

DMAT
Aspiration | Excellence | Transformation



Leadership: *Principles in Practice*



Introduction

This 'Leadership: Principles in Practice' guidance document is for current and future leaders at Durrington Multi Academy Trust (DMAT). This could be a member of SLT, middle leader or someone who has recently taken up their first leadership role. It sets out a practical framework for what effective leadership looks like for our leaders. It will work most effectively when contextualised by each leader for their own setting and sphere of leadership.

We know strong and effective leadership is essential for all aspects of school life but is often not explicitly articulated in terms of what it precisely entails. We have produced this guidance to support leaders in building an armoury of effective leadership behaviours based on our core leadership principles.

You may wish to use it at the following times:

- Line management meetings
- Coaching sessions
- When planning to have a 'difficult' conversation
- When planning a team meeting
- When analysing performance data
- In your day to day work as a leader
- When developing a team or an individual

Format

At DMAT we have some overarching leadership principles that shape our work as leaders. These apply across the trust and are not phase specific. This document breaks these principles down and explores different 'plays' that can bring these principles into practice. Plays are suggested ways of successfully handling situations. They may include a sequence of behaviours and actions.

At DMAT we use a number of plays that ensure we are doing a good job as leaders. Our plays are not exhaustive, but they are effective when used well.

Each section of this document focuses on one principle. It will look at:

- What the principle is
- Why it matters
- A checklist for each principle
- High frequency errors
- Different plays for that principle.

As well as looking at what works effectively, it's also important to know what the 'high frequency errors' are. These are the things that can easily go wrong in leadership. If we know what they are, we can plan to avoid them.

Leadership PiPs

Strong leaders lead teams effectively. In doing so, they understand the importance of the following principles:

- Moral Purpose
- Communicating the vision
- Growing their team
- Being organised and strategic
- Implementing change
- Modelling behaviours



1. Moral Purpose

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Why it matters?

In 2002 Michael Fullan described moral purpose as *'principled behaviour connected to something greater than ourselves that relates to human social development'*. He goes on to explore what this means for school leaders:

1. Making a difference in the lives of students;
2. Committing to reducing the gap between high and low performers within your school and locality;
3. Contributing to reducing the gap in the larger environment;
4. Transforming the working (or learning conditions) of others so that growth, commitment, engagement, and constant spawning of leadership in others are being fostered.

High standards and expectations support strong achievement, which ultimately makes a difference to the lives of our students – our moral purpose. What can leaders do to ensure that these high standards and expectations are threaded through all we do?

Checklist

Measure of Success	High Frequency Errors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relentless in the pursuit of a culture of high expectations and standards for all, from all. • Believes that every student will receive the best possible education. • Seeks to achieve this by ensuring consistency and excellence within their team. • Insists that their team is committed to embracing learning, development, and improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ignoring low standards and expectations and not challenging them • Accepts variability in provision and does not challenge it. • Accepts variability within their team and tolerates mediocrity. • Allows individuals within the team to opt out of development or improving their practice.

Play 1: Learning Walks

A learning walk is where leaders, individually or in pairs, walk around lessons to look at the learning experience for students. It is an opportunity for leaders to see if approaches that support high standards and expectations are being implemented with fidelity across their team.

	Stage	Description
1	Decide a focus	There are a huge number of things that you could focus on with a learning walk, but it is best to focus on something very specific, that links to your improvement priorities e.g. is the teacher increasing participation ratio by using cold call effectively? Are all students paying attention during the explanation phase?
2	Decide who you will visit	Try to see as many of your team as possible. Do not exclude more experienced colleagues as consistency of approach matters across the whole team. Plan the classrooms you will visit and the sequence – do not leave things to chance.
3	When in classrooms look specifically for your focus	Have a laser-like focus on the specific approach you are looking for. It can sometimes be helpful to gather quantitative data e.g. average length of pause time; number of questions asked; question distribution (gender, PP, SEND etc). This allows you to give very specific feedback.

4	Look for the corners of the classrooms	Focus on the 'corners of the classroom' - the quiet students who do not say much; SEND students who may have specific challenges; disadvantaged students. Are they talked to and made to feel a part of the lesson? Having access to seating plans can support with this.
5	Feedback	<p>Individually: If we are visiting lessons, we have an obligation to give individual feedback to our colleagues. Giving praise when colleagues are doing something effectively is as important as giving colleagues very specific feedback and actions to bring about improvement.</p> <p>Team: It is always useful to give a collective summary of what you see the team is generally doing well and where it would be useful to have a collective focus, to make things even better.</p>
6	Inform future planning	<p>Use your findings to inform future actions and planning. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A follow up learning walk to review progress. • A PD session for your team on that particular approach, including the opportunity for rehearsal. • More focused instructional coaching for individuals.

Play 2: Work Looks

Work looks, in the same way as learning walks, allow us to see if approaches that support high standards and expectations are being implemented with fidelity in classrooms.. It involves leaders looking at a sample of student work - either in lessons or collected to look at outside of lessons. If we truly have high expectations of all students, this should be reflected in the work output they are producing, so this is a good thing to look at.

	Stage	Description
1	Identify a focus	What is the hypothesis you are looking to test? For example it could be that expectations around presentation are the same for disadvantaged students and non disadvantaged students.
2	Select the students to look at	Identify a large sample of students to sample - including a test group and control group e.g. random group of 30 M starting point PP students in Y7-9 and a random group of 30 M starting point non-PP students in Y7-9. Gather their work together. The randomness of the samples is important, to mitigate against bias.
3	Organise a gallery	Arrange for the team to meet together and look at the student work - laid out in a room. Discuss with them what the focus is, and what to look for and then encourage discussion as the team looks at the books.
4	Key learning and next steps	<p>Once everyone has looked at the work, get the team together to tease out the main threads:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the positives? • Where are the improvement areas? • Is the hypothesis correct? • What are the implications for classroom practice? • What are we all going to commit to doing as a result?

Play 3: PP Pen Portraits

PP Pen Portraits are a way of allowing colleagues to share how they are thinking about the barriers to learning faced by their disadvantaged students and then adapting their classroom practice accordingly, whilst not compromising our high standards of them. This can then build into a useful set of effective practice case studies. This is of course school dependent. For example, if high numbers of the student population is PP, this will probably be addressed in a different way e.g. progress meetings.

	Stage	Description
1	Allocate a member of staff	Allocate one colleague at a time to a specific meeting during the year. This is the time when they will present their PP Pen portrait.
2	Select a time for them to share their PP pen portrait with the rest of the team	The colleague prepares to present their Pen Portrait, using the following prompts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Context/data relating to the child. ● Barriers to learning. ● Approaches/strategies that have been put in place to overcome these barriers. ● How effective these have been (supporting data/evidence). ● Next steps. It's important that these are (a) time limited (b) focused on the challenges to learning and how these have been overcome.
3	Discuss the key learning for the team.	What can we learn from this as a team to support our collective practice moving forward.

Play 4: Honour Our Values

At DMAT we have the highest expectations of our young people. As leaders, when we see them falling short of these expectations, we must never ignore it - we permit what we ignore and what we permit, becomes our culture. So, it's important that we correct students who are falling short of our expectations.

	Example	Description
1	Uphold corridor culture	Corridors should always be calm, safe and dignified. If students are behaving in a way that compromises this, it's important that it is addressed. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Normal conversation sound levels at all times. ● Walk sensibly ● Walk around in small groups only ● Behave in a calm and safe way
2	Uphold standards	We have the highest standards of uniform and behaviour. When students fall short of this, address it directly with the student (and possibly the parent) and apply the sanction (if necessary) in line with school expectations e.g. sign expectation cards
3	Uphold lesson expectations.	We have very clear routines and expectations in terms of lessons at DMAT (outlined in the 'Teaching PiP'). As leaders, when we are visiting lessons, if we see students falling short of this, it's important that we intervene and support the teacher.



communicate

2. Communicate the Vision

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Why it matters?

“Excellence is the result of caring more than others think is wise, risking more than others think is safe, dreaming more than others think is practical, and expecting more than others think is possible.”

Ronnie Oldham

Our vision and values should drive our school improvement priorities and in doing so, give meaning to the actions we take each and every day. It's important to be clear what we mean when talk about vision and values:

Vision - the overarching aspirations of what the team hopes to achieve and become.

Values - this is what the team believes in and how the people within the team are expected to behave, with each other, students, parents and other stakeholders

So as leaders, our behaviours, what we say and what we do need to reflect the vision and bring it life. As leaders, we set the weather, through living our values.

Checklist

Measure of Success	High Frequency Errors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is a strong and professional role model – effective as a leader. Has a high presence and profile around the school. Articulates, models and over communicates a clear vision to all stakeholders and refers back to it regularly with the team. Communicates clear and high expectations for all members of the team and students. Sets ambitious team goals to create compelling direction for the team. Ensures there is clarity of roles, purpose and responsibilities within the team – including the need for flexibility and adaptability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overcomplicating the vision message leading to confusion and misinterpretation by staff. Is not often seen around their area/the school and is not able to/chooses not to influence student behaviour using their presence. Doesn't refer back to the vision frequently enough. Doesn't explain the 'why' when it comes to new approaches - 'how does this fit with the vision?' Isn't seen to have high expectations, all day, every day. Doesn't set ambitious goals for their teams, or celebrates mediocrity too frequently. Doesn't ensure that team members are clear in terms of their role when it comes to realising the vision.

Play 1: Improvement plans

Improvement plans are a very effective way of communicating to the team what needs to be improved, in order to realise the vision. They should be clear, concise, time referenced and actionable.

	Stage	Description
1	Identify the key improvement priorities for the team	Think carefully in terms of the vision and what is currently missing from your team, in order to achieve this. Distil this down to a small number of very specific and actionable priorities - what are the approaches that would make the biggest difference in my team?
2	What will success look like?	Have a mental model of what you want this to look like. If you don't know what it looks like, you won't know how to get there.
3	Describe the actions and by who	Break these down into very specific actions - not intentions.(what they will do to bring about change, not just how they want it to be in the future)

		This needs to describe very clearly what you want your team to do differently. If the actions require a deadline, make this clear.
4	Communicate to the team	Communicate steps 1-3 to your team, so everybody is very clear about how they are contributing to achieving the vision.
5	Monitor for fidelity	Think about how you will monitor that these actions are being implemented with fidelity. As well as including whether members of the team are enacting the approach you have asked them to, it should also look at the impact of this e.g. improved quality of work; improved attainment; improved behaviour
6	Review and reshape	Put in place regular review points, using a checklist if it helps. Is progress being made? If not, why not and what needs to be different?

Play 2: Start of year and start of term

The start of the year and the start of each term are a great time to re-focus on the vision.

	Stage	Description
1	Review and refocus	At the end of each term, review what you were trying to achieve that term and evaluate how successful you have been. Out of this review, should come fresh (or refreshed) improvement priorities for the coming term.
2	Refresh the priorities	At the start of the year and then at the start of each term, articulate to the team: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is the vision - where we want to be. • This is what we need to do to get there. • This is how we'll know if we're being successful.

Play 3: Leadership Hinterland

The hinterland of leadership are the bits around the edges, that aren't necessarily on a job description, but really make a difference. These are not so much a sequence of actions, but a 'reminder list'.

1	Say thank you to colleagues who are doing a great job and recognise this publicly
2	Find opportunities for colleagues to share their effective practice
3	Turn up to events - if colleagues are running an after school club, or putting on an event, go along and show your support. Follow this up with a thank you email/note.
4	Be seen to be reminding students about standards and expectation frequently
5	Know your team - find out what motivates them and the challenges they have, in and out of school. Be interested in them as people.
6	Be on time, be where you're supposed to be and never miss a deadline.
7	Value the opinion of others
8	Never encourage or support gossip, blame or negativity - model openness, honesty, professionalism and kindness.
9	Value the work of other leaders as highly as your own
10	Be calm and level wherever possible
11	Avoid passing your concerns and worries to those below you in the hierarchy
12	Be high profile - not only in your specific area of the school, but beyond this - all around the school.

Play 4: Articulate the why

When you are looking to refine existing approaches or introduce new approaches, in order to support you moving towards the vision, it's important to explain the 'why'. This helps the team to understand the context of what they are being asked to do, as a part of a bigger picture.

	Stage	Description
1	What's the problem we're trying to solve?	It's important to be clear about why we are introducing this new approach. When talking about the problem we are trying to solve, be specific e.g. we've noticed that middle attaining students aren't using as much tier 3 terminology as we would like them to.
2	What's the approach to address this?	Be very specific about the approach that will be used to address this. Make the time to model and rehearse this with your team.
3	Why does it matter?	Explain why it matters e.g. if students aren't confident with tier 3 vocabulary, they will struggle to understand many of the texts and questions they are presented with. This will be particularly challenging for disadvantaged students.
4	Is there research evidence to support the approach?	Use the Research School team to see if there is any evidence to support this approach - research@durring.com



3. Grows Their Team

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Why it matters?

"Individual commitment to a group effort –that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work." – Vince Lombardi

As a leader, your team is your strongest asset. With this in mind, we have an obligation to nurture, grow and develop the individuals within our team into the best versions of themselves.

Checklist

Measure of Success	High Frequency Errors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knows, develops and understands all members of their team, through building strong relationships, belonging and trust. Motivates supports and challenges all members of their team to focus on continuous improvement. Agrees team values and behaviours and how they will communicate. Encourages psychological safety, so their team feels safe to share ideas, make mistakes, take risks, and communicate openly. Is confident with communicating frankly, with candour and encourages their team to do the same. Develops their whole team and individual staff through effective and contextualised PD by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investing time in their team. Focusing on clear and specific goals, with regular review points. Facilitating a collaborative, sustained and contextualised approach. Giving clear and constructive feedback to the team and individuals. Giving people ownership and with that, accountability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nurtures a strong relationship with some members of the team, but not others. There is very limited challenge and support for colleagues to embrace continuous improvement. Team values and behaviours are not clear and/or are not corrected when they are out of alignment. Colleagues do not feel safe to share ideas, make mistakes and take risks, for fear of being ignored or ridiculed. Is not candid and gives mixed messages about performance. Does not invest time in getting to know their team and then supporting their PD. Team goals are not clear. Colleagues are not given feedback on their performance. There is a limited sense of accountability within the team.

Play 1: The meeting maestro

Robert O Brinkerhoff talks about the 40:20:40 model of meetings. He suggests that we should spend about 40% of our effort planning the meeting, 20% of our effort actually facilitating the meeting and then 40% of our effort on post-meeting actions. Further details below:

	Stage	Description
1	Before (40%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan the agenda. Look at any action points from the last meeting and consider how they will be reviewed. Ensure colleagues who will be leading an agenda item are well planned, know the time they will have, and have thought about intended outcomes. Ask to check any presentations or resources that are being shared. Think about engagement activities, key questions and discussion points, to ensure engagement. Anticipate any potential controversial points and how these will be addressed. Have discussions with key people before the meeting so parameters of discussions are established, particularly for potentially controversial items Distribute the agenda.

2	During (20%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start with an opening round (sharing of effective practice/ thanking; highlight of the week). Introduce agenda item - why we are talking about this and intended outcomes. Name a timekeeper, if appropriate. Facilitate the learning and engagement of all participants by directed questioning - so all are involved. At the end of each agenda item, sum up the key points and any actions so all are clear on next steps. How does this link to our overall vision/improvement priorities?
3	After (40%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure any relevant resources/notes are distributed. Follow up any issues that were raised during the meeting that needed to be picked up outside of the meeting. Ensure everybody is clear of their actions. Thank those who made strong contributions. Follow up any actions that need to be completed.

Play 2: Candid conversations

Candid conversations are an essential part of leadership as they provide colleagues with feedback on their behaviours and actions to bring them back in line with what is expected of the team. They should not be left to chance, but planned carefully.

	Stage	Description
1	Planning before	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be clear about your intended outcome e.g. they should know it is an expectation to have an orderly dismissal when students leave the classroom. Gather evidence to support your concerns e.g. attainment data if there is an underperformance issue, dates and times of when the issue occurred. Identify the weakness in the person's skill or progression and use this as a stimulus for the conversation.. Understand the context e.g. have there been similar issues recently? What support was put in place? Think about and plan your questioning e.g. 'Was there a reason why you were 5 minutes late for your lesson twice yesterday?'
2	During the conversation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name the issue. Be direct and honest. Don't sugar coat as this can lead to misunderstanding. Data, observable facts or specific examples should inform your line of enquiry e.g. attainment data. Be clear about why this matters and link this to the team e.g. as a team we have decided that orderly exits are important because... Invite them to respond, gain their views and show active listening skills (eye contact, body language, seating). Explain the implications of their actions on those around them e.g. when you don't send cover work in, it means that X has to do it, instead of their own work. Bring the conversation back to wider values that the person shares e.g. I know you want the best outcomes for students. Be clear about the standards our organisation demands. These may be different to the standards the person is used to (if new for example). Agree on clear, measurable targets to move forward and any support that may be useful
3	After the conversation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send a follow up email to reiterate what you discussed and agreed. Personally, do a sample check. Sometimes, someone might think they have done something, but have a different understanding of what quality means. If you agreed on a date for actions, make a point to check on this date.

Play 3: Gallup

Gallup's employee engagement work is based on more than 30 years of in depth behavioural economic research involving more than 17 million employees. These 12 questions emerged as those that best predict employee and workgroup performance. Use this play to guide your actions as a leader in influencing the performance of those that you lead.

	Question	Description
1	Do you know what is expected of you at work?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure those you lead understand the 'what' and 'how' of their job. • Use forums like line management to communicate this.
2	Do you have the materials and equipment you need to do your work well?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask what exactly they need to complete the task with success and endeavour to ensure this is provided. • Think about training, access to systems and spreadsheets, calendar, resources etc.
3	At work, do you have the opportunity to do what you do best every day?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate those opportunities as a leader e.g. they are very good at delivering staff training; ensure you enable opportunity for them to do this.
4	In the past 7 days, have you received recognition or praise for doing good work?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a point to thank them for their good work, but be specific with the praise - no one likes empty praise. • Use forums like line management to communicate this.
5	Does your line manager seem to care about you as a person?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You genuinely ask them how they are and offer solutions to problems/offer to take a problem off them. • You check in on them without any ulterior work related motive. • You remember personal details they have shared with you and use this to build rapport with them.
6	Is there someone at work who cares about your development?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask them what they would like to do to develop in their role? • Offer opportunities for them to develop when they are ready.
7	At work, do your opinions count?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are open to opinions and are able to relay back to them what they think to their satisfaction, even if you disagree. • You take on feedback and adapt practice as a result.
8	Does the vision of the school make you feel your job is worthwhile?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You often remind the person of how their actions serve the wider vision and values shared by you all.
9	Are your fellow employees committed to doing quality work?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage team spirit via communications such as emails and public praise. • Create time to unwind and laugh with colleagues.
10	Do you have a friend at work?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage participation in staff social events and celebrations.
11	In the last six months has someone talked to you about your progress?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calendar in progress review conversations. This could be part of line management meetings.
12	In the last year, have you had opportunities to learn and grow?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly ask reflective questions. Build this into line management e.g. what was your biggest learning point from X?

Play 4: Instructional coaching

Instructional coaching involves working with a colleague to identify a very specific part of their practice that could be improved and as a result, would have a significant impact on their practice. It involves the following steps:

	Stage	Description
1	See it	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The coach observes lessons, looking for a very specific leverage point. e.g. unsettled starts to lessons, not giving specific praise to students; explanations use vocabulary unknown to students; questioning does not increase participation ratio.
2	Name it	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Coach identifies the leverage point and action steps e.g. cold call to ask the question > pause > direct at a named student
3	Model it	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The coach models the approach to the coachee, who then rehearses the approach in controlled conditions.The coach gives feedback on this and the rehearsal is repeated e.g. I liked the way you.....it would be even better if.....
4	Do it	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The teacher then implements the action steps in their lessons and is observed by the coach.The coach gives feedback
5	Review it	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Action steps met - back to step 2 and identify a new leverage point.Action steps not met - back to step 3



4. Organised and Strategic

4. Organised and Strategic

Why it matters?

Schools are very busy places with many tasks competing for attention. By being organised and strategic we can ensure the areas we lead are tackled with precision and effective prioritisation. But what do we mean by 'strategic'? There are many definitions, but this one seems useful:

'Relates to the way in which an organisation or team decides what it wants to achieve and plans actions and use of resources over time to do this'

By being strategic, we can also ensure those we lead are focused, challenged and praised in the right areas at the right times.

Checklist

Measure of Success	High Frequency Errors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to prioritise and identify foci for improvement work, leading to a coordinated approach to implementing change. • Understands and uses data strategically to reduce variability, maintain high standards and evaluate impact. • Organises time, planning and resources for the team to support their workload and facilitate efficiency. • Anticipates potential problems and is proactively solutions focused. • Understands the importance of breaking down long term goals into small steps. • Communicates with clarity in a streamlined format. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not think strategically and is purely reactive based on what happens day-to-day. • Does not have short, medium and long-term plans. • Does not have a well ordered calendar, diary and to-do list allowing the prioritisation of tasks. • Emails are not processed and organised systematically. • Thinks purely about their own areas of responsibility and not beyond. • Does not plan for pinch points in the year and ensures other tasks are cleared in advance of these. • Does not delegate effectively.

Play 1: Email

Emails are a vital tool for communication. However, the frequency of emails both received and sent means a strategic approach to organising your inbox can support effective task prioritisation and communication with colleagues.

	Action	Description
1	Create folders	<p>Folders allow you to categorise your emails, and frees up your inbox.</p> <p>Here are three simple folders to use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Action - Read - Waiting
2	When you receive an email, decide what to do with it	<p>Do it: If what is required in the email can be done in 2 minutes, do it.</p> <p>Action: For emails that require you to reply/action but you can't do it just then, move to your "Action" folder.</p> <p>Read: For emails that provide information which may be interesting or useful to you but don't demand an action, move to your "Read" folder.</p> <p>Waiting: If it's an email you need to remember to follow up on, move to your "Waiting" folder. You may need to retrieve it from your "Sent" folder.</p> <p>Delete: If it is none of the above, delete it.</p>
3	The when and the what	<p>Consider when is the best time to send your emails depending on the team and the individual you are contacting. If you are working late in the evening, consider scheduling emails to be sent the next morning</p> <p>Always use bulletins over emails where possible (see play 2 for details).</p>

Play 2: Bulletins

In order for time spent meeting as teams to be as purposeful as possible, bulletins should be used to summarise key information. These should be both a one-stop reference for ongoing priorities and reminders for actions to happen that week.

	Example	Non-Example
1	Use a format that is repeatable and easy to use. The most relevant information should be easy to find.	The format is overly busy, confusing or not delineated.
2	Include a list of actions and their deadlines.	Information is given without associated deadlines making task prioritisation difficult.
3	Hyperlink to any documents you wish the readers to look at regularly.	Related documents are not easy to find and time is wasted locating them.
4	Send it out at the same time each week.	The bulletin comes out sporadically or at very different times each week.
5	Remove unnecessary information.	Outdated information is left on the bulletin diminishing its value and giving the impression that it is not well managed.
6	Funnel communication on to the bulletin and resist sending emails in between its publication.	Emails are sent for items that should be on the bulletin. The bulletin loses its status.
7	Use Google docs and make a new version each time	Create a new bulletin every week - not very time efficient.

Play 3: Line management

Effectively line management is key to successful leadership and the dissemination of whole-school priorities to all levels. It's probably one of the most important things we do as leaders - it keeps school improvement on-track. To use the time most effectively, careful preparation for the meeting is vital.

Pre meeting		
	Example	Non-Example
1	Set the agenda in advance of the meeting, focusing on the key aspects of the person's role - and specific improvement priorities.	Identifying every agenda item in one go, resulting in forgetting essential items to be discussed in a timely way.
2	Identify essential standard agenda items to be discussed and reviewed at each meeting. For example. You could include joint learning walk (10 min), book looks (5 mins), progress with improvement priorities (5 mins), ongoing curriculum development (5 mins)	Key standard agenda items are not regularly discussed. Patterns and emerging issues are missed and not addressed in a timely way.
3	Share the agenda via your shared Google doc with the relevant person/people at least 24 hours before the meeting.	Not sharing the agenda in time so there is not enough time for the receiver to think about and adequately prepare for the meeting.
4	Agree on how you will populate the agenda item. Specify which items are flipped so they come prepared and which items you will do together.	All agenda items have to be completed during the meeting resulting in wasting valuable discussion time

5	Expect the person being line managed to RAG all the items from the previous week ahead of their next meeting.	Items are not ragged leading to time being spent going over items already addressed.
6	Read the agenda and respond to items ahead of time in the minutes/comments column where you can	Ignoring the agenda
7	Line management time is sacred. Always give the full hour and if something comes up and you can't make it - always rearrange it.	Cutting the meeting short or not rearranging a missed meeting
During the meeting		
8	Expect the person being line managed to copy over all items not done or incomplete as 'matters arising'.	Incomplete items get lost and forgotten about.
9	Keep to the agenda items and be actions- focused.	Discussions turn into rants or counselling sessions, or just a meandering discussion on nothing in particular You run out of time on the other items.
10	Start each agenda item by allowing the person being line managed to update you on progress	Starting each agenda item by giving your opinion on how things are
11	Use challenging questions to prompt further thinking and to address gaps, where further action is needed	Not questioning and just accepting the status quo.
12	Ensure the actions are SMART. It does not matter who writes them.	Actions are vague and do not adequately support or hold the person being line managed to account
13	Finish the meeting on time.	Key items are missed and/or the meeting overruns

Play 4: Add value, add joy

Taking a genuine interest in colleagues allows us to build trusting relationships. These relationships form the foundations that allow effective leadership to take place.

	Example	Non-Example
1	Ask how the person is doing (include something personal to them, eg. children, sport, reading). - How's the building work going?	You only talk to this person when you need them to do something. They do not feel valued as a person. They think you only see them as a vehicle of action.
2	Engage with them and relate to their response. - I can imagine. ..builders are the worst...	You make small talk but because you do not genuinely engage with it, they think you don't mean it. It becomes the means to what you actually want them to do - a task off your 'to do' list...
3	Ask them what their biggest challenge is at that moment/what's going well.	You don't ask them about their challenge/triumph and they think you don't care about their workload/ progress.
4	Offer a solution/praise.	You don't offer to help in a meaningful way or acknowledge what they have done well. You come across as uncaring.

Play 5: Task relevant maturity

Before you lead others, decide their maturity level for the task you want them to complete. One person may have differing TRMs depending on the situation. A leader should recognise the TRM lead depending on the task. Use the framework below to guide you.

	Level	Description
Low TRM	Use a structured conversation: telling when, how	Usually novices or someone who has little experience of the task at hand and will need close guidance/regular feedback.
Medium TRM	Use two way discussion, offer support, problem solve	Usually deployed for someone who will pick up what is required quickly. A medium to light touch approach with initial guidance required.
High TRM	Aim for minimal involvement, discuss broader objectives, monitoring not directing	Usually deployed for someone who is highly competent at that task and can be trusted to complete it without direction.



5. Implements Change

5. Implements Change

Why it matters?

“The main job of transformational leaders is to establish direction, align people, motivate & inspire, and produce & sustain change”

Sir Tim Brighouse

Effective implementation is required for an intervention to succeed. No matter how good the idea is, if it is poorly implemented it will not affect the children we serve. Equally important is making good decisions about what to implement, as a bad idea well implemented is a dangerous thing. These plays will support leaders to identify where the change needs to be focused.

Checklist

Measure of Success	High Frequency Errors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is outward looking for effective practice and uses the best available research evidence to make informed decisions when planning change. Understands the four main stages of implementation - explore, prepare, deliver and sustain. Understands what needs to change and drives this. Has clear attention to detail when it comes to planning, monitoring/evaluating impact and reviewing actions. Reflects and responds to ensure that change has high fidelity, reach and is sustained. Is able to galvanise people to engage, unite and reflect on implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rushing to judgement about the required solution to a problem before looking deeply at the available evidence and data. Ignoring what research suggest is most likely to work. Not carrying out a pre-mortem of what is most likely to go wrong. Failing to put in place the necessary professional development to enact the change. Unrealistic expectations of how long the change will take to embed. Staff involved are motivated to enact the change. Monitoring and evaluation is not baked in.

Play 1: Learning conversations

Internal data can be useful to leaders at all levels, but accurate interpretation is vital if it is to lead to meaningful interventions. This structure supports the framing of conversations where internal data is being discussed in relation to specific cohorts or classes.

Pre meeting		
	Example	Non-Example
1	A least two weeks before the meeting: check internal data for the class	Data is not checked prior to the meeting so context is lost.
2	A week prior to the meeting: ask the teacher to fill out the relevant proforma e.g. learning conversations Google doc. progress meeting document etc	You have to populate the doc with key actions during the meeting, wasting valuable time.
During the meeting: learning conversation between curriculum/year/phase leader & teacher		
3	Use this meeting to model how data should be scrutinised to the teacher.	<p>You assume effective scrutiny of data and learning conversation can be done without it being modelled to them.</p> <p>Data is not scrutinised appropriately at postholder level and effective</p>

		interventions are not put in place as a result.
4	<p>Concentrate on focus students and their learning needs.</p> <p>The most powerful intervention is quality first teaching. Use these prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the focus students sitting strategically? Do they get asked questions first/ are questions targeted for them? How do we know? • Is there a clear differentiation on the level of feedback they are provided to make improvements? • Explore whether students' parents have been contacted by the teacher. • Action as required. 	<p>You allow long stories about individual student behaviour.</p> <p>Avoid discussions about student behaviour (involve pastoral teams separately if an intervention is required)</p> <p>Parents are unaware of their child underachieving. Support is not gained from home.</p>
5	<p>Analyse the accuracy of the projected grade and current grade and what the latest exam(s) are showing.</p> <p>Intervene and adjust projected grades if appropriate.</p> <p>Make sure projections are evidence based.</p>	<p>Projections are based on feelings and guesses.</p> <p>There is missing data.</p> <p>There is a mismatch between current and projected/ historical data that suggests inaccuracy.</p>

Play 2: SMART target

In order to keep up with the fast pace of schools and the number of tasks being juggled at any given time, clear and actionable targets are essential. This is a checklist for how we make our targets SMART.

	Example	Non-Example
1	Initial of the person completing the action	Unclear who should complete the action
2	Future tense, eg. TB to complete	Past tense so it reads like a diary of actions that have already been done, eg. TB has created.
3	Verb, eg. complete, email, create	The verb is missing so the action is not clear for the person completing the task
4	Observable and can be put into practice	It is vague and not observable, eg. TB to consider.
5	Highest leverage	It is not the highest leverage action for that item, eg. TB to rewrite last year's DIP
6	Concrete and bite size enough to be achieved in a week	The task is too large to complete and sets the person up to fail. eg. TB to check the accuracy of all of next term's y11 lessons
7	Use the standard red font to RAG an item not done and copy it over to the following week to ensure it is done	Variations of the colour red are used to RAG an item as not done. Possibly to soften the impact of the colour red.
8	The 'intended outcome' is used to guide the next action in the appropriate 'action' column.	The 'intended outcome' is confused with an action.

Play 3: TP & GCSE results review

Tracking points and KS2/GCSE results require leaders to successfully interpret the data and crucially use those interpretations to direct the work that follows. This structure supports that process.

Pre meeting		
	Example	Non-Example
1	<p>Two weeks before the meeting (at least): check the data, looking at all measures, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headlines • Individual classes • Progress against starting point • Progress against previous tracking points • Disadvantage • SEND 	<p>Data is not checked prior to the meeting so context is lost.</p> <p>Only some measures are considered</p>
2	<p>Two weeks prior to the meeting, let leaders know the date of the meeting and the key questions they will be expected to answer.</p>	<p>Not enough notice is given leading to a poorly framed meeting.</p> <p>Overly arduous forms are required to be filled in rather than focused questions.</p>
During the meeting: learning conversation between curriculum/year/ phase leader, line manager and relevant members of SLT, often headteacher		
3	<p>Use this meeting to model how data should be scrutinised to the teacher.</p>	<p>You assume effective scrutiny of data and conversation can be done without it being modelled to them</p> <p>Data is not scrutinised appropriately at postholder level and effective interventions are not put in place as a result.</p>
4	<p>Concentrate on focus students and their learning needs.</p> <p>The most powerful intervention is quality first teaching. Use these prompts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the focus students sitting strategically? Do they get asked questions first/ are questions targeted for them? How do we know? • Is there a clear differentiation on the level of feedback they are provided to make improvements? • Explore whether students' parents have been contacted by the teacher. • Action as required. 	<p>You allow long stories about individual student behaviour.</p> <p>Avoid discussions about student behaviour - focus on challenges to learning.</p> <p>Parents are unaware of their child underachieving. Support is not gained from home.</p>
5	<p>Analyse the accuracy of the projected grade and current grade and what the latest exam(s) are showing.</p> <p>Intervene and adjust projected grades if appropriate.</p> <p>Make sure projections are evidence based.</p>	<p>Projections are based on feelings and guesses.</p> <p>There is missing data.</p> <p>There is a mismatch between current and projected/ historical data that suggests inaccuracy.</p>

Play 4: Finding fidelity

Any intervention has the capacity to mutate into forms that, while close to the intended intervention, are no longer faithful to its active ingredients and, as a result, do not provide the intended impact.

	Example	Non-Example
1	Bake in evaluation, knowing what the measures of success of an intervention are	Evaluation is a bolt on at the end
2	Set out with a genuine curiosity to uncover practice as it truly is, not to prove success	Aiming to prove the intervention has worked and ignoring evidence to the contrary.
3	Look at data from a number of sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lesson visits ● Internal data ● End of KS outcomes ● Book scrutiny ● Student voice ● Teacher voice 	A narrow focus is taken to judge fidelity
4	Challenge your own bias when judging fidelity. If looking for a teaching practice, look at the active ingredients, not your preferred version.	Confirmation bias exists in your judgements
5	Look for reach as well as fidelity. Are all teachers behaving in the way you wish	Ignoring those teachers who are harder to move and only focusing on early adopters.
6	Ensure the change is sustained. Habits will revert if not constantly refreshed. Keep finding times to return to the change and provide prompts and cues	An assumption of change is made.

Play 5: Team debriefs

Did you know that team debriefs can have a huge impact on performance? Research shows that teams can boost their effectiveness by 20-25% by regularly reviewing processes, using a few tried and tested methods.

	Example	Non-Example
1	What were you trying to accomplish?	This can focus on a big objective e.g. GCSE results, KS2 SATS, or a smaller one e.g. embedding SLANT across the team. The important thing is that everyone knows what you were trying to achieve.
2	Where did we hit (or miss) our objectives?	This requires honest reflection and not too much 'back slapping'! This will only happen in an environment where colleagues feel safe to be honest.
3	What caused our results?	This will need to time to explore this thoroughly - and will be supported by some probing questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Why do you think that might have happened? ● In hindsight, what could you have done differently? ● Were these 'causes' behavioural, process driven or caused by a lack of knowledge/understanding?
4	What should we start, stop or continue doing?	This question is key. If we're going to start some new approaches, we'll need to stop doing things that aren't working.

Useful Links

The EEF has produced an excellent guidance report on implementation, and a range of accompanying resources. The can be accessed here:

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/support-for-schools/implementation>



6. Models Behaviours

6. Models Behaviours

Why it matters

“A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way.” John Maxwell

If we are to ask others to exhibit certain behaviours then we need to embody them ourselves as leaders. This is about leading by example, and ensuring we behave as we would want those that we lead to behave.

Checklist

Measure of Success	High Frequency Errors
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Challenge● Consistency● Relentlessness● Resilience● Accountability● Clarity● Responsive● Candour● Supportiveness● Pragmatism● Optimism● Problem solver● Honesty	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Sharing unhappiness with a joint leadership decision with wider staff● In difficult times, presenting as angry or stressed to wider staff.● Asking staff to complete a task but failing to complete it yourself● Missing deadlines● Not being clear when giving colleagues targets for improvement● Not accepting that others may have a better way of doing something● A lack of empathy● The behaviour you ignore is the behaviour you accept

Exemplification of these behaviours:

Challenge:

A curriculum leader is teaching a class with a number of lower starting point students within it. Rather than changing the curriculum in a way that reduces challenge, the curriculum leader retains the same challenging objectives for those lessons and uses adaptive teaching methods to support all students to meet them.

Consistency:

- 1) A primary headteacher meets children and parents at the gate every Monday morning. They avoid arranging meetings at this time, as they see this as a key part of their role.
- 2) Even at the busiest times of year this secondary assistant headteacher never misses line management meetings, even if it means rearranging the time. The full hour is always set aside and the format is followed come-what-may.

Relentlessness:

A leader does not accept a drop in standards from a high profile student. While reasonable adjustments are made, the line is held on basics such as uniform and punctuality despite the boundaries constantly being tested.

Resilience:

Despite high staff absence this deputy headteacher is able to manage cover so that the pupils continue to receive the best and most consistent teaching possible.

Accountability:

This curriculum leader feels every result in their department as keenly as those within their own classes. They know how the children and doing, do all in their power to support and feel the successes and failures of all as their own.

Clarity:

The weekly bulletin provided by this leader is precise and actionable with all elements clearly categorised and no ambiguity in the information provided. The points are easy to read and do not contain spelling or grammatical errors.

Responsive:

The leader notices that a student from their year group has been sent out of a lesson during the day. Rather than waiting, the leader proactively seeks out the teacher to find out details and supports the necessary sanction and restorative work.

Candour:

A senior leader notices that an area of the school is not meeting basic expectations in line with other departments. Rather than sending an email the leader books a face-to-face meeting and explains clearly the issue and the wider impact it would have.

Supportiveness:

This leader takes a genuine interest in the people they line manage. They make it their business to know the particular challenges they face professionally and personally and ensure they are mindful of these when engaging with them.

Optimism:

When a national story breaks around the challenges facing education, this leader continues to emphasise the positives with staff and the importance and value of the job they do.

Problem solver:

Rather than simply sympathising with busy curriculum leader about the pressure they are under, this deputy headteacher takes time to use their experience to give practical advice on how they can prioritise the tasks they have to do and find the quickest routes to their completion.

Honesty:

Having made a mistake in implementing a whole-school priority and getting it wrong, this member of SLT is honest about that around the table, and does not attempt to explain it away.



In his document '[Creating a Culture](#)' Tom Bennett suggests that as a result of strong leadership, successful schools have the following features:

- committed, highly visible school leaders, with ambitious goals, supported by a strong leadership team
- effectively communicated, realistic, detailed expectations understood clearly by all members of the school
- highly consistent working practices throughout the school
- a clear understanding of what the school culture is 'this is how we do things around here, and these are the values we hold'
- high levels of staff and parental commitment to the school vision and strategies
- high levels of support between leadership and staff, for example, staff training
- attention to detail and thoroughness in the execution of school policies and strategies
- high expectations of all students and staff, and a belief that all students matter equally.

“Excellence is the result of caring more than others think is wise, risking more than others think is safe, dreaming more than others think is practical, and expecting more than others think is possible.”

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