

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATION ADVISERS

DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP AT ALL LEVELS IN SCOTTISH EDUCATION

PAPER BY SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT LEARNING DIRECTORATE

Current Position

1. It is widely recognised that the quality of teaching and school leadership are the most influential factors in improving children’s learning, and the outcomes that they achieve, and are the key “in school” factors in addressing the attainment gap. Ensuring the highest professional standards for all teachers and school leaders in Scotland will help to ensure the highest standards and outcomes for all children. Supporting and developing the teaching profession to deliver excellent educational experiences for all pupils in Scotland’s schools is therefore a key priority.
2. In their 2008 publication “Improving School Leadership”, the OECD stated that “Research has shown that school leaders can make a difference in school and student performance if they are granted autonomy to make important decisions. However autonomy alone does not automatically lead to improvements unless it is well supported. In addition, it is important that the core responsibilities of school leaders be clearly defined and delimited. School leadership responsibilities should be defined through an understanding of the practices most likely to improve teaching and learning.”
3. The OECD paper identified four main policy levers which, taken together, can improve school leadership practice. They are:
 - define school leadership responsibilities
 - distribute school leadership
 - develop skills for effective school leadership
 - make school leadership an attractive profession
4. In considering the issue of leadership in Scottish education, the Council has recommended that, in order to develop effective leadership at all levels in Scottish education – unleashing untapped potential within the system, the Scottish Government should:
 - Consider providing a greater financial incentive to encourage teaching professionals to take on greater leadership roles and, in particular, to apply for headships.
 - Establish clear, broad and multiple career pathways for teaching professionals, and look at ways for teachers to progress while remaining in the classroom (e.g. as a teacher mentor employing leadership skills within a classroom environment,

or by leading change in pedagogy in a certain subject area) other than the more administrative route to headteacher.

- Establish a clear structure for bringing together leaders from across the teaching profession, local authorities, business etc, at a regional level in order to share learning and engage in joint practice development.
5. The Next Steps document recognises that leadership is the essential ingredient that binds the separate parts of an education system together, and is a pre-requisite for achieving system-wide transformation. We have made a wide range of commitments in the Next Steps document which will help to deliver on the Council's recommendations, which are set out below. These commitments seek to address the culture, capacity and structures required to improve leadership across Scottish Education. The focus of our work will now be on building momentum and buy-in, working with the profession and other key stakeholders to deliver on this vision.

Education Governance: Next Steps

- *We will work with our partners to establish new career pathways for teachers allowing greater opportunities for development and progression into leadership, specialist or improvement roles.*
- *We will clearly define school leadership responsibilities, legislating to create a Headteachers' Charter, which will be developed in partnership with the profession. We will trust and invest in the leadership of schools and support empowered headteachers.*
- *We will distribute school leadership to ensure headteachers are supported by peer networks, regional improvement collaboratives, local authority support and the wider school community including pupil and parent councils.*
- *We will develop skills for effective school leadership by enhancing the leadership support package to build the capacity and culture for teachers and headteachers to take on their new more empowered role.*
- *We will take specific actions to increase the attraction of school leadership. We will develop a specific recruitment campaign for headteachers building on our Teachers make People campaign.*
- *We will develop a mechanism to identify aspiring headteachers early in their career and develop a programme of professional learning and work experiences to lead them to the Into Headship course – this will provide a fast-track leadership route for talented teachers providing a clear pathway to headship.*
- *We will develop new Executive Heads and Cluster leaders with partners to strengthen school leadership.*
- *We will develop a coherent approach to the leadership capacity across the whole system from the classroom to policy level and work with partners to develop a*

new system leadership role to provide clear progression opportunities and to strengthen educational leadership at all levels in the system.

- *We will simplify the national support for professional learning and leadership development by placing these functions in a renewed and revitalised Education Scotland.*

The Council is asked to consider:

- **what it sees as the challenges to deliver the actions set out in the Next Steps paper to deliver effective leadership across Scottish Education?**
- **how best to achieve stakeholder buy-in to the cultural, capacity and structural reforms which have been identified?**
- **are there examples of international best practice in terms of delivery of reform which we should consider further?**

Scottish Government
August 2017