

Inspirational new heads – transcript

1. SIMON UTTLEY

“I think in this job you’ve got to be bilingual, you’ve got to speak jargon to some people and you’ve got to speak human to a whole lot of other people”

2. ANNIE WILES

“Today’s part of Dashain, it’s a Nepali festival, and all the staff are dressed in national costume”

3. KAREN GILES

“Headship is changing all the time, its evolving, it’s re-inventing itself, it’s about adaptability and flexibility”

4. YVONNE SHARPLES

“I think it’s probably one of the most important parts of the job really to actually be out and about and alongside young people and colleagues and really giving them the opportunity to show you just how positive they are”

5. TONY COLLINS

“It’s normally at this point I shut the lock and half a dozen kids turn up”

6. TITLES

7. LIZ SIMPSON

The challenge of being a headteacher, I was thinking, was you know, managing the staff and the pupils and change and things like that. The realities of the job, quite different! Those challenges are there, I think one of the things I hadn’t realised how much responsibility at the very beginning, I felt so responsible for all the actions that I, the things that we were taking and the changes that were being made, the significant impact that that had

8. SIMON UTTLEY

I didn’t have any reservations about applying for a headship, it’s what I’ve always wanted to do. I had reservations thinking about the things that I’m not as good at as other people and then it suddenly struck me that actually one of the most important parts of my job is to appoint people who are good at doing things that I’m not good at and that idea of distributed leadership isn’t just a piece of jargon, it’s really the most important thing I think that a head does.

9. TONY COLLINS

I’ve always wanted to be a head since I first started, but I didn’t realise it would be so much fun and so exciting from the day you start, right through, all the way, it’s just been none stop excitement. Every day is different, the, it’s the way you interact with children, with the parents, it’s all different and it’s, it is, it’s fantastic.

10. YVONNE SHARPLES

“I’ve always felt as though I had the potential to move people, to motivate and to inspire people and it’s about wanting to make a difference really. Its about wanting to make a difference to young peoples’ lives

11. LIZ SIMPSON

“Newcastle had an induction scheme where I worked with other headteachers at the same you know, sort of level as me, and I've got to say the support from the admin staff was unbelievable. You don't know your way around the school, you don't know how to use the phone, you don't know who the children are and that is really hard.

12. TONY COLLINS

I don't think anything really prepares you for the onslaught of parents on that first day, cause they all want to know you, they all want to find out a bit more about you, it's a real shock that first day,

13. YVONNE SHARPLES

It's extremely important to, when you take up headship, for all of your school community, to perceive you as a being a really strong leader, being a leader that has a sense of moral purpose, very clear about what your vision is and what your hopes and dreams are for the school.

14. ANNIE WILES

I think you have to be all things to all people at all different times. There are times when you need to go in and say, this is what is happening and that's, there is no further discussion, on other occasions it's, you'd be going in almost as a mentor or a coach, well what's the problem, what are we going to do about it and you have to pick the style and hopefully you pick the right style for the right occasion.

15. SIMON UTTLEY

Increasingly nowadays our curriculum is enriched by interdependence. We're about to launch the first engineering diploma here at St Paul's in collaboration with a college and that requires not just institutional changes but it also requires a degree of trust and a spirit of collaboration so for the benefit of children, for the benefit of staff development and for my benefit to keep me sane, collaboration isn't a luxury, it's a requirement.

16. KAREN GILES

Working within networks or with other people, with other schools, with other professionals, means that we're sharing and disseminating good practice all the time

17. TONY COLLINS

The Every Child Matters agenda is very important because it takes the focus away just from the standards, it takes everything else about a child so it's the whole picture of the child that is more important

18. LIZ SIMPSON

I think it was always there but it's been named and the strands are there and you can see actually where things fit and fitting into a bigger picture of what's happening in the local authority, that we're part of a children's services and not just schools on their own

19. YVONNE SHARPLES

A real key to the role of leadership I think at headship level certainly is to identify within your school community where the leaders are, where the leaders of tomorrow are. Succession planning is absolutely crucial to a school's success.

20. TONY COLLINS

I can't lead my school on my own, I need other leaders with me and unless I'm developing those people then I won't be able to do my job well enough.

21. SIMON UTTLEY

I think the idea of the twenty four seven and the weekend head teacher is probably a recipe for someone doing three or four years and leaving the job and we've seen that all too often with good people across the country. That needs to stop and head teachers need to take it very seriously this idea that they need to develop a practice which is sustainable so that we can keep people as effective head teachers for a career not for four or five years until they're burnt out.

22. YVONNE SHARPLES

The reality is you won't have any time, you don't find any time and so because there isn't any available. So you've really got to work at it so it actually becomes a strategy.

23. ANNIE WILES

It's not always easy to relax, I've got sort of three teenage girls so on occasions I leave here feeling slightly frazzled and arrive home and realise that work was a much more peaceful place to be!

24. TITLES

25. TONY COLLINS

The best moments are standing out on the gates welcoming the kids into school every morning, it's seeing their enthusiasm and the enjoyment on their face as they walk through the gate

26. KAREN GILES

A couple of weeks ago we had an OFSTED inspection, it's my first OFSTED as a head and as soon as we got the phone call the way that everyone just pulled together. It was a testament to how well our teams are developed in this school.

27. LIZ SIMPSON

One of the most funny things that happened to me was a parent came to see me who said that the child was having problems in school so we talked through the child's problems and the child did have some problems and at the end of the interview she said, I knew that already Miss Simpson because a fortune teller told me yesterday

28. TONY COLLINS

You hear a lot at the moment about headship and about the responsibility of headship, about all the issues and a lot of people, particularly deputy heads not wanting to go into it but I completely disagree with it. This has to be the best job that you can do in teaching.

29. KAREN GILES

People have said to me, so you know, maybe you should do this or you could try that, you'd be good at this, and I'd be like, but are there kids there and they're like no, and they say well you need to get over it and I'm like no I can't. I want to be a head teacher, I like being with children.

30. SIMON UTTLEY

I can't think of anything I've done in my life that's been more fun, more challenging, felt more worthwhile and has required me to develop a whole series of skills outside my comfort zone so I couldn't really ask for anything else.

31. YVONNE SHARPLES

The most rewarding part of being a head teacher really is knowing that you can make a difference to young peoples' lives. Instilling in other colleagues really that belief that education can actually transform young people's life prospects.