

Inspiring leaders to
improve children's lives



National College
for School Leadership

Schools and academies

A framework for excellence in the leadership of church schools and academies: qualities and behaviours

Resource

Contents

Purpose	3
Distinctiveness.....	3
Context.....	3
Qualities and behaviours.....	4
Ideas for using the framework for excellence in the leadership of church schools and academies: qualities and behaviours	7
Key sources	9

Purpose

This framework considers the distinctiveness of leadership in church schools and academies. It offers a flexible set of qualities and behaviours which can be used in a range of ways by:

- individuals at various stages of their leadership journey
- church schools and academies as they develop themselves and their staff and teams
- groups of church schools and academies that are working together to improve leadership
- diocesan directors, officers and others in the system working with church school and academy leaders and governors
- the National College as it considers future leadership activities and programmes, including targeted support for leaders of church schools and academies

The qualities and behaviours may seem like a statement of perfection. However, they are intended to provide a benchmark for church school leadership that will encourage personal growth and development based on the understanding that nobody demonstrates every quality perfectly.

Distinctiveness

Many of the qualities and behaviours are generic and transferable, in that they could be demonstrated by all skilled school leaders. However, they are set in the context of preparing leaders for an increasingly diverse system. They recognise that church school and academy leadership has distinctive features which need a greater degree of focus and emphasis. Specific qualities and behaviours may also need different degrees of weighting when leading schools and academies in a church context. The framework acknowledges that transformational Christian leadership requires personal commitment and understanding combined with creative and innovative approaches which build on individual strengths.

This framework was developed by a group of Diocesan Directors of Education and Officers in the Anglican and Catholic Churches, with support from the National College. It is not a definitive list, but rather a flexible and versatile resource. Further suggestions for its use are included later in the guidance.

Context

In framing the qualities and behaviours, consideration has also been given to some of the contextual issues affecting church schools and academies. These include:

- values explicit or implicit in national policy and the resonance or dissonance of these with Christian values (for example, the current focus of targets on more easily measurable educational outcomes, the concept of an individual's responsibilities towards other people and for wider society)
- fragmentation of the current system and the increasing autonomy of schools and academies within the maintained sector balanced by the need to forge new partnerships, including church with non-church schools and academies and dioceses working in partnership with non-Christian organisations
- increasing secularisation and maintaining the distinctiveness of church schools and academies in a changing world
- impact of both the national debt and changing funding levels on the capacity of local authorities and others to provide broad-based support for schools and academies, and the implications of that for diocesan work
- changing demands on the leadership roles of headteachers, principals and governing bodies and the support roles of clergy and the implications of these changes for recruiting, developing and sustaining the leaders of church schools and academies

-
- challenge of recruiting enough headteachers, principals and foundation governors with appropriate faith, commitment and expertise

In the text that follows, 'school' is used to cover all categories of institution, including academies.

Qualities and behaviours

Securing and maintaining transformational change

- Articulating values based on the life of Jesus Christ and a vision of Christian education for pupils and staff; working effectively with governors to develop and promote this vision within a church context; demonstrating personal authenticity with respect to these aspects of leadership and being a role model for pupils, staff and governors/directors.
- Having a passion for learning and for leadership in a Christian context; leading with spiritual intelligence¹ and a sense of vocation.
- Expressing with conviction and clarity educational aims and purposes for the future success of the school; ensuring that all members of the community are provided with opportunities to achieve their God-given potential by releasing the inherent capacity of pupils and staff to improve and achieve their best; working hard to close the academic achievement gap.
- Mediating the thinking and practice of staff and pupils so that they understand the nature of transformational change and the raising of standards in a Christian context; ensuring a shared understanding of important words and phrases such as 'learning', 'inclusion', 'moral purpose', 'servant leadership' and 'outstanding practice' and 'school improvement'; being reflective as a leader.
- Constantly seeking to take the learning of pupils and staff to deeper levels; focusing on the equal importance of physical, moral, emotional and spiritual development; ensuring that religious education is given a high priority for all pupils, both within discrete RE and the broader curriculum.
- Valuing creativity and innovation; understanding change and the complexities involved in leading all organisations; being a good listener, open-minded and flexible.
- Possessing the leadership and management skills and the personal qualities to build strong relationships with all stakeholders, particularly pupils, parents/carers, staff and governors.
- Securing through the leadership, management and organisation of the school a successful focus on: both strategic planning and operational effectiveness; both capacity-building and the short-term raising of standards; both teamwork and individual effort; both the celebration of what has already been achieved and the constant pursuit of further improvement.
- Celebrating the progress and successes of pupils and staff regularly; ensuring that Christian thanksgiving, worship and prayer are core activities in the school.

¹ Notes on 'spiritual intelligence':

Howard Gardner, in the 1993 edition of *Frames of Mind*, his seminal book about multiple intelligences, proposed an additional category of 'spiritual intelligence'. Danah Zohar (1997) in her influential book *Rewiring the Corporate Brain* wrote about three kinds of thinking that are related to the structure of the brain: serial thinking equates with mental intelligence and 'management by objectives'; associative thinking equates with emotional intelligence and 'management by consensus'; quantum thinking equates with spiritual intelligence and 'managing the unexpected'.

Danah Zohar and Ian Marshall (2000), in *Spiritual Intelligence*, described the qualities of spiritually intelligent people. They:

- ask 'why?' and 'what if?' questions and seek fundamental answers
- are inspired by values and vision and are determined to achieve long-term goals
- are able to work against convention and show flexibility
- see the connections between diverse things and are holistic in their view of the world
- have an ethical lifestyle and are trustworthy
- show a high degree of self-awareness and humility; put ego aside for the good of others
- make sacrifices and show resilience
- have a capacity to face, use and transcend suffering; are courageous

Being outward-looking and having a positive impact on the wider community

- Having the ability to form highly effective partnerships, particularly with nearby schools and educational institutions and, through collaboration, to increase the impact of change to raise standards.
- Having a strong sense of equity, political awareness and a well-developed sensitivity to cultural differences within the community; understanding and celebrating diversity as a key focus for leadership and learning; valuing people with other faiths or no religious faith.
- Engaging effectively with the local community, including churches and the diocese, for the benefit of children, young people and families; being visible and persuasive with a wide range of stakeholders; remaining competent and confident with all types of communication.
- Ensuring that the idea and practice of service to the community is a core part of the curriculum; creating opportunities for service to the global community, particularly projects in developing countries; developing leadership among pupils and staff.
- Bringing a Christian viewpoint and ethics to entrepreneurial activities including relationships with the business community; being willing to take and manage risks imaginatively and constructively.

Establishing sustainable and accountable systems of organisation and governance

- Devising and assuring rigorous systems and structures of accountability; working closely and effectively with the governing body and the diocese.
- Understanding and working with new leadership and governance structures including academy partnerships and executive leadership roles.
- Having a confident grasp of financial planning and budgeting relevant to school status and context.
- Using data confidently, honestly and effectively to secure and sustain improving standards; developing these skills in all senior and middle leaders.
- Attracting, recruiting, inducting, developing and retaining high-quality staff; ensuring that all staff are challenged and supported to operate consistently in raising standards throughout the school on the journey towards an 'outstanding' Ofsted judgement; sharing leadership in thoughtful and effective ways; ensuring that all staff are committed to and supportive of the church school ethos; providing opportunities for the spiritual development and enrichment of staff.
- Securing the efficient and sustainable use of available resources for the benefit of the community including buildings, human and financial resources; ensuring that the school community develops an awareness of resource limitations and a sense of responsibility for global sustainability.
- Working in partnership with governors, particularly foundation governors, to develop their vision of what it means to be a church school; acting as stewards of the distinctive Christian ethos.

Personal characteristics

Successful church school leaders will demonstrate:

- Personal commitment to a Christian world view and way of life through being a role model for the fruits of the spirit² and demonstrating characteristics such as dignity, compassion, forgiveness and reconciliation.
- Clear vision for and track record of delivering excellence in education; passion for the needs of all children and young people, creating high aspirations and engendering hope for the future.

² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Galatians 5:22-23

-
- Courage, and the ability to think and act independently to face challenges including poor performance and to take difficult decisions; preparedness to show sacrificial love towards others.
 - Self-awareness, authenticity and integrity that will generate trust among all types of people and in all aspects of leadership.
 - Excellent cognitive and analytical skills combined with high levels of emotional and spiritual intelligence; having good judgement particularly in complex and uncertain situations.
 - Humility that recognises that leaders cannot do it all themselves and sometimes get things wrong; a life-long learner in matters of faith and work.
 - Resilience, patience and tenacity for sustained organisational and cultural change and to manage conflict and vulnerability successfully; holding fast to the truths of one's faith.
 - Energy, stamina and optimism that maintain a positive outlook even in the most demanding situations; a motivator of others.
 - Commitment to the wellbeing of self and others; understanding wellbeing as it is understood in the full meaning of the term 'shalom'; commitment to opportunities for spiritual renewal, eg diocesan retreats

Ideas for using the framework for excellence in the leadership of church schools and academies: qualities and behaviours

It is suggested that this framework might prove useful in the following contexts:

- visioning, ie when a school is seeking to develop a clear expression of core values and beliefs
- as a resource for teaching schools when working with church schools
- leadership auditing in circumstances where a robust analysis of current strengths and future development needs is required
- governing body development, to aid discussion about school priorities and leadership development issues, where appropriate working with local clergy
- recruitment procedures eg formulation of job descriptions, person specifications and interview questions and to organise assessment centres for selection and development
- leadership policy development and planning programmes for training and development, including work with senior leadership teams
- in groups of schools and academies to help develop a shared language and to support team-building and the acquisition of transferable skills (particularly relevant for groups of schools within a diocese)
- performance management, to help set an individual's objectives and during the review/debriefing stage
- career progression as a resource for self-review and personal professional assessment by individuals
- coaching, eg as a basis for critical friend analysis and to support peer-review activities
- in bringing coherence to individualised leadership development programmes or the devising of focused action-research proposals

Specific ideas on using the framework in recruitment

- Incorporate the framework into existing diocesan handbooks for recruitment.
- Draw on framework for job descriptions and, particularly, person specifications.
- The governors should consider the framework and decide which items they want to include.
- Adapt any selection guidance tool already in use; the diocese of Chichester, for example, has such a document, which includes items from the person specification/job description on one side and guidance on what to look for on the other.
- Issue the framework as part of the information pack for applicants so they can consider whether they meet the requirements for qualities and behaviours.

Specific ideas on using the framework with governors and for governing body development

- Agree that the framework should not go out 'cold' to governing bodies. Dioceses should construct a governor-specific introduction to it.
- This can be accompanied by introductory activities at a training session for chairs of governing bodies.
- Use the framework to aid increased awareness of the importance of governance, including point about acting as stewards as mentioned in the framework, thereby changing mindsets and developing commitment.

-
- Some governing bodies may find sections 1, 2 and 3 challenging, so there is potential for training and discussion sessions focused on these sections.
 - Use the framework to support the selection and nomination of foundation governors (but remember there will be implications for its distribution to clergy).

This framework has been developed by the Diocesan Education Officers in the South East regional group, with the support of the National College:

- Diocese of Arundel and Brighton (Roman Catholic)
- Archdiocese of Birmingham (Roman Catholic)
- Diocese of Canterbury (Church of England)
- Diocese of Chichester (Church of England)
- Diocese of Guildford (Church of England)
- Diocese of Oxford (Church of England)
- Diocese of Portsmouth (Roman Catholic)
- Dioceses of Portsmouth and Winchester (Church of England)
- Diocese of Rochester (Church of England)

Key sources

In preparing this framework, guidance from several key sources was used. This includes:

National College, 2011, *Achieving excellence in academy leadership*, Nottingham, National College for School Leadership. Available at www.nationalcollege.org.uk/index/docinfo.htm?id=142373 [accessed 17 February 2012]

National College, 2010, *Leadership succession: a framework for action for dioceses and other providers of schools with a religious character* Nottingham, National College for School Leadership. Available at www.nationalcollege.org.uk/index/docinfo.htm?id=132763 [accessed 17 February 2012]

Hampshire Toolkits for senior and middle level leadership (National College succession planning project with Hampshire Local Authority)

Self-review questionnaire for potential participants on the INSPIRE programme (National College succession planning project with the Diocese of Oxford and Oasis Community Learning)

Hargreaves, D, 2010, *Creating a self-improving school system*, Nottingham, National College for School Leadership and Hargreaves, D, 2011, *Leading a self-improving school system*, Nottingham, National College for School Leadership. Available at www.nationalcollege.org.uk/leading-a-self-improving-school-system [accessed 17 February 2012]

The National College is uniquely dedicated to developing and supporting aspiring and serving leaders in schools, academies and early years settings.

The College gives its members the professional development and recognition they need to build their careers and support those they work with. Members are part of a community of thousands of other leaders - exchanging ideas, sharing good practice and working together to make a bigger difference for children and young people.

©2012 National College for School Leadership – all rights reserved. No part of this document may be reproduced without prior permission from the National College. To reuse this material, please contact the Marketing and Communications team at the National College or email publications@nationalcollege.org.uk.

Triumph Road,
Nottingham NG8 1DH
T 0845 609 0009
F 0115 872 2001
E enquiries@nationalcollege.org.uk
www.nationalcollege.org.uk

We care about the environment

We are always looking for ways to minimise our environmental impact. We only print where necessary, which is why you will find most of our materials online. When we do print we use environmentally friendly paper.