

# Learning, well being and changing children's lives

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# Introductions

Building our community

Find someone who .....

# Today we will be exploring



## **Achieving our ambition**

Strengthening the links between academic achievement, well being, and family / community partnerships.

Why is this important ?

What should focus on

National College Framework for Closing the Gap

## **Leading change**

Well being leaders and those who lead learning – developing our leadership capacity for sustainable change and improvement – our role as change agents

## **Leading beyond school improvement**

Leading beyond expectations, leading learning communities and high performance leadership

## **Reflection**

## And our theme...

# Let the questions do the heavy lifting

‘Asking powerful questions can uncover the root of the challenges groups face when attempting to work together; the values, assumptions, perceptions and emotions that often lead to conflict rather than collaboration.

Powerful questions create space for groups to reveal deep level differences’.

Powerful questions are distinguished by –

- They invite exploration
- They resist easy answers
- They invoke strong passions

The Leaders' Edge – Palus & Horth  
Centre for Creative Leadership

# Evidence from a range of research reports into extended learning/wellbeing & learning programmes and what they tell us



1. Keep children in school, help them engage with learning and set them on productive pathways after school
2. Help families deal with crises and encourage better parenting
3. Effectiveness depends on targeting (*and schools are not so good at this*)
4. Schools do best when they have explicit targeting systems which combine personal knowledge and objective data
5. The effects are likely to be small in the first instance '*but there is some reason to believe they grow over time*' and multiply where schools and communities act together in a coordinated areas strategy

1. Foster better relationships between students and teachers
2. Help develop 'student voice' and increase engagement with school
3. Activity focused on raising attainment have the greatest impact but unless aligned with other more sustainable activity, may be short term
4. Extended service complement other approaches designed to raise achievement, and are most successful where part of a coordinated effort – and not a 'bolt on' or alternative
5. Schools that provided the most effective extended services integrated these with their planning for whole school improvement – they were clear about the outcomes they wanted to achieve.
6. Schools that did best had high expectations – no excuses culture

Evaluation of Extended Services, 2011

Evaluation of Full Service Extended Schools, 2010

How well are they doing? Impact of Extended Schools and Children's Centres, 2008

## Evaluation of community schools

1. Academic achievement positively correlated with the with the number of days students attended extended – day programmes
2. Attitudes to school were more positive among community school students than among students at comparison schools
3. Parental involvement was significantly higher in the community schools than comparison schools
4. Parents of students in the community schools felt a strong sense of responsibility for their children's learning

New York Community Schools Initiative; Impact evaluation 1996 - 1999

# Parents; involvement, engagement and agency

*'When parents talk to their children about school, expect them to do well, help them plan for college, and make that the out of hours learning activities are constructive their children do better in school.*

*Where schools engage families in ways that are linked to improving learning, students make greater gains.*

*When schools build partnerships with families that respond to their concerns and honour their contributions, they are successful in sustaining this engagement over time and when families and communities organise to hold poorly performing schools accountable, studies suggest that school districts make positive changes in policy, practice and resources.'*

A new wave of evidence – the impact of school, family and community connections on student achievement (2002) – summary of 51 studies



# Education vital for social mobility



**Good teaching** necessary but not sufficient .....

**Attitude and behaviour** are potentially important links between socio economic disadvantage and children's educational attainment

There are two main areas where policy may help to reduce educational inequality:  
In relation to the parents and family home

## **Improving the home learning environment**

- Helping parents to believe their own actions and efforts can lead to higher education ( for themselves and their children )
- Raising family expectations for advancement

## **The child's own attitude and behaviour**

- Reducing behaviour problems and risky behaviour and increasing engagement with school and teachers
- Helping children believe their own actions and efforts can lead to higher education – increasing their sense of well being
- Raising children's aspirations and expectations from primary school onward

# What have been the limits of past initiatives?

**Targeting more resource** in an area is not always effective and unlikely in current funding climate

Bending and changing available resource may be more beneficial

**Too narrowly focused** on school agenda

Aim needs to be broader to bring together broad coalition of partners focused on the aim

**Short term (3- 5 years)** i.e. the life of a parliament

This has made it difficult to build up the momentum for change

**Owned and dominated by professionals** who move on when the money dries up – don't fully understand and unable to call on wider resource

## And so .....

- Targeted and focused – use of data and personal knowledge
- Area based – aligned and multiplied
- Complement other school improvement initiatives
- Build the capacity of parents
- Only the best – high expectations
- Work on underlying causes as well as symptoms
- Take an area based approach – collaboration at all levels
- Plan long term – look for quick 'wins' but be patient

School leaders who are most effective at raising the bar and closing gaps focus on three areas

## **Knowledge**

Knowledge about gaps

Knowledge about scale, causes and consequences

Knowledge about effective school leadership and school improvement

## **Quality of teachers and teaching**

An intense focus on the quality of teachers and teaching

## **Quality of engagement with parents and the community**

Know the above necessary but not sufficient for long term sustainable change - are outward looking and build partnerships for long term sustainable change.

# Leading Change : Resourceful and resilient leaders .....

Make multiple connections – reach out to others

Are in touch with themselves – calm, alert, aware

Give themselves time; action ..... reaction

'Between the thought and action, between the motion and the act falls the shadow'.

T.S. Eliot

Expand their focus; look for **viewing points** rather than get caught in a **view point**

Expand their options and choices

*' the law of requisite variety says that the organism with the greatest number of responses is the one most likely to survive'*

Eileen McDargh

## 8 core behaviours of resourceful leaders - they demonstrate .....

1. openness to possibilities
2. the ability to collaborate
3. a belief in their team and people
4. personal resilience and tenacity
5. the ability to create and sustain commitment across a system
6. display a focus on results and outcomes
7. the ability to simplify
8. the ability to learn continuously

National College Resourceful Leadership  
2011

# Leading change in schools and communities

## - appreciative enquiry

- Organisations and communities are living human systems
- They respond to stimuli
- The more we enquire into an area the more understanding about it we generate
- Using imagination – whilst not causing something to happen – will grow motivation and belief that things could be different and will build a sense of ownership and agency among the people involved
- Enquiry is not a pre-cursor to doing something it IS doing something

# The power of conversation in the change process

*'I believe we can change the world if we start listening to one another again. Simple, honest human communication. Not mediation, negotiation problem solving, debate or public meetings. Simple truthful conversations where we each have a chance to speak, we each feel heard and we listen well'.*

*This means it is vital we are present open and curious. What passes for conversation in our daily experience is really about 'waiting to talk', rather than wanting to listen'.*

Margaret Wheatley



# What stops us – the fear of conversation

The fear of expressed emotion

The fear of being perceived as different from colleagues

The need to manage anxiety

The fear of being seen to 'waste time'

The fear of not 'getting on' and reaching a conclusion

The fear of not being able to handle the outcome

# Addressing the fear – strengthening our practice

Practice, practice, practice – till it becomes natural and not 'bolt on'

Be explicit about the value of conversation

Ask for feedback

End with a reflection – this is how I now feel... this is what I noticed...

## Relationships ....

*'Any reform initiative that improves relationships has a chance of success – any that doesn't is doomed to failure'*

Michael Fullan  
Change Forces

# Attributes – professional characteristics- be the change you want to see in the world



**Optimistic, enthusiastic and curious** – belief in people

Commitment to **social justice, equity and excellence**

**Respect and empathy** for others

**Resilient** - tireless energy

**Persistent** – in pursuit of excellence, putting pupils first

**Drive and determination** – ambitious

**Courage, conviction and integrity**

**Vigilant and visible** - “only the best will do”

**Humility** plus **professional will** (fierce resolve)

and .....

Sources: Ofsted Outstanding Schools series 2009/10; Capturing Leadership Premium, McKinsey 2010; Glatter 2009; Future of Leadership, National College 2008.

## Untapped talent?

***'Any one organisation has more leaders than it realises'***

McKinsey and Co

The leadership effect – how the worlds best performing systems develop and grow their leaders

## Learning centred leaders – in schools and communities

Model – an integrated approach; learning and well being – understand the argument and model that it's important

Monitor – where it is happening well and make sure it is shared and profiled

Dialogue – about what we are trying to achieve and how – curiosity

# High ambition

Achieving against the odds – performing beyond expectations

How do we do that ?

# Performance beyond expectations



## Destinations and departures

F1: **the fantastic dream** – these organisations aspire to and articulate an improbable, collectively held fantasy or dream that is bolder and more challenging than a plan or even a vision.

F2: **the fear** – these organisations often face failure, ridicule, humiliation and even extinction in a way that galvanises a commitment to change.

F3: **the fight** – the impossible dream and improbable challenge produce a response of fight to overcome or avoid obstacles instead of flight to avoid them.

F4: **fundamental futures** – these organisations create an inspiring future by connecting with the fundamental meaning of a classic and honourable past.

## Progress and pathways

F5: **firm foundations** – these organisations' impact of high-profile leadership and meteoric success is often Underpinned by years of foundation building by others, developing better business models, building new relationships

F6: **fortitude** – these organisations depend on leaders who have inner reserves of strength and resilience that enable them to bounce back from adversity, undertake dangerous tasks or dirty work before anyone else is ready to do it, and persevere despite opposition and setbacks.

F7: **counter flow** – these organisations are prepared to run against the mainstream, and to move ahead not by going with the flow but against or around it.

F8: **fast and fair tracking** – these organisations use indicators and targets of progress and performance that are personally meaningful, publicly shared and demonstrably fair measures of what leaders and followers are trying to achieve.

F9: **feasible growth** – these organisations pay prudent attention to sustainable growth rates that do not compromise the future by improving too quickly in ways that produce only false recoveries by exhausting resources, incurring excessive debt, attracting star performers with only transient loyalties, or by burning people out.



# Performing beyond expectations



## Culture and collaboration

F10: **high fidelity** – these organisations have a deep faith in and faithfulness to their colleagues and the people they serve, and a higher purpose greater than any one of them.

F11: **fraternity** – these organisations build and sustain four kinds of community: communities of recruitment, communities of service, communities of professional practice, and communities of support that surround them.

F12: **flair, flow and flexibility** – these organisations engage a talented team in which risk and creativity are valued and members participate and play in interchangeable roles and positions.

F13: **fallibility** – these organisations are confident but not overconfident; they make and acknowledge mistakes and expect others to make mistakes also. They know they are not infallible.

F14: **friendly rivalry** – these organisations combine competition with collaboration (what we call collaborative edge), recognising that their success partly rests on the success of others, and they have a sense of social justice in providing service to others.

## Drive and direction

F15: **fusion leadership** – these organisations invest in leadership and followership that raise and rally the performance of all by lifting up its members morally, emotionally and spiritually, through a combination and progression of leadership styles and strategies, included distributed and sustainable leadership

National College

Performance Beyond Expectations, 2011

Andy Hargreaves and Alma Harris

# Developing our leadership capacity for change and continuous improvement



*'When from our better selves we have too long been parted from the hurrying world, and droop sick of its business, of its pleasures tired how gracious, how benign is solitude'.*

## Wordsworth

Strengthen our inner life – time for reflection and contemplation

1. Why do I do this work?
2. What do I stand for as a leader?
3. What legacy do I wish to leave?

# Leading beyond school improvement leading for high performance



## Our dream – a place of realised potential

*A place of realised potential opens itself to change, to contrary opinion, to the mystery of potential, to involvement, to unsettling ideas ...*

*They offer people the opportunity to learn and grow*

*They offer the gift of challenging work*

*They shed their obsolete baggage*

*They trust and forgive*

*They celebrate*

*Max De Pree*

*Leading without Power*