

Annual Review 2017/2018



Welcome



I'm delighted that Best Practice Network as the DfE licence holder continues to support OLP in its important work.

Vision and values are at the heart of what we do. When the OLP Partnership Board reviewed these this year, the candidate care, responsiveness and commitment to making a difference to children from all backgrounds through leadership development shone through.

This year the partnership has renewed programmes, materials and back office systems – a huge undertaking. Feedback has been excellent. In the latest evaluations 98 per cent of participants across OLP said they would recommend the programmes. It's an impressive statistic that is testament to the quality of the facilitators, online tutors, content developers, and support staff across this partnership.

As the partnership grows, I feel it's important we keep relationships and commitment to learning and children at the heart of what we do by combining high quality programmes with local delivery, insight and flexibility.

I hope you find this annual review a helpful snapshot of the impact of our work together.

Liam Donnison, Managing Director, Best Practice Network



What an amazing year this has been for OLP.

Since the award of the new licences for the delivery of the revised National Professional Qualifications the brilliant team at Best Practice Network has been working phenomenally hard. The rewriting of materials has been challenging, rewarding and sometimes frustrating but feedback from the new cohorts has been extremely positive and applications for the new NPQs are steadily rising.

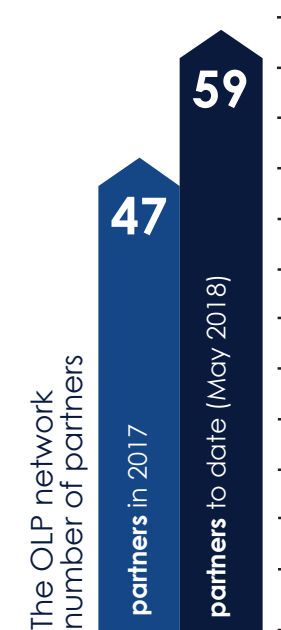
The quality of the new materials, combined with the expert delivery of our facilitators, will ensure that candidates get an outstanding grounding in the skills and knowledge they need to be great school leaders.

One of the most important things OLP does is help candidates think strategically and fully realise the difference they can make. That was encapsulated for me in the words of an NPQH candidate who said the course had given her "the courage and understanding that I can do it!" She is now a headteacher and looking forward to enriching the pupils and community that is her new school from September.

My sincere and grateful thanks to all involved with OLP. We should be proud of our achievements over the past year. I am sure next year will be even better!

Sally Bishop, Director, West Herts Teaching School, Aspire Academies Trust and Chair of the OLP Board

OLP in numbers



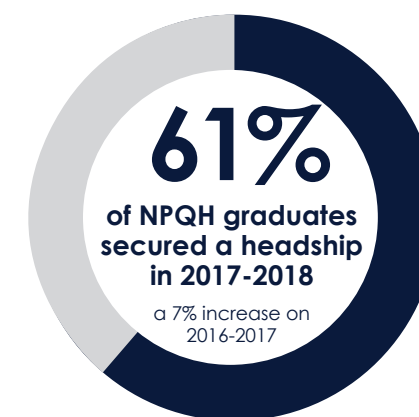
887 schools engaged with NPQs in 2017-2018 compared to **584** schools in 2016-2017



2434 schools have engaged with OLP for leadership training since 2012

Of the NPQ graduates whose schools achieved a good or outstanding Ofsted

68% felt that their training had a **positive** impact on that inspection



497 candidates passed their final assessments in the year to April 2018

Qualification	Percentage
NPQML	36%
NPQSL	39%
NPQH	25%



Leaders want to prioritise CPD investment despite budget and time pressures

England's school leaders are prioritising professional development and support of their staff - despite budget worries and high workloads.

Well over half (58 per cent) of the 122 school leaders surveyed in the first Outstanding Leaders Partnership school leadership challenges survey plan to maintain levels of CPD investment in their staff during 2018, with 22 per cent intending to increase it.

The survey also revealed that leaders were most likely to maintain their resilience through the support of family and friends, a love for their work, and the support of colleagues and teamwork.

Leaders also see their own professional development as important – 94 per cent said they would benefit from additional support and professional development. Almost half (48 per cent) hoped to maintain investment in their own CPD during 2018 and almost 31 per cent would increase it.

But there are pressures. Leaders say that financial challenges, staff recruitment, wellbeing and retention and pressures of accountability make up the top three of the current challenges they face, while leadership

responsibilities mean that for the majority of leaders their own professional development and reflection takes a back seat.

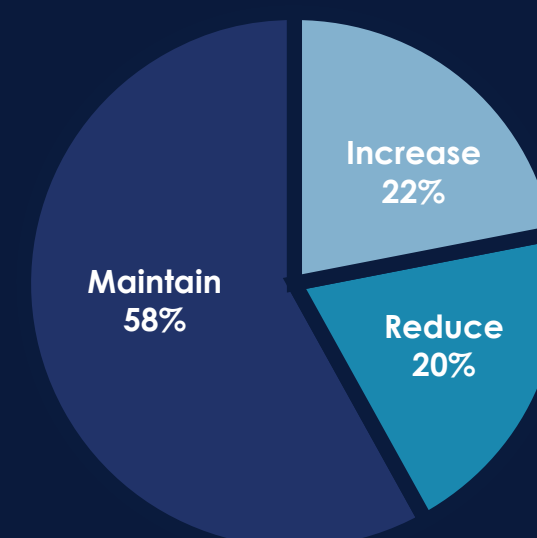
Asked to rank a list of leadership duties in order of the time they took up each day, SEND, behaviour, wellbeing and safeguarding was the area most commonly ranked top by respondents, chosen by just over 20 per cent. Strategy and planning (18 per cent) and managing staff (16 per cent) were the other most frequent top choices. At the other end of the scale, personal professional development and reflection was rated the activity they currently spent the least time on by 66 per cent of respondents.

Most leaders say their role is stressful. Asked to rate how workload affected their wellbeing on a scale between one (unaffected) and four (seriously affected), 37 per cent rated it at three, with 29 per cent at two, 17 per cent saying it was unaffected and 16 per cent declaring that their wellbeing was seriously affected by workload.

There was a clear role for professional development and support for new school leaders, according to those surveyed. The top three challenges leaders faced in the first months of headship were pressure of accountability, the need for new skills and knowledge and different relationships with colleagues. Additional workload, managing external relationships and lack of a peer group were other common choices.

The survey also revealed that leaders were most likely to maintain their resilience through the support of family and friends, a love for their work, and the support of colleagues and teamwork.

Do you intend to maintain, reduce or increase CPD spending during 2018?



The survey was supported by Best Practice Network and the University of Chester. Of the 122 respondents, 80 per cent were headteachers with heads of school, principals, executive heads and MAT CEOs making up the remainder. Almost 72 per cent of respondents were primary leaders, with 44 per cent leading local authority schools and 39 per cent part of an MAT. Respondents were from across the nine government regions of England, with the majority in the north west and London and the south east.

Survey participants entered a draw to win a package of professional development. The winning school was The Green School Trust in Isleworth.



Case studies



NPQH

George McWilliams is assistant headteacher at Ullswater Community College in Cumbria. His headteacher's encouragement and strong testimonials from OLP graduates persuaded him to enrol on NPQH. The course transformed him as a leader and teacher, he says. "I'd been very focused on 'taking care of the knitting' but the programme forced me to become a much more strategic leader," he says. George is now applying for headship posts. "I wouldn't have been in this position if I hadn't done the programme," he adds. "NPQH has a breadth and depth that gives you the knowledge and understanding of all the key areas of headship."



NPQSL

Sarah Gower began NPQSL as an assistant headteacher at The Observatory special school in Merseyside - and completed it as acting deputy head. The unexpected promotion came at a fortuitous time for Sarah as she could call on the support of the programme's facilitators. "There wasn't time to get that support in school but the facilitators gave me really good advice," she says. Programme highlights for Sarah included face-to-face days and the school-based project in which she developed an assessment without levels system with her headteacher which is now used across the school. Sarah says NPQSL built her confidence and she is applying for the permanent deputy position.



NPQEL

Jo Robertson, head of Brushwood Junior School in Buckinghamshire, is in OLP's first NPQEL cohort. She sees the programme as an important part of preparing for future leadership roles. "My governors want me to focus on my professional development so that we are prepared for a potentially very different landscape in five years' time," she says. Jo has found the Canvas online learning system a rich information resource and she has enjoyed the first programme residential. "I've been really impressed with NPQEL," she adds. "The amount of support from the facilitators has been phenomenal. I do feel that it's going to be really beneficial."



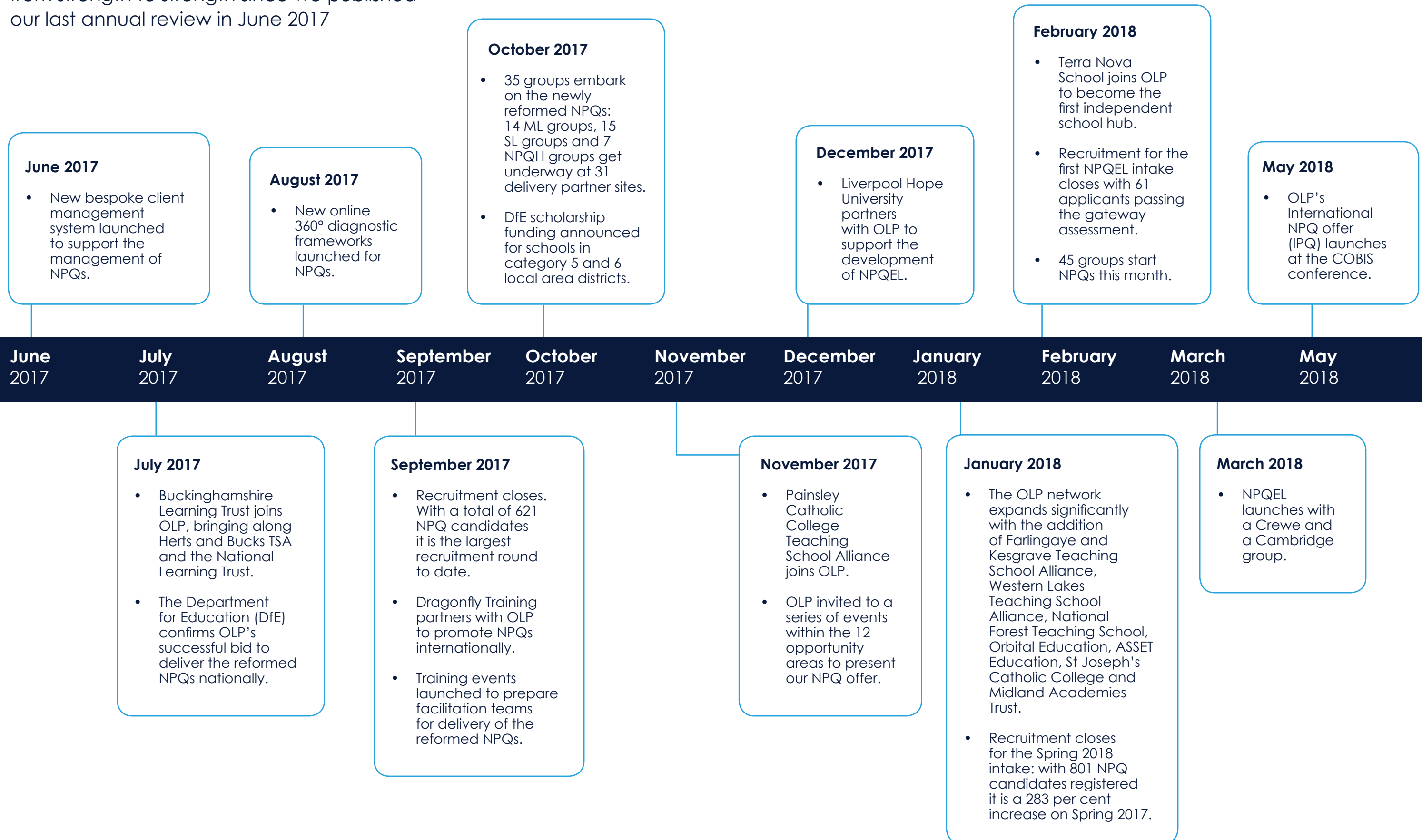
NPQML

Aaron Piggott is head of year 10 at University Technical College, Norfolk. He may be in the early stages of NPQML but he says the programme is already helping him to reflect on his leadership style. "The core tasks are really useful, especially the ones on interpreting data and leadership styles," he says. "It's already got me thinking about changing my approach to leadership and management today, and my career ambitions in the longer term." Aaron praises NPQML's online forums, which he says are a helpful way to ask tutors for advice and run his thinking past course colleagues, and he's enjoyed meeting facilitators and fellow candidates at face-to-face days.



Milestones 2017-2018

Outstanding Leaders Partnership has gone from strength to strength since we published our last annual review in June 2017



The qualifications

OLP's suite of National Professional Qualifications are designed by serving school leaders and subject matter experts and form a coherent learning pathway. Each programme features a mix of online courses, face-to-face events and reflective, school-based practice to create a firm foundation of leadership skills, knowledge and understanding.

National Professional Qualification for Middle Leadership

NPQML gives aspiring and current middle leaders - such as key stage, curriculum, pastoral or department leaders - professional development and recognition. The programme stimulates and challenges thinking, builds knowledge, skills and expertise, and promotes change and improvement in leadership behaviours, capability and capacity. Each module features content tailored to the candidate's school context. NPQML offers 40 credits towards an MA in Educational Leadership with the University of Chester.

National Professional Qualification for Senior Leadership

NPQSL provides recognition of leadership development and professional achievement for current and aspiring senior leaders with cross-school responsibilities, such as experienced middle leaders, deputy headteachers, assistant headteachers, or teaching school directors. NPQSL offers 60 credits towards an MA in Educational Leadership with the University of Chester.

National Professional Qualification for Headship

NPQH is for current and aspiring headteachers or heads of school. It develops key headship skills and meets the highest standards for leadership development anywhere in the world. Trainees reflect on their own leadership through discussion with peers and put theory into practice with school-based projects. NPQH also offers 100 credits towards an MA in Educational Leadership with the University of Chester.

National Professional Qualification for Executive Leadership

NPQEL is for those aspiring to, or serving in, leadership roles across more than one school, including headteachers, executive headteachers, chief operating officers and directors of school improvement. Candidates form peer leadership challenge groups and carry out a joint improvement project and study strategic planning, organisation change and business development. The programme features perspectives and approaches from outside the education system from guest speakers and peer mentors.

Don't miss out on scholarship funding. £10 million has been set aside by the Department for Education for candidates undertaking NPQs. To find out if you're eligible and to access the funding while this opportunity still exists, visit outstandingleaders.org.

OLP in the news

Outstanding Leaders Partnership features regularly in the education press, and the past year has been no exception. **Here's a small selection of that coverage.**

School Leadership Today

Supplements

We Are The New Providers!

Leadership Training is Becoming A School Preserve

School led providers have a stronger than ever presence in the list of organisations appointed to deliver the new-look suite of National Professional Qualifications (NPQs). Nick Parry, who is part of the team that runs one of the largest shares his insights into

The Department for Education's announcement in July of which organisations would be delivering the refreshed suite of national professional qualifications (NPQs) from this academic year gave a very clear indication that schools now play a nationally important role in developing a new generation of leaders.

Out of 40 organisations appointed to develop and deliver the NPQs around the country two of the biggest were school led. Outstanding Leaders Partnership (OLP), which I'm part of, was one.

Headteacher Update

HEADTEACHER UPDATE

The only magazine for all UK primary school headteachers

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Leading a primary multi-academy trust

Written by: Liam Donison | Published: 10 May 2018

The role of executive headteacher is a relatively new one and as such we are still discovering the secrets to successful MAT leadership. Kevin Simpson tells Liam Donison how he and his team forged a successful MAT

We've seen a huge expansion in the number of multi-academy trusts (MATs) in recent years, with a resulting leap in the numbers of MAT executive leaders.

These leaders are often heads and executive heads who become heads of highly complex organisations of schools, requiring a very different set of leadership skills.

As national schools commissioner Sir David Carter has said, on-going development of strong MAT leaders through high-quality training and support is vital if we are to develop and further define the executive leader role and the credentials needed to be successful in it.

To help these leaders in these pressurised and highly accountable roles the National Professional Qualification for Executive Leadership (NPQEL) has been launched. The first intake of MAT leaders are now taking part in the programme around the country, including one developed and delivered by Outstanding Leaders Partnership.

Kevin Simpson is CEO of Aspire Educational Trust, a MAT formed in Macclesfield, Cheshire, in December 2013 which now consists of six primary schools. Mr Simpson has contributed his MAT leadership perspectives to the programme and he describes here his approach to leadership and how he and his colleagues built their MAT.

Root your vision in real values

"My core value has always been that all children, regardless of background, can achieve academic success," Mr Simpson explained. "Part of the journey was to prove this belief to all stakeholders and to make sure they could buy into the core value. This was achieved by quickly establishing a single vision which was made a reality by senior leaders and staff working seamlessly together to ensure all children achieved at least age-related expectations."

Make that vision a reality

"The vision was made real by holding six-weekly pupil progress meetings for all children. During these meetings, which consisted of myself as headteacher and the class teacher, decisions were made about where staff were going to be deployed to meet the needs of all children.

"We underpinned every decision with scrupulous attention to the wealth of robust research evidence and the use of effective, evidenced interventions to ensure the individual needs of the children were successfully addressed.

"We realised that it is important to look at the bigger picture; the view should always be on working from what the children can do rather than simply delivering a predetermined curriculum. Put simply, we worked hard to ensure we used the right intervention, for the right child, at the right time. All interventions were rigorously monitored and evaluated, meaning that, over time, we developed a comprehensive understanding of what works, for whom, when and under what conditions. In simple terms, we developed our own evidence-base."

Replicate success across the trust

Leadership

Let's retain our leaders by co-operating

Region-wide schools partnerships are the key to tackling the leadership recruitment challenge, says Tarun Kapur

If we're to ensure that enough people become heads and senior leaders and can pursue sustainable, enjoyable careers, then it's imperative that we give them the training and support they need. The challenge is acute. England may face a shortage of between 14,000 and 19,000 school leaders by 2022, which will affect almost a quarter of all schools. We know that we need to tackle this, but we can't if we continue gathering together in small clusters. United we stand, divided we fall.

I accept there are many excellent teaching school alliances operating alone that provide excellent leadership development programmes, but this approach has its drawbacks. Small scale can mean costly, especially in these straitened times. It takes time to organise open days, delivery sessions and workshops, and to process the resulting paperwork.

Operating at a small scale makes it harder to gather the intelligence you need to understand what local pressure points and needs there are, and can create coverage gaps. In some areas of the country there's lots of competition between smaller providers and plenty of options for prospective candidates. In others, things are distinctly patchy.

Our response should be to organise and join partnerships that allow us to deliver leadership development programmes at scale – and an approach we're taking in the north west could show the way. I lead an MAT of eight primary and secondary schools that's part of the Outstanding Leaders Partnership – a large collaboration between teaching school alliances, trusts and individual schools first established five years ago that's now working with almost a quarter of all schools in the region.

The partnership comprises almost 30 groups – or hubs – of schools with experienced leaders who are delivering the NPQH, NPQSL and NPQML leadership programmes. We're unusual in that we've partnered with a specialist training provider, Best Practice Network, which looks after the practicalities of organising the programmes' delivery, and running the online element and quality assurance for our courses.

At the centre of it all is a single strategic board that partly comprises senior school leaders from across the partnership. The headteachers leading the strategy and running the programmes have direct knowledge of what's involved in training up new

We're above the national average in terms of NPQH graduates securing headships within 18 months at 60%, and more than half of the candidates completing our NPQML and NPQSL qualifications have secured promotions. It also makes financial sense – we've been able to plough back a surplus of £36,000 into creating scholarships to support candidates taking our qualifications.

With national strategies now a thing of the past, it's up to us as school leaders to work together in a spirit of co-operation and common purpose if we're to ensure that every school is well-led by leaders who possess the skills they need, the support necessary to have sustainable careers – and a desire to stay in the profession.

Tarun Kapur CBE is Chief Executive and Academy Principal at The Dean Trust

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Leadership: Three questions for new headteachers

Written by: Liam Donison | Published: 03 October 2017

What can you expect as you step-up to headship? Liam Donison speaks to executive principal Peter Rubery, who offers three key questions to help you reflect on the challenges ahead

What drives you to want to be a headteacher? And what approach will you take when you're in post? These are fundamental questions for anyone who is contemplating taking on what is a challenging but incredibly rewarding role.

Thinking about your motivation for headship, your leadership style, your purpose is vital for anyone contemplating headship, or indeed any leadership role in schools. Finding the space to reflect on these key questions can be tricky, but it is time well spent, according to Peter Rubery, executive principal and CEO at the Fallbroom multi-academy trust in Cheshire.

"I think it's particularly important today, in a time of continuous and fast-paced change that would-be heads are really clear in their thinking about why they want the role and what sort of headteacher they want to be," he explained.

Mr Rubery has captured his thinking in a contribution to the National Professional Qualification for Headship programme.

Image: MA Education

Comment on this article



Insights from the professionals

The successful design and development of the four NPQs by OLP has only been possible through the contributions of dozens of serving school leaders.

They have helped to design and facilitate the programmes, as well as provide us with dozens of accounts of practice, thinkpieces and case studies which together make up one of the most substantial bodies of current school leadership thinking and practice available today.

“If something is not effective then don’t be afraid to change it”

Our hope was to produce a range of materials that would complement the course and give our candidates a rich selection of vital insights into challenges faced by all leaders at various phases of their careers. And the feedback shows that these contributions are really valued by participants.

Here we share a selection of advice offered by contributors. Our thanks go to everyone who has helped.

“I feel it is important to lead by example, and listen to the views of others and not be afraid to hold my hands up and admit if I make a mistake. This in turn has helped me to earn the respect of my colleagues and a reputation for professional integrity. I would advise anyone

contemplating going for an internal promotion to prioritise building relationships. Credibility in your new role will ensure that the team around you will want to achieve and do well and build a sense of loyalty and determination to succeed even during the difficult times.”

Samantha Brennand, Vice Principal, Leighton Academy, Crewe, describes how she maintained credibility on the journey from NQT to deputy head in the same setting for NPQML

“Once you have established what works and the standards you expect from both staff and students everyone needs to follow through on delivery. Monitoring and support are key. We have a saying, ‘to ignore is to condone’, so once the standards have been set they become the way in which things are done by everybody. If that’s not the case with some of your colleagues then you must challenge and support them to ensure that they do.”

Ann-Marie Connor, deputy principal/director of teaching school at All Hallows Catholic College, Macclesfield, offers advice to NPQSL candidates

“In every sector it’s true that we don’t talk to our frontline people enough. For me the four most amazing words are ‘what do you think?’ Asking the teachers is the smartest thing we can do because it will generate a lot of ideas from the people who are actually doing the job, rather than me who has been out of the classroom for nine years.”

Drew Povey, executive headteacher of Harrop Fold School, Greater Manchester, on promoting retention and professional development for NPQH

“Never lose sight of what is important and evaluate every action against the impact on learning”

“As headteachers we are at times ‘jack of all trades’ and the day-to-day management can be difficult to juggle alongside the strategic leadership role. My advice would be to never lose sight of what is important and evaluate every action against the impact on learning.”

Kylie Spark, headteacher of Tyntesfield Primary School, Cheshire on how leaders secure excellent outcomes for pupil learning and wellbeing for NPQH

“A culture where people want to learn from each other is a real prerequisite. If you are paying just lip service to that then it is possible that some school-to-school support will be a waste of time. For executive leaders going into a trust they will need to make a big investment in their energy and time.”

Tim Coulson, chief executive of Samuel Ward Academy Trust (SWAT) in eastern England on the role of school-to-school support in school improvement for NPQEL



About us

Outstanding Leaders Partnership (OLP) is a national partnership of schools, teaching school alliances and multi-academy trusts, managed and supported by Best Practice Network.

OLP was created in 2012 by a small north west alliance of like-minded schools committed to improving leadership provision. Since then it has grown into one of the country's largest school-led professional development organisations, consisting of 59 teaching school alliances and MATs stretching from Manchester to Exeter in the south west.

OLP is accredited by the Department for Education to provide the National Professional Qualifications (NPQs) nationally.

OLP vision and values

The Outstanding Leaders Partnership is a school-led organisation committed to improving outcomes for all learners, through high quality leadership development. The partnership aims to:

- provide all schools with access to outstanding leadership development
- deliver qualifications designed by school leaders for school leaders
- meet the needs of the school-led system
- combine secure national quality assurance with local flexibility and delivery

Join us

Our partnership model enables you to deliver gold standard, accredited qualifications locally.

We provide everything from the training and materials for the face-to-face days to all the online learning systems and end-to-end support, from registration through to assessment. The qualifications have been developed alongside the DfE criteria, with significant school leader and partner involvement. Your own staff can train to deliver the qualifications and we work with you on continuous quality improvement to make sure your local programmes are of the highest standard. There is also the option to deliver other programmes in early years, support staff, teaching and learning, and SEN.

We welcome approaches from teaching school alliances, partnerships and trusts that want to take a collaborative, school-led approach to professional development while supporting local schools and outcomes for children.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Get in touch

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A tribute to Tony Hardiker

Tony Hardiker, who passed away suddenly on 2 May 2018, will be greatly missed by his OLP and Best Practice Network colleagues, as well as the many

hundreds of NPQ candidates he worked with over the years.

His sense of humour, ability to see things through and get things done all contributed to the successful design, development and delivery of the NPQ programmes. Tony played a pivotal role too in OLP as lead facilitator and online tutor for NPQML candidates.

Before dedicating himself to the professional development of school leaders Tony enjoyed a long and highly successful career as headteacher of Tarleton High School in Lancashire.

A friend and fellow professional whose humour, storytelling and ability to create and support fantastic learning programmes will be sorely missed

NPQML student Olivia Brougham-Robinson described Tony as an 'inspiration' who helped her secure a middle leadership post. "Tony had

supported me through my NPQML since January but through his kindness and support I feel like I'd known him much longer" she said.

Yvonne Gandy, director of the NPQ programmes for OLP, added: "Tony always went the extra mile to get the best for leaders and young people in our schools. He was a friend and fellow professional whose humour, storytelling and ability to create and support fantastic learning programmes for leaders will be missed by the profession and by everyone who worked and learned from him."



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