



Leadership Report 2016

Conclusions from The Prince's Teaching Institute's Headteachers' Residential Conference and annual Schools Leadership Programme members' day, held in January and February 2016

Secondary

Abbey Grange Church of England Academy	King Edward VI Handsworth School
Alperton Community School	Kings Norton Girls' School
Altrincham Grammar School for Boys	Lampton Academy
Altrincham Grammar School for Girls	Lancaster Girls' Grammar School
Avonbourne School	Launceston College
Aylesbury Grammar School	Little Ilford School
Bethnal Green Academy	Maidstone Grammar School for Girls
Bideford College	Mounts Bay Academy
Bury Church of England High School	Northumberland CofE Academy
Caistor Yarborough Academy	Oakwood Park Grammar School
Cardinal Newman Catholic School	Paddington Academy
Carre's Grammar School	Parkside Community College
Chelmsford County High School for Girls	Plashet School
Chelsea Academy	Queen Elizabeth's School, Barnet
Chesham Grammar School	Rainham Mark Grammar School
Chiswick School	Rawlins Academy
Christ The King Sixth Form College	Robert Clack School
Christleton High School	RSA Academy
City of London Academy (Southwark)	Sandbach School
Codsall Community High School	Sanders School
Connell Sixth Form College	Shooters Hill Post-16 Campus
Consilium Academy Trust	Sir Robert Pattinson Academy
Downham Market Academy	South Shore Academy
Durham Johnston Comprehensive School	South Wirral High School
Eastbury Community School	St Angela's Ursuline School
Eaton Bank Academy	St Ursula's Convent School
Edwinstree Church of England Middle School	Stantonbury Campus
Ernesford Grange Community Academy	Stewards Academy
Heathcote School & Science College	Tendring Technology College
Henlow Church of England Academy	The John Warner School
Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre	Upton Hall School FCJ
Hinchingbrooke School	Weydon School
Holyhead School	Whitefield School
King Edward VI Camp Hill School for Boys	Wigan UTC
King Edward VI Camp Hill School for Girls	Ysgol Rhiwabon
King Edward VI Five Ways School	

PTI Headteachers' Conferences 2016



The hallmark of all PTI activities is that they are designed and run by teachers for teachers, and their purpose is to disseminate the best principles and practice in education that we have identified. From the first we have been convinced that subject knowledge and a passion for communicating it lie at the heart of effective teaching for children of all abilities.

Acting on this proposition has had a very positive effect on teachers. Many have told us that involvement with the PTI has reminded them of why they became teachers in the first place – because they loved their subject; a few have even admitted that they were thinking of giving up the profession but had decided to stay after being inspired by one of our courses.

Since 2010, with the publication of the White Paper *'The importance of teaching'*, there has been greater emphasis on subject knowledge, and the need for this has recently been reinforced by the Sutton Trust in their review *'What makes great teaching?'*. However, heads are now having to work in a context where there is less money available for the necessary continuing professional development that underpins great teaching. Nevertheless, we have persevered with exploring the issues that we regard as essential if every child is to have the benefit of enrichment and challenge in the classroom.

Although these conferences saw general agreement about the principles underlying good and effective leadership, it was recognized that the particular circumstances of individual schools may be quite different. This is why there has been so much interest among delegates in the PTI's Schools Leadership Programme, which is designed to explore, by means of extended action-based research conducted in schools, what leadership strategies in a particular context are most conducive to good teaching and learning.

On the evidence of the detailed feedback we have received, these conferences have been an outstanding success, both in terms of value of the experience for heads and the impact it will have on their schools. Delegates were unanimous in saying that the PTI should run more of the same; we will do our best to oblige them.

Bernice McCabe, Course Director
Co-Director, The Prince's Teaching Institute

Key conclusions

How to establish a strong school ethos:

- Develop a clear set of values and model behaviour that pupils will come to internalise.
- Involve the whole school community in shaping the ethos.

How to ensure great teaching and learning remains at the heart of school leadership:

- Prioritise love of learning and never narrow education to meet accountability frameworks.
- Empower and enthuse teachers in their subjects through continuing professional development.

How to succeed in educational leadership:

- Have a clear vision, uphold your core values and make teaching and learning the absolute priority.
- Be authentic and optimistic; know your staff well and discover what drives them.

How to recruit high-quality subject teachers:

- Nurture talented individuals already in your networks and provide clear career pathways.
- Raise the profile of the school through social media and local media.

How to establish a strong school ethos

Headteachers' conclusions

Developing a school ethos:

- Have a clear set of values, shared by most, if not all.
- Revisit the ethos, along with staff, students and the community.
- Grow, change and develop – but changing a culture takes time and careful thought to be meaningful and become internalised, especially if staff are happy with the existing culture.

The role of a school leader:

- Exemplify the ethos – nothing is more damaging than discordance between what one says and one does.
- Work on building trust – be generous with your time, be visible and know yourself and your staff.
- Reflect – take time, and give staff time, to reflect on lessons learnt and engage in deep learning conversation.
- Employ the right people who share the school's values.

Involve the school community:

- A school's ethos has the power to impact a wider community, but may be difficult to establish when counter-values exist outside.
- Work with parents – this is key in generating a culture change.
- Allow no bystanders – involve everybody in shaping school ethos.





Ethos

Dr Ross Wilson, University of Cambridge

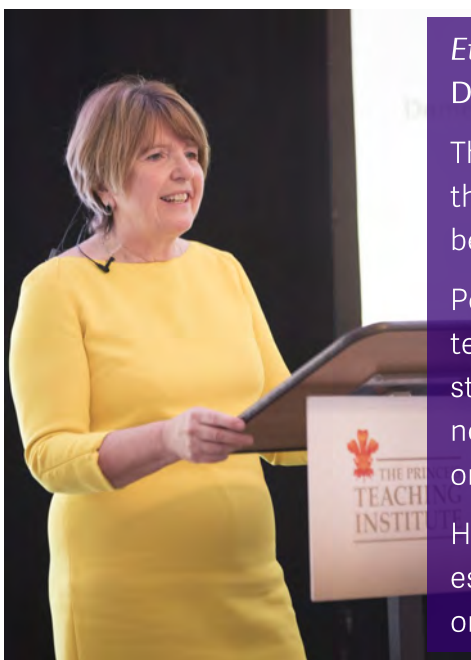
A school's ethos can be external behaviour (which can be mere performance) or internal (relating to convictions and beliefs). How can an abstract ethos be connected to actual behaviour in a school context? And more than that, how can ethos be instilled so that students carry these values and behaviours with them through their lives?

Ethos, ethics and morality are demonstrated through customary behaviours, and children can become accustomed to and internalise values through imitating the behaviour of others. A school's ethos must be established as the customary behaviour of all its members at all levels, exemplified by the leadership. A strong school ethos can establish students as citizens in a democratic society, who not only act well, but also think well. They will be capable of taking on new ideas and of questioning, testing and challenging old ones.

Pupils' perspectives

A panel of Year 9 and Year 11 pupils shared their thoughts on school ethos:

- A school's ethos is something to carry on into future life, to make better moral people. It can provide students with confidence, a good outlook on life and a good attitude towards learning.
- Communicating ethos can be more effective when students are given a straightforward method of talking about it and reflecting on how their learning measures up against it – e.g. *“the Five Rs”: Reflection, Resilience, Resourcefulness, Responsibility, Respect.*
- Recognising and celebrating achievement motivates pupils to live up to the ethos.



Ethos, culture and practice

Dame Barbara Stocking DBE, former Chief Executive of Oxfam

The fundamental purpose of an organisation must be a 'lived value' that is explicitly stated and expressed through strategy and behaviour at all levels of the organisation.

People join organisations that express their values, and they will tend to retain them, even in difficult circumstances. Almost all stakeholders in a school will have a sense of purpose. There can be no bystanders; everyone has a role in shaping the ethos of the organisation.

Headteachers are a day-to-day role model, and must live what they espouse. They need support, from within or outside the organisation: a senior leadership team or a mentor.

How to ensure great teaching and learning remains at the heart of school leadership

Headteachers' conclusions

The role of a school leader:

- Generate the right mind-set – convey excitement for learning and give staff who are caught up in day-to-day tasks the space and time to reflect on teaching and learning.
- Be careful not to over-measure – there can be an over-emphasis on data at the expense of inspiring teaching.

Recruit and support high-quality subject teachers:

- Recognise what motivates individuals – give them opportunities to develop and keep raising the bar.
- Draw in a diverse staff of passionate teachers with deep subject knowledge – careful use of professional development and performance management will enhance subject knowledge, and reflective CPD will have an impact over time.
- Empower teachers through the PTI and College of Teaching to be vocal about the value of their subject.
- Encourage staff to join relevant professional networks – heads of department need to keep their knowledge up to date and fresh.
- Partner new teachers with established ones so they can support and challenge one another.

Maintain focus on teaching and learning:

- Prioritise love of learning over exam results.
- Educate for depth and breadth – give students cultural capital and enrichment; do not narrow their experience to meet accountability frameworks.
- Develop curiosity in students by teaching beyond specifications.



Student panellist from Stewards Academy, Essex

Panel responses

The panel comprised Brian Lightman, General Secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, Simon Lebus, Group Chief Executive of Cambridge Assessment, Sarah Burns, Headteacher of Sandbach School and Alun Harding, Executive Headteacher of Codsall Community High School.

How do we keep teaching and learning at the heart of our schools?

- **Teachers have passion – leaders have the task of unleashing it.** Ensure that CPD underpins teaching and learning by training teachers on methodology and ways to challenge students, rather than a narrow definition of 'Outstanding'; shield teachers from unnecessary paperwork to allow them to focus on teaching and learning. Accountability will come from this.
- **Heads should be lead teachers** – by continuing to teach, leaders feel the same pressures as their staff and gain credibility when talking about teaching standards. Having an executive principal to take care of HR and administrative duties can free headteachers to do this; however, a head is a very expensive teacher.
- **Support risk taking** – most pressure is in the opposite direction. There is a tendency not to take risks as accountability measures do not allow for bad lessons, and complex mark schemes create pressure to teach to the test. With a remote executive head it is more difficult to justify having a bad lesson, as they are not connected to your classroom. There is a danger that multi-academy trusts can become too big and lose sight of their core values.

Putting subjects at the heart of teaching and learning Professor Helen Cooper, University of Cambridge

Aspiration means being curious, wanting to learn more and delighting in challenges. Oxbridge applicants are sometimes accused of elitism, but what is at issue is an aspiration to do better at whatever subjects they are studying, and it is often their teachers who directly inspire this passion for learning. However, we will not inspire them if we limit our teaching to what they already know or what we believe is relevant to them.

We must not be afraid of difficulty. Nobody queries the need for hard work and practice in sport, and the same is needed to develop in any discipline. When students are challenged, they set their expectations higher, just as high-jumpers respond to a literal raising of the bar. Subject teachers likewise need to raise the bar for their own passion and curiosity, and it is the task of a headteacher to inspire such aspiration.



Pupils' perspectives

- Subject choice is influenced by teachers' knowledge of the subject and their enthusiasm in both teaching and recruiting students.
- A great lesson is taught with passion, goes beyond the specifications to help students develop their curiosity and includes high-quality feedback.
- An ineffective lesson is one with no clear structure, where pupils are separated from their friends and there is a poor teacher-pupil relationship.
- High-quality feedback happens in one-to-one conversations, and is more in-depth than written feedback. A good school ethos means that checks are in place to ensure all students understand, and teachers are willing to spend time outside of lessons helping those who do not.

How to succeed in school leadership

Headteachers' conclusions

- **'Do the right thing on a difficult day'** - stick to your core values and place these above external accountability measures. You may have to make compromises, but do not lose sight of the main aim. Short-term solutions aimed around meeting accountability measures can get in the way of longer-term, creative solutions.
- **'If it ain't broke'** - if something is working, there's no need to waste time and effort looking for evidence to support it.
- **Make teaching and learning the absolute priority** – a key challenge in a climate of reduced budgets and staff shortages. Strong subject leadership is an essential element of truly exceptional schools.
- **Lead with humour** – practice determined optimism; be inspired by people you have worked for; take steps not to become isolated with longevity in post; balance openness with professional distance; tell the truth, but maybe not the whole truth.
- **Actions speak louder than words** – be authentic, give praise, be personal. Be controlled and do not lose your temper. Fear is not an effective form of leadership.
- **Know your staff well** – tailor your approach for individuals; support middle leaders to build effective teachers and challenge poor performance; create an atmosphere where senior leadership teams/staff have the confidence to challenge and shape direction.

Being an effective leader

Lord Wilson of Dinton, Former Cabinet Secretary

- You have to have a clear vision – you need to know where you are leading people and be worthy of their confidence that you can take them there.
- Leadership is not 'management' – it has that extra ingredient that motivates and inspires others to perform beyond their capabilities.
- Fear does not make good leadership – people will just want to survive and will not put in extra effort.
- Non-verbal communication – people know when leaders are frightened; you cannot say one thing but mean another.
- Keep your humour – if you look depressed or exhausted, people will notice.
- Leaders are human beings – they should not be put on a pedestal. They have good days and bad, and can fall victim to the usual human vanities. Getting enough sleep is important – for you and the people who work around you.
- Power is isolating – you must be careful to keep the support of your team and recognise discontent or ambition from below.
- Self-esteem is important – you must give people a sense of their own value and the value of what they do. Give hope, believe in their competence and reinforce the good. Raise their sights without devaluing them; being too blunt can be a big mistake.
- There is constant upward appraisal and we expect more of people in their jobs than we used to – subordinates are much less kind in their appraisal of leaders than the reverse.



Panel responses

A 'heroic leader' (like Alex Ferguson) can leave a vacuum. What qualities and attributes do you hope to find in a leader and how can one ensure effective succession?

- The 'heroic head' is a dangerous model – there can be a loss of perception and reluctance among staff to confront the head when things are slipping. Mistakes can take years to rectify, and in the meantime a year group is lost.
- A charismatic head can paper over the cracks, leading to denial among staff when changes are needed.
- Necessary qualities: Clarity in your aims, authenticity, resilience and self-belief, listening, trusting and respecting people, the capacity to deal with uncertainty and the ability to adapt.



Pupils' perspectives

An effective leader is a role model; someone inclusive and cooperative, who gives you their time and who allows teachers to explore a subject beyond the curriculum.

Ethos and managing change

Yvonne Wilkinson

Headteacher, King Edward VI Five Ways School

Yvonne Wilkinson has been involved in helping schools in challenging circumstances, and shared her thoughts about a five-stage process that she has seen work, and which is invaluable in boosting morale.

A five-stage process to changing a school's ethos:

- 1) Define the ethos (unapologetically):
 - a. Enable the school community (students and parents) to contribute to the dialogue.
 - b. Display the ethos and a student charter to make expectations clear. In one school, the previous display on the wall had been copied from another school and people disliked the fact that they had not been a part of the discussion.
- 2) Translate the ethos into action and reinforce it through dialogue:
 - a. Be visible as a leader, build relationships and listen to people.
 - b. Be cheerful and smile, always focus on the positive, speak politely (to combat a culture of shouting) and show everybody they are valued.
- 3) Embody the ethos – find the right leaders and involve everybody, without exception.
- 4) Test the ethos – in one school, in ten weeks the school had stabilised and staff morale had improved; however, a lot of challenges, and some resistance, remained.
- 5) Develop the ethos – a good school ethos evolves, and the way to grow your ethos is to praise.



How to recruit high-quality subject teachers

Headteachers' conclusions



Recruitment in challenging circumstances

- Filling vacancies in a school in a challenging area or challenging circumstances can be extremely difficult, even when being proactive. Teach First and School Direct have been more reliable than traditional advertising, but the supply has diminished. Schools in some areas (e.g. coastal) cannot attract people even through the Institute of Education.
- In one school, out of 76 teachers recruited only 3 had competitive interview processes, and as the school improves, teachers are poached by other schools. There is a need for extra resources and support for a school in these circumstances.

Meeting recruitment challenges

- 1) Recruit through nurturing talented individuals you have access to by:
 - Ensuring teachers give pupils a positive view of the job.
 - Involving Sixth Formers in supporting younger learners.
 - Recruiting local graduates as teaching assistants and developing them into teaching staff.
 - Keeping records of former students who will be graduating each year.
- 2) Use social media and local media to raise the profile of the school and recruit staff.
- 3) Invest in CPD and provide clear career pathways for teachers; staff who love their jobs are retained and feel valued.
- 4) Recruit from within local industry.

Panel responses

Given the difficulties with teacher recruitment, how can failing schools be turned around?

- Recruitment of headteachers is becoming more difficult – the personal cost and unforgiving accountability measures are barriers.
- Branding a school 'Inadequate' digs it into a deeper pit by making it very difficult to recruit good teachers and headteachers. Rapid improvement timescales are not always beneficial – to improve properly takes time, and this needs to be understood.
- Give headteachers adequate support to turn around failing schools – putting in a full leadership team could save money in the long term.
- Listen to the teachers – find out why they feel the school is failing. Heads and teachers need to tell their own story, and not passively accept judgements handed down by Ofsted.
- Respect the pupils – in a failing school, students can sometimes be viewed as the enemy. This needs to be addressed to get them on board with a shift in ethos.

What makes great teaching?

Our Schools Leadership Programme Day gave members their annual opportunity to share lessons learnt in the progress of the action-based research projects they each conduct in their schools for the benefit of the network. Project summaries can be found in the PTI Yearbook. Members also had the chance to discuss current concerns with Nick Gibb MP, Minister for Schools, and Lee Elliot Major, Chief Executive of the Sutton Trust and co-author of the 2014 report *'What makes great teaching?'*.

Nick Gibb MP stated that:

- Subject teaching and passion are central – we are moving towards a position where teachers are seen as academic experts and schools as academic institutions, and where the emphasis is on passion and love of subject. Review groups are addressing levels of bureaucracy and moving towards evidence-based practice that is not dogmatic.
- CPD that focuses on subject content has positive benefits for learners – generic CPD falls back on debunked aspects of teaching, like learning styles.
- Autonomy for the profession is increasing - the era of the 'perfect Ofsted lesson' is over. Individual lessons are no longer graded and teachers' decisions should be motivated by student learning, not by what visitors will think.
- Recruitment is the number one priority – there are more teachers than ever before, but every industry is looking for top graduates. Bursaries for Physics, Maths and Design and Technology are working, but targets are still not being met.
- There is a hostility towards textbooks due to a fear of criticism from Ofsted, which creates a huge workload for teachers in terms of lesson preparation. Textbooks should be created and honed by the profession, which is what happens in Finland, among other places.

Lee Elliot Major stated that:

- Leaders with the confidence to focus on teaching and learning in their school will see gains in pupil achievement, and pupil achievement is the best way to judge effectiveness.
- Subject knowledge is key, and the final important ingredient is high-quality feedback for students that is also grounded in the subject.
- A school is a learning community – learning should be ongoing for teachers and not just happen on inset days.
- Headteachers have to hold their nerve to go for long-term gains – in schools with good professional learning, teaching continues to improve, rather than plateauing.

What advice would you give to headteachers in their first term?

Lee Elliot Major:

- Focus on teaching and learning with your senior leadership team.


Nick Gibb:

- Re-examine behaviour, it is the essence of everything.
- Examine the curriculum in every subject to ensure rigour, challenge, high expectations and a base in knowledge rather than skills.





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