



ESHA magazine

EUROPEAN SCHOOL HEADS ASSOCIATION

MARCH 2010

Shaping the future of Education

ESHA Conference in Macedonia

The attractiveness of
school leadership



ESHA magazine is the official magazine of the European School Heads Association, the Association for school leaders in across Europe. ESHA Magazine will be published three times between now and the end of the school year and will be published 7 times in 2010-2011. You are welcome to use articles from the magazine but we would appreciate it if you contacted the editor first.

Subscription

The ESHA e-magazine is free of charge. You can register through the internet at **www.eshamagazine.org**

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About ESHA

ESHA is a Foundation that consists of 32 Associations of Heads and Educational employers in 25 European countries in primary, secondary and vocational education.

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In this issue

MARCH 2010

Educating for the Digital Society

Although new technologies offer enormous chances for education, the teachers still make the difference. How to ensure that they can continue doing so?

Read more on page 13

Schools getting ready for Comenius Individual Pupil Mobility

Training of schools and teachers, with the aim to have students from all over Europe participating in international exchange programs. And to profit from this. Read more on page 20

The attractiveness of school leadership

Danish school leaders are more than average enthusiastically motivated.

What are the Danish success factors? Read more on page 26

The moment of truth approaches

Will the outcomes of Cambridge Primary Reviews effectively lead to improvements at school level? Read more on page 30



1st European School Heads Association Conference
4 - 6 November 2010, Limassol, Cyprus

ESHA 2010 CONFERENCE

Grand Resort Hotel, Limassol Cyprus
4 - 6 November 2010

«**The successful school: a human approach**»

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- **Petros Pashiardis:** Human Systems of Leadership in Successful Schools.
- **Neil Hawkes:** Human Approach, Moral Leadership and Positive Culture in Schools.

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Dear ESHA friends and members

Amazing; this is your first ESHA magazine!

It is our first step forwards in the continued development of a European Network for Heads and Deputy Heads and School Leaders. We plan to circulate this new pan-European magazine in the near future every month in 4 languages to all ESHA members and to individuals wishing to read it. We will start the new magazine in English. Until August 2010 the magazine will be published every two month. From August 2010 on, we will publish 10 times a year. From January 2011 we hope to publish the magazine in different languages. We hope that the magazine will be constructed from a collation of interesting articles already published in the variety of magazines from our member organisations and others. If individuals wish to publish, please contact the ESHA office, e.dejong@avs.nl. As you know, internal educational policy developments within individual EU countries remain the business of each member nation. However, we all recognize that we can benefit and learn so much from the 'good practice' developments, practice and results from each other.

In order that we can make this happen we will depend on you to send us interesting articles which you think may be of wider interest to your colleagues across Europe; please send them to Ellen de Jong at the ESHA secretariat. The first year we want you to write or sent only English copies, next year we'll do our best to make a suitable translation before we publish!

Remember, the identification of, sharing and dissemination of good practice is one of our key ESHA goals. You can help us to make this magazine a real success. And, sending the article by email saves the environment and as you can now see, you can even read it as you would a book.

Thank you – in anticipation of your co-operation in making this exciting opportunity for reading a pleasure and fun for all! ◀

News in brief

The transformation of ESHA According to the constitution ESHA is a Foundation. Unlike the name European School Heads Association suggest. The General Board has decided in Ohrid to change ESHA from a Foundation to an Association. The main difference between an Association and a Foundation is that in a Foundation every member is part of the board and fully responsible for the acts of all other board members. In an Association, only the elected Board is responsible, not the members themselves. In the GB meeting in Amsterdam, March 12-13th this will be decided. ◀

Cooperation with EFIL ESHA had decided to cooperate with EFIL, the European Federation for Intercultural Learning in the project Individual Pupil Mobility. Our work is to help EFIL to recruit schools in several European States to participate in the program and to disseminate results. You can read more on page 20 in this Magazine.

Want to learn more: see www.efil.afs.org/efi_en/home ◀



Photo: Studio rUZ

Agenda

March 12–13

The ESHA General Board (GB) will meet in Amsterdam

March 12th-13th from 14.00 h on Friday until 14.00 h on Saturday

The Executive Board will meet March 12th from 10.00–13.00

On the agenda:

- Keynote speaker Toine Maas about e-learning and e-sharing (Toine is CEO of Kennisnet who sponsors the meeting)
- The EC programs and how to collaborate with the EC. David Bohmert from Nether
- The ESHA working plan 2010-2012
- The ESHA financial report 2009
- The ESHA budget 2010
- The change of the constitution
- The proposal to the EC for the website and magazine
- AOB

The Executive Board has met on January 22 in Utrecht.

ESHA Proposes World Education Forum

November 4–6

12th ESHA's BI-annual in Limassol Cyprus

From November 4th until November 6^h the 12th European School Heads Association will be held in Limassol Cyprus. Registration is now open.

Go to www.eshaz2010.com and register!

Report of European School Heads Association Conference in Macedonia



Ciarán McCormack and Clive Byrne represented NAPD at the General Board of ESHA meeting which took place on Ohrid, Macedonia during half term. Key decisions were taken which it is hoped will improve the profile of the Association

and make ESHA more relevant for members. Members discussed the proposal from President elect Ton Duif (Netherlands) to organise a World Education Forum along the lines of the World Economic Forum. He remarked that there is no global educational lobbying platform except UNESCO which is not as effective as it could be.



Ciaran McCormack (Ireland) and Virginia O'Mahony, President elect of ICP at the Macedonian Conference.

World Education Forum

Such a Forum could act as a world conscience platform for education in a context where 80,000,000 children have no access to education, 750,000,000 people cannot read or write, 1,000,000,000 have no access to proper food and drinking water and if only one of these people was a new Einstein, what benefits to the world could there be. Ton stressed that such a forum could set the tone for educational developments worldwide and could enable the establishment of school leadership organisations in the developing world. School leadership is a high leverage activity and should be seen as key to effectively implementing educational initiatives worldwide. ❖

« Ton Duif remarked that there is no global educational lobbying platform except UNESCO which is not as effective as it could be »

ESHA conference 2010

The General Board noted the planning for the 12th European School Heads Association Conference which will take place in Limassol in Cyprus from the 4-6 November 2010. The Theme of the Conference is “The successful school, a human approach”. Further details are available on www.esha2010.com.



Jukka Kuittinen (Finland), Panayotis Kyrou (Cyprus) and Antonello Gianelli from Italy at the recent ESHA Conference in Macedonia.



*Lars Flodin (Sweden) and Mark Jensen (Belgium)
at the ESHA General Board.*

Elected

In an endorsement of the work of the Association in hosting the spring General Board meeting in Dublin and an acknowledgement of the standing of NAPD internationally, Clive Byrne was elected to the 5 person Executive Board of ESHA and will take up office in January. NAPD members in good standing are automatically members of ESHA and the International Confederation of Principals (ICP). ◀

Learn more?

Go to www.esha.org



Educating for the digital society – Derek West reports on David Puttnam's address to the Institute of International and European Affairs in Dublin on 19 January 2010.

Educating for the Digital Society

Derek West reports on David Puttnam's address to the Institute of International and European Affairs in Dublin on 19 January 2010

David Puttnam's views on education appear to be both conservative and revolutionary. He believes in the fundamental importance of education, of children ['the building blocks for the future of our planet'] and in the primacy of good teachers, the 'infantry' in the war, as he sees it, between 'our failed present, and the possibility of an altogether more imaginative future.... between our worst and better selves.' At the same time, he draws on a lifetime of working with the moving image, digital technology, the internet, the mobile phone to point to an urgent need for us to move our thinking into the 21st Century.

So he is committed to education. 'It's the teachers, not the technology which makes the crucial difference between raising the bar and keeping it in exactly the same depressing place it's always been. Or to be strictly accurate, it's the skilled teacher, adept at handling the very best technology, that's become an asset truly beyond price.' ❖

Embrace that technology we must. It's well and truly embedded in the world of the new century. Like Marian Healy, Puttnam is asking uncomfortable questions about our performance. He states that it's 'pitifully inadequate.' We may stand back and marvel at the way young people navigate a way through all the technology, but it's not just a matter of accessing information. They need help – from the teacher, the guide, the mentor – to distinguish the 'wheat from the chaff', the 'valuable from the useless'. Digital technology is universal and virtually unstoppable. It already shows signs of developing dangerous traits. 'A digital society is, or should be just that – a society – a society in which we thoughtfully balance our rights with our responsibility to respect and learn from others. Life cannot be reduced to some anarchistic free for all!'

What makes a good teacher?

Hence Puttnam's insistence on school: 'Teachers [skilled teachers] matter they are the key to all our futures'. But he sees that the definition of what makes a good teacher is going to change radically. 'Of course, leadership, knowledge, the ability to inspire and arouse curiosity, those attributes will always endure. Teachers will still need to be coaches, colleagues and friends – but in addition to these qualities, the daily substance of their professional skill base will alter; if for no other reason than to reflect the rapidly changing needs of their students. All this has significant implications for classroom and school, management. The model of 30 children in neat rows facing a single teacher is (or ought rapidly to be) an anachronism in an era of video-conferencing, whiteboard technology and social networks. Why shouldn't children be helped to learn French by French children in French schools; or physics by a Nobel Prize winner? Why should teachers still be responsible for lunch-hour duty, and making sure the PCs work, when there are literally armies of volunteers and specialists that could support them in exactly these areas?'

Puttnam sees the possibility of enormous creativity in all of this, based on a literacy that encompasses the moving image as well as the written word: ‘Only by engaging with these new and at times quite intimidating challenges, and applying them to the process of teaching and learning are we likely to produce a generation of creative people with a breadth and a depth of understanding capable of dealing with this new and incredibly difficult century of ours (actually, we should never cease to remember – it’s theirs!).’

‘I’m afraid we all need to take a deep collective breath, and accept the increasing centrality of the moving image at the heart of learning – and

the serious opportunities this offers to both the teacher and the learner.’

« The definition of what makes a good teacher is going to change radically »

Which brings him to the ‘interactive’ dimension – he mentions Futurelab which fosters ‘classroom practices and new approaches to curriculum design which are under-

pinned by the aim of supporting kids to become informed and literate digital participants...Initiatives are being developed within schools that twin the application of new media for learning with fresh thinking about the curriculum and teaching practices, for example by conducting historical inquiry via online archives; interpreting and producing literary hypertext; testing and constructing science simulations. All of which inevitably challenges WHAT we teach; as well as HOW it’s taught – let alone WHY it’s taught!’





If you go to the Podcast or download the full text of his talk you'll see how he illustrates this point. The play element is back in education and Puttnam cites the Sony game, *LittleBigPlanet*, which takes the moving image into a vivid learning situation.

“In many respects this is little short of a revolution in the way we learn. For a start it's a lot less didactic. Instead of saying to kids: “This is the way to do it”; what you're in effect saying is: “Here are the tools, and here are your options” It's the equivalent of learning to use a flight simulator – you take off – you try to stay in the air and eventually land safely – and in the right place. Assessment is immediate and self evident. Kids don't need to be told whether they succeeded or not; and if they failed, their most likely response is to want to try again, and again, and again until they succeed.

‘In real life that’s exactly how we all learn, in fact that’s how people have always learned, but oddly (and this is purely my own observation) that type of thinking seems never to have quite transmitted itself to the established world of teaching and learning. Games, and crucially their interactive dimension, provide us with the opportunity of looking at things as they are, or even were, and then, through reassembling the ‘digital toolbox’, offer a sense of how they might be.

« Kids don’t need to be told whether they succeeded or not; and if they failed, their most likely response is to want to try again, and again, and again until they succeed »

He sees the potential for a new era of imaginative, hands-on learning, a re-instatement of the virtues of what was known as ‘trial and error.’ ‘Technology has handed us the opportunity to actively engage learners; to finally escape from the passive world of ‘chalk and talk’, which remains, even in 2010, an all too familiar model of classroom practice throughout much of the world.’

The Puttnam Statements

Puttnam then offered his Dublin audience ‘a bit of tough love’, by re-stating what he saw as the crucial lessons that we ought to have absorbed during these past thirty years:

- Like it or not, getting education right is the whole ball of wax.
- No education system can be better than the teachers it employs, and the standards it demands of them.



- Teacher training in a digital age has to be viewed as an entirely non-negotiable and continuing process. The commitment of Governments and individual head teachers to the best possible quality of teacher training, along with regular, preferably annual, time out for professional development, must be absolute.
- There needs to be an undisputed global acceptance of the importance of the education of women.
- This country enjoyed an early and inspired start due to the courage and foresight of Donogh O'Malley who laid the foundations for a strong public focus on education. It was largely thanks to his imagination that this country was able to take an early lead in encouraging its young people to embrace what was at the time not just new, but largely untried technology.
- A well-educated returning diaspora had a lot to do with promoting twenty years of unparalleled growth, but those early successes were insufficiently built upon; to the point at which public expenditure on education, as a percentage of GDP – was allowed to drift downwards – at the very moment it should have been going up – exponentially! A minimum of seven per cent of total GDP is the figure the Government should set and hold to.
- A world-class education system will, over time, deliver a world-class health service – the reverse can never be possible.
- Young people learn and teachers teach best in environments that they respect. The physical infrastructure [including every aspect of connectivity, along with complementary hardware and software] of many of the primary and secondary schools in Ireland should be a cause for national shame. Choices were made to spend billions of euros on buildings in the private and public sector that now lie empty, under-used, or simply not needed. Had some fraction of that sum been committed to refurbishing the quality of the schools and classrooms in this country, the nation would be far better placed to dig itself out of the hole that all that accumulated debt and waste has helped create.

Sincere optimism

His closing words were optimistic: 'The good news is that there are really excellent people in this country who understand that education at every level is both the cause and the consequence of any possibility of national renewal. For too long Ireland relied on the good offices of the Church and the largesse of Europe to address and solve many of these problems. It's now down to a simple test of national will to invest in the future; to rediscover those things for which this country has rightly been celebrated – learning, culture, imagination, inventiveness; a unique sense of community and place that the world has, in the past and, please God, will once again, come to admire,- and possibly even envy. ◀

Learn more?

Institute of International and European Affairs, www.iiea.com

This article is previous published in the NAPD Magazine

Schools getting ready for Comenius Individual Pupil Mobility

ESHA getting involved in Teacher Training on Youth Exchanges

New EU framework for pupil mobility In 2010 the European Commission' Lifelong Learning Programme starts the first secondary school individual pupil exchanges under the Comenius Sub-programme (Comenius Individual Pupil Mobility scheme – see http://ec.europa.eu/education/comenius/doc990_en.htm). The tasks of recruiting students and host families, of accompanying students/families during and after the experience and a number of administrative/practical tasks are assigned to the participating schools and teachers assigned to play key roles in the programme. For most of them dealing with exchanges is a very new experience that requires additional specific knowledge and skills. At the same time, a number of civil society organisations have been running similar pupil exchange schemes for years and therefore acquired already extensive experience and competence in this field. Among them the biggest one is AFS, with its European umbrella organisation: the European Federation for Intercultural Learning (EFIL). ❖

EFIL and its network are willing to share the know-how related to long-term exchanges of secondary students, in order to help schools to get fully ready for running the scheme. For that purpose, under EFIL's leadership and with ESHA's involvement, it is planned to conduct a large-scale European project preparing teachers for running individual pupil exchanges, with the support of the EU Comenius Multilateral Projects grant framework.

General project summary and scale The core of the project assumes organising national teacher training events on youth exchanges in 7 project countries: Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy and Portugal. The trainings will be designed based on the needs of teachers, tailored to the local situation and powered by 60 years of AFS experience in youth exchanges. They will include a special track for teachers/schools participating in the first Comenius IPM in 2010-2011 and will be delivered in national languages. A group of traveling international trainers recruited from within the EFIL/AFS network will ensure the synergy among all training events. ❖





Jan Honinx, Auditor - Frini Ezunkpe, Executive Manager - Izabel Jurczik, Training Coordinator @ Paul Claes, Secretary General

The training events will be documented and evaluated, resulting in a Training Package for each country, in order to be able to assist schools on a more regular basis in the years to come. Furthermore, the project offers the opportunity for teachers to exchange experience/ideas and disseminate the outcomes through the project website and the European Teachers' Seminar organised at the end of the project. If the Comenius funding is approved, the project will start in November 2010 and last overall about 20 months (till June 2012).

Aims and objectives Overall aim of the project is to contribute to the successful implementation of the EU Individual Pupil Mobility Scheme and international pupil mobility in general by preparing secondary schools and teachers to deal with exchanges.

The project aims:

- to identify the schools' missing knowledge and competences for the implementation of the Comenius Individual Pupil Mobility programme and pupil exchanges in general;
- to design and implement the need-based country-tailored training events for schools dealing with exchanges or planning to do so in the near future;
- to produce optimised national training packages on exchanges for teachers;
- to give teachers an opportunity to share experiences on youth exchanges.

Target groups and beneficiaries The project targets primarily the teachers and secondary schools that participate in the first Comenius Individual Pupil Mobility Scheme, but also those that currently deal or plan to get involved with youth exchanges in general, in the 7 participating countries. Additionally, the project aims to reach teachers/schools/educational authorities in other European countries, thanks to their participation in the broader dissemination of the project outcomes. Long-term beneficiaries: European students and their school environments participating in exchange programmes as they will benefit from better organisation and support during the exchanges.

ESHA's involvement in the project at European level Following the recent decision of the ESHA Board, the Association has become the official partner of the project. Baring in mind the specifics and strengths of the ESHA network, its main task in the partnership will include dissemination of project information and outcomes to the relevant school networks and individuals. This role would imply the use of the ESHA website, and ESHA's magazine, direct mailing to Member Organisations and Headmasters and promotion during relevant events. ❖

Dissemination of information by ESHA will have particular importance during recruitment of teachers to participate in trainings organised in each of the countries (winter-spring 2011). Reaching the relevant networks of schools, headmasters, teachers and other educational authorities will also be needed in preparation of the European Teacher Seminar – a joint event organized at the end of the project (early 2012). Additionally ESHA will contribute to the project with its knowledge of realities in school establishments and national realities, as well as with school heads' perspective in setting up teacher trainings.

« The trainings can definitely help participating schools in setting up exchange programmes in the years to come »

The ESHA network will benefit from this involvement through increased visibility, in particular to external school-related networks and institutions, in particular the European Commission. Most importantly, however, it is the schools and teachers at national level who will gain necessary knowledge and skills on pupil exchange, thanks to their participation in the project.

Possible involvement of national school heads' organisations

Next to the partnership at European level, there is also space for co-operation between AFS national organisations and the relevant ESHA Member Organisations in each country, according to interest and capacity. National School Heads associations in the project countries (Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy and Portugal) can definitely contribute to the teachers' training needs

assessment and to country-specific recruitment and dissemination efforts. These partnerships can be decided upon bilaterally at national level, at a later stage.

Involvement of as many secondary schools as possible in national teacher training organised in the seven project countries is strongly encouraged. The idea is to recruit teachers not only from schools which already participate in the Comenius Individual Pupil Mobility but also from those which consider getting involved in long-term pupil exchanges in general. The trainings can definitely help participating schools in setting up exchange programmes in the years to come.

Next to the countries directly involved in the project, it is also important to reach schools, headmasters and teachers in other countries.

The competences provided to schools within the project can be easily transferred across borders, in particular thanks to the Training Packages prepared for other schools' use. Next to benefitting from the project outcomes in this indirect way, the headmasters from other countries are also encouraged to get involved in the European Teacher Seminar at the end of the project. The overall intention of expanding and improving secondary student exchanges should definitely be promoted all the countries of the ESHA network. ◀

Please stay tuned for further information about this initiative in the next editions of the ESHA magazine.

Learn more?

Go to www.efil.afs.org/efi_en/home

The attractiveness of school leadership

By Anders Balle, president, Danish Association of School Leaders

The school leaders of the national primary and lower secondary school have launched a major leadership-centered initiative involving a number of projects intended to illuminate the attractive aspects of being a school leader. In collaboration with institutions, organisations, companies etc., the Association will attempt to isolate the factors that make it exciting and meaningful to be a school leader – factors that will carry the school forward towards greater success, greater academic standards and a good teaching and working environment.

There are many attractive aspects of being a school leader in Denmark. Indeed, the satisfaction rate of Danish school leaders is above the average of other public employees.

Job satisfaction is an important factor in coping with the responsibilities of a school leader and for exercising good leadership. This, in turn, is essential for the general successfulness of the school as surveys show leadership to be the most important single factor in safeguarding and improving school quality. For this reason, providing school leaders with



good conditions for exercising their leadership is an important aim. Being a school leader must be attractive, and the leaders themselves and their surroundings must see that they thrive on the job and have a reserve of strength.

Unfortunately, though, applicants are not queuing up to become school leaders in the Danish public school. The leader's competences are often vague, and it is an exposed position that involves many working hours. These are the downsides to being a school leader. However, even though many school leaders do say that they are fond of their jobs, they are also concerned that they might not be able to continue coping with the pressures.

The duality of exercising school leadership under conditions at once satisfactory and unsatisfactory is an interesting object of study – for the purpose of defining when and under what conditions leadership will be successful. For, considering that good leadership is an important parameter for the academic and social success of a school, it seems pertinent to ask: What is good school leadership, how is it to be organised and on what factors does it depend?

Good leadership, good school

Identifying opportunities and prerequisites for exercising good school leadership is a challenge that has been taken up by the Danish Association of School Leaders. Under the headline 'The Attractiveness of School Leadership', the Association has launched a major initiative for the next couple of years, focusing on professional and policy related aspects of school leadership. The aim is to acquire knowledge of the constituents of good leadership in the public school but also to ensure that school leaders will last longer and that more will want to apply for leadership positions.

With 'The Attractiveness of School Leadership' the Association wishes to set a positive agenda for the working conditions, retention and recruitment of school leaders. The aim is to encourage qualified – including local – discussions of the fundamental prerequisites for making school leadership an attractive option – among the school leaders themselves as well as among the external stakeholders. The Association also wishes to use this process for purposes of policy formation and to identify the Association's professional development targets and what needs to be done to improve the level of job satisfaction and the working conditions of school leaders. Furthermore, we intend to upgrade our services to members in terms of counselling and guidance.

« To improve the level of job satisfaction and the working conditions »

We believe that the time has come to look at the world from the inside out – from the perspective of school leaders and not exclusively from the cross field of pressures to which leaders are traditionally described as being subject.

If the leadership is not feeling comfortable about its actions, the school will not function well. It is as simple as that. Our focus will therefore be on identifying the connection between the good school and good leadership.

From words to action

The initiative 'The Attractiveness of School Leadership' is based on our 2007 'Code of good school leadership', the Association's eleven-point attempt at identifying the requirements of modern, good leadership in the public school.

Moreover, the initiative is linked to the current collective agreement for school leaders, which sets out the framework for the salaries and working conditions of Danish school leaders. Under the rules agreed, this framework is up for renegotiation every three years through centralised and decentralised negotiations with the local government employers –the next round to begin in 2011.

Finally, the initiative is linked to the general focus in recent years on public management and leadership – not least school leadership – in the form of political agendas, objectives, reforms and transformation of the public school system as well as on research, surveys etc. within this field. In this respect it is also linked to the European, OECD-initiated project 'Improving School Leadership', which focuses on elements such as:

- Redefining leadership responsibilities in the school.
- Delegation of leadership responsibilities.
- Developing competences in effective school leadership.
- The need to turn school leadership into an attractive profession.

Now the aim is 'merely' to move from laws, regulations and statements of intent to more concrete action. Via a number of projects, the aim of the initiative is to identify the core elements of leadership and of successful collaboration in the leadership team. What are the core competences of a good school leader and, not least, what are the basic prerequisites for a well-functioning school leadership?

Our vision is to strengthen the conditions for exercising leadership in the school and for developing successful personal and team-based leadership. We hope that this work will result in innovation within the field of school leadership – with an eye to the well-being and impact of the leader, making it both more attractive and manageable to be a school leader.

The Association is not alone in carrying out projects under this general initiative but collaborates with a number of research institutions, organisations and consultancy firms that already focus on public leadership, especially school leadership. The general initiative is an umbrella covering a number of activities – see figure.



Space, power and impact

As part of the general initiative, the Association has invited four municipalities to participate in an intensive programme of analysis and development, intended to identify opportunities and prerequisites for making school leadership an attractive option. Based on monitoring examples of best-practice school leadership, the aims include:

- Strengthening general insight into and knowledge about the given and self-created preconditions for exercising school leadership in Denmark.
- Specifying the elements of good school leadership, strengthening the identity of school leaders and developing a common language with regard to good school leadership.
- Giving concrete form to initiatives supporting general conditions of good school leadership as well as robust personal leadership.

The aim is to combine terms such as leadership space, leadership power and leadership impact into a practice-related view of the profession in terms of what makes school leadership attractive during a working day brimming with dilemmas. Basically, these terms may be defined as follows:

- **Leadership space:** The framework supporting the power vested in the leader's position as well as the actual impact of the individual leader. Within this space, the leader operates with whatever power and impact are available.
- **Leadership power:** The power vested in the position. Leadership power is an assigned power, vested in the leader by virtue of laws, ministerial orders, agreements on the principles of leadership, decentralisation etc.
- **Leadership impact:** The way in which the leader/leadership rises to the occasion and assumes responsibility, sets the course, inspires, handles conflicts etc.

The programme implemented in the four municipalities consists of workshops, focus group interviews, surveys, documentation and communication of results etc. Among other things we intend to:

- Chart the existing philosophy of control and the distribution of competences among relevant actors at different levels of responsibility in the four municipalities.
- Bring to light how leadership power is exercised by the leadership of the individual school, focusing on the prerequisites for making school leadership attractive.
- Analyse the general exercise of leadership, focusing on the prerequisites for making school leadership attractive.
- Describe initiatives supporting a good balance between leadership power and impact for the purpose of increasing awareness of what makes school leadership attractive.

The four municipalities have been chosen to ensure broad representation of the prerequisites for good school leadership, and the process is organised with a view to making the work as valid as possible for other municipalities, schools and school leaderships that do not participate in the project. Moreover, being relatively large institutions, the schools are prototypical, making school leadership a prime example of public leadership.

« To combine leadership space, leadership power and leadership impact »

Ongoing projects

Several other projects are in progress or in the process of being launched under the initiative 'The attractiveness of school leadership', such as the setting-up of a policy institute for profession-related

leadership, a survey of the strategic aspects of school leadership and investigating the fact that school leaders, too, are subject to leadership. A knowledge/experience database on school leadership has been established and new courses have been launched, focusing on the school leader's psychological working environment. Also, a series of articles is being published with school leaders writing about their own personal thoughts and concerns about the job of being a school leader, and a book and a film about (good) school leadership are on the way. Finally, the Association has created a new exclusive social forum, in the style of Facebook, where school leaders may exchange experience, chat and network.

The Association wishes to acquire factual knowledge about the elements of school leadership that make the position attractive. For that reason, our approach is research based. However, the idea is not that these initiatives should result in thick dissertations. On the contrary, the work must be disseminated and translated into practice-related recommendations that will lead to concrete change. ◀

The results will be communicated to members, media, the public, politicians and decision-makers as they appear. Moreover, experience and recommendations will be made available for discussion at courses, meetings, conferences and the Association's annual meeting in 2010.

Want to learn more?

Go to www.skolelederne.org

News in brief



Photo: Studio rUZ

School leadership part of the European Program

The European Commission adopted the recommendations of the OECD concerning the importance of school leadership in Europe. In the objectives in the Life Long Learning Program we can read:

Priority 2: School Leadership

As in many organisations where leadership is shared, leadership skills are required from all staff in positions of responsibility. Networks should provide a forum / platform for joint reflection and European co-operation in:

- *identifying and promoting innovation and best practice in effective school leadership*

(page 10)

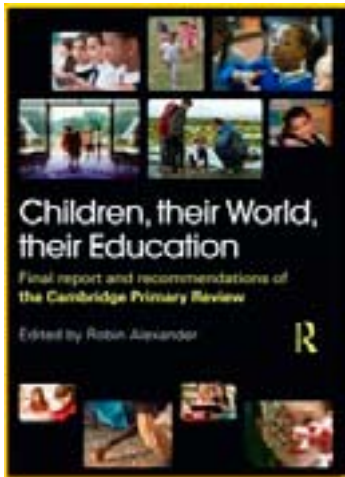
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The moment of truth approaches

A summary of the Cambridge Primary Reviews findings is being sent to every school and the (UK) Government has the full report. But will it leads to real improvements? Asks Warwik Mansell



It's the most exhaustive inquiry into primary education for more than 40 years. It took evidence from more than 4,000 research sources, 1,000 written submissions and 237 meetings involving teachers, parents, pupils and many others. It earned blanket media coverage and has a good news story to tell about teachers' work. But how much impact will the Cambridge Primary Review really have in schools?

As the review team embarked on a series of conferences around England to disseminate its findings, this question has been first on the lips of attendees. How it is answered may say a lot about the degree to which heads feel they have the freedom to innovate, and whether the review will have been successful in questioning and challenging what it sees as 20 years of seemingly ever-increasing centralised demands on primaries from government.

The review, which was three years in the planning and then spent a further three years building up its evidence base, has earned headlines for a variety of eye-catching findings in a succession of reports, including criticism of the effects of Sats and league tables, its questioning of the impact of setting in primaries, calls for a broad and balanced curriculum and a recommendation that formal learning be delayed until the age of six.

Funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, a charity, and directed by Professor Robin Alexander, a fellow of Wolfson College, Cambridge, who led 100 academics, writers and consultants, it is genuinely independent. Its final report, published in October, runs to a staggering 586 pages, but a smaller 42-page summary is being sent to every UK school. To its supporters – who appear to include many teachers, but not ministers, who dismissed the findings – the report is a tribute to the power of evidence-based investigation and a vote of confidence in professional expertise.

And, although the headlines have centered on conclusions that will have annoyed ministers, its central finding is remarkably upbeat. Schools, it finds, are basically doing a good job, despite the many challenges they face.

The report says: “What we must emphatically report is that primary schools appear to be under intense pressure but in good heart. They are highly valued by children and parents.”





It adds: “Indeed, as was noted by many witnesses, primary schools may be the one point of stability and positive values in a world where everything else is changing and uncertain. For many, schools are the centre that holds when things fall apart.”

Happy childhood

The report also questions the often-expressed notion that childhood is in ‘crisis’, remarking that children were the review’s most upbeat witnesses. It cites evidence from the Children’s Society’s recent Good Childhood inquiry, which found only 9 per cent of the adults interviewed, believed children were happier than during their own childhood.

Among the concerns raised by that survey were family breakdown, peer pressure, bullying, celebrity culture and computer technology. But the Cambridge Review said that research has found that children's views often diverged from their parents. Some people were certainly worried about issues such as local safety, global warming and poverty. However, the report adds: "It was noticeable that when schools had taken account of pupils' concerns and chosen to address them through curricular and non-curricular activities, children had a more positive outlook." The biggest problem facing childhood is inequality, says the review. Eliminating child poverty should be the Government's 'highest priority', and ministers should continue to focus on reducing underachievement.

« Primary schools may be the one point of stability and positive values in a world where everything else is changing and uncertain »

But much of the review challenges current ministerial thinking. It is concerned that a narrow learning diet is being encouraged which prioritises the 'basics' of the 3Rs ahead of other aspects of education in a style it sees as reminiscent of Victorian times. It therefore advocates replacing SATs and league tables with a system in which all aspects of the curriculum would be assessed by teachers, through an 'unobtrusive' structure of 'enhanced' teacher assessment.

It proposes introducing some specialist subject teachers alongside class teachers. These specialists and 'semi-specialists' might be deployed mainly in the last years of primary, or throughout a school to supplement the work of class teachers.



The review has also been widely misreported as recommending that pupils should start school at six. Instead, the review advocated that the Early Years Foundation Stage be extended to age six, with the rest of primary then covered by a single phase. There should be a debate as to when schooling itself begins, says the review's final report.

It also challenges the notion of a 'state theory of learning', or the Government's right to dictate not just what should be in a national curriculum, but how it should be taught.

Its 75 recommendations embrace every aspect of primary education, meaning, paradoxically perhaps, that their full implementation could only come with ministerial support.

Perhaps the biggest groundswell of backing from teachers at the two dissemination conferences in Cambridge and London attended by *Leadership Focus* concerned its overall approach. The review's idea of starting from first principles – laying down general goals for primary education and then seeking to base teaching and learning on the findings of the best research on how pupils move forward – was very well-received.

Daphne Babour is, an early years teacher at Colleges nursery and family centre in Cambridge, said: "They have listened to the professionals, to children, parents and local authorities. As someone who wants to deepen my understanding, I am a huge advocate of the Cambridge Primary Review."

'Not up to speed' - 'not read'

By contrast, the reaction from ministers was not appreciated. Vernon Coaker, the schools minister, described the review on the day the final report was published as "not up to speed" with initiatives being introduced by the Government, including the new report card documenting schools' performance, the review of special educational needs and the Government's own review of the curriculum, by Sir Jim Rose.

Robin told the Cambridge conference that ministers had clearly not read the report. The final report also adds that, during meetings with



officials around the time of the publication of the review's interim reports, "it became apparent that the full reports were rarely opened and even the briefings were unlikely to have been read".

For all that this approach from Government will annoy many teachers – or at least that seemed the overwhelming view at the conferences – it does go to the heart of the debate on the review's impact. Will it be ignored by the profession in favour of other approaches which are officially endorsed? Or will teachers try to embrace the Cambridge viewpoint?

The Rose review of the curriculum, the outcome of which will be introduced in law through the Children, Schools and Families bill currently going through Parliament, and which sets out a curriculum to be taught from 2011, will clearly be a highly influential counterpoint. ❖

It does differ from the Cambridge Review. While Jim sets out six compulsory 'areas of learning', and then seeks to promote some flexibility, Cambridge is more explicit about the aims of the curriculum, listing 12 of them, and says that 30 per cent of teaching time should be spent on a locally-determined 'community curriculum', with only the remaining 70 per cent allocated at national level.

While Jim seems to have had a good hearing in many schools, there has also been unhappiness that ministers did not allow him to consider the effects of testing, which Jim himself described as "the elephant in the room" in the curriculum debate. The Cambridge Review is also far broader: the curriculum is only part of one of its 10 themes.

The Cambridge team clearly takes the review's legacy very seriously. There are 14 regional dissemination conferences in all, culminating in a final session in Cambridge in February which will aim to come up with a suggested 'succinct list of priorities' for the next Government. This will be sent to all political parties in the run-up to the general election. The Conservatives may also be well-disposed to it. Professor Mary James, of Cambridge University, told the Cambridge conference that sources within the party were viewing it more favourably than the Rose review. However, Michael Gove, the party's shadow schools secretary, appears only cautiously enthusiastic, welcoming its emphasis on, for example, subject specialist teachers, but attacking its proposals on accountability as 'fuzzy'.

Other effects of the review may follow. Robin said that a handful of local authorities had wanted to talk to his team about exploring the 'community curriculum' idea. The review is also keen to work with one or two schools featured in the report about developing innovative approaches to teaching and learning. And there were signs at the conferences that the review might have other effects: a teacher educator from Homerton College, Cambridge, said the final report would go on her PGCE students' reading lists from next year, while Robin said the review was influencing. ◀

Selected recommendations of the Cambridge Review

- ▶ Adopt UN Convention on Rights of the Child
- ▶ Prioritise eliminating child poverty
- ▶ Carry out full review of special educational needs
- ▶ Extend foundation stage to age six
- ▶ Establish new curriculum, 70 per cent nationally developed
- ▶ Scrap primary national strategy
- ▶ Stop Government/quangos/local authorities telling teachers how to teach
- ▶ Replace Sats with teacher assessment across the curriculum
- ▶ Scrap league tables
- ▶ Reform teacher education
- ▶ Reform inspection
- ▶ Deploy specialist subject teachers;
- ▶ Replace top-down control with 'professional empowerment'
- ▶ Eliminate primary/secondary funding gap

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