

# Excellence in Headship Stretch programme

## Leading systems change Session 1: Systems thinking in practice

**10<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

**Fàilte!**

**Anton Florek**, Lead Associate, The Staff College

# Welcome and introduction

Timing	
13:00	<b>Welcome and introduction</b>
13:05 – 14:00	<b>Session 1 – Systems leadership: what is our work?</b>
1400: – 1500:	<b>Session 2 – Systems innovation: case studies of practice</b>
15:00 – 15:05	Break
15:05 – 16:00	<b>Session 3 – Systems thinking for systems change</b>
16:00	Close

# Session 1

## Systems leadership: options, possibilities and solutions

In this world of rapid, complex change, no one can really know the future and lead others there. An individual leader can't neatly choose the right outcome and chart a course alone, because there are too many unpredictable variables in the mix. We need a new model of leadership, which we call Whole Systems Leadership.

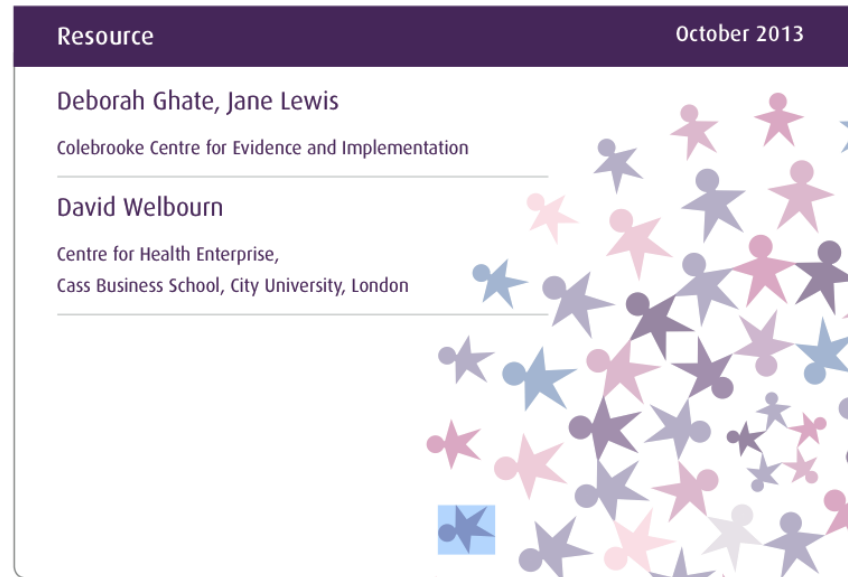
University of Minnesota and Life Science Foundation (2010)

# The research study

In Autumn 2012, The Virtual Staff College, commissioned a partnership of researchers specialising in the science and practice of social care implementation and health management - to carry out research on this emerging leadership response... Systems leadership, according to this formulation, concerns *leadership that extends beyond the confines of single agencies or organisations, stretching the remit and skills of leaders into places where their usual authority, derived from organisational position, may not be recognised.*

Systems Leadership:  
Exceptional leadership for exceptional times

## Synthesis Paper



The Colebrooke Centre  
for evidence and implementation



Cass Business School  
CITY UNIVERSITY LONDON



- **Seeking diverse perspectives:** A whole systems approach thrives on the respectful inclusion of all voices. From this viewpoint, conflicting opinions do not present a problem; rather, they present a potential resource that can sharpen thinking and lead to innovative options for action
- **Suspending certainty,** embracing uncertainty: Suspending certainty enables you to see beyond your habitual lenses to get a broader and potentially more accurate view of what is going on. It also creates room for diverse views so that new or different knowledge can come forth
- **Taking adaptive action:** Adaptive action means learning from everything you do. It means taking time to recognise patterns and reflect on their meaning before jumping to a solution. It balances an inclusive, deep listening approach with a bias towards action.

University of Minnesota and Life Science Foundation (2010)

## Systems leadership is achieved through:

- influence and ‘nudge’, not formal power
- alignment around common moral purpose: improved outcomes for those we serve
- a focus on the outcomes and results, not the process
- strong but robust and honest relationships
- a mind set, rather than specific actions and behaviours.



## Summary

- Qualities, motivations and personal style are more important than specific competencies and skills
- Relationships are central to leading through influence, allowing challenge and difficult conversations
- Challenge, conflict and 'disturbing the system' are integral.

Ghate, Lewis and Welbourn (2013)

# Alliances: beyond partnerships

Your capacity to innovate will depend on who is part of your alliance. Creating new products relies on creative teams. Changing entire systems, however, requires alliances of partners who will be co-innovators working alongside you and distributors who will take the product to market. Successful systems innovators create constellations of other actors aligned around them.

Charles Leadbeater (2013)

From a Whole Systems Leadership perspective, change doesn't take place one person at a time. Instead, as Margaret Wheatley notes, it happens "as networks of relationships form among people who discover they share a common cause and vision of what's possible". Drawing from the lessons of complexity science, Whole Systems Leadership recognises that when many interconnected individuals and groups take many small actions, a shift happens in the larger patterns of communities, organisations, and societies.

University of Minnesota and Life Science Foundation (2010)

Systems leadership across cultural boundaries is about aligning vision and purpose across different organisations whilst respecting professional difference. Systems leadership across local authority boundaries is about working with other organisations to renew vision and purpose by challenging professional difference.

Patrick Scott, John Harris & Anton Florek (2013)

Two leadership constructs which might help our work...

**VUCA**

**Adaptive Leadership**



Thoughts in chat please.....

**ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP  
EXPLAINED IN 4 MINUTES  
OR LESS**

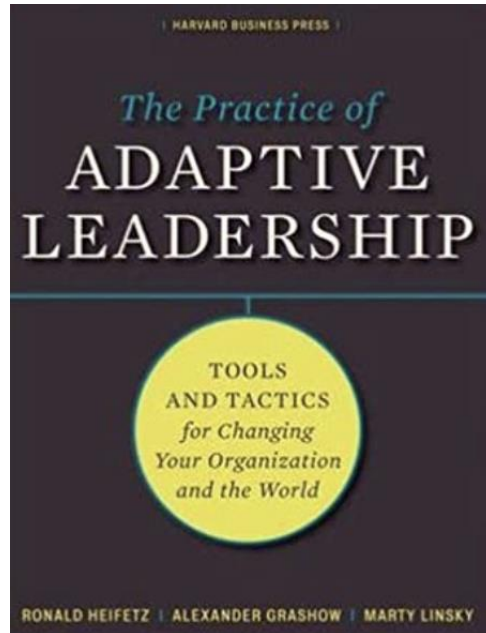


**LEADERSH1P.COM**



# Adaptive Leadership

Ronald A. Heifetz



## Dance floor and balcony

Moving from the dance floor to the balcony describes the mental activity of stepping back from the action and asking, 'What's really going on here? Where do I need to be? On the dance floor, or the balcony?'

Heifetz and Linsky (2009) use the expression 'reflect in action by spending time on the balcony and the dance floor' to illustrate how leaders need to metaphorically step away (head up to the balcony) while in the midst of their daily work (the dance floor). This enables leaders to gain a different perspective and gather insight, not only on issues but also on their own behaviours and beliefs.

## Four Main Principles of Adaptive Leadership

The following are the four main tenets tied to adaptive leadership:

### **Emotional Intelligence**

[Emotional intelligence](#) is the ability to recognize your own feelings and those of other people. With this awareness, an adaptive leader is able to build trust with other participants and foster quality relationships.

### **Organisational justice**

Another fundamental principle of adaptive leadership is fostering a culture of honesty. Adaptive leaders know the best policies to introduce for the good of the organization. They also know the best ways to introduce these changes so that people embrace them. Adaptive leaders are willing to accommodate other peoples' views, hence, assuring them that they are valued and respected.

### **Development**

Adaptive leadership entails learning new things. If one technique is not yielding desired results, an adaptive leader goes out of his or her way to discover new strategies that can work. With new techniques, both the employees and the company at large will experience growth and development.

### **Character**

Adaptive leadership is about having a deep sense of character, being transparent and creative. Adaptive leaders may not always be right, but they earn the respect of those they work with and practice what they recommend.

## Technical vs. Adaptive Problems

Adaptive leadership recognises that there are two kinds of problems: technical and adaptive.

With **technical problems**, a satisfactory pre-determined response is already available, and one or more experts who possess solid reputations are sought to address the issue. Overall, technical problems are mechanical and can be solved by well managed systems and processes.

With **adaptive problems**, there may well be no set of established rules or procedures to address the issue. In most cases, the definition of the problem is vague or certainly difficult to define accurately and there aren't any technical fixes to solve it. It is in such situations that adaptive leadership becomes useful. It helps to define the problem and then mobilises stakeholders to come up with possible answers.

Also note: [Tame and wicked issues \(K Grint\)](#)

## Personal agency

With systems leadership comes a renewed emphasis on the ability of the leader to influence events by force of personality. A distinction should be drawn between the old fashioned notion of the domineering leader, whose power comes from their willingness to coerce others, and the requirement on a modern leader to be a member of a team, making their presence felt by their ability to achieve a collective sense of purpose.

The key features of this are:

- a sense of what it means to have impact without marginalising other people,
- the ability to create a compelling narrative, which is engaging and inspirational,
- the kind of creativity that generates innovative solutions to intractable problems.

It follows that the most highly skilled systems leader is able to balance two different kinds of leadership in creative tension. On the one hand they will be 'on the dance floor', embodying the organisation that they lead, supporting their staff, and being an advocate for the services they provide. On the other, they will be 'on the balcony', a leading critic of the organisation for which they are responsible and challenging the way in which it does business. For many, both the leaders and those who follow, this will be an unfamiliar combination, but it is essential for the establishment of high quality services in the public sector that are capable of self improvement.

Discuss.....

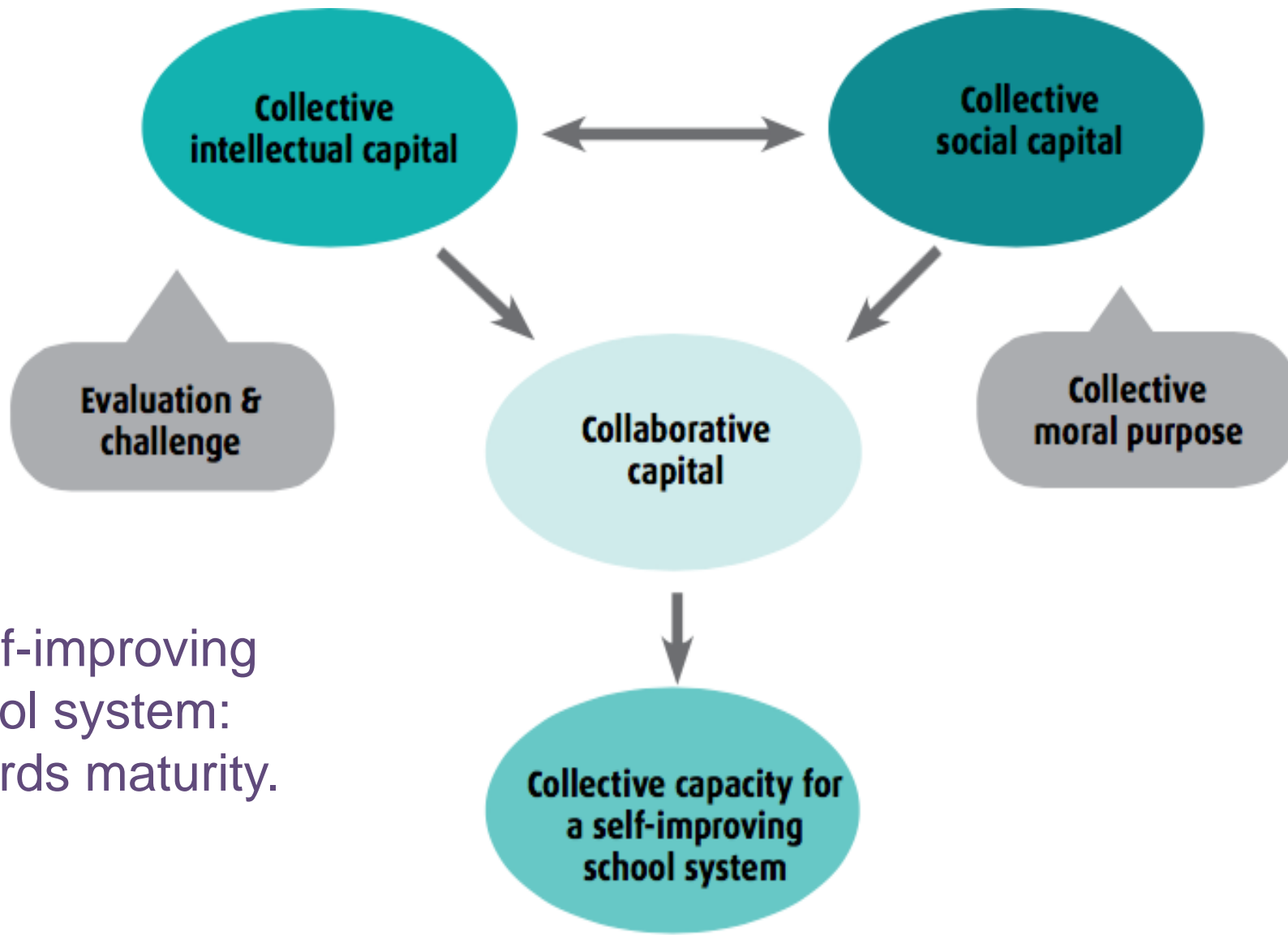
# Session 2

## Systems innovation: case studies of practice

**There can be no possibility of coherence across the wellbeing system without schools acting as key participants**

**Headteachers acting as critical change agents for systems innovation**

**School improvement through system improvement**



A self-improving school system: towards maturity.

Hargreaves, (2012)



# The Newcastle Promise

A city where we **all** share responsibility for providing the best educational opportunities for all our children and young people.

## **We will:**

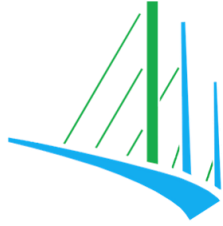
- create the sense of belonging in our schools, where children are proud of the present and ambitious for their future
- support and challenge each other so that no school or child is left behind
- drive improvement, seeking excellence through equity
- work creatively, beyond institutional boundaries, to raise standards and maximise the learning opportunities for all
- build a collaborative learning community, sharing our success, innovation and evidence-based practice.



**Wiltshire Learning Alliance: working together for the best possible life chances for every child and family.**

**This means all alliance members:**

- Being outward looking and forward thinking
- Learning from each other, seeking and sharing best practice
- Being collectively accountable for improving the life chances of all our children and young people



# Halton Learning Alliance

*Putting learners first*

## **A Learning Community where:**

*Every learner and every learning place in Halton are our collective responsibility*

*Every learner is known, valued and supported to achieve*

*Our young people aim to become responsible, caring, effective and contributing citizens.*

## **To achieve and maintain this collective ambition for our learners we will:**

- **Embrace collective responsibility for improving life chances by working together**
- **Proactively build positive relationships through an ethos of respect, openness and trust**
- **Work together with a shared understanding that we will meet the needs of all our learners**
- **Create a welcoming learning community that fosters pride in Halton**
- **Celebrate past, present and future heritage as part of a whole learning community**

## **What does this mean?**

**Collective responsibility means:**

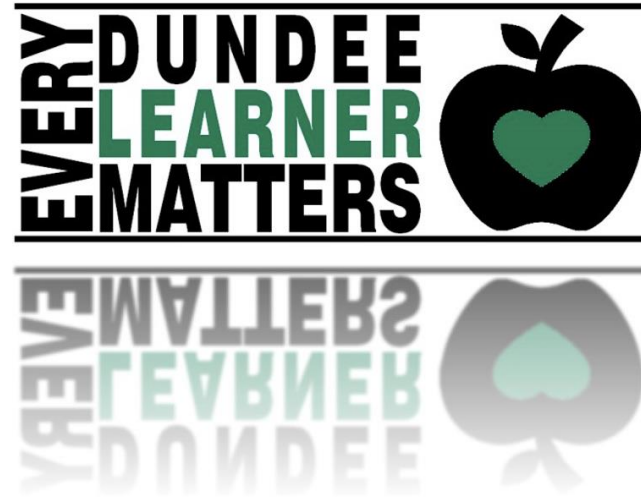
# Building Life Chances For All

A learning community which nurtures **all** our young people, enabling them to become effective citizens in a dynamic world.

## To achieve this we will:

### Improve teaching and learning through the collective resource of the Learning Community by:

- creating the sense of belonging in our schools, where children are proud of the present and ambitious for their future;
- supporting and challenging each other so that no school or child is left behind
- drive improvement, seeking excellence through equity;
- working creatively, beyond institutional boundaries, to raise standards and maximise the learning opportunities for all;
- building a collaborative learning community, sharing our success, innovation and evidence-based practice.



University  
of Glasgow

Robert Owen Centre  
for Educational Change



**A strategy for untapping the potential within  
educational establishments and communities  
2021-2023**

## Key features

Agreed common moral purpose

Collective **systemic** accountability for all children and young people

Excellence through Equity

# Schools creating the setting conditions for system change: case studies of practice

- All children and schools in Lincolnshire are our collective responsibility
- Every child and school is known, valued and supported to achieve
- No school is more important than an individual child's needs



#### Lincolnshire Learning Partnership Board will:

- Champion learners and leaders to shape their own futures
- Promote successes, innovation and evidenced practice to benefit all
- Empower schools to meet the need of their communities
- Challenge all schools to keep getting better

#### All schools will:

- Commit and contribute to supporting each other's improvement
- Share and act upon evidence to improve learning
- Build networks and work together to serve children and their communities
- Welcome challenge from each other to ensure no school fails





## **Collective Moral Purpose**

Establish an integrated school system where children and young people get the right health, care and education, in the right place, at the right time, as close as possible to where they live.

## **Public Value Proposition**

Provision without boundaries: where children feel they belong, are respected, hopeful and optimistic about their future.

# Lincolnshire County Council Children's Services

PUTTING CHILDREN FIRST: Working together with families to enhance children's present and future lives.

A clear commitment to doing the best for children is impressively modelled by the senior leadership team. Successfully focusing on all children's experiences has improved children's journeys overall and has contributed to outstanding practice for children in care. The vision of 'putting children first' is shared throughout the workforce and shines through at all levels of the organisation. Staff are supported to do their best for children, and the environment in which they work allows them to flourish and excel. The celebration of children's achievements, the constant drive to seek feedback from children and families and learning from complaints are testimony to the dedication of leaders to positively impact on children's lives.

*Ofsted. (2019)*



# Walsall Children and Young People's Alliance



Children & Young People's Alliance

## What we'll do

### Purpose

Create and maintain a strategic alliance to regularly consider how the lived experience of children and young people in Walsall can be improved.



### Outcomes

- We are all accountable for better aligned outcomes for the children, young people and families of Walsall, with positive relationships through an ethos of respect and trust working collaboratively towards the common good across diverse agendas and funding developing resilience in the community
- We want our children, families and communities to thrive not just cope
- Protecting children, enabling safety from harm. Building and sustaining change for healthy and happy families

### Priorities

- Balance between taking and getting on with deciding on what are the key issues and how we going to make a difference
- Sharing collective knowledge
- Building relationship
- Adopt an uncompromising commitment to trust, honesty, collaboration, innovation and mutual support
- Including decision making is ours - outside we support the decision and each other.
- Be positive ... Be open to change mind-sets...believe what is possible... the art of the possible (rather than the impossible)
- Communicate openly about major concerns, issues or opportunities relating to the achievement of the outcomes
- Commitment to be part of it for the long term
- Communicate with each other and all relevant staff in a clear, direct and timely manner to optimise the ability for each of partner to make effective and timely decisions to achieve the alliance objectives
- Making decision on a best for children, young people and families in Walsall basis



## How we'll do it



Transcends people and personalities "This is how we work round here"

Any problem for children is something we are all accountable for (not passing the buck!)

Challenging interdependencies of capacity and quality, the best balance for the most children, maybe a good service for many rather than outstanding for few?

### Improving the life chances of Children & Young People

Partners working together and effectively towards understanding needs of the family and community

Work with an openness and willingness to change for the better

Focus on experience of children, parents and community and contribute on this basis

Live with some of the complexity, a safe place to take risk and just do "Good Stuff"

Honesty about expectations with each other and children and families (whilst not making excuses)

## How we'll know if we've made a difference

Improving Health and Wellbeing for Walsall



## Walsall Children and Young People Strategic Alliance

### Our Way of Working Pledge – 'Putting Children First'

We have committed to one common moral purpose to create and maintain a strategic alliance which will regularly consider how the lived experience of children and young people in Walsall can be improved.

We are committed to working together driven by following **guiding principles**:

- We will create a **safe, creative** space that is **unique** to all other partnership boards
- We will put the **needs of the individual child and family** above that of organisational needs and processes
- Our work is **strategic** and not operational – we will apply a system wide approach to our thinking and doing
- Our work is guided by understanding the **lived experience** of our children, young people and their families. We will **listen** and consider where we can take **action**.
- Our work is framed by mutual **trust, respect and care**
- We will work with **openness** and willingness to change for the better
- We will **keep each other true** to our agreed common moral purpose
- We will act as a **collective power** - work collaboratively to identify solutions, eliminate duplication of effort, mitigate risk and maximise our collective capacity
- We will **communicate** with each other and all relevant staff in a clear, direct and timely manner to enable each partner to make effective decisions to achieve the alliance objectives
- We will act as **champion for children** bringing their voice and needs into the Alliance and taking greater understanding of children need through the alliance back into individual organisations and partnership boards



Signing our pledge

### Joining the dots and widening opportunities for system change

The Alliance will provide an opportunity to develop a good understanding of the needs of children and young people in Walsall and system wide change which needs to take place to enable improved outcomes. As well as using this information to enable our own organisation change it will enable us to influence change for children and young people in other strategic spaces.

As a partnership we agreed to focus on making the right connections and maximising opportunities rather than focus on formal governance arrangements. In order to do this we will be joining the dots to ensure we maximise opportunities to advocate and influence the right issues/topics in the right place:





# RAISING ROCHDALE

# STRATEGIC PLAN

## ONE COMMITMENT

We, the Pioneers Trust, commit to Raising Rochdale, our joint mission leading change to constantly improve our systems and practice, ensuring that every individual and institution can thrive, both now and in the future.

## TWO PRIORITIES

### Support for those at greatest risk -

Our highest priority as leaders in education is to ensure that we effectively support students facing greater risks, and those newly vulnerable. We collectively strive to raise the attainment of all young people so they can access a wide range of opportunities in the future.

**Curriculum** - High quality curriculum planning and delivery is fundamental to ensuring all young people have a successful educational journey in which no school or young person is left behind.

## PROGRESS

**3**  
WAYS WE  
WILL KNOW  
WE ARE  
MAKING A  
DIFFERENCE

## ATTENDANCE

## REDUCED EXCLUSIONS

## FIVE FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS

FIND OUT MORE AT  
[rochdalepioneerstrust.org](http://rochdalepioneerstrust.org)

### Recruitment and retention

Recruiting and training high quality school staff and leaders through a career development strategy that focusses on support and succession planning.

### School improvement

We aim to be a self-improving education system able to rigorously self-evaluate, and collectively support and challenge each other through a school-to-school improvement model.

### Accountability and quality assurance

All of our work is built on the ethos of the original co-operative principles and values, with the Trust committed to being accountable to those that we serve.

### Admissions and place planning

We are committed to ensuring that all young people have access to a high quality local school place which is able to provide appropriate support, whatever their needs and aspirations.

### Building the system for the future

The success of young people across the borough is dependent on developing strong partnerships across Rochdale and Greater Manchester which provide opportunities for employment or training in the modern world.

**Our contribution to raising Rochdale is:**

To equip every child with the knowledge, skills, values and opportunities to enable them to lead a happy, healthy and purposeful life.

To achieve this, we will:

- **Be collectively accountable for improving the life chances of all Rochdale children**
- **Know, value and support every child and place of learning to achieve**
- **Create a sense of hope and belonging in all our learning settings, where children are proud of the present and ambitious for their future**
- **Provide welcoming learning communities which build positive relationships with children and their families through respect, openness and trust**
- **Foster pride in Rochdale and its heritage of cooperation and achievement**

**This means:**

Supporting and challenging each other so that no child, school or learning setting is left behind

**By:**

- Building a collaborative learning community, sharing our success, innovation and evidence-based practice
- Driving improvement, seeking excellence through equity
- Working creatively, beyond institutional boundaries, to raise standards and maximise the learning opportunities for all
- Working within multi-agency partnerships, which impact positively on outcomes for children
- Creating curriculum development opportunities which will link our learning settings, cultural and heritage sites, industry and the local communities to create shared knowledge of our heritage and pride in our area
- Establishing links with our local employers and training providers to develop opportunities to learn about the world of work
- Ensuring well planned, positive transitions across our local learning system
- Investing in our workforce by sharing expertise across our learning settings and providing high quality training and professional development opportunities
- Contributing to an inclusive education policy, which places children first and provides a robust set of agreed principles to guide inclusive practice which is underpinned by the philosophy of excellence through equity
- The Real Trust becoming the cohesive, central communication hub creating an Educators' Forum to promote quality professional development and foster reflective practice



Collectively we will equip every child with the knowledge, skills, values and opportunities to enable them to lead happy healthy and purposeful life



## No Child Left Behind

- Be collectively accountable for improving the life chances of all Rochdale children
- Know value and support every child and place of learning to achieve
- Creating a sense of hope and belonging in our schools, where children are proud of the present and ambitions for their future
- Provide welcoming learning communities which build positive relationships with children and their families through respect, openness and trust
- Foster pride in Rochdale, its heritage of cooperation and achievement



## 6 Outcomes

- I am hopeful and prepared for the future
- I am active and involved
- I am emotionally well
- I am safe and supported at home, at school and in the community
- I have knowledge and skills I can use as an adult
- I have opportunities to live a purposeful life in Rochdale

## 'Raising Rochdale', the story so far...

### Primary



### Nursery Schools



RAISING ROCHDALE

### Secondary Schools

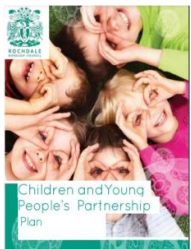


### How have we started....

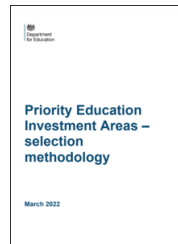
- ❖ Established Raising Rochdale Working Party to shape sector-led improvement.
- ❖ Early Years, Primary and Secondary have all developed a Raising Rochdale set of ambitions for Rochdale Children and young people, across the borough.
- ❖ RAPH has changed to RAEYPH to include Early Years Leaders and settings.
- ❖ Presentation shared with RAEYPH colleagues at Summer 2022 conference.
- ❖ Raising Rochdale Comms – Pin badges, PowerPoint template, Instagram and #raisingrochdale
- ❖ Profile raising events 2022 - Rochdale Children's Literature Festival, Spelling Bee, Music Festival, Local History Curriculum development, Promoting Educational Outcomes for children with a Social Worker and Trauma Informed training.

### What next .....

- ❖ Revist and refocus Raising Rochdale ambitions across Key Stages and realign for 2022/23 agreeing collective accountability.
- ❖ Create a Raising Rochdale shared strategy, overarching the PEIA Plan and CYPP 23-25.
- ❖ Support school communities with a shared understanding of Raising Rochdale and commitment to the agreed ambitions for Rochdale children and young people.
- ❖ Share resources which support colleagues to share a consistent Raising Rochdale strategy- PowerPoint for dissemination, Examples of 'What Raising Rochdale looks like in my school, SDP.
- ❖ Agree the Priority 1- Improving Transition across phases as the focus of 22/23.
- ❖ Ensure communication and responsibility includes all providers of education, using Pioneer Meetings, Steering and collaborative networks to inform, shape and promote sector lead improvements.



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## 'Raising Rochdale', what does it mean?

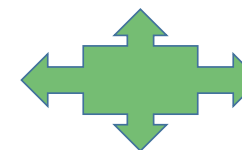
Raising Rochdale is a borough wide partnership led by Headteachers across all Key Stages of the school system to shape our approach to sector-led improvement. Raising Rochdale is an overarching set of ambitions for the children of Rochdale. Clearly defined behaviours, create a framework of accountability, to underpin a shared goal of delivering an excellent education for all children and young people in Rochdale. The current Raising Rochdale Working Party has representatives from the Primary sector and this year we plan to realign our work with that of the Pioneers (Secondary Heads) and Nursery Schools, creating a unified voice which supports a sector led school system. We are confident that every school will support the aims of Raising Rochdale and will recognise the power of the agreed ambitions, in helping us to frame and guide the work we do, as we develop our models of joint working. As a Priority Education Investment Area, Raising Rochdale supports the government's 'levelling up' agenda and a commitment to drive school improvement, achieving our ambition for children and young people within the borough. This ambition for Rochdale children and our unified school voice will play a pivotal role in shaping the vision and priorities of the new Rochdale CYPP Plan 23-25.



### Primary



### Secondary

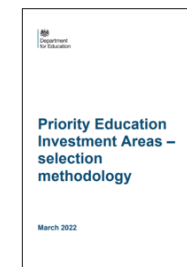


### Nursery Schools



1. Be collectively accountable for improving life chances of children.
2. Know, value and support every child and place of learning to achieve.
3. Create a sense of hope and belonging in our schools.
4. Provide welcoming learning communities which build positive relationships.
5. Foster pride in Rochdale, its heritage of cooperation and achievement.

1. Support for those at greatest risk.
2. Developing a high quality curriculum.
3. Improve attendance.
4. Improve progress.
5. Reduce exclusions.



RR22/23/KC

# Raising Rochdale

Making our borough a great place for all to grow up, get on and live well



## 1 vision

"Rochdale will be a great place to grow up, get on in life and live well. Rochdale will meet the needs of all children and young people with special educational needs and disability, from birth to the age of 25 years. Children, young people and their families will choose their own outcomes and be supported to improve them, together with professionals when needed. Services will be inclusive and easy to access and support will be given at the earliest possible point of need. Getting more help will be easy and there won't be delays."

## 2 spotlights

**1 Children are in school** (attendance and exclusions).

**WHY?** When children are in school they are supported, receive education and are safe.

**2 Children stay close to home** (educated in and live in Rochdale).

**WHY?** When children remain close to their home family and community, we can support them, build resilience and help them to achieve positive outcomes into adulthood).

## 7 outcomes

These outcomes are what children and young people with Special Education Needs and Disabilities across Rochdale want life to be like, and what we are all working towards together.

My opinions are valued

I am emotionally well

I am as healthy as possible

I am safe and supported at home, at school and in the community

I am active and involved

I am hopeful and prepared for the future

Those that care for me are supported



## Count the difference

We want to know that things are improving, and will measure if children and young people:

- ✦ Achieve their goals
- ✦ See their mental health improve
- ✦ Develop as expected
- ✦ Are educated, or in care, within Rochdale or elsewhere
- ✦ Are excluded, or not in education, employment or training
- ✦ Are involved in a social activity
- ✦ Have positive relationships
- ✦ Feel supported (not just children and young people, but their parents/carers too).

## 8 ways we support

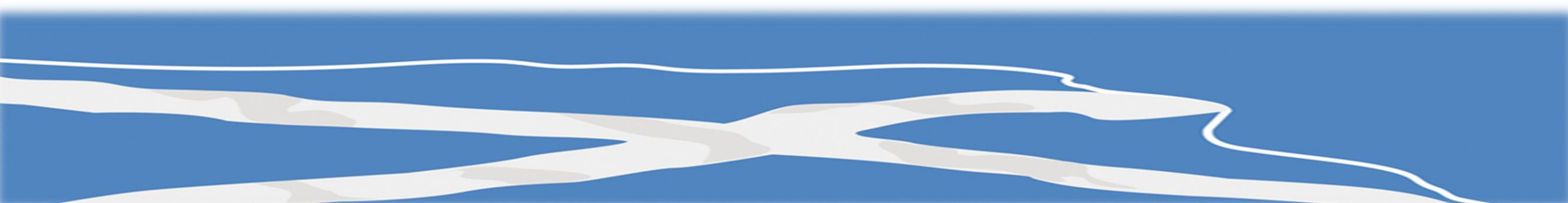
- 1 Children and families will be at the heart of decision making
- 2 The journey to and through support and help will be easy
- 3 There will be training, skills and knowledge to help children with SEND
- 4 Early Help and preventing needs from reaching crisis will be our priority
- 5 Information will be easy to understand and data will be shared
- 6 Communication – we will set up a regular newsletter and improve the local offer
- 7 All organisations in Rochdale will work together
- 8 Diagnosis will not be the only way of getting support.

**Implications for your work: plenary discussion**

**Break**

## Session 3

# Systems thinking for systems change



# Scottish education system to be overhauled after damning OECD report

**Independent review said curriculum had not kept pace with changes, and exams and inspections were in need of reform**

*and*



📷 The Scottish education secretary, Shirley-Anne Somerville, accepted all the OECD report's recommendations. Photograph: Fraser Bremner/Scottish Daily Mail/PA

Scotland's exams agency and its schools inspections system are to be substantially reformed after a damning report said the current system was cumbersome and over-complex.

An independent review by the [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development](#), a Paris-based agency, found the Scottish education system had failed to keep pace with the latest best practice and had no long-term strategies or vision.

Beatriz Pont, from the OECD's education directorate, said: "The system is really busy, and at risk of policy and institutional overload, and reactive and political approaches to CfE in the absence of an identified cycle of policy review."

She added the system had "too many owners, while lacking clarity about their responsibilities. [CfE] is just moving forward and [has] no structured approach to look forward, plan and communicate CfE's development with a long-term perspective".

Shirley-Anne Somerville, the Scottish government's education secretary, said she accepted all 12 of the OECD's recommendations, which follow years of mounting criticism about the Scottish National party's handling of education.



# Towards a learning system: a new approach to raising standards for all in Scottish schools

A think piece from the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland

So, our question is - how might we in Scotland collectively create the conditions for all stakeholders to come together to agree a collective approach which has one aim only:

to develop, maintain and enhance a school system in Scotland which fosters innovation, celebrates diversity and has an unrelenting focus on ensuring the most positive life chances for all children and young people?

As part of seeking to answer this question we accept that local authorities in Scotland, as one of the major players in the middle, are fundamentally implicated in reaching a solution which is timely, effective and, above all, sustainable given the increasing move towards a sector-led model of school improvement.

[Towards a Learning System. \(2017\)](#)

At the heart of this endeavour is to our desire to have a confident, reflective, self-improving school system where the responsibility for improvement is increasingly set at school rather than local authority level. This will require a dedicated and focussed effort to enhance and extend the maturity of leadership in our schools and local authorities in preparation for the time when the current support structures provided by local authorities may not be available or required. This is a prime purpose of what we are calling a **whole system** approach to building leadership capacity where local authorities play their part in creating the optimum conditions for the system change called for in the OECD report (ibid) and the WISE Report.

Towards a Learning System. (2017)

In this new world, we believe that we should celebrate diversity and local solutions as a truly school led system must surely reflect local context, local communities and local aspirations.

This will require insightful and liberating local authorities which are at the centre of seeking and developing creative local solutions and are increasingly comfortable to step back from the front line of school improvement and focus on acting as champions for high standards, innovative pedagogy with a singular determination to achieve excellence through equity for all learners.

This will require mature as well as systemic leadership which we believe can only be achieved by new and different leadership behaviour from local authorities and the development of new constellations of practice aimed at systemic change through creative pedagogy and collaborative leadership rather than policy dictat.

*Towards a Learning System. (2017)*

## New learning through new thinking

The challenge for those involved in the schooling endeavour isn't simply a technical one of content and delivery, however. It is also a moral one which requires us to accept that there seems little point in trying to preserve a schooling system which is predicated on knowledge transfer and retrieval. It simply will not prepare adequately our children and young people for the rapidly changing world into which they will step having completed their schooling years.

“Reproducing knowledge will be increasingly automated by digital technologies. So being able to do that will not in itself be a critical skill. Instead, what will be valuable is applying knowledge in inventive ways in novel contexts. Whereas in the past we have seen education as providing people with access to a fixed stock of knowledge; now it is much more about getting people to find their way into flows of knowledge that are constantly changing.”

[https://kupdf.net/download/leadbeater-rethinking-innovation-in-education\\_5a093d10e2b6f5a118c0ba07\\_pdf](https://kupdf.net/download/leadbeater-rethinking-innovation-in-education_5a093d10e2b6f5a118c0ba07_pdf)

**Group work** – one member of the group to scribe and feedback – where possible, use PowerPoint or Word to capture the discussion and then share screen when feeding back.

**Plenary discussion.....**

# Excellence in Headship Stretch programme

## Leading systems change Session 1: Systems thinking in practice

**10<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

**Fàilte!**

**Anton Florek**, Lead Associate, The Staff College