

**National New Heads Conference 2008**  
**Highlights from Estelle Morris's speech – video transcript**

Congratulations on your new headship. If work it out, some of you are perhaps in your second year now, perhaps been there for over a year, but congratulations. It's a huge achievement. It's not the first time you've been a leader. You've been a leader since the very first time you walked into your own classroom as a new teacher.

You must stand on the shoulders of those you've gone before you. There are things that those heads did that are still relevant to what you're being asked to do today. Don't invent it from scratch.

I think schools have been incredibly successful at taking that wider social agenda and running with it. Just take two examples. You know, for heaven's sake, when the Royal Society started worrying about girls' underachievement, schools did that well that they're now worrying about boys' underachievement. And it's absolutely, you know, they never expected people to go that fast.

What politicians do, they put in the rules to protect children from mediocre performance in schools or poor performance in schools. And the best leaders break the rules.

And if we stop enjoying what we do and having a good time, well bloody hell, life's a misery. I really think so. I really do say that.

Sincere best wishes for what you do in your careers, it will affect all of us every day of our lives for many years to come. Thank you very much indeed.