

DEEP LEADERSHIP FOR EDUCATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

DEDICATION TO SIR CYRIL TAYLOR

This pamphlet builds on the work of SSAT over several years. As I was writing it, I thought of the leadership and vision of the founder of the charity – City Technology Trust – that developed into the specialist schools and academies trust – Sir Cyril Taylor. He worked with Ken Baker to bring together employers, school leaders, politicians to create city technology colleges and then specialist schools. Cyril bridged the political divide and was adviser to eight secretaries of state for education. Many of the sponsors of the CTCs and specialist schools, are now sponsors of multi-academy trusts.

Introduction

“Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mineworker can become the head of the mine, that a child of farmworkers can become the president of a great nation. It is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another.”

Nelson Mandela.

This is the quote that I used to open the pamphlet, *Why change is needed* in September 2013 - the first pamphlet in Redesigning Schooling, SSAT's campaign for a schools-led vision for education. In 2026, is education the way forward for all children or just for the non-disadvantaged? What do we need to do to ensure that every child succeeds? In this pamphlet, I am looking at the deep leadership required from politicians and school leaders to radically improve the situation.

In many ways, I think the context in which schools are operating are worse than in 2013 even though we were in the period of austerity. The rise in child poverty, and mental health issues plus the aftermath of the Covid pandemic create severe challenges for children and young people. In this pamphlet, I will draw upon the work of Tim Brighouse, Hilary Cottam, Sam Freedman, Baroness Anne Longfield

and Matthew Syed, as well as politicians Tony Blair and Gordon Brown. I want to give insights from my experience as a headteacher and educationalist, who has worked nationally and internationally to give a pathway to the future. I will also draw upon the ideas of David Hargreaves on system redesign and personalising learning. Taken together, these perspectives show that redesign is needed at national and local levels. I am not convinced that there needs to be a regional level but will briefly look at possibilities. The real challenge is how to connect these approaches - Brighouse's collaboration, Longfield's equity, Cottam's redesign, Freedman's policy insight, and Syed's culture of learning - into a coherent strategy for the future. Former politicians like Tony Blair and Gordon Brown argue that education needs to be leading transformation globally, but in recent times, schools are not playing a role globally but are focusing on a narrow agenda.

As you will see later in this pamphlet, much of Blair and Brown's thinking could be utilised in transforming the English schooling system. School leaders can learn from other sectors, including the business world. Baroness Sue Campbell and James Kerr bring lessons from the world of sport to improve leadership and the lives of young people.

The Challenges

In terms of examination results, there is still a huge gap between non-disadvantaged and disadvantaged children. The disadvantaged also fall behind in other areas, e.g. attendance, exclusions. Anne Longfield, former Children's Commissioner, tells the stories of Jaden and Jacob – 14 and 16 years old – who fell through the gaps in the school, care and justice systems.

Both boys were criminally exploited and abused. Jacob had received no education for 21 months before his death. The stories of Jaden and Jacob are harrowing – no child should be lost from education nor lose their lives so young. Another sad reality is that in 2025, there are 4.5 million children living in poverty. The current Children's Commissioner, Dame Rachel de Souza says: "Children shared harrowing accounts of hardship, with some in almost Dickensian levels of poverty... They don't talk about 'poverty' as an abstract concept but about not having the things that most people would consider basic: a safe home that isn't mouldy or full of rats, with a bed big enough to stretch out in, 'luxury' food like bacon, a place to do homework, heating, privacy in the bathroom and being able to wash, having their friends over, and not having to travel hours to school."

Child poverty is the issue that I believe the government is right to prioritise. This will remove barriers to learning. There needs to be joined up thinking in the design of government, and investment to protect vulnerable young people. Resources are limited, and we need to be creative with solutions. We know the problems; we now need to address them. It is in the interest of schools to be part of the solution. Our stated aim must be to ensure that no young person falls through a gap in the schooling system.

Since the 1948 Education Act, successive secretaries of state have accumulated more power and control. Local authorities have been severely diminished, and, with the introduction of multi-academy trusts, the system is fragmented. The changes in political control change education on a frequent basis. When Michael Gove became Secretary of State in 2010, he effectively ended specialist school status by withdrawing the grant to SSAT and no longer ring-fencing the grant to schools. Specialist schools had been introduced by Lord Kenneth Baker during the Thatcher government; been enhanced by the Labour Government under Tony Blair and Gordon Brown and stopped with no consideration of the success of the programme.

The programme brought school leaders to lead on curriculum design, raising achievement, leadership and innovation. School leaders networked with academics and school leaders from around the world with an unrelenting focus on school improvement. Many of these leaders went on to set up high performing MATs. At the very least, there should have been a discussion on the success or failure of the programme. Constant changes in direction of travel have made some leaders reluctant to innovate, e.g. vocational and technical education. SSAT believes that there must be cross party agreement on the purpose of education following consultation with all stakeholders.

ACTION: Define the purpose of education – this must be done by all stakeholders and across all political parties.

THE CHALLENGES AND WORK TO DATE

According to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF), 4.5 million children live in poverty, which equates to 1 in 3 children. This can be broken down to 3.1 million living in deep poverty (defined as children living in households with income below 50% of the median after housing costs). 44% of children in poverty live in households where someone is disabled. 72% are living in working families. The Government has made a start to reduce child poverty:

1. **Extended free school meals eligibility** – by 2026 an additional 500,000 children (in universal credit households, regardless of income threshold) will become eligible for free school meals. This is estimated to save families around £500 per child annually and is expected to lift about 100,000 children out of poverty.

2. **Breakfast clubs and school uniform support** – the initiative includes funding 750 new breakfast clubs, benefiting approximately 180,000 children, and proposals to cap school uniform costs—potentially saving parents around £50 per year.
3. **Family Hubs relaunched as ‘Best Start Family Hubs’** – in July 2025, the Government rebranded and expanded the existing family hub initiative into a nationwide “Best Start” programme. With £500 million in funding, the aim is to have a family hub in every local authority in England by April 2026, and up to 1,000 hubs by 2028.
4. **Children’s wellbeing and schools bill** – a new bill, introduced in late 2024 and now progressing through Parliament, includes key provisions to bolster child welfare.
5. **Child Poverty Taskforce and strategy development** – the Child Poverty Taskforce, established in mid-2024, is working to develop a comprehensive, cross-government child poverty strategy, incorporating inputs from children, families, and anti-poverty organisations. Final publication is expected in Autumn 2025.

There are also increasing calls for the Government to remove the two child benefit cap. The media are suggesting that this might be removed in the November budget. A cross-party Poverty Strategy Commission and organisations like JRF and Save the Children strongly advocate removing the cap, arguing it could lift between 350,000 to 500,000 children out of poverty, though the cost remains a major hurdle. The Financial Times has reported that a new programme – Lifting Lives – will be launched that abolishes the two child cap, opens 1400 Sure Start centres, provides AI tutoring and internet access, improves mental health support in schools, and improves vocational training. If the Financial Times is correct, this could radically improve the lives of thousands of children and young people.

The implemented actions and the Child Poverty Strategy should reduce child poverty, but it is too soon to judge their effectiveness. It is fair to say that a start has been made to end child poverty, but it will take time, and schools will have to play their part.

Schools also face other major challenges. There have been real term cuts in per pupil spending, as well as rising costs e.g. staffing, heating bills. Technical and vocational routes are underdeveloped - it will be interesting to see how the new 'V' qualification develops. Can we introduce a gold standard qualification for academic and vocational routes? Albert Einstein once said: "Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid." We need a springboard to contribute to the Prime Minister's target of 66% of students going to university or on a gold-plated apprenticeship. Much work is still needed to provide meaningful technical and vocational courses in schools. They are a different, not inferior, pathway to success. SEND provision is patchy and parents are forced to fight for the right support for the child. This can be a source of conflict between schools and parents. There is also an increase in children suffering from anxiety, depression and stress. In 2023, one in five children aged between eight and 16 years – 20.3% had probable mental disorders. Working with other agencies, SSAT produced *The Children's Charter* (see appendix 1) a starting point to instigate discussion and action on the well-being of children and young people.

Children are not the only ones to experience stress and anxiety. Ofsted is seen as punitive in its judgements and teachers resort to teaching to the test. Following the death of Ruth Perry, a primary headteacher, Ofsted is introducing a new framework following consultations with the profession. But I do not believe that Ofsted has truly listened to the voice of the profession. In 2013, the view was that Ofsted was valued by

parents and employers, so needed to remain. Twelve years on, I think it is time to move to local accountability.

There is also a shortage of teachers and school leaders. Many critics put this down to the stresses and strains of Ofsted. SSAT believe that teachers make lives and are at the heart of achieving success for every child. Teachers must have exceptional subject knowledge and understand how children learn. Most importantly, they need to know the children they teach. Of course, data is important, but knowing the individual student is even more important, data may tell a teacher that a student is failing, but talking and listening to the student can give you the reason why. Leadership is needed at every level. Middle leaders are the engine room of every school – they must expect and demand excellence. It does not mean top test scores, but a recognition that the student has fully engaged with the exercise. School leaders need to be investors in people and innovators. They must have the courage to take risks. At the [Leading Edge](#) Conference, I said:

"I believe that you can be confident and courageous when you have clearly defined principles that underpin all your work and are key to decision making. My key principle was that every child can succeed – this influenced how I taught, how I developed the curriculum and, when I became a headteacher, the culture of the school."

All the challenges need greater analysis and SSAT will be discussing these with schools. I want to look at some possible ways forward.

Possible Reforms

I believe that there needs to be the broadest discussion around the purpose of education and the end results. Schools, bearing in mind the different contexts, can work in their own way to achieve the outcomes for their students.

Tim Brighouse wanted the power of the Secretary of State to be reduced. He advocated the establishment of the Standing National Education Advisory Council (SNEAC) one of its roles would be to determine accountability nationally, regionally and locally. Brighouse argued that SNEAC's membership should include representatives of teacher and other staff unions, HMI, Chartered College of Teachers, Universities, CBI and Chambers of Commerce, Trade Union Congress (TUC), Local Government Association (LGA) and bodies representing churches and faiths. Its chair to be appointed by the Select Committee for five year terms. Select Committee and HMCI's reports would be considered by SNEAC and advice given to the Secretary of State annually.

Sam Freedman believes that the current system is broken and overloaded. Central institutions like Whitehall are swamped, and local bodies lack capacity and autonomy. There is weak parliamentary scrutiny, and he argues that select committee chairs need elevated status and remuneration to be as influential as ministers. Freedman's key point is "People matter, but systems matter more – and we will get nowhere until we fix our systems." There are dangers in creating institutions like SNEAC – they can be bureaucratic, expensive to operate and little more than talk shops. The membership is critical. Members must be visionary and, working with the Select Committee, present possible next steps for the schooling system. Critically, they need to publish the success criteria by which schools will be judged. School leaders need to know where to go in order to address need.

In Deep Leadership for Social Justice, Professor Tim Brighouse advocated a new age of 'hope and ambition'. Schools are operating within the context of accelerated change, and students need to be able to

address the issues raised by the impact of artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, robotics, social technologies, the internet, climate change and political turbulence. Brighthouse also raised the issue of adolescence. How do young people navigate maturation and the challenges of county lines, social media and mental health? The television drama *Adolescence* sparked a conversation around youth violence, misogyny, and online radicalisation. A national body like SNEAC can propose effective practice for dealing with these issues, but it is school leaders who need to deliver the outcomes. This will include the structure of their pastoral system and the partnerships required to be effective.

I think student leadership in shaping anti-bullying and anti-misogyny policies is essential.

Schools need to partner with youth services and charities tackling online harm. There is also a responsibility to engage with parents. These issues must be dealt with in school and locally – school leaders have an opportunity to work together and with other relevant stakeholders to reduce or hopefully remove some of these dangerous issues.

Once the purpose of education is agreed, work can start on accountability, curriculum design and innovation. We also need to get the balance right between knowledge and skills. The success of schooling is still judged on examination results from an academic-based curriculum that relies on memory rather than a basis of understanding linked to problem solving, team working, and leadership. Book knowledge is viewed as more important than practical skills. In *Radical Help* (2018), Hilary Cottam argues that the institutions designed to educate and care for us are no longer fit for purpose. She links schools and welfare systems as products of the same industrial-era mindset – one that values control, efficiency and standardisation over human connection and creativity. Both were created in an age of factories, when social progress was

understood through productivity rather than wellbeing. Cottam contends that this logic still shapes how public services operate today, leaving both education and welfare struggling to respond to complex, modern lives.

Cottam explains that these systems “were designed for a different age – to process people efficiently, to fix problems that were already defined... Originating alongside industrial production, both schools and welfare institutions were built to manage populations rather than to enable human flourishing. They prioritise procedures, targets and measurable outputs instead of relationships or trust. In each case, professionals work within narrow roles – the teacher, the social worker, the health visitor... each look only at their own small piece of the puzzle... leading to fragmented, impersonal support.” As Cottam notes, these bureaucratic systems “manage need, not grow human capacity”. She therefore calls for a radical redesign based on relationships and human capabilities, where education and welfare form part of a connected social ecosystem that helps people to learn, care and thrive together. Her experimental projects, such as *Circle* (which builds community networks around older adults) and *Life* (which helps families in crisis rebuild relationships), demonstrate how a relational model can replace hierarchical institutions with human centred systems of mutual support.

Cottam’s concept of *relational welfare* also offers a transformative vision for education policy. Just as welfare must move beyond managing need, education must move beyond testing and sorting. A relational approach would see schools as places that grow people’s capabilities – echoing Amartya Sen’s idea that wellbeing depends on our real freedoms to live meaningful lives. Teachers would act as facilitators of growth, working collaboratively with families and communities rather than delivering a fixed curriculum from above. In this model, schools become hubs of belonging and

creativity that mirror Cottam's relational designs in welfare. Ultimately, she suggests that transforming welfare and education together is essential to building a society capable of supporting human potential. A shift from systems that control life to ones that help it to flourish.

Poor attendance and bad behaviour are issues that schools are facing with the added problems of teacher recruitment and lack of quality leaders. School leaders are not engaged enough with transforming the system – it is still very much top-down instructions. The development of next steps must include school leaders.

David Hargreaves wrote about the power of networking. I experienced the power of the SSAT network of schools as a headteacher – I was surrounded by other school leaders who were determined to improve the outcomes and experiences of their students. When I needed help I had a network of colleagues to support. I experienced it when I joined SSAT in 2002 and saw the value and power of successful headteachers working together. Tim Brighouse is best known for the London Challenge, which showed the power of regional collaboration between schools.

Tim Brighouse consistently warned against top-down reform and emphasised trust, morale, and empowering teachers and local authorities.

Baroness Anne Longfield, the former Children's Commissioner, calls for a national children's strategy and reform of SEND. She often highlights the north–south attainment gap, and she's a strong advocate for local family hubs and early intervention. Hilary Cottam goes further, arguing that our welfare and education systems are outdated and need radical redesign. Her focus is on co-design with communities, building relational, local services, and scaling through networks rather than hierarchy. Sam Freedman brings the policymaker's lens.

He focuses mainly on national frameworks, regulation, and incentives, while also reflecting on how reforms play out differently when devolved. He pays less attention to the classroom level, but his insight is crucial for understanding why some reforms succeed and others fail. Matthew Syed takes yet another angle – less about structures, more about culture. He promotes growth mindset thinking and the idea that schools and society should normalise. He advocates the power of thinking differently.

Collectively, the work of these experts provides potential solutions to current problems, and ways of moving forward.

Firstly, we need to look at the issues.

Accountability

The Government's drive to end child poverty is of considerable help to schools – hunger is a barrier to learning. Central government is also an issue in the English schools system, as so much power is centralised. Sam Freedman sees the problem as the tension between hyper centralisation (DfE, Ofsted, Whitehall control) and fragmentation (thousands of academies and MATs). He argues for local/regional authorities to be given real strategic power and capacity to plan provision, support improvement, and integrate education with children's services. This would enable local solutions to attendance, SEND, and exclusion crises.

In 2019, Brighouse, writing in SSAT's *Deep Leadership for Social Justice*, advocated for a balanced scorecard for school accountability. The scorecard would assess the following:

- Pupil outcomes in respect of progress made in graded tests and exams in skills and knowledge specified in the national curriculum – assessed and moderated locally and validated regionally.
- Pupil attitudes and motivation as assessed by using one of the many surveys (e.g. Keele, Strathclyde) available for this purpose.
- Pupil progress in terms of wellbeing and health.
- Pupil participation in the school's sporting and performing and expressive arts opportunities.
- Staff development and wellbeing.
- Pupil destinations after schooling.
- A validated self-review, externally moderated, of where the school is in its 'school improvement' journey.

Such a balanced scorecard – with numerical/banding representations for each category – would be available to all.

Brighouse in 2022 updated his thinking, adding recommendation for a balanced, annually published scorecard for each school, within local partnerships of 20–30 schools that are themselves inspected on improvement. Suggested indicators include pupils' attainment, achievement, commitment, exclusions, destinations, plus staff turnover, sickness, professional development, and the school's service to its community. Ofsted would stop ranking single schools; inspection focuses on the partnership's improvement record. Brighouse makes MATs or LA groups accountable. The focus is not just on academic standards, but on a civic and workforce lens.

Accountability moves away from Ofsted to local accountability.

From November 2025 Ofsted is moving to a report cards model, replacing the single overall grade with a multi-area report card for every provider, using a five point scale (*Urgent improvement, Needs attention, Expected standard, Strong standard, Exceptional*) and a met/not met judgement for safeguarding. Core areas in schools include inclusion, curriculum and teaching, achievement, attendance and behaviour, personal development and well-being, leadership and governance (plus EYFS/Sixth Form where relevant). Ofsted will still retain inspection of individual providers. Brighouse's score card has a broader civic and workforce lens whilst Ofsted focuses on educational domains. Brighouse's score card does not have headline grades and does not rank schools. He wants partnerships inspected every four to five years, and school-level accountability to be mediated through the partnership.

The role of the headteacher is critical. Brighouse suggests that Ofqual and Ofsted be merged, which would make £1billion available for school budgets. Brighouse is promoting redesigning the system with a strong focus on local accountability, and MATs and local collaboratives being held to account. As we have seen, Sam Freedman also advocates devolving more autonomy to local and regional authorities.

I believe that the time has come to radically restructure or disband Ofsted.

Increasingly it is clear that Ofsted is not independent from Government but is a means for enforcing government policy e.g. the EBacc. The quality of the inspectorate is varied, and, as chair of a MAT, I seriously doubt that they are collecting evidence but rather listening to gossip and innuendo. Local accountability is vital to all stakeholders, but most importantly to parents and carers. Individual schools need to tell parents the aims and ambitions for the academic year ahead. They need to ask for the parents' support to meet and exceed these aims.

Carrot, not stick

I have recently seen a beautifully written email to parents in a primary school explaining why attendance is important and how they can work with the school. It is a wonderful example of ‘carrot rather than stick’. At the end of the academic year, the school reports back to all stakeholders, so everyone is acknowledged for their contribution. Trustees and governors will be monitoring progress throughout the year and will be accountable to their community.

I advocate for local accountability as context is critical. If school leaders are fully engaged in determining the purpose of education, then the setting of targets for individual schools is easier. Brighouse wanted a time of “Hope and Ambition” – this means high aspirations for every learner. The development of partnership working between school leaders and the engagement of all stakeholders in delivering the targets of the scorecard is critical. Collaboration rather than competition. A local school improvement network that shares effective practice and professional development.

An Ofsted visit is not the right way to judge the success of the network. There is much criticism of the Ofsted report card, and the profession believes too much pressure is placed on schools to meet the inspectorate’s demands. The funding that could be saved – £200-220 million – can be allocated to schools. It is said that parents like Ofsted as it helps them judge the quality of a school, but I would argue that, more importantly, greater local accountability

with parental engagement gives a more accurate reflection. In every area there is a headteachers group and this could be revamped to be a local accountability board, plus representatives from other stakeholders. It must not be bureaucratic but relentlessly focused on improving outcomes for young people. If we get local accountability right, fewer students will fall through the gaps.

Actions

- Introduce a system of local accountability.
- Reform or remove Ofsted.

Questions

1. How might the concept of local accountability work in your locality?
2. Are schools – whatever their type – and FE colleges ready for partnership working for the benefit of all students?

Schools at the heart of their community

I believe the days of schools just thinking and delivering teaching and learning have gone. Schools must be at the heart of the community they serve. This was the Henry Morris principle behind the village colleges in Cambridgeshire. Schools must know the children and young people who make up the student population. Schools need to know the families. Primary schools are often better at this than secondary schools. This could be because they are smaller and that parents are more engaged with their child's education at a younger age. However, the best secondary schools design their pastoral systems to provide family support.

I was impressed by Manchester Communication Academy's pastoral team – the social investment department. They spent considerable time listening to students and parents. Schools cannot fix social problems on their own – a view I share with Hilary Cottam. She advocates for joined-up local systems where education, health, family support, and community organisations work together.

The case studies in Cottam's *Radical Help* are not school based, e.g. Circle for ageing, Wellogram for health, but are a model on how education might be reimagined with services designed around relationships. She is critical of top-down reform, and advocates for co-designing educational support with families and communities. I agree with co-designing – if all stakeholders are engaged in the design process, then fewer mistakes will be made. The main frustration that most school leaders feel is the length of time that it takes to get the right support in place.

Is there a role for regional accountability or is there a danger of being over bureaucratic? If Ofsted is reformed, then it could be charged with monitoring the outcomes and reviewing effective practice in schools. It should revert to having highly qualified HMI, who have subject and school improvement expertise and can hold a developmental conversation. This would cost, but the money would be paid for a professional conversation and knowledge of the effective schools nationally.

Another option could be that the local boards are monitored by the new mayors. This might involve looking at regional boundaries. There could also be the danger of politicians adopting a partisan approach. What is the role of the chief executive of a multi-academy trust that is based in several localities? Sam Freedman advocates for regional authorities that are responsible for:

- Teacher workforce including being an independent pay body and CPD.
- MATs and school structures – regional planning authorities. Freedman believes this body will give a stronger local voice.
- Accountability and Ofsted – Ofsted is slimmed down and carries out regional improvement reviews. There is also an independent curriculum commission.
- SEND and inclusion – integrated funding and planning.

I think that there needs to be lots more discussion on any regional level. I am convinced that local accountability is the way forward, but this is a decision for politicians.

Actions

- Determine if there is a need for regional accountability.
- Plan for co-location for support services in new schools.

The Politician's Perspective

Tony Blair famously said: “Ask me my three main priorities for Government, and I tell you: education, education, education.” He framed education as a mission for social renewal – a learning society. He wanted schools to deliver not only basic knowledge but the joy of music, art, science, civic responsibility. Under his premiership, we saw the expansion of the specialist schools programme in these subject areas and the formation of networks striving to find best practice. Blair saw education as the core component of a nation's growth strategy – “Education is the best economic policy there is.” He was an advocate for personalising learning and David Miliband, Minister, urged school leaders to be in the vanguard of determining what personalising learnt meant. Blair was committed to technology and innovation supporting education, for example AI tutors transforming how children learn.

Gordon Brown is United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education and believes that education is a foundation for resolving global problems. For him, education is a strategic lever that unlocks social mobility, peace and opportunity, and must be supported through global financing models and innovative thinking. In a time of nationalist sentiment, it would require nations (politicians and

people) to make such a commitment. Brown believes that there needs to be shared international responsibility in funding and delivering education – indeed he says education should be top of the global agenda. Determining the way forward will be the policymakers and politicians rather than school leaders – although the latter must be able to express their views. School leaders need to be shaping the delivery model. Brown advocates for a funding framework that operates in similar way to climate change, health, and peace keeping, and wants to create a guarantee-based organisation – the International Finance Facility for Education. He believes the organisation could offer guarantees and lend developing countries money at very low interest rates.

Like Mandela, Brown sees education as reducing the disparity between the “education-poor” and “education-rich” by increasing access to high quality learning. The original academies in England were all based in areas of high deprivation. In developing countries, Brown argues that the “teacher as sage” model is outdated and wants to leverage technology as a game changer. There is much talk about the possible impact of AI on schooling – much is critical, but educationalists and policymakers need to evaluate the positives, particularly in a time of teacher shortages.

Gordon Brown sees school leaders as implementers of his educational model whereas SSAT believes that they should be at the heart of developing the vision. There should be a two-way conversation between policy designers and school leaders – those working in schools understand the limitations and the opportunities for delivering reform.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Tony Blair's guidance on leadership is aimed at political and institutional leaders. Blair writes about the importance of clarity of purpose and priority setting – this adds to the case for agreeing the purpose of education. A school leader sets the school vision, structures delivery units, maintains staff morale, and harnesses technology for delivery.

I think Brown's education leapfrog strategy can be used nationally as well as globally.

Step 1 - Acknowledge the problem:

4.5 million children live in poverty, which equates to one in three children. This can be broken down to 3.1 million living in deep poverty (defined as children living in households with income below 50% of the median after housing costs); 44% of children in poverty live in households where someone is disabled; 72% are living in working families. The Government has made a start to reduce child poverty.

Globally, there are 250+ million children worldwide out of school and hundreds of million more in school but not learning basic skills. These children do not have the time to wait for schools to be built, and teachers trained. I have outlined the situation regarding child poverty and the actions the Government is taking to reduce/end it above.

Step 2 – Reframe education as a global good:

Define the purpose of education and put it at the heart of the welfare system and contributing to economic growth. The teaching profession and school leaders

must be fully engaged in this work. It's not a straightforward discussion e.g. some professionals believe strongly that schools should just be focusing on teaching and learning. I believe that schools must be at the heart of their communities and, at the very least, involved in finding solutions for their context.

Once consensus has been reached on the purpose of education, then the more complex discussions can take place on steps 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 below. School leaders and teachers must be leaders in the debate and be prepared to listen to the views of other professionals. National frameworks can be constructed, but there must be place for local variations. A one size fits all solution is unlikely to work. Brown's leapfrog strategy is not about tinkering but innovating by utilising inclusive technology and adapting the role of the teacher to maximise the use of new technology. Brown wants global action so that every child can learn within a single generation. I want every child to succeed, and I would argue that this is the ambition of every teacher; we do not have time to waste.

There is a role for students to link with students from other countries. It gives greater understanding of the world and the issues facing a country.

Step 3 – Use technology to leapfrog infrastructure bottlenecks:

This is Brown's "game changer" idea. Do not wait to build schools, but use digital learning hubs, low cost tablets, and radio/television instruction to deliver quality content. Teacher training to be delivered by online platforms, so local educators are ready to deliver in months. Deploy AI driven adaptive learning tools to personalise pace and content for each learner.

Step 4 – Blend teachers and tech into a hybrid model:

Brown sees teachers responsible for mentoring, emotional support, and guiding collaborative learning. Tech becomes a force multiplier allowing one skilled teacher to reach more students, particularly in rural or conflict areas.

Step 5 – Build resilience into education systems:

Learn the lessons from Covid-19 and have offline capable apps, radio learning packs, and community learning spaces.

Step 6 – Focus on the most marginalised first:

Brown is clear that investment should be targeted in areas where the return for humanity is highest: girls' education, refugee and conflict zones and early childhood programmes.

Step 7 – Measure, adapt, and iterate:

Brown wants real time data from tech platforms to monitor progress, and content, delivery methods, and support services to be based on what's working – turning education into a continuously improving system rather than a static one.

I believe this strategy could be used to improve schooling in England, but there are other possibilities e.g. Hargreaves's system redesign and personalising learning work. Brown does not write explicitly about the role of school leaders, but his broader vision for education sees school leaders driving transformation through innovation, resilience and equity. SSAT has always advocated school leaders – at all levels – as innovators. Leaders, who take risks to ensure the best possible education for their students. They are not waiting for directives from the Secretary of State but are driving forward with their vision for improvement. For Brown, technology is the “game changer” but I have been waiting for over 30 years to see technology transform the learning environment. There is much

discussion on the use of AI, and considerable negativity around its use. We need to focus on the positive use of AI in: the learning of students; professional development of teachers; and freeing up of teacher and support staff time to enable them to focus on individuals. Online working was the norm during Covid – we demonstrated that much could be achieved by a Teams meeting. Professional development was delivered online; parents' meetings were held online. Surely, we can deliver a successful model combining face to face and online activities. This approach could help with the delivery of apprenticeship schemes.

We once had a proud record of looking outwards and networking across national boundaries to share ideas and practice. This stopped during the coalition years when Michael Gove expressed the view that it was frivolous to spend time overseas looking at different systems. Programmes such as Teachers International Professional Development (TIPD) were cancelled. SSAT had established *iNet* (international networking for educational transformation) with school leader networks in Australia, Chile, China, Mauritius, the Netherlands, South Africa, USA, and Wales. Leading educational thinkers and academics such as professors Hedley Beare, Brian Caldwell, Alma Harris, Andy Hargreaves, David Hargreaves, David Hopkins, Barry Carpenter and Yong Zhao worked with school leaders to challenge thinking and practice. Together they produced the *iNet* Charter (see appendix 2). I would argue that the charter is still relevant and what we should be working towards today. We need academics, thought-leaders, employers, entrepreneurs and school leaders to come together to update thinking and practice.

Schools operating at the heart of their communities need to be outward facing and link with the sectors where their students will be working.

Deep Leadership

Human leadership must be at the heart of deep leadership. Of course, school leaders want teachers who produce outstanding results, but they also want teachers, who hold children and young people at the centre of their work. As Baroness Sue Campbell said at SSAT's conference in 2016: "If you abandon your moral purpose, you don't really have a purpose." I believe most teachers and school leaders are driven by moral purpose. The very best teachers know the students that they work with – they know their strengths and weaknesses and are prepared to invest time in their development.

This is why pastoral systems and other support mechanisms are so important. David Hargreaves saw this as part of the school design and organisation role of deep leadership. It is generally accepted that every child needs to engage with a responsible adult. School leaders are system

designers, and a crucial part of school design and organisation is the design of a pastoral system. Well-being and attainment are linked – students with higher well-being attend and engage in schools more successfully. Effective pastoral care reduces exclusions, drop out and disengagement. An effective pastoral team engages with parents and carers and gains knowledge of the barriers to learning.

Traditionally schools have organised their pastoral systems as year-based vertical systems or in House systems. Both systems have advantages and disadvantages.

The year-based system is usually led by a deputy or assistant headteacher with heads of year for each age group. This gives staff a consistent view of progress. Some schools keep the staff team in place, as it develops the staff's knowledge of specific events e.g. option choices. Other schools keep the staff and students together for the five years of secondary education.

THE DEAD HORSE THEORY



The Dead Horse Theory' illustration – author and original source unknown.

Image widely circulated in management and leadership literature.

The House system provides continuity across the student's time in school; plus staff gain experience of all aspects of school life. A few schools have a hybrid system with heads of year focusing on academic progress and the House leading on well-being. With the development of MATs and the greater social issues, we have seen the creation of posts such as Director of Pastoral Care with responsibility for safeguarding, mental health/well-being, attendance and behaviour, and SEND and vulnerable learners.

The redesign of a school's pastoral system to meet the needs of every young person requires considerable thought. I think there is a case to say that schools should start with a clean sheet of paper – what is needed now and in the future? What are the roles that are needed? It is not the time for the "dead horse theory of management"!

Actions

- Read SSAT's *Deep Support for Social Justice* – in particular, the Manchester Communication Academy case study is essential reading.

Questions

1. How might you redesign your pastoral system to meet the needs of students in your school?
2. Who might you partner with to enhance your pastoral offer?
3. How can we create more opportunities for schools and employers to work together and learn from each other?
4. How can schools and the NHS partner to provide speedy, specialist support for children and young people, particularly in mental health?

Leadership is....

What skills and experiences do school leaders need to be able to lead globally, nationally and locally? We do not need school leaders who are waiting for the Secretary of State to tell them what to do. I agree with Blair and Brown that strategic leadership is required. They must be the voices for their community as well as outward looking. I also agree with James Kerr and Sue Campbell that school leadership is a character-driven vocation that is grounded in humility, values, and personal legacy. School leaders pass the baton and take responsibility for the development of the next generation of leaders. Kerr sees them as moral exemplars, who build the culture of the school (or MAT) and protect its values.

As a chair of a MAT, when advertising to recruit a new chief executive, I found the non-negotiables were the six principles:

1. **The excellence principle:**
Educational provision must be excellent. Reasonable or even 'Good' is not good enough. We seek the very best education for all pupils in our schools. This implies that academic progress will be very high for all of our pupils however it is measured. Very specifically, we aspire towards pupil progress measures that would suggest our schools have pupil progress measures in the top 5% nationally.
2. **The comprehensive principle:**
We hold to the comprehensive ideal for our schools. This implies that our schools accommodate pupils of all types, including all types of academic starting points and abilities. We are clear that all pupils of all abilities can thrive and make excellent progress in the same school. It is for us to ensure that this is a reality. As well as all individual pupils of all types excelling in our schools, we believe that pupils benefit from sharing their education with pupils of all types from all backgrounds. This is seen as part of the educative process.
3. **The broad education principle:**
Education in our schools should be broadly based and incorporate a broad educational experience for all pupils. This includes strong provision of the arts, sport and physical education and technological education as well as academic subjects. It sees personal

development, well-being, leadership, creativity and citizenship for every pupil as core to educational provision. Wider education, often achieved through enrichment and extra curricular activities, is also vital. It is often through this that key skills and attributes are developed in young people that we see as fundamental to their development as young citizens. It means that programmes such as the Duke of Edinburgh scheme are common in our schools.

4. **The community principle:**

We are clear that our schools should be at the heart of their communities. This outlook might reasonably be characterised as the 'Henry Morris' vision for schools. We want our schools to be more than 'just schools'. Our schools provide significant value added to their local communities and they provide facilities and services that are available to all in their communities throughout the day, week and year. It is common for there to be thriving adult education programmes run from our schools as well as many other community activities and groups. Safeguarding the young people in our schools is our foremost priority. This can readily identify where pupils need help, and provide it quickly. We will also prioritise support for the wellbeing of members of our community, including our staff.

5. **The partnership principle:**

We expect our schools to work in partnership with others for mutual benefit. It is not acceptable for our schools to be islands and seek to plough their own furrows. It is right to work with and support others and we know that schools do better by seeking to behave in this way. Most obviously this applies to other schools in the Trust. At the heart of our Trust is the educational value added that can benefit our schools through the sharing of ideas and resources. However, the partnership principle goes beyond

the Trust and implies that our schools will work with other schools (rather than separately from or in competition to them) as there is benefit to all in doing this. Further, we seek to partner other organisations where there can be mutual benefit in so doing.

6. **The international principle:**

All our schools should have a clear international emphasis in their educational provision both within and beyond the formal curriculum. A strong international aspect to all young people's education is seen as crucial both in its own right as a proper part of any meaningful education and because it is crucial for the positive functioning of all societies. This clearly means a firm commitment to the quality teaching and learning of foreign languages in all our schools. However, it means more than that in terms of international themes running through the curriculum in our schools and rich extra-curricular international opportunities including trips and exchanges. Our schools work towards achieving the British Council International Award.

The new chief executive could innovate, but the six principles had to be maintained and updated. When working with the staff in the MAT to determine the vision for 2030, the principles were the framework in which the senior leadership team and staff operated.

Principles of Leadership

In this section, I want to look at the principles of leadership as stated in the books I am using as a basis for the pamphlet. It is the politicians that must have the vision for the systems in which schools operate. I believe that now is the time to radically change the way schools, public services, employers, and voluntary groups work together. There needs to be proper recognition that parents and carers need to play an important role in the education of their children.

We need to define the purpose of education and the outcomes we want. There are limited resources, and it is important not to duplicate roles, nor create bureaucratic processes that delay support. I argue that it is time for Ofsted to be reformed or scrapped. I want local accountability, but how will this operate? Does there have to be the same in each locality? The following chart shows the thinking of Blair, Brown and Freedman on leadership. There are other writers, who have thoughts on leadership and the following chart highlights the thoughts of Hilary Cottam, Matthew Syed and Anne Longfield.

Leadership dimension	Tony Blair – on leadership	Gordon Brown – Seven ways to change the world	Sam Freedman – failed state
Vision and purpose	Defines leadership as creating clarity purpose, and direction in complex systems.	Advocates global vision and moral leadership to tackle inequality and climate change.	Lack of coherent strategic mission. Leadership must shift from short-terms announcements to missions: setting clear, public-facing purposes.
System thinking and change	Believes in strategic reform and delivery mechanisms to make institutions effective.	Focuses on systematic global change, but his stages approach could be adapted.	Core theme: “people matter – but systems matter more. He argues leadership must engage systematic change: rebuild state capability, devolve power, align checks and balances.
Collaboration and relationship	Blair promotes partnership between state private sectors for delivery.	Brown encourages international cooperation and moral alliances.	Freedman emphasises partnerships across levels of governments (national, regional, local) and between public, private and voluntary sectors. He wants enabling networks, joint delivery, shared responsibility.
Inclusion and diversity	Values broad coalitions and pragmatic inclusion.	Champions fairness and justice globally.	Leadership must open up to distributed actors, not just elites in Whitehall.
Resilience and adaptability	Emphasises calm decision making under pressure and learning from failure	Advocate moral courage and persistence in reform.	Need to build reliant institutions: give organisations time to learn and adapt.
Ethics and humanity	Leadership must be principled and authentic.	Moral leadership as the foundation of lasting change.	Leadership is an ethical duty to rebuild trust, fix broken promises, and design institutions where goals are public good rather than just headline metrics.

Leadership dimension	Hilary Cottam – Radical Help	Matthew Syed – Rebel Ideas	Anne Longfield – Young lives big ambitions
Vision and purpose	See purpose in human-centred systems that enable people to flourish.	Purpose arises from diverse thinking and challenging assumptions.	Advocates for child-first vision in public policy.
System thinking and change	Argues for redesigning welfare, education, and care systems around relationships.	Emphasises cognitive diversity as key to solving complex systematic problems.	Pushes for structural reform in children's services and policy coherence.
Collaboration and relationship	Places relationships at the heart of social change.	Argues for collective intelligence – diverse groups outperform individuals.	Works across sectors to amplify children's voices and well-being.
Inclusion and diversity	Advocates inclusive systems that treat people as capable co-creators.	Makes the case that diversity of thought is vital for innovation.	Focuses on inclusion of marginalised children and families.
Resilience and adaptability	Encourages, adaptive, experimental social design.	Promotes learning and openness to challenge.	Shows resilience advocating for children's welfare amid bureaucracy.
Ethics and humanity	Compassion and empathy as leadership tools.	Psychological safety and humility as ethical anchors.	Empathy driven leadership focus on rights and justice for children.

There are many other important decisions for politicians to make, and I do hope that they include all stakeholders in deciding the way forward. It would be good to see the Secretary of State for Education overseeing the new way of working and leading in a very different way to the “command and control” form of leadership. The other writers are also advocates for change.

There is considerable talk about relationships and getting people to flourish. The role of developing the next generation of

leaders in all sectors is a huge responsibility. There is much talk about the importance of growing the economy. We need creative and innovative thinkers. School leaders must be part of the initial discussions, and they must welcome the involvement of other stakeholders. We did this when defining personalising learning. In a meeting with 250+ school leaders to determine how we achieved personalising learning, we examined David Hargreaves' two gateways: school design and organisation and workforce development.

School design was not just about bricks and mortar, but also organisational design. Hargreaves took lessons from the business world, and the development of the MAT system has seen school leaders become organisational designers. The key question for me is: are they focusing more strongly on teaching and learning? If you are a chief executive of a MAT is your focus on teaching and learning or on the operation of the MAT? Is the responsibility for school improvement with the headteacher/head of school – how much is delegated and how much autonomy do they have? How do you judge the success of the headteacher – purely examination results? Are you investing in your staff at all levels?

I greatly admire the work of Baroness Sue Campbell. She is a firm believer that all staff should attend training events. I knew Sue first through her work at SSAT's sister organisation the Youth Sports Trust (YST). Sue is someone we always called upon to speak on our leadership programmes. She is funny, sincere and authentic. She told the developing leaders: "If you abandon your moral purpose, you don't really have a purpose." Teaching is a profession that attracts people with a deep sense of moral purpose. Most teachers want to see children and young people do well. I have no idea of how many teachers and school leaders I have met since I joined SSAT, but I usually come away inspired. Teachers provide leadership in the classroom – knowing their students, how they learn, their strengths and weaknesses. They do not stop in their drive to make them successful.

Sometimes I despair that Government initiatives limit the creativity of teachers. We want teachers to have the confidence to innovate and to discuss their successes and failures with their colleagues. The first step on their journey is to decide what are their non-negotiables – what are the principles they will always abide by. SSAT's leadership programmes are designed to do this and to challenge thinking and practice. SSAT does believe that lessons can

be learnt from the business world and the worlds of sport, entertainment, etc. I find the NPQ programmes to be uninspiring, but as they are the national qualification, teachers participate. My concern is these programmes are more about conformity. As Sue Campbell says: "You (in education) do one of the most important jobs there is in this country" – the training must be of the highest quality. We want innovators and thinkers – there is always more than one way. As Matthew Syed writes we do not want to create echo chambers.

James Kerr's book *Legacy* is a must read for all leaders in any field. Kerr examines the All Blacks of New Zealand and reveals 15 lessons for leadership. He looks at the secrets of sustained success and maintaining exceptional standards. The book examines "...the idea that an organisation's culture – its values, beliefs, standard, expectations and foundational behaviours – are a competitive advantage." Leaders are character-driven, humble, detail orientated, and purpose led. They pass the baton, focus on daily excellence, and leave a meaningful legacy. Kerr sees school leaders as moral exemplars, culture-builders, and guardians of values – not just managers of change. All these authors see human leadership as critical in guiding teachers, shaping cultures or delivering outcomes.

Visionary leadership is also fundamental. Brown, Blair, and Freedman speak at policy level. Brown and Blair have held the most senior leadership position in the country, but they still look outward to the global position. Both want school leaders to see how other countries' schooling systems work. Brown introduced the Global Fellowship programme that enabled leaders to travel to investigate topics. It was during their tenures as prime minister that SSAT introduced iNet (international networking for educational transformation). iNet is about systemic change, innovation, and sharing of good practice in education. iNet did not tell schools what to do but the ambition is for all schools to be outstanding

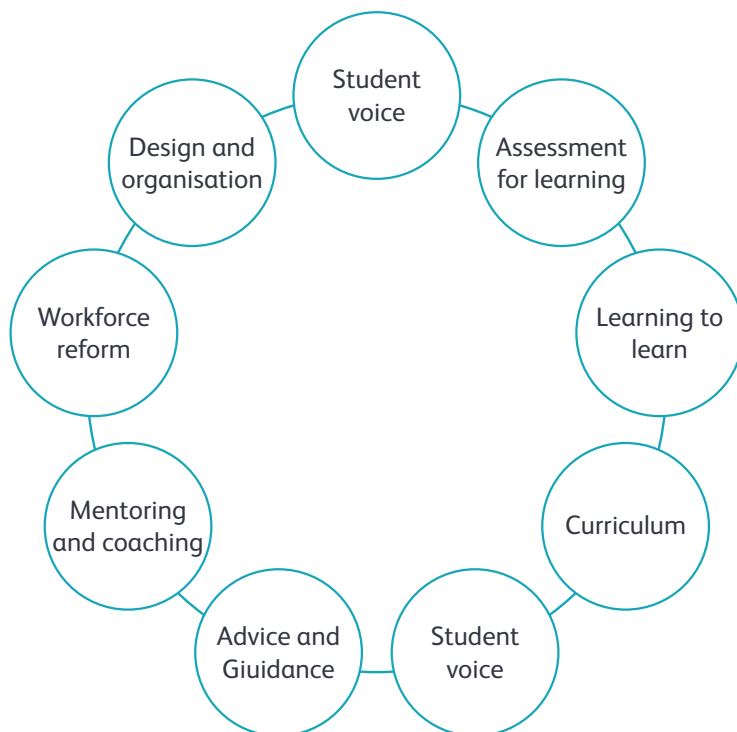
not just a few. That must be the ambition in every locality in England once the purpose of education is determined and school leaders are able to take their own pathway to achieving success for every child.

Networking and building your network of professional colleagues is critical and needs to start very early in a teacher's career. A subject network in your locality is a good start. Debating theory and practice lifts a practitioner from the daily routine and leaves you a place to go when there are problems to be solved. If we move to local accountability, I will hope to see subject networks thriving. I would expect there to be problem-solving around local issues. All the work should focus on improving the students' education. There should be local, regional or national recognition of the work

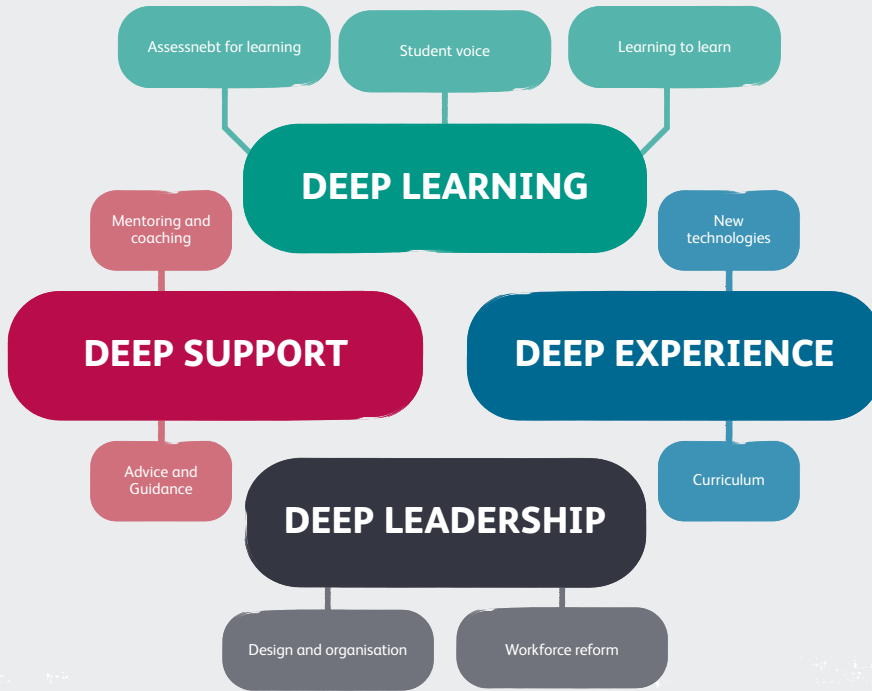
being done. SSAT has [Lead Practitioner](#) status in recognition of research carried out.

It is important that leaders are identified at an early stage in their careers. They need to be exposed to the best academics, business leaders, school leaders, and challenged by that exposure. David Hargreaves worked with 250+ school leaders to define personalising learning and produced the nine gateways. School leaders implemented this work in their schools and modified it. SSAT working with SHA (now ASCL) ran conferences on two gateways at a time, leaving school design and workforce development to the end. Our thinking was developing as we progressed. Eventually, based on feedback, we introduced the 4 Deeps:

The nine gateways to personalising learning



Clustering the gateways to PL: the ‘deeps’



Some schools loved the Deeps, others did not. It did not matter – it was for the schools to decide. All SSAT’s leadership programmes cover these areas, and these areas are relevant today. Hopefully the discussions developed new ways of working. Learning to Learn is not about learning styles. It is important that teachers and school leaders develop their own networks – it is always good to communicate with a colleague dealing with similar issues.

The best MATs are creating their own leadership programmes, as well as other professional development training. Their leadership participants need also to look outwards and see how other schools are developing.

Leadership should not be a lonely business.

Conclusion

I believe that now is the time to determine the purpose of education – everything flows from this. If we agree, cross-party and with input from educationalists, school leaders, teachers, employers, parents and students, the purpose of education then we can determine the system in which schools should operate - including judging outcomes. Most importantly, schools can determine the way that they want to achieve these outcomes. Matthew Syed quotes from the work of Maria Muuri, author and teacher, writing about the Finnish education system: “Students are all individuals, so we can’t teach them all in the same way.”

Blair and Brown want to maintain strong national levers with some delegated powers. I cannot see any Secretary of State wanting to relinquish powers. We are currently operating within the context of a standardised system, and I believe that we need to move to a more flexible system with the focus on individual children. The challenges that schools face: attendance, behaviour, mental health issues relate to individual children living in their own situation. Well organised systems and processes can alleviate the issues, but a one size fit all approach will not work. Local context is critical. Local accountability must be rigorous and engage all stakeholders. Working together, local solutions will be found. The challenge will be to remember national issues and that the UK operates in a global environment. Stakeholder voice is important, and it would be an unwise headteacher that ignores it. Challenge to do even better is positive.

A new national institution, as advocated for by Tim Brighouse, is one way forward. I do not think that Ofsted can be that national institution – it has lost credibility with the teaching profession and school leaders. Can it be reimagined to be the guardian of regional accountability? I do not know. It is early days for the RISE teams, but they commission MATs to deliver school improvement work. Decisions will become clearer once we have defined the purpose of education.

We need resources to schools and support services to provide improved support for children and young people. The Secretary of State has started with early years and primary age children, particularly with reducing poverty. We know urgent work is needed on SEND provision. School funding has often been seen as a postcode lottery. With local education groups focussing on all children, we should get a clearer picture of what is needed. We know that this Government is committed to housing developments. This is important, and so are the infrastructure institutions, including schools and support organisations. Now is the time to be planning these arrangements. Education is the key to the future of the UK and for every child and young person. There must be no more stories of Jaden and Jacob. As Sue Campbell said at SSAT's 2016 National Conference “Does every kid leave your school and think ‘You know what? I’m OK’”

Every child deserves to succeed.

Our six principles



Children and young people should be central in developing a shared understanding of what they need at any point in time “nothing about us without us”.

This means: That all stakeholders will seek, listen to and respect the opinions of all children and young people to develop a shared understanding of their lived experience in order to co-develop a coordinated and appropriate response. Leaders need to be courageous and advocate for children whilst providing authentic opportunities for them to exercise agency.



Children and young people have the right to be well and provided with an environment where they can thrive.

This means: That all children should have a range of joyful experiences which build robust resilience, health and develop physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing in the world in which they live.



Children should experience the joy of life, living and childhood.

This means: That all children should be exposed to a range of rich and diverse experiences that go beyond the traditional academic diet and support their vision for their future as an adult.



Children should have skilled and trusted support to understand and become socially and digitally aware in order that they remain safe.

This means: That children need to be explicitly taught about how to keep safe in a modern and digital world. Children should have easy access to trusted people around them where they can go for advice, support, and help.



Children should experience a sense of belonging and community where they are treated with respect and authenticity

This means: That equality and inclusion are championed; every child should have a place where they can feel safe and comfortable to be themselves. A place where they are loved not judged, where they are understood, valued, listened to and where they can grow and flourish into empathetic and compassionate adults who contribute as citizens within society.



Children's behaviour should be viewed as a form of communication and as such be viewed with curiosity.

This means: That behaviour should be viewed as a way of expressing an unmet need and as such activities need to be adapted and approaches developed to promote positive behavioural change. Teaching needs to support needs in a culture which seeks to understand rather than blame.

iNet Charter for Action



As a leader in a globalised world I agree to reflect the following in my work and to recommend to my colleagues around the world that they do the same:

1. To engage in global collaborations to transform schools and network knowledge in every way possible, with trust that comes through a commitment to a common cause and with the highest levels of professionalism and respect for the circumstances of others.
2. To participate in and contribute to networks at different levels – local, national and international – according to circumstance and opportunity.
3. To respect the differences and diversities in settings within and between countries
4. To recognise that countries are at different points in the journey to transformation and that, while there is an agreed view on the direction of change, there will be different rates of progress.
5. To acknowledge that with the explosion of knowledge and the way it is acquired and disseminated, there may be dramatic changes in the design of facilities, where schooling takes place, how it is organised and in the nature of teaching and learning
6. To respond to the special challenges of education in settings where growing numbers of children live in deep poverty, polarisation and exclusion.
7. To recognise that networking and globalisation are more than a sharing of knowledge; they are about breaking down racial and other barriers and creating a climate in which meaningful and collegial dialogue can flourish.
8. To help create a global movement of educators who help children to come to terms with globalisation that calls for strong values that engender respect and empathy and celebrate diversity.
9. To lead the development and delivery of curriculum that responds to the aptitudes, passions, interest and needs of all students; calls for a high level of professional skill, a capacity to learn from and form partnerships with other schools, listen to and learn from students who are at ease with new technologies, and that is innovative in organising learning by stage of development rather than age.
10. To accept that the nature of society and schooling in the medium to long term cannot be predicted with certainty, thus calling for extraordinary adaptability and flexibility on the part of all who work in or for the school.
11. To become outward facing, drawing strength from, encouraging and supporting parents and others in the wider community to understand and appreciate what is occurring, and helping them to embrace an agenda for change and transformation.

As a leader for transformation and innovation I agree to reflect the following in my work, and to recommend to my colleagues around the world that they do the same:

1. To raise the esteem of the profession to the point that it attracts the best people to its ranks.
2. To prepare students to be leaders and agents of change in a climate in which the voice of students is sought and honoured.
3. To create an environment and an empowering framework that enables creativity and innovation to flourish.
4. To create new ways for professionals throughout the school to become more globally aware; to become brokers and navigators of learning for students; to work in teams, often project-based; and to encourage mindsets and language skills that will help position the school for sustained success in an era of globalisation.
5. To ensure that new professional capacities are supported and sustained through structured opportunities for professional development; exemplary approaches to mentoring and coaching, with honest and open feedback; distributed leadership, succession planning, and high levels of professionalism.
6. To ensure that a coherent set of values drives transformation and innovation, personally valuing a 'no blame culture', and striving to be models for deep professional learning, problem solving, courage, boldness, collaboration and accountability.
7. To challenge traditional ways of doing things – to determine new 'default settings' – building confidence in new ways and resisting reversion to the traditional settings.
8. To join with other leaders in making a moral commitment to supporting schools in developing countries and their communities.

In equipping every learner for the 21st century I agree to reflect the following in my work, and to recommend to my colleagues around the world that they do the same:

1. To be driven by unrelenting commitment to ensuring success for all students in all settings, including and especially for children with profound and complex learning needs who have equal rights as global citizens.
2. To fully embrace personalising learning and to share knowledge on strategies for achieving it; personalisation, diversity, choice and variety are features of curriculum in the 21st century.
3. To accept that a global curriculum requires a different range of pedagogies; ensures students are aware of what it means to be a global citizen; is scientific, creative and philosophical; appreciates historical contexts; and ensure that digital literacy for students enables them to become the new creators in global technological advances.
4. To ensure that all students build capacity in problem solving, creativity, flexibility, adaptability, mental agility and life skills, acknowledging that these mean more cross-disciplinary learning and teaching than has traditionally been the case.

5. To change the culture of learning to include a higher level of coconstruction by teacher and student and the incorporation of local, national and global perspectives.
6. To expose students to the worlds of work in the widest sense, accepting and preparing them for a future where these worlds may be remarkably different from the present.
7. To lead and support richer and more relevant approaches to assessment for and of learning that embraces the full range of intelligences and capacities; strengthens the focus on requirements for learning in the 21st century; engages a wide range of stakeholders in the processes of assessment; ends the damage to good education of teaching to the test and thereby assists parents and policymakers to understand and accept the benefits of these richer approaches.
8. To provide the strongest possible guidance, counselling and other forms of support for all students as they navigate increasingly complex pathways of learning, especially for students who fall behind or are not experiencing success.
9. To ensure intelligent and safe use of new technologies in learning.
10. To trust students to be independent learners, taking responsibility for their own learning, and to ensure a good fit between 'students' world' and the 'educators' world'.

I accept the call to action set out in this charter, supporting the major themes that shall drive my actions:

1. To re-examine continually the concept of the school as a place of learning – a learning community for the whole community.
2. To accept that creative capacity building is the core business of the school in the 21st century.
3. To create cultures, structures and processes that enable these changes to occur through new and often radically different approaches to the acquisition and deployment of resources, adoption of new pedagogies, formation of new partnerships, abandonment of past practices that do not support these transformations, and new and more powerful approaches to assessment
4. To endorse a role for iNet in providing the structures and fostering the networks that will ensure the commitments in this charter will be realised in local, national and international settings.

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We are SSAT, the Schools, Students and Teachers network.

We exist to help improve outcomes for all young people. As a membership organisation of schools and academies across the UK and internationally, we work with leaders, teachers and pupils to drive school improvement and innovation, and celebrate their successes. We believe in a **truly school-led system**, with schools working in partnership across and beyond the education sector.

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SUE WILLIAMSON

Sue Williamson is chief executive of SSAT. Sue's early career began with various posts at schools in Northamptonshire and Berkshire, before she became headteacher of Monks' Dyke School in Lincolnshire. Under her headship, examination results went from 15% to 56% GCSEs 5 A* - C. Sue joined SSAT in 2002 as director of affiliation with responsibility for membership, leadership, innovation, and the national conference.

She later worked on the personalising learning agenda, and introduced iNet, working with schools internationally. Throughout her time at SSAT, she is clear that the best work is done when leading thinkers, employers, and other stakeholders work with school leaders to find solutions. She became chief executive in November 2011. Sue is a chair of governors, a fellow of the RSA and a trustee of several charities. She has an honorary doctorate from the University of Wolverhampton for her contribution to school improvement.

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