach to competency development. Likewise, 'talent management' encompasses all the many facets of a truly integrated system of people planning.

Personal development plans are owned and led by each individual. They are expected to take responsibility for developing their own 'brand', asking themselves why the organisation would want to develop them for a particular job or role, and take full advantage of the support mechanisms within the company to achieve their aspirations.

While the paradox is that these aspirations may ultimately take them outside the company, many do stay, and the company's view is that the advantage of this is to enhance its image as an employer of choice.

Talent-review and performance-management processes identify any mismatch between performance and aspirations through a minimum of four one-to-one conversations being held each year.

Staff satisfaction is one of the organisation's key performance indicators and is linked to a reward system. Evaluating this is part of the wider process. There is a monthly 'temperature check' and an annual survey of employee attitudes. The monthly check involves around 500 employees; the annual survey is a census of all employees.

Current issues

Focus: In business terms, the organisation is trying to achieve a great deal. It requires having the self-discipline as an organisation to do the work required to maintain effective talent management. To achieve this, the company is currently building performance management into the objectives of all managers. This mechanism is being devolved throughout the organisation so that each person has 'conducting performance management in their team' as an objective.

Transparency versus secrecy: The goal is to be open through what the company calls 'honest dialogue': "Everyone needs to know where they stand".

Readiness to respond: The ideal is to be ready to respond to new initiatives and ensure they are solid, with connections between each initiative – 'joined-up thinking'. All documentation is being designed to link each process and each new initiative as it is taken up.

Case Study B: A unitary local authority

The organisation

A unitary local government body deliver services to 290,000 people in its area. It has a workforce of 13,500. Services range widely, from education, youth and sports provision, to roads, cleaning, bridges and property management. Some of its services are contracted out.

Change history

The council has faced continuous, significant change over the past 12 years or more, from the introduction of compulsory competitive tendering, and Best Value (which called for a major review of all services), to the move towards working in partnership with other local services and private contractors. Currently, it is in the middle of setting up a new contact centre for front-line services, resulting in a major change in the way that services are delivered. The outcome of this volume of change has been the creation of a very different organisation.

Leadership succession history

Past succession processes were based on task proficiency. People reached the top of the pay scale in their field of expertise and were prompted on that basis, rather than on their ability to manage in the future. Because good technicians do not necessarily make good managers, that create a problem down the line.

Drivers for change

In an organisation with a high level of turnover due to a perceived lack of career progression, the requirement was for a people-planning framework that addressed its specific needs and the culture of local government.

After a major review in 1996, during which it looked at the competencies of the Management Charter Initiative (MCI) and private sector practice, a new core framework was put in place. While labeled a competency framework, it is an integrated system linked to recruitment and the overall business plan and has corporate values at its hear.

The framework is updated every three years – earlier if the context changes as, for instance, in recognition of the need for a more skilled workforce as a result of the greater use of information technology.

The framework

The breadth of the competency framework – essentially an expression of core values – provides flexibility for the changing needs of the organisation.

The system is both present- and future-focused, and assessment uses 360-degree feedback. There are three management levels, each backed up by a competency model: chief officers, senior managers and team leaders. At this level, typical competencies/qualities include:

- value diversity
- Valuing people
- organisational effectiveness
- leadership
- networking and influencing/working in partnership
- developing a learning organisation, and
- problem solving

Standards of performance are ranked at four levels, dependent on the role, with level four indicating readiness for promotion to chief officer/director level.

360-degree feedback

Assessment through 360-degree feedback takes the form of a questionnaire based on the competency models. Copies are sent to the manager, a peer and around four reporting staff. From their responses, a 360-degree profile of the subject's strengths and weaknesses is drawn up.

Subjectivity safeguards come from a benchmarking process that the authority introduced in 1996, beginning with 45 to 50 of its chief officers and later cascading down to all levels of management. It involves an initial two-day diagnostic centre assessment for each manager, the results of which are subsequently used as a measure for future assessments. Any inconsistencies in the 360-degree feedback process are immediately visible. The system is seen as fair and capable of picking up anomalies.

Current issues

Under normal circumstances, all positions in the council are opened up both internally and externally to open recruitment. The new contact centre provides an exception, where positions have been ring-fenced internally due to the reduction of available jobs. Recruitment and retention were identified as high-risk areas in a recent corporate risk analysis.

The authority has a top-heavy traditional executive culture. It is currently actively targeting under-represented groups for leadership positions. The outcome is a real conflict between an internal progression route and the need to bring the richness of diversity into the organisation. The risk factors for retention are currently being addressed through an employment action-plan framework.

Case Study C: Ministry of Education, Singapore

Context

The Ministry of Education faced up to a crisis in 2000 when it could lose a third of its teachers within five years (because of a loss to other organisations), which would have a significant impact on leadership succession in 5–10 years.

The framework

Instead of looking at conventional solutions (eg salary increases – which had shown relatively short-term gains in the past), the Ministry asked a sample of its 24,000 teachers for their views on what it could do to attract more people into teaching, and keep them in the profession. Lack of career progression was identified as a critical issue. The current career structure was a single hierarchy, with the management posts at the highest level. Teachers had little opportunity to advance to higher salaries unless they gave up teaching.

The Ministry came up with a radically different career structure – which offered three career paths, or 'fields of excellence' which were open to all teachers:

- A Teaching Track
- A Leadership Track, and
- A Senior Specialist Track

    The Education Service aims to provide a challenging and enriching career with career paths that cater to different talents, abilities and aspirations of education professionals… we will offer good careers for those who choose to teach and will design a system to encourage as many to stay for a long and satisfying career.

Those who wished to stay in teaching could pursue a 'Master Teacher' accreditation, enabling him/her to operate between a cluster of schools, providing advice and guidance to teachers and developing good teaching practice within the cluster.

The Senior Specialist Track caters for those who wish to be leaders in four specialist clusters:

- Curriculum and Instructional Design
- Educational Psychology and Guidance
- Educational Testing and Measurement
- Research and Statistics

The Leadership Track provides the track leading to the apex of the organisation, ie that of Director-General of the Education Service.

Each track is underpinned by a clear definition of the qualities required to progress up each track and with the guaranteed provision of learning and development opportunities. For example, teachers with at least six years experience can be paid full pay while teaching half-load and spending the remaining time on action research or other professional upgrading activities. This is for a duration of six months.

The outcome

Teaching in Singapore is attracting more applicants and fewer teachers are leaving the profession, thus creating a bigger potential pool for future 'leadership' roles. Also, those teachers who wish to go into leadership are identified at an early stage and given a clearly defined pathway and supported by structured professional development.