

NCSL Chief Executive Steve Munby's speech to Seizing Success 2008: NCSL  
Annual Leadership Conference

Good morning. It is great to see that this year's conference is not only heavily oversubscribed but also that we have an input from the Prime Minister and, later on this morning in the flesh, from the Secretary of State. We have certainly come a long way since 2005 when about 400 of us met for the first ever NCSL annual conference.

I am now in my fourth year as Chief Executive at NCSL. I am one of those fortunate people who love their job and I regard it as a great privilege to have this role. One of the best parts of my job is that I get a chance to visit schools and to meet with school leaders. Since the last annual conference I have visited 45 schools and spoken to or with more than 6,000 school leaders across the country and I am going to infuse my speech this morning with the perspective of those visits and those often powerful conversations with school leaders.

According to OFSTED, quality of school leadership has improved again this year. The children and young people that we are all here to serve are fortunate to have such good school leadership in so many of our schools. Nevertheless, I believe that there are a number of serious and significant

challenges for the school system in England over the next few years and I want to mention three of them today.

### **Challenge One:**

#### **Reducing variability.**

According to the OECD, we have greater variation in performance between schools than in many other countries. In other words –we have many, many great schools, but a significant number are struggling. Now there may well be good reasons for this due to the fact that we don't have a very homogeneous culture in this country but the fact that the variation in quality exists is a major challenge to the system.

**Alongside the variation between schools is an equally worrying issue- Variation within-schools.** In England variation within schools is significantly above OECD averages and is between five and 14 times greater than between-school variance.

Let me try to clarify this. In England, more than in many other countries, we seem to have great teachers and not so great teachers, great departments and not so great departments **within the same school.**

And as the recent McKinsey study demonstrates, high quality teaching makes a difference. If the same children were all taught by the best teachers in the school it would have a significant impact on outcomes for children and young people.

So that is the first big challenge facing us.

The second big challenge facing us is:

### **Challenge Two:**

#### **Narrowing the gap**

The sad conclusion is that over the last 10 years or so we have raised the bar in terms of student achievement but we have not significantly narrowed the gap. The Joseph Rowntree Research has demonstrated that children who are more able at 5 years old but from disadvantaged homes are being overtaken by the age of 7 by less able children from more advantaged homes.

## **Challenge Three:**

### **Enhancing sustainability**

55 per cent of current heads are likely to have retired by 2012. That is a huge challenge to the system but also a great opportunity to further improve leadership in this country. But we have to ensure that leadership is attractive and that our leadership models are sustainable.

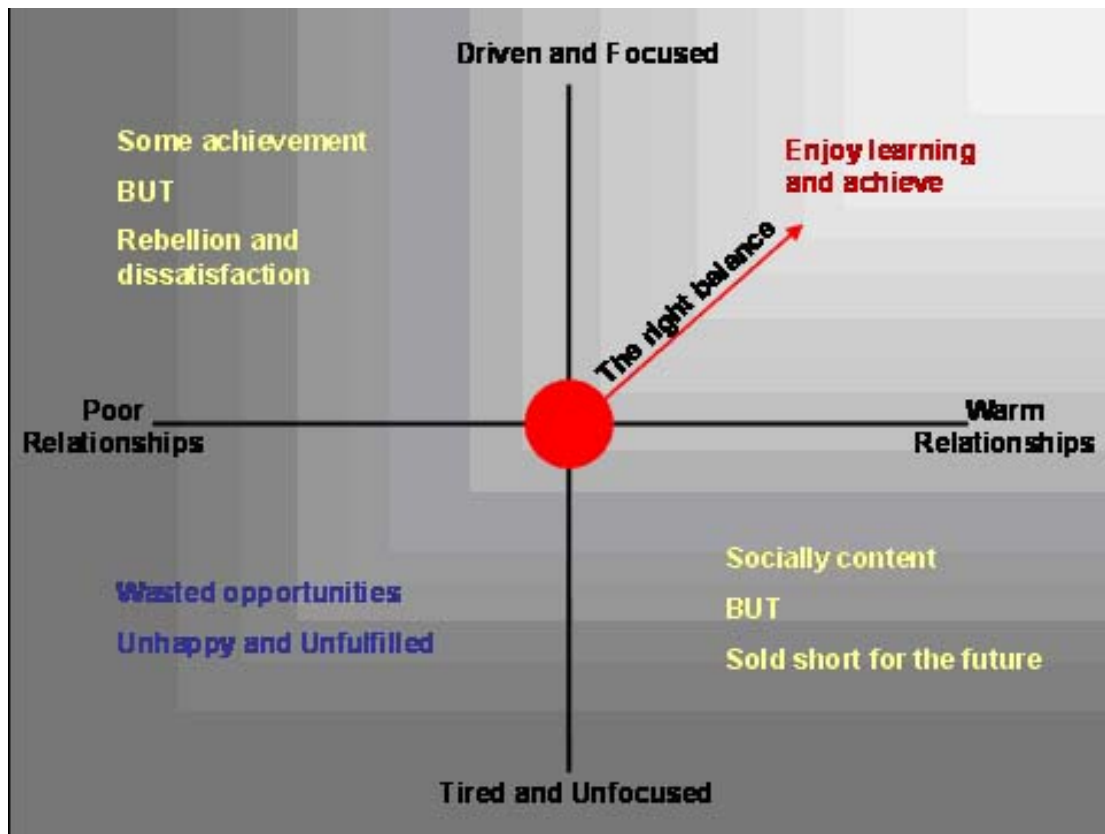
So, as I have said, these are three serious challenges within the whole educational system. They are complex challenges and they are adaptive challenges –there are no simple solutions. No magic bullets. However, I do believe that school leadership has a key part to play in addressing each of these challenges. Not that schools can solve society's ills, nor that individual schools should be held to account for obesity or youth crime or for the fact that deprivation and, frankly, class have such a profound effect on children's achievement.

But within these broad constraints, good leadership is making a significant difference. Our workshops today and tomorrow are specifically set up to enable school leaders to tell their stories about how they are addressing these three challenges and experiencing success.

As I have travelled the country this year I am clear that many schools are shining lights on these problems and developing ways of working that are effective and successful. So what I want to do for most of my annual conference speech this year is to highlight the kind of leadership I have seen that is making a significant difference towards addressing these 3 challenges. Towards the end of my speech I would also like to say something about leadership development and the future of the National College for School Leadership.

**1) Indomitable and compassionate leadership.**

Toughness and tenderness. Let me use this diagram to explain what I mean:



Let's look first at the top left hand quadrant. I have been to some schools in the past year that have been relentless in their focus on standards and absolutely driven when it comes to pushing the young people to achieve. But somehow the relationships and social development haven't been given enough consideration - too many of the young people are rebelling – and certainly not discovering an enjoyment of learning and a desire to learn. In one school I went to students said to me “they are on your back all the time and it's no joke” as students began to play up in class and as others in the school just didn't turn up at all. On the other hand – like the bottom right hand quadrant - I have been to other schools where there seems to

be a great deal of emphasis on relationships but no driving energy or focus. It might be there in the school leaders' head but it has not translated into the focused practice on the ground consistently with teachers and with the students themselves. However, encouragingly, I have been to far more schools this year where they seem to have that great skill of getting the ethos and culture just right as in the top right hand quadrant. Focused and determined, with indomitable will and commitment right through the organisation so that students know there is no hiding place for second best or for laziness, but combined with humour and compassion and warmth so that the students genuinely feel valued and cared for – even when they are being pushed hard or receiving tough messages about the quality of their work. Now that's a hard balancing act to get right but good leaders, like the ones I have seen in many places this year such as in Cambridge and London and Oldham and lots more show just what a heady mix for success that balance can be.

And of course it works for staff as well as for children.

Don't just take my word for it. Listen to what Tom Peters says:

*“Excellent Companies provide two things simultaneously, tough environments and very supportive environments.”*

*Tom Peters*

The best leaders know that the secret of success is an absolute insistence upon high expectations combined with a focus on relationships, relationships and relationships. The best leaders are a mix of these tough and tender characteristics. I like the phrase that leadership is “the capability to excite people to exceptional performance”. You don’t achieve that for long just by being driven and focused –there has to be an attraction and a warmth there too.

## 2) Lateral and Inclusive Leadership

In a recent study by NCSL and TDA on the impact of Every Child Matters, we came to the following conclusion:

*“Schools with inclusive cultures are also likely to be characterised by the presence of leaders who are committed to inclusive values and to a leadership style which encourages a range of individuals to participate in leadership functions. Such schools are also more likely to have good links with parents and their communities.”*



I am convinced as I visit schools and as I talk with school leaders in all parts of the country that the model where school leaders run their own show, are not lateral in style, nor inclusive in approach, will not survive. It is outdated. Our modern school leaders **share** the leadership throughout their organisation.

The most exciting and refreshing schools I have visited this year haven't appeared to revolve around the head but seem to have leaders everywhere. In a secondary school in Plymouth and in a primary school in Edmonton there were leaders throughout the school – the school was bursting at the seams with them.

Now, there is a world of difference between distributing leadership and delegation. If it is just delegation because there is more work to be done this is more like distributed **pain** than distributed leadership. As Alma Harris maps out clearly in her new book:

*“One of the barriers to distributed leadership is how leadership distribution is viewed by principals and teachers. If it is viewed as delegation then it is likely to be met with resistance by teachers not wanting to undertake yet more work. If principals or heads equate distributed leadership with an*

*erosion of their power it will be perceived as threatening and therefore unlikely to happen” (Harris 2008)*

Distributed leadership where it works most effectively is neither of these things. Nor is it about collaboration for the sake of it. It is not about what Huxham and Vangen call *collaborative inertia* where no decisions are taken and the answer is always “let’s have another meeting” nor is it *collaborative thuggery* where it appears to be collaborative but is really highly manipulative.

If you do not have a genuine distribution of leadership you will never realise the immense benefits that many other schools realise, or are beginning to realise.

Just as an aside, I would like to speak for a few moments in praise of the deputy Headteacher role.

There is a commonly-held notion that if you are a Deputy it is either because you cannot go any further onto headship – you are not up to the top job – or, alternatively, that it is not an important job in itself – it is just a stepping stone to becoming a headteacher. This is, I believe, a false notion. Being a Deputy Head is not a deficit role, it is a critical one and an

honourable one. Good headteachers know that they owe their success and indeed, their ability to lead their schools effectively to their deputy heads.

Deputies are very often the communicators & problem solvers– they ensure heads stay in tune with their schools and school community. Deputies are integral to making sure that heads know their contexts, make the right decisions and gain the confidence of others in what they do.

This was reflected in a recent visit I made to a Secondary School in Southampton. A senior person in the school said to me that the head was the brains of the school and the deputy was the heart of the school. All schools need hearts as well as brains and no single person – whether the head or the deputy - can always be both.

I always think that the relationship between heads and deputies is a bit like a finger and thumb. On their own they can do some things but as a pair they can do great things.

At this point I would like to make special mention of Professor Geoff Southworth, who is Deputy Chief Executive at NCSL and is retiring in August after a lifetime of service to education. If I have had a successful

three years as chief executive much of that has been down to Geoff's absolutely outstanding role as my deputy – we certainly could not have achieved much of what we have achieved over the past few years without him. He has been a deputy par excellence. So thank you Geoff.

We have been working with the social partners from the unions and professional associations to develop what were the headship standards. Now you may or may not agree that having a long list of skills, competencies and expertise for leadership is a good thing –it can sometimes lead to a tick box mentality. Nevertheless, what is great about the current process is that the decision has been made that these are no longer **headship** standards –they are **leadership** standards –we are not expecting an individual Headteacher to demonstrate all of those things – we are expecting leadership **teams** collectively to be able to demonstrate them. The future is not about superheads –it is about super teams. Today almost every school has a leadership team, what we need to consider is whether the one you are a member of is a high performing team. The key skill for heads is recruiting and developing effective teams.

Modern school leadership is also about lateral leadership – leadership beyond the school and beyond hierarchies.

I have visited many, many schools this year which have been part of federations or trusts or collaboratives. Let me just mention one. The Garforth Trust near Leeds. Here they have a trust with one secondary school, five primary schools, the Primary Care Trust and the local college/university. They have an agreement between them all that within the trust no child will be excluded –fixed term or permanent. They are raising standards, promoting inclusion and developing community engagement all through collaboration.

I also want to say something in particular here about the recently announced National Challenge. No doubt the Secretary of State will want to talk about this later on this morning. Most of the 638 secondary schools below 30 per cent for 5 A\*- C including English and maths are in very complex and challenging environments with no instant solutions. Many of them already have very good leadership – in some cases outstanding leadership - and are making good progress. It is factually incorrect as well as patently self-defeating to label them all as failing schools, as the media has done. However, we clearly cannot ignore the fact that so few young people are achieving the kind of examination results that will enable them to make progress when they leave school. It seems to me that the key solution to the National Challenge –and I am pleased to say that this is fundamental to the government’s proposals – is

providing support from other schools. The main solution to improving schools is not out there in local authorities or in the DCSF or in NCSL or in the National Strategies, the main solution to improving schools is in schools themselves. That is where the real expertise lies. Even the most challenging and struggling schools have good practice within the school- in parts. One of the great lessons from the success of the London Challenge is that the key way of moving schools forward is through effective leadership and through schools helping each other. If we are going to address the urgent need to raise standards in the 638 schools and indeed in schools in the primary and the special school sector too, then the way to do this is through schools with capacity stepping up to help those in need –not in a patronising way but in a constructive and professional way with each learning from the other:

- National Leaders of Education and National Support Schools providing expert help to those in serious need,
- local leaders – heads identified and trained by NCSL - providing additional school to school support and expertise, as has happened successfully in London and in Bristol and is now being developed in Greater Manchester and the Black Country.
- The profession taking collective responsibility in a local area for all the children in that area not standing on the sidelines to watch some schools under the cosh or being labelled as failures.

The profession leading itself – working collaboratively with local authorities in the best interests of the children and young people. It will of course need to be robust collaboration to challenge complacency, to stand up against low expectations and to address highly complex challenges that don't have simple solutions.

If we are to improve the system, and ensure all schools move forward, this notion of distributing leadership within schools and lateral collaborative leadership beyond the school- in whatever form is appropriate - has to be the presiding vision for the future of school leadership.

### **3) Leadership of Teaching and Learning.**

NCSL welcomes the proposals for a new Masters Degree in teaching and learning. There are some practical issues to resolve but what is great about the proposals is that they are about practice-based, evidence-based, in the classroom professional learning. It is absolutely right that teachers should be focused on improving their own teaching and that increasing prominence should be given to the skills of improving teaching and learning.

Now let me be blunt this morning. The core business of school leadership is ensuring that teaching and learning is effective in your school. It doesn't mean that you have to do it yourself or that you shouldn't be spending time on other important issues that have a more indirect impact on teaching and learning but it does mean that we should never lose sight - amongst all the admin and the meetings and the demands on your time - of what your leadership is for – ensuring that the children in your school learn effectively and helping them to become the people that they might be.

We have also just carried out an analysis of the difference between schools that get a good grade in their OFSTED reports and schools that get outstanding in their OFSTED reports – the key difference is that the word consistency comes up again and again and again in the outstanding reports. A few months ago NCSL produced a research paper with Professor David Reynolds on Within School Variation, based on three years of focused work in schools. It showed that when school leaders seriously address within-school variation it can make a significant impact. Amongst the barriers to dealing with within-school variation it listed:

- Weak school management that finds it hard to confront the issue and to develop mechanisms to learn from best practice.



- False modesty and misplaced egalitarianism on the part of effective teachers/departments
- Small schools in which the range of excellence between teachers may be less
- The difficulty in secondary schools of getting departments to see any utility in swapping practice when the subjects are so different

These difficulties are challenging, it isn't going to be easy – it is going to take excellent leadership to overcome them. But school leaders need to ask themselves some hard questions:

How well are you using data to raise awareness of the variation issues in our schools? Are you using CPD opportunities well enough to enable effective learning across the school to take place? As far as improving teaching and learning in your school is concerned, are the answers in your own school? On your own doorstep? With your own staff and your own leadership of those staff?

But one question I am asked about all the time is this. Do you have to be a teacher to be a Headteacher and do you have to be a great teacher to be a great Headteacher?

Well I think since teaching and Learning is the core business of a school it helps a great deal if the person in charge is strong in that area and if you talk with those in the health service where they have chief executives and directors of the clinical aspect then this can create problems and challenges too. So my view is that it helps a great deal if those in charge have a teaching background but for me it is not a matter of principle - I think we should view it on a case by case basis. I met a School Business Manager in a Plymouth secondary school who is passionate about Teaching and Learning and already has NPQH. My guess is that he will soon be a Headteacher. And by the way, I think the leadership roles that school business managers play are fundamental to the future of school leadership in this country.

Incidentally a recent survey of parents by NCSL indicated that they think that the best people to run schools are teachers and the worst people to run schools are politicians.

What I am absolutely clear about is that the best teachers don't always make the best leaders and vice versa. In fact some of our best teachers are intuitive teachers –they do it naturally. If something comes naturally to a person, it can be difficult for them to convey how they do it to

someone who does not possess innate skill. Think about how this is true in a football context. Our most gifted footballers rarely make great managers:

*“There is absolutely no link whatsoever between an individual’s ability to play well and his ability to manage well. Think Arsene Wenger and Jose Mourinho and then think Paul Gascoigne, Bobby Charlton and Maradona.”*

The Ninety Minute Manager.

Let me be personal here. I have reason to believe that I have good leadership skills but although I became quite a good teacher I didn’t have a successful first couple of years in teaching. In fact I recently went on Friends Reunited to see if anyone had written anything about me. There was only one entry and as far as I know this is the only comment in the public domain about my first few years in teaching: “Does anyone remember Mr. Munby. He wore a beard and drove a yellow Cortina. He was a nice man but he couldn’t control us. It is a wonder we learned anything.” It is true –I used to struggle to prevent students from climbing out of the window in my lessons. I got better at teaching but only because I had to work at it and I was never a star performer

There are two general lessons about leadership that I learned from this:

- 1) Intuitive and extraordinarily talented experts in their field don't always make the best leaders and -incidentally - extraordinarily talented leaders don't always make the best coaches of other leaders.
- 2) In any walk of life – including teaching and school leadership - it is possible to overcome a bad start.

Interestingly, to continue the football analogy, two of the greatest managers of our generation – Bobby Robson and Alex Ferguson - were both sacked early on in their careers as managers. In complex organisations it can take a while to see tangible improvements and I think school leaders are sometimes not given sufficient time to get it right.

#### 4) Leadership of “Generation Y” staff

We have, as I know you are all aware by now, a succession planning challenge. We have to see this, as other industries and professions do, as not just a challenge but an opportunity. And to make the most of this we have to understand this new generation – ***Generation Y*** as it has become known. –those who were born after 1980.

What motivates these people entering the profession, what are their backgrounds and experiences?

First of all, they are known to value work-life balance.

“A survey by the Association of Graduate Recruiters published in July 2007 found that over 92 per cent of graduate recruiters believe they should address work-life balance as an issue to engage successfully with today's Generation Y graduates.”

We have recently conducted our own survey of NQTs under the age of 26 – asking them what they want from their work. They want to make a difference.

A “desire to help children” is the most consistently cited driver for NQTs entering teaching.

Generation Y people are also technological natives and they use technology to learn and to connect with others. A recent analysis of the use of Facebook showed that on average most users accessed the site 30 times a day and, incidentally, it also showed that the majority of young people accessed the site at 2 in the morning!

So generation Y use technology well, are strong on relationships, and value work life balance. We also know that they like working in teams, being creative and they want and expect to be involved in what is happening in the organisation.

If we are to harness the potential of Generation Y we need to look at a few things – we need to make school leadership more sustainable and as a result more attractive, less isolated and more supportive of work-life balance

Generation Y are also ambitious:

This is a generation who are flexible in their careers, willing to change jobs, sometimes annually, in order to build up their skills and experiences.

NCSL's recent research shows that although the vast majority come into the profession to be teachers rather than headteachers, 89 per cent would be interested in taking up leadership development opportunities.

And, crucially,

85 per cent of NQTs claim that the availability of leadership development opportunities will influence their future choice of school.

It is therefore important that we make the most of the talents and attitudes of this new generation of leaders from an early age. We need to create an environment that gives Generation Y the flexibility and variety they want in work. We must let them build a portfolio career within the organisation.

Many of us do not understand our younger staff – because they are so different. But the clue for the leaders of today is to understand how Generation Ys think and operate, to connect with them and to then develop the leadership skills of the next generation in a context that attracts them and inspires them. I've seen schools in places like Newcastle and Kent doing really well at identifying talents in younger staff, and giving them responsibility and leadership as a result – from a very early stage in their careers. They tap into their expertise and into their psyche. One of our workshops today - led by David Triggs and Mike Wilkins - deals with this very issue. In our survey, 96 per cent of NQTs said that Headteacher or senior teacher encouragement would influence them to

take up a leadership role. Are we doing enough to encourage the next generation to want to lead?

## **5 Sustainable Leadership.**

Now I am going to be quite controversial in this section but my visits to schools this year have convinced me even more of the importance of this issue. Over the years I have visited many small primary schools. This year one sticks in my mind. It was a school of about 100 pupils –not that small as far as many primary schools are concerned. The head was clearly outstanding and hugely impressive – she was energetic, warm, focused, determined, visionary, good with the children, the staff, the parents and the community. I asked her 2 important questions:

1. How often do you get a chance to meet with other heads to share ideas and discuss issues? The answer was very rarely indeed.
2. Do you get tired? The answer was a definite yes –she was pretty much on her knees.

The big question in my head was that not only the school but the whole village community relied on this single individual to make everything work well. And, make no mistake, it was working well. But what would happen if she left? I wondered whether, given the huge accountability that heads



have, the demographic challenge of an ageing profession and a Generation Y who value work-life balance more – there will be another superhuman person like her willing to step up to that particular role.

Now I know that you may say that the solution is that we should stop having so many initiatives or that government and the public should stop having such unrealistic expectations of school leaders. It would be easy for me to get a round of applause at this conference by calling on the government to reduce the burden on schools. Well, clearly there are things that can be done on this but my overall view is that frankly, whichever government is in power will continue to demand a great deal from its schools and from its headteachers – and understandably so.

So let's get real. We have to find a better way of managing the change and expectations. Frankly, I am increasingly convinced that the notion of having one Headteacher in each small primary school trying to shoulder all the responsibilities is a model that is no longer tenable or sustainable. I am aware of the financial arguments too but this is not just about resources. I think we should be moving towards heads of school and strategic leaders or executive heads of collaboratives and federations not because it's sexy or modern but because it will make the leadership roles more manageable, it will lead to more realistic expectations of individuals,

it will be more attractive to the next generation of school leaders and it will be more rewarding professionally. Also, crucially, I believe these models are more likely to meet the needs of children and communities and they make better use of our best school leadership. This isn't just a solution for leaders but a possible lifeline for villages – small schools are more likely to be able to stay open if there is a federation or executive head model.

I believe it is time that we faced this head on. As Einstein said,

**“Significant problems can't be solved at the same level of thinking that created them” (Einstein).**

It is time to think afresh and to challenge the accepted notion that every school, no matter what its size should have a headteacher who is fully accountable for everything in the school and a governing body who holds that one person accountable. I am not arguing for a top-down centrally imposed model but I am asking those heads and local authority staff here to talk to governors before a head leaves to help them to consider other solutions than the standard response which is too often “lets appoint a replacement as our Headteacher” without considering other models. The assumption in the future should not be more of the same but that we

move towards new models of leadership and that this becomes the norm not the exception.

**Which brings me on to leadership development and the future of NCSL.**

The profession is changing and evolving at a rapid pace. It's our duty to stay ahead of the game.

NCSL has had its most successful year ever, as Vanni has outlined, but it is now time to take a big step in transforming school leadership development and also to create the next chapter in the history of NCSL.

We are now of the view that the most powerful and lasting form of professional development is done by learning in a real context - doing real work with support and mentoring. It was clear from our survey of NQTs, many of whom will be our future leaders, that they feel the same way too. 86 per cent would prefer 'on the job' learning to going on a course.

However, we also know that to avoid insularity, and the 'recycling of low level thinking', and to provide challenge, on the job development must be supported by additional inputs, learning in groups, visiting other schools, listening to new ideas and reflection. A ratio of around 70:30 is

what we think in general is best, where 70 per cent is devoted to on-the-job learning and 30 per cent to offsite and other forms of learning. This new emphasis also has the additional benefit of not requiring schools to 'send out their staff on too many external courses'.

Moreover, individuals who have experienced development and who then return to unchanged schools rarely transform the school. The culture of the organisation usually prevails over the individual. So we have to ask ourselves, are leadership programmes for individuals the best way to spend public money?

We are therefore wrestling with the concept of how we might give greater responsibility to groups of schools for leadership development - with resources and materials to help to make it happen. Not for all of our future leadership development but for an increasing amount of it. Can we make leadership development even more powerful and sustainable and authentic and real by giving greater responsibility to groups of schools to handle this at local level and to grow future leaders, by supporting more school-based and real-world professional development? Can we learn from the local solutions approach to succession planning, which seems to be increasingly successful?

It is time for us to ask hard questions about what the modern system needs in terms of leadership development and we want to ensure that this review is informed by the profession. That is why over the autumn we will take our recommendations out onto the road, to 8 Regional Conferences, right across the country, for discussion and consultation with school leaders with potential school leaders and with other stakeholders. We want to get this right.

I now want to finish with two final characteristics of effective leadership

## **6. Reducing variation in our own leadership.**

I have argued this morning that the answer to school improvement isn't to invent a brand new approach – there is stunning practice already out there - it is to look closely at other excellent schools and in particular at the great practice in your own school and consider how to share and disseminate it. Well I think the same applies to leadership. Of course we copy others. Our research into head's Life Histories has been very enlightening. We surveyed 500 headteachers and interviewed many of them. They say again and again that one of the biggest factors influencing them in their career was their exposure to role models –either good ones that inspired them to become heads or bad ones that made them determined to become leaders so that they could show that leadership

didn't have to look like that. On the whole we don't learn leadership from a text book or from going on a course. A key skill in leadership is strategic intuition –intuition that has been honed and developed by watching and learning so that you just know in your bones that it won't work if you do it in that order it will only work if you do it in this way. Those who lack that strategic intuition often end up getting it wrong. In the famous Morcambe and Wise sketch, Andre Previn accuses Eric Morcambe of playing all the wrong notes to which Eric replies “Listen sunshine, I am playing all the **right** notes but not necessarily in the right order” Leaders who lack strategic intuition do all the right leadership strategies but not necessarily in the right order.

Where do we learn that strategic intuition and how do we develop it? Well we learn it partly by watching others but we also learn it by reflecting upon and indeed copying ourselves at our best. Think back to a moment in your leadership when you were superb. You were energised, focused, compelling, selfless, courageous, intuitive. You were stunningly good. Now we can't be like that all the time - we all have down times and up times, and it is important that we give ourselves permission to have those down times - but the best leaders are able to be at their best more often because they reflect on it, they remember what they did and they copy not other people but they copy themselves at their best. Reducing variation

within our own leadership. Being at our best more often –now that is a great skill. Outstanding leaders aren't necessarily better leaders than the rest of us –they just operate at their best more often. That is the challenge for the rest of us.

## **7. Leadership with moral purpose.**

In our research into heads' life histories, the desire to make a difference to the lives of children and young people came through strongly in our responses from school leaders.

The best leaders I have met this year have been strong on values and passionate about moral purpose. That has been their top driver and what gets them up in the morning. As part of moral purpose we have to consider the needs of others, not just ourselves. It's not just about being altruistic, it is about being determined to see all children benefit from the best education possible in order to fulfil their potential.

I spoke at a conference recently and a head asked the question: 'Why should I pay for my deputy to go on NPQH when he or she may leave the school as soon as they get the qualification?'

Now I understand budget problems, but I was swift to challenge this one. Frankly our system will crumble, unless we are prepared to develop leaders irrespective of which school they end up leading. Do you want a school that empowers its potential leaders or one that traps them? Who will want to work in your school in the future - especially the Generation Y people – if they are not going to be developed and moved on - even though they may move onwards elsewhere?

*“Growing leaders is like growing fruit trees. Other owners may one day have the benefit of your trees, but maybe you will also benefit from other unknown owners of orchards. The best organisations take pride in the fact that they grow more leaders than they need; they are net exporters of leaders.”*

*John Adair*

No person will ever be a great leader who doesn't take genuine and heartfelt joy in the success of those around them.

So let me say one final thing about moral purpose and the National College.



For as long as I am Chief Executive of NCSL this will be what drives us – serving existing and future leaders who make a difference to the lives of children. Not skewing our work to attract funding, not competing against other agencies when schools end up missing out as a result, not blowing our own trumpet. But we will do whatever we can to serve you and the future school leaders of this country. Inspiring leaders to improve the lives of children and young people. Building on our strengths and improving on our weaknesses.

There is an advert in the States about what makes Tiger Woods such a great golfer. It says:

50 per cent relentless consistency and 50 per cent willingness to change.

I think that's about right for school leaders and it's about right for NCSL. Like school leaders we will together face this complex, changing and accountable future with confidence, with determination and with humility.

