

# 1

## Leading and Managing People

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Talk to any head teacher, line manager or head of department and they will tell you that their biggest challenge is to do with the people they lead or manage: they are resisting change; they are not skilled enough; they are lacking motivation.

There is a saying in Yorkshire: 'Everyone's queer but thee and me, and thou's a bit strange'. The problem is that we are complex creatures with different needs, motivators and background and behaviours. Learning to understand other people is the key to successful leadership.

In this chapter, we will consider the following:

- Trust
- Know thyself
- Building a positive culture
- Developing a clear vision
- Building on strengths
- Developing others
- Holding to account
- Leadership styles and when to use them
- Developing coaching and mentoring

### **Trust**

I think the main issue is trust. Working as I do with many groups of middle leaders and trainee head teachers, I see that there is often a lack of trust between senior and middle leadership or within a subject area or a year group. To develop trust, one needs to be trustworthy – worthy of trust – and this takes time. It is achieved in the following ways:

- **Respect others** – no matter what their status
- **Involve others and seek their input** – if you want buy-in
- **Help people to learn skills** – continuous professional development
- **Do the right thing** – working with integrity
- **Be consistent** – not treating everyone the same but treating everyone fairly
- **Share information** – too many leaders keep secrets as a power tool
- **Tell the truth** – again acting with integrity
- **Admit mistakes** – one of the best ways to avoid a blame culture
- **Give and receive constructive feedback** – the emphasis is on constructive
- **Maintain confidentiality** – when appropriate

A friend of mine took over as head teacher in an inner-city primary school where there had been a strong blame culture. She said that in order to break that culture she had to show it was OK to take risks and to get things wrong occasionally. She had to say things like, 'I won't do that assembly again; it didn't go very well at all'. People gradually learnt that it was all right to make mistakes – but it took a long time to build that trust.

If trust is in place, then holding others to account becomes less difficult because people will know that you are fair, that you have integrity.

In his 2006 book, *The Speed of Trust*, Stephen Covey explains that lack of trust costs the US economy millions of dollars per year, because where there is no trust all work procedures take much longer. Hargreaves (1994: 424) states that active trust means that teachers 'feel a stronger obligation towards and responsibility for their colleagues'. In other words, trust creates interdependence.

### **Know thyself**

Understanding others is complex and the first step in that direction is to know yourself. Ask yourself some of these questions:

- Do you understand and have control over your own emotions?
- Do you understand the emotions of others? Do you have empathy? (These questions are about emotional intelligence.)
- Are you values driven? What are your values? What do you care about?
- Do you understand your own moral purpose?
- Can you articulate these values?

Being able to understand where you are coming from is linked to your integrity; if people understand that your decisions are not just arbitrary but are value-driven, then they will respect you. Some leaders worry about articulating their values, fearing conflict but, as Bennis and Thomas argue,

*When an organisation's values are clear, participant's perceptions tend to be more accurate and decision making tends to be simpler and faster. Organisations with clear shared values outperform their peers. And values are less likely to be divisive if everyone remembers that tolerance is a key value in a diverse workplace. (2007)*

Having clear values gives clarity to your teachers. As Peters and Waterman comment: 'People way down the line know what they are supposed to do in most situations because the handful of guiding principles are crystal clear' (1995: 76).

Geoff Southworth (2008) reminds us of the importance of re-examining our values:

*Leadership is a social activity and professional leadership should be based on sound professional knowledge and judgements, not shallow opinions, or with scant regard to evidence, or experience. The underpinning values should be surfaced, interrogated and challenged from time to time, otherwise they become habitual and remain untested.*

## **Building a positive culture**

At its simplest, culture is 'the way we do things round here' (Deal and Kennedy, 1982). This refers to the set of unspoken rules and values that form over time and guide organisational behaviour. Imagine the reception area of your school. What values are apparent? Who is allowed to go into this area? What does this tell you?

The climate of the school is 'how it feels to work round here' (Deal and Kennedy, 1982) – it is about people's feelings, expectations and impressions of what it is like to work in a particular place.

As a leader, you can have a great influence on the culture and climate of your school, faculty or department. You can make decisions about the environment but, more importantly, you can choose how you deal with people. You can choose to be respectful, always calm. You can choose to greet people when you meet them; you can choose to notice the good things you see instead of looking for the bad. When things go wrong, instead of searching for blame, you can say, 'How can we make it right? How can we make sure it doesn't happen again?'

I visit many schools in my job and there are plenty that I look forward to visiting because of the warmth of welcome and the positive energy which they exude. Children greet teachers; teachers greet children and each other. The message being given is: people matter. As you walk round the school, you can almost hear the buzz coming from classrooms. Young people's work is all over the walls.

In contrast, there are schools where I can't get past a very unwelcoming receptionist; where no one makes eye contact; where, when I walk round the school, there are children in corridors getting out of lessons; there is little display and what there is, is torn. Which of these schools would you want your child or a friend's child to attend?

Culture and climate can affect the motivation of both teachers and pupils and can impact on achievement. Deal and Kennedy (1982) and Deal and Peterson (1998) illustrated how dysfunctional school cultures, e.g. inward focus, short-term focus, low morale, fragmentation, inconsistency, emotional outbursts, and subculture values that supersede shared organisational values, can impede organisational improvement.

Take a renewed look at the culture and climate of your school, faculty, key stage, year group or department and ask yourself these questions:

- 1 Look at one room – what do you hear or see that tells you about the underpinning values?
- 2 Look at your school brochure and/or your website. What are the main messages? Are they a reality? What do you need to do to make them a reality?
- 3 Think of the last time something went wrong. How did you handle it? Is there a blame culture?
- 4 How do you know if someone has a good idea? Would you listen to them?
- 5 How are teachers treated? Are they respected?

### **Developing a clear vision**

If you are a leader, you need to lead people somewhere. Do you know where you are going? What do you want your school to look like in a year's time? In three years' time? That's your vision – your image of a desired future. As I visit schools, I often ask, 'What's your school's vision?' Few teachers and even fewer students can articulate it ... To develop an inspiring vision that gives a clear sense of mission is very important for the development of a school.

The best way to develop a vision that is owned by all is to create a process that involves everyone. A visualisation exercise is a good way to start. What would you see, hear, be saying if your school had outstanding teaching and learning? What would teachers be seeing, hearing, saying and doing? What would students be seeing, hearing, saying and doing?

To have an agreed vision is not easy – it will require all your leadership skills – but to have a shared sense of purpose is crucial to real school improvement. Mark Leppard, Principal of Doha College, A British International School in Qatar, has been working on vision. He began by asking his board of governors to think about what the school stands for and what it could be. He asked the

same questions of parents through an annual open forum and all teachers and students via assemblies. The data was collated and used as the basis for a meeting with the senior leadership team (SLT) and the board of governors. At the end of that meeting, they had a rough draft of Vision, Mission and Core Values. At a whole staff meeting, the principal and the Chair of Governors presented the drafts. Teachers then broke into team groups to draw up their own Vision, Mission and Core Values. All this data was collated again and, at another meeting of the SLT and board of governors, a final version was agreed. This was again shown to staff to check there were no strong objections and that everyone felt they could work in this direction. Finally, the finished drafts were sent to parents and students.

Of course, vision on its own is simply a daydream without action. Mission is the way the school will implement the vision; I like to think of the vision as the destination on a journey. I need an action plan (development plan) to help me get to my destination. I need to take people on my journey with me but, as long as everyone is clear about the destination, some people may come a different route.

You need to keep communicating your vision so that everyone is clear about it. All this time you will have been using what Daniel Goleman (Goleman et al., 2002) calls a visionary leadership style – mobilising others towards a vision. Once you have your vision, the style becomes even more important in keeping the vision alive and in people's minds. One head teacher I know asks of every new suggestion, 'And how does that fit into our vision?' She constantly reminds people of their vision. Doha College has made this a question in performance management, where they ask, 'In your job last year, how did you support the Vision, Mission and Core Values of the college?' In recruitment, they ask candidates how they could contribute to the Vision, Mission and Core Values – it ensures a buy-in from new staff. Similar questions are asked at the Head Boy/Girl interviews. They have monitoring days where students and parents are asked how they intend to support the Vision, Mission and Core Values of the college. I think keeping the vision as a living, working thing with students is also important. When I last visited Doha College, Year 10 students were creating posters to describe the vision.

You need to empower others to take action on your vision. This is where you put your vision into action. As a leader, you will begin to see changes being planned or made. You need to check that teachers and support staff have the necessary skills to deal with these changes. If not, do you need to plan a training programme? Similarly, do you have the necessary resources to implement the change? At one junior school I know, the entire staff were told that next term they would all need to teach French. The worry and fear this caused was immense because no one had checked the skills of the staff. Another school held a Professional Development Day and countless meetings to introduce a new reading scheme, only to find that the books took another half term to arrive. This caused a great deal of frustration.

Middle managers will need to create their own vision based on the whole-school vision and they will need to contextualise and give details to the development plan. What does this mean for my department/year group/faculty/key stage? What will it look like in my context? What can my team do to realise the vision? Are there other aspects which are subject-specific that need to be part of your team's vision but not of the whole-school vision? Harris concludes that a one-size-fits-all model will not work because: 'The context in which people work and learn together is where they construct and refine meaning leading to a shared purpose or set of goals' (2002: 24).

You will also need to monitor how the mission is being carried out and frequently review both your progress so far and your vision. Have circumstances changed so that we need to adjust our vision?

### **Building on strengths**

To realise your vision, you need to work with the team you have. In his 2001 book, *From Good to Great*, Jim Collins talks about 'getting the right people on the bus'. This is great advice for recruitment – and you are very lucky if you are starting in a new school – but most of us have to work with people already on the bus. The most important thing is to get to know the other staff, so find out what makes them tick, what they care about in education and what their strengths are. You might already have a view about what they are good at but ask. Some people hide their lights and others don't think skills they demonstrated in previous careers are likely to be relevant. Work to their strengths – this is particularly important with blockers, those who are against change. Use their strengths positively. People are often afraid of change, yet they have years of relevant experience they can use if they are encouraged.

Once you have identified people's strengths, you can extend and build on them through professional development.

### **Developing others**

A good school is a school that learns. To ensure school improvement and retention of staff, you have to commit to professional development. You need to decide what professional development is needed in order to create your vision. Professional development is not just about sending people on courses or organising whole-school development. You could consider any of the following:

- giving people time to research topics
- peer observations or expert observations

- visits to other schools
- shadowing
- coaching/mentoring
- action research.

Dylan William talks about how difficult it is to make changes in classroom practice when behaviours are entrenched and have become the default way of working:

*For example, a few months ago, an elementary school teacher in northern New Jersey was telling me about her efforts to change her questioning techniques. She wanted to use popsicle sticks with students' names on them as a way of choosing students to answer her questions at random—a technique that increases student engagement and elicits answers from a broad range of students instead of just the usual suspects. However, she was having difficulty calling on specific students because she automatically started most questions with phrases like, 'Does anyone know ...?' Frustrated, she wondered why she was finding this simple change so difficult. This teacher has been teaching for 25 years, and we worked out that, over her career, she has probably asked around half a million questions. When you've done something one way half a million times, doing it another way is going to be pretty difficult! (2008: 38).*

William recommends teachers working in Teacher Learning Communities to try out new ways of working in groups. He suggests these groups should:

*be planned for two years*

*start with volunteers*

*meet monthly for at least 75 minutes*

*aim for a group size of 8–10*

*group with similar assignments*

*ask teachers to make modest, brief action plans. (William, 2008)*

Whether you are the head of a school or a senior or middle leader, you cannot do everything yourself. You must develop leadership skills in others. Too often, when teachers are promoted into early leadership positions, they are promoted because of their subject knowledge or their ability in the classroom and are not given guidance in leading and managing people. Alma Harris et al. (2001) found this to be the case. Here are ways in which two schools planned to develop their leaders.

We start with a list provided by the head teacher of Willow Girls School, a school in North London:

- new staff induction – people who are promoted internally are also inducted into their new role
- annual middle leader conferences
- leadership visits – middle leaders visit other London schools
- outreach work through ASTs
- Leadership Team Secondments – middle leaders apply for a year's secondment on the senior leadership team (SLT)
- Leading from the Middle, Leadership Pathways, Tomorrow's Leaders, and other National College courses.

At Holly School in East London, middle leaders who have completed the National College programme, Leading from the Middle, go on to shadow the role of senior leaders and begin to share the role as the senior leader nears retirement. The school feels it is growing its own leaders.

However, head teachers need to be aware that if they are investing in developing their leaders they are likely to get developed leaders – leaders who end up knocking on any artificial ceilings there are in the school. They may be more comfortable with collaborative learning, with leading a project, with coaching, with creating new ideas and may wish to develop these attributes further. It is increasingly important that schools respond to this. Here is HMIE in Scotland talking about distributive leadership:

*The most effective way to perform the range of functions required within complex establishments is by sharing responsibility for leadership. The Integrated Children's Service policy and practice agenda has increased the demand for shared leadership development as a way of supporting joint working. The scale and pace of change is increasing the demand for leaders at various levels and a broadening of the scale of practice. We are seeing a growing shift towards equally responsive and flexible leadership patterns. The practice of leadership has become something that is within the power of every member of staff and not something that only senior staff do. (HMIE, 2007)*

In a school where leadership is developed, staff are helped to make an impact on a wider school; ideas from every level are taken up and championed; it is easy to share ideas and people are aware of what is happening elsewhere.

### **Holding to account**

So far we have discussed: trusting staff; dealing with staff in a positive manner and creating a positive culture and climate; creating a shared vision; building on strengths; and developing others. However, there will be times when you will need to hold people to account. I do not intend to deal with this in detail as my colleague Linda Trapnell will give this full attention in her chapter in this book (Chapter 3). However, it is worth reiterating that if you are explicit



about your values, if you set a clear vision, if you set clear standards, then people know what is expected of them. You must therefore deal with teachers who are not doing their job. I have been talking about your leadership responsibility to teachers but your first responsibility is to the students in your school, and if their education is suffering then you must deal with it.

## **Leadership styles and when to use them**

Daniel Goleman (Goleman et al., 2002) lists six leadership styles to describe the way in which you interact with those you lead. You are likely to have a default style but no style is right or wrong. You need to use the right style in the right context with the right person.

### ***Commanding***

You are basically saying ‘Do it’. Use sparingly. This style will not get people on board but you may need to use it if you have a crisis or if you have to make a stand on a non-negotiable issue. For example, Ofsted are coming in three days’ time and you want to make sure everyone has read the final version of a new policy you have all agreed. You don’t go into discussion, you just say, ‘Would everyone please ensure they have read and are familiar with our learning and teaching policy’. Another example of using commanding is when you have had resistance to something you consider to be important. If after a lot of talking there is still resistance, then you have to say, ‘Just do it!’

### ***Visionary***

Here you are saying ‘Come with me’. For any leader, a visionary style is crucial. You are creating learning opportunities so that young people are ready for a world we do not know. Your vision has the potential to inspire and enthuse staff to move forward. The only time I would advise caution in using this style is when you have staff in your team who hate change, who defend the past with fervour. These people do not need big pictures; they need small steps described so you can link the future to the past.

### ***Pace-setting***

You may well use this style when you are implementing change. You model what you want to see and expect others to do as you do. It can be very positive if used for a relatively short time. However, it prevents flexibility and creativity, so be careful how long you use this style for. If you have people who are strong advocates of your plans for change, this style could have a negative impact.

***Affiliative***

This style is giving the message that people matter. You get to know your team and you show you care about their welfare. 'How is your son, is he better?', 'Did you have a good weekend?', 'I don't want you working late on your birthday.' All of these are examples of using an affiliative style. Many people respond positively to this style but beware of being too affiliative. If you over-use this style, you could have trouble holding people to account.

***Democratic***

You are using a democratic style when you are asking for and taking note of the opinions of all in your team. You will not be able to use this style all the time as it can be quite time-consuming but people generally respond well to it. It is likely to induce buy-in to the change as people will think that they matter.

***Coaching***

The coaching style is one that develops others and shows respect and belief in the ideas of others. I recently saw it used to great effect in a school where a teacher came into the head's office about a problem with a pupil. The head said, 'What do you think you should do?' The teacher replied with a suggestion. The head said, 'Is there any reason why you shouldn't do that?' She was silent for a few moments and then said, 'I'll go and do it,' and off she went. This style is not as time-consuming as you might suppose and can induce huge buy-in and commitment because you have shown respect and belief in your team. There will be a few people who will not respond to this. They will be the ones who want you to give them all the answers. If you persevere with coaching for them, you may affect a change but it will take time. Coaching can empower others to feel they can achieve.

**Developing coaching and mentoring**

Using a coaching leadership style is very effective but coaching in its fuller context is also an effective way of developing yourself and others. If you are really interested in this aspect, I suggest you read one of the many specialist books on coaching but I will give you an outline of some of the general principles here.

Coaching is strongly promoted by the TDA and National College. Within the current TDA teaching standards, people are expected to be coached throughout their working careers from trainee teacher, through to NQT and head teacher. These standards also indicate that we need to have coaching skills and to apply these in our working context.

The National College has coaching in all its leadership programmes. The application of coaching and mentoring is now encouraged as a way of supporting learning and development, whether this is related to classroom practice, broader aspects of professional/career development or as a way of developing and distributing leadership within school.

There are a plethora of definitions of coaching and mentoring with little consistency between them. Some definitions of coaching are similar in nature to other definitions of mentoring. However, mentoring is often seen as incorporating a focus on knowledge sharing and directing less experienced staff. It is about longer-term development and life transitions. Mentoring relationships are usually longer term. Coaching, meanwhile, is seen as being less dependent on the coach being an expert and more on the ability to facilitate the coachee's ability to gain insight, to learn, to change. Some would argue that coaching is more short-term focused; it is about enhancing performance or skills development.

Here are some definitions:

- 'Coaching is the art of facilitating the performance, learning and development of another.' (Downey, 1999)
- 'Coaching is unlocking a person's potential to maximize their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them.' (Gallwey, 2000)
- 'Coaching focuses on future possibilities, not past mistakes.' (Whitmore, 2002)
- 'A collaborative, solution focussed, results orientated and systematic process in which the coach facilitates the enhancements of work performance, life experience, self directed learning and personal growth of the coachee.' (Grant, 2003)

The National Framework for Coaching and Mentoring, designed by Curee ([www.curee-paccts.com/](http://www.curee-paccts.com/)), gives the following definitions of specialist coaching and collaborative coaching (this second definition is not too far from Dylan William's notion of Teacher Learning Communities):

*Specialist coaching is a structured, sustained process for enabling the development of a specific aspect of a professional learner's practice. Collaborative (Co-) coaching is a structured, sustained process between two or more professional learners to enable them to embed knowledge and skills from specialist sources in day to day practice. (Curee, 2005)*

The concept of mentoring comes from Homer's *Odyssey*; Mentor was the older wise guide whom Odysseus left to help his son Telemachus. From this, we have taken the notion of an older, experienced person advising a younger, less experienced person. The National Framework describes it thus: 'Mentoring is a structured, sustained process for supporting professional learners through significant career transitions' ([www.curee-paccts.com/](http://www.curee-paccts.com/)).

Coaching presumes an equality of relationship; both coaching and mentoring are based on respect for the other person and a belief in the resourcefulness and potential of the other person. If we, with simplicity, and certainly going against a number of experts, think of mentoring as giving advice, then I intend in this next section to concentrate on coaching.

Jenny Rogers (2004) gives the following principles of coaching:

- 1 The client is resourceful.
- 2 The coach's role is to spring loose this resourcefulness.
- 3 Coaching addresses the whole person – past, present and future.
- 4 The client sets the agenda.
- 5 The coach and the client are equals.
- 6 Coaching is about change and action.

The last point I think is important. Coaching is not just about having a conversation. It is about having a structured conversation that leads to an outcome. This is why it is such a helpful tool in staff development. I personally think every leader at whatever level should have a coach, to help them reflect on what has happened and to develop their leadership capacity.

So how do you start this structured conversation? Well, first of all set out your parameters, your protocols. Coaching textbooks call this contracting. What are the rules of engagement? What subjects can we or can't we discuss? What is confidential, what isn't? What do we mean by confidential? How long have we got?

You can build rapport by:

- reflecting the learners' language (visual, auditory, kinesthetic)
- body language – attentiveness and mirroring (non-mimicking)
- pacing – matching pace of conversation
- creating a safe environment/trust
- empathy
- time (list compiled by Julia Foster Turner).

In coaching, we must really listen, putting aside our inner voice, but really listening for meaning. Don't rely on directed listening, where the listener is concentrating to make sense of what the speaker is saying – relating what they hear to their own experiences to give sympathy or so that they can next argue their point of view but try to listen for the learner – where you suspend your own judgement and inner dialogue so that you are entirely present to the learner/client. There are huge benefits to just listening to people, but to help people move forward you often need to ask them questions. There are different types of questions:

- Clarifying – 'Tell me more about ...'
- Reflective questions – getting people to think: 'What would have to change in order for ...?'

- Summarising questions – checking for understanding: ‘So, you are saying that ...?’
- Outcome questions – ‘What could be your first step in taking this forward?’

Some basic rules of thumb when thinking about questioning:

- Avoid closed questions – use open questions wherever possible.
- Set short questions – not two or three questions in one.
- Don’t make it advice in disguise! (‘Haven’t you ...?’ ‘Would it ...?’)
- Avoid leading questions, such as those that would take them to the ‘answer’ you think would help them, e.g. ‘Would you agree that from what you have said so far ...?’ (Rules developed by Julia Foster Turner)

Remember that it is your client’s agenda, not yours; you are raising your client’s awareness and promoting their thinking. Don’t be afraid of challenging their thinking – and encourage them to take responsibility for themselves.

## Conclusion

I started this chapter by saying that many leaders view working with people as the biggest challenge. It is the biggest joy as a leader when you see people develop their own leadership and see that you and your team are really making a difference to the children in your school. It is worth persevering. You need patience, resilience and, most of all, time. Good luck!

### Questions for further thinking

- What do you see as your strengths in leading and managing people?
- What areas would you like to develop, and how are you going to do this?
- Is there a person on your team with whom you are having difficulty? Are there strategies that you might try to help you deal with this person better?

## Resources and useful further reading

- Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R. and Kee, A. (2002) *The New Leaders*. London: Time Warner – a clear explanation of the importance of emotional intelligence and the use of leadership styles.
- Kouzes, J. and Posner, B. (2003) *Encouraging the Heart*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass – a good guide to developing people.

- Starr, J. (2011) *The Coaching Manual*, 3rd edition. Harlow: Prentice Hall – a good practical reference book on coaching.
- [www.thenationalcollege.org](http://www.thenationalcollege.org) – join their leadership library for a wealth of material on leadership.

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