



Research Brief 4

The development of leadership capacities across the career trajectory: The Scottish context [Part 1]

This discussion extends over Research Briefs 4 & 5 and builds upon the previous three Research Briefs, examining the implications of **leadership at all levels** for the development of leadership education in Scotland. It draws from a range of studies pertaining to the Scottish context. Initially the discussion is contextualised through an examination of leadership development post-Donaldson [1] before comparing and contrasting conceptualisations of leadership and leadership development which are embedded within the former Chartered Teacher programme [2]; the National Flexible Routes to Headship programme (NFRH)¹ [3]; and the Scottish Qualification for Headship (SQH) programme through the lens of novice headteachers [4].

Forde et al. [1] make the case that, whilst Scotland has some excellent examples of leadership education, there is a need to put in place a coherent framework of provision to foster leadership capacities in all throughout the

professional career of a teacher from Initial Teacher Education (ITE) through to enabling experienced headteachers to contribute to systems leadership in Scottish education. Such education takes place at the interface between the school, the local authority and Higher education institutions.

Why Leadership at all levels?

School improvement and its relationship to leadership

A range of studies identify effective leadership as being pivotal to school improvement [5, 6] but there is a limited evidence base linking the role of the headteacher directly to improvements in pupil learning (57). Bell *et al.* [7] suggest that the relationship between the role of the headteacher and a school's success is mediated through intermediate factors such as the 'work of teachers, the organisation of the school, and relationship with parents and the wider community.' (3) (cited in Forde *et*

al., 57). Forde et al. [1] draw from Leithwood *et al.* [8] to identify that leadership accounts for about ¼ of the overall school effect in securing pupil attainment. The quality of leadership is of greatest significance in schools facing challenging circumstances, playing an important role in impacting upon pupil learning. [9]

This *layering of leadership* was important not only in relation to the school context but at the interface between the school and the local authority. 'Leadership in education is therefore conceived of as being multi-layered and the connectedness of leadership across these layers is crucial. Nevertheless, the headteacher remains the central figure in fostering connections in and beyond the school.' (57)

Forde *et al.* draw attention to the tension between the pivotal role of the headteacher in exercising strategic leadership and the concept of 'leadership at all

It is widely recognised that leadership is not exclusively located in the headteacher or senior management of the school. Hence one tentative conclusion from these findings is to suggest that leadership that is distributed among the wider school staff might be more likely to have an effect on the positive achievement of student outcomes than that which is largely, or exclusively, 'top-down'. [7] (3) (cited in Forde et al., 57)

Reflection Point

'... there has been a tendency for discussions to be polarized, setting 'academic' learning and experience as opposite. ... Underpinning this position is a view that 'academic learning' has limited relevance to the practice of leaders and teachers in school. This simplistic binary thinking has to be challenged and instead of making claims for one side or the other we need to look closely at the principles underpinning professional learning.' (61)

What is your perspective on the above quote? Do you agree or disagree with the stance of the authors? What evidence would you bring to bear on your argument?

What would you regard to be the principles underpinning professional learning? How do they accord with the model set out on the next page for leadership development?

What are the implications of the above for leadership development in Scotland?

Earley and Jones' 5 stages of Leadership development

1. **emergent** where teachers take on leadership roles at an informal level
2. **established** where teachers move into a first formal management post
3. **entry** into headship
4. **advanced** leaders
5. **consultant** headteachers and leaders

(cited in Forde et al., 60)



Leadership development in Scotland post-Donaldson: what next?

levels', as advocated in policy documentation. Gronn [10] argues for both to reside side-by-side in what he describes as 'hybrid leadership'. [1](58)

Why now?

Within the political context of the Donaldson and McCormac reviews and the work of the National Partnership Group [cc. Research Brief 1] there has been an increasing focus upon identifying 'next practice' in educational leadership. As demands upon education have intensified, the role of the school leader has been reconceptualised. Furthermore, as cited within the McKinsey report [11], despite investment in education systems internationally, this has not translated into improved educational outcomes for children. The drivers for change are not just related to concerns for equity, access and reducing social disadvantage through education (56) but to the economic imperative: '*...if all our children, young people and adult learners are to develop and use their potential to its fullest extent and contribute to a world-class economy, providers of education, training and related services must work together.*' (3)[12] (cited in Forde et al., 56)

Next steps

International comparisons (such as those relating to education systems in Finland, Ontario and Singapore) identify that high performing educational

systems had well-established, coherent and complementary programmes of teacher and leadership development. [13] Whilst in Scotland there is provision for leadership development at middle management, it is not consistent nationally or systematic. [1] The authors draw from Earley and Jones [14] to identify five stages of leadership development.

Huber [6] proposes six stages 'within which there will be particular concerns and approaches appropriate for that stage of leadership development' (87) which largely correspond to Earley and Jones' categorisations. (61) Forde et al. [1] make a strong case for enabling access to leadership opportunities for all arguing that leadership should be considered as 'an intrinsic part of the professional understandings, skills and practice of all in the teaching profession.' (61)

Approaches to Leadership Development

A polarisation between theory and practice has characterised debate about leadership development in Scotland [cc. Reflection Point]. Forde et al. [1] argue that it is important to give consideration to 'principles underpinning programmes of leadership development and the construction of leadership embedded in these programmes' (62) rather than seeking quick solutions through, for example, e-learning.

Forde [15] identifies three predominant models of leadership development:

1. *a knowledge-based model* located within Higher Education
2. *an apprenticeship model* based upon learning in situ
3. *an experiential learning model* focusing upon structured sets of experiences to acquire the necessary understandings, skills and personal development.

(cited in Forde *et al.*, 62)

The last of these is gaining credence in an international arena. [16-18] Dempster [18] makes the case that leadership development programmes need to be attuned philosophically and theoretically to both system needs and the needs of the individual whilst also attending to school improvement in the broad sense and pupil learning and achievement. (62) A model of professional learning for leadership development, placing the learner at the centre, is forwarded by Forde and Reeves [19] (cc. Fig 1). However, there is an inherent tension between whether leadership development programmes should focus on the needs of the individual or the system/institution and, as previously alluded to, the question remains as to the impact of leadership programmes upon pupil learning. [1]

Leadership Development and Pupil Learning

Much of the discourse in Scottish policy pertains to leadership as transformational which Elmore [20] characterises within education as 'providing guidance and direction to achieve certain goals' [64]. However, Robinson *et al.* [21] establish that pedagogical leadership had an effect size of

nearly four times that of transformational leadership in terms of pupil learning outcomes. The implication of the above is the need to place 'involvement by leadership in establishing an academic mission, monitoring and providing feedback on teaching and learning, and promoting professional development' (Robinson *et al.* 2009: 88) at the heart of what leaders do. Forde *et al.* note that such a development is dependent upon rich understandings of pedagogy yet Scottish policy documentation, with the exception of 'The Standard for Chartered Teacher' (SfCT) [22], is lacking in this respect. The authors also speculate that the emphasis in Scottish policy upon distributed leadership may have led to a concordant 'loss of focus on the nurturing of expertise on pedagogy.' (66) They draw upon Timperley [23] to highlight some of the tensions and difficulties: 'Teacher leaders with high acceptability among their colleagues were not necessarily those with expertise. Conversely, the micro-politics of a school can reduce the acceptability of those with expertise.' (221) (cited in Forde *et al.*, 66) Thus the authors argue that leadership for learning has to be 'imbued with rich understandings of pedagogy and part of this task is the articulation of these rich descriptions of pedagogy.' (66)

Conclusion

The authors re-assert the importance of interrogating constructions of leadership within the Scottish policy context, ensuring that leadership education is not reduced to over-simplified understandings of power and influence and concentrates upon developing the attributes of the

Leadership for Learning helps to place teaching and learning as the central concern of those in management posts in schools. It also points to an understanding of leadership as a layered and inclusive practice with teachers both working with and leading other teachers in the development of teaching and learning, and leading learning in their classrooms. (64)

leader. Further, they make the case for experienced headteachers to be able to contribute actively to the development of policy through contributing to system-led leadership of education in Scotland and for **leadership for learning** that focuses upon developing pedagogical understanding to underpin leadership development for all.

Key Messages

- ❖ The need for a coherent programme of leadership development in Scotland which addresses the needs of leaders at all stages of career development.
- ❖ The need to ensure that leadership development is founded upon understandings of what constitutes leadership.
- ❖ The need to recognise that effective experiential learning integrates both theory and practice seamlessly – there should not be a dichotomy between theory and practice.
- ❖ The need within leadership programmes to integrate pedagogical understanding (and to put in place systems, structures and supports to further it) with understanding of leadership and management.

Figure 1: Forde's model of leadership development



References

1. Forde, C., M. McMahon, and B. Dickson, *Leadership Development in Scotland: after Donaldson*. Scottish Educational Review, 2011. **43**(2): p. 55-69.
2. Reeves, J. and V. Drew, *Relays and relations: tracking a policy initiative for improving teacher professionalism*. Journal of Education Policy, 2012. **27**(6): p. 711-730.
3. Forde, C., M. McMahon, and P. Gronn, *Designing individualised leadership development programmes*. School Leadership & Management: Formerly School Organisation, 2013. **33**(5): p. 440-456.
4. Crawford, M., *Novice head teachers in Scotland: competing expectations*. School Leadership & Management: Formerly School Organisation, 2012. **32**(3): p. 279-290.
5. Hallinger, P. and R. Heck, *Exploring the principal's contribution to school effectiveness: 1980-1995*. School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 1998. **9**: p. 157-191.
6. Huber, S.G., *Preparing school leaders for the 21st century: An international comparison of development programs in 15 countries*. 2004, Lisse, Netherlands: Taylor and Francis.
7. Bell, L., R. Bolam, and L. Cubillo, *A systematic review of the impact of school leadership and management on student outcomes*. 2003, EPPI-Centre, Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London.: Research Evidence Library, London.
8. Leithwood, K., et al., *Review of Research: How Leadership Influences Student Learning*. 2006, University of Minnesota, University of Toronto and The Wallace Foundation.: USA and Canada.
9. Leithwood, K., et al., *Successful School Leadership: What it is and how it influences pupil learning*. 2006, National College for School Leadership. Research Report 800: Nottingham.
10. Gronn, P., *Hybrid Leadership*, in *Distributed Leadership According to the Evidence*, K. Leithwood, B. Mascall, and T. Strauss, Editors. 2009, Routledge: London. p. 17-40.
11. McKinsey and Company, *How the world's most improved school systems keep getting better*. 2010.
12. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education, *Leadership for Learning: The Challenges of leading in times of change*. 2007, Her Majesty's Stationery Office: Edinburgh.
13. Darling-Hammond, L. and R. Rothman, *Teacher and Leader Effectiveness in High-Performing Education Systems*. 2011, Alliance for Excellent Education and Stanford, CA: Stanford Centre for Opportunity Policy in Education.: USA, Washington, D.C.
14. Earley, P. and J. Jones, *Accelerated Leadership Development: Fast Tracking School Leaders*. 2010, Institute of Education, University of London.: Bedford Way Papers, London.
15. Forde, C., *Leadership for learning: educating educational leaders* in *The International Handbook of Leadership for Learning* T. Townsend and J. Macbeath, Editors. 2011, Springer: Dordrecht. p. 353-72.
16. Huber, S.G., *School leadership and school leadership development: Adjusting leadership theories and development programs to values and the core purpose of school*. Journal of Educational Administration, 2011. **42**(6): p. 669-684.
17. Davis, S., et al., *School Leadership Study: Developing successful principals*. 2005, Stanford Educational Leadership Institute: Stanford, CA., USA.
18. Dempster, N., S. Lovett, and B. Fluckiger, *Strategies to Develop School Leadership: A select literature review*. 2011, Australia Institute for Teaching and School Leadership: Melbourne, Australia.
19. Forde, C. and J. Reeves, in *Developing Your Personal Learning Programme*. 2011, Western SQH Consortium: Glasgow.
20. Elmore, R.F., *School reform from the inside out: Policy, practice, and performance*. 2004, Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
21. Robinson, V., M. Hohepa, and C. Lloyd, *School Leadership and Student Outcomes: Identifying What Works and Why, Best Synthesis Iteration (BES)*. 2009, Ministry of Education: Wellington, New Zealand.
22. General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS), *The Standard for Chartered Teacher*. 2009, General Teaching Council for Scotland: Edinburgh.
23. Timperley, H., *Distributing Leadership to Improve Outcomes for Students*, in *Distributed Leadership According to the Evidence*, K. Leithwood, B. Mascall, and T. Strauss, T., Editors. 2009, Routledge: London. p. 197-223.

Scottish College for Educational Leadership

Centrum House, 38 Queen St, Glasgow G1 3DX

Tel: 0141 548 8032

Email: enquiries@scelscotland.org.uk

Website: www.scelscotland.org.uk