

Learning to Lead: an evaluation

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with

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¹ Community Interest Companies (CICs) are limited companies that exist to provide benefits to a community, or a specific section of a community. The CIC has the flexibility of the familiar company form, and access to a range of financing options, so may be appropriate for those working for a social purpose. Its key features include an asset lock and a community interest statement.

Foreword

This document presents the findings of the evaluation study of the Learning to Lead initiative. The evaluation study was carried out by a team from the Leadership for Learning group at the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education.

This document portrays the Learning to Lead model as it was developed at The Blue School in Wells Somerset and reports on the implementation and development of the Learning to Lead programme in the 'pilot schools' between 2008 and 2010.

This report echoes and amplifies the document *Learning to Lead: the story so far* which draws on the evaluation study documented here (Frost and Stenton, 2010). That document is more condensed and illustrated with photographs and graphics. It is designed for wider public consumption and as a guide to practice.

This document provides a more comprehensive and detailed account. It is aimed at policy makers, headteachers and others who may be interested in investing in student leadership. The document will also be of interest to scholars and researchers who may wish to know more about Learning to Lead and the evaluation approach.

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Section 1: Introduction

Learning to Lead breaks new ground in the field of student participation and reflects the growing conviction amongst practitioners, policy makers and researchers that young people are entitled not only to be heard, but to be active partners in the process of improving their schools. The distinctive contribution of Learning to Lead is the transformation from ‘voice’ to ‘agency’.

In policy documents such as *Working Together: Listening to the Voices of Children and Young People* (DCSF, 2008) the emphasis is placed on ‘listening’. This is an essential but insufficient element in the teacher-student relationship. The report of the same year commissioned by the GTC adds an important element - ‘influence’ and ‘participation’. The ‘Influence and Participation of Young People in their Learning’ project identified a range of innovative practices which enable young people to become partners in the learning enterprise (MacBeath *et al.*, 2008). It also put forward a number of key principles for practice which included this one:

Everyone, including pupils, is encouraged to exercise leadership as appropriate to task and context with opportunities for leadership to be a shared activity.

This principle is reflected very strongly in the Learning to Lead programme.

An overview of the Learning to Lead approach

The Learning to Lead initiative began in The Blue School in Wells, Somerset as a way of enhancing student engagement, building on and extending the work of the school council to create something that involved many more students. School councils are now common in schools in the UK (www.schoolcouncils.org); they are representative bodies that provide a forum for students to discuss issues of concern and to communicate their views to the senior leadership of the school. Research indicates that these bodies play an important part in supporting student voice, but participation can sometimes be quite limited and there is often a lack of clarity about their purpose and scope (Whitty and Wisby, 2007). The initiative at The Blue School involved a radical transformation in which the school council gave birth to student project teams. The teams would enable students to become activists and to exercise leadership in tackling problems and concerns in practical and transformative ways. The model has now been developed and adopted by 40 schools, including secondary, primary and special schools, in various parts of England.

The Learning to Lead model rests on the designation of a member of staff as the Community Link Teacher (CLT), a role that involves coordination and the development of the programme in the school. They also tend to take responsibility for training the student teams and maintaining support for them as they develop their own sense of direction. CLTs are provided with training to familiarise themselves with the structures, processes and materials by the initiators of the programme. The programme in school normally begins with a whole-school, online survey of views about the school and community. The data from this are discussed by all students in a 'This is Our School' planning session usually organised within tutor groups. The outcome of the survey and workshop discussions is the identification of a set of priorities for change and improvement which are then publicised throughout the school. Students of all ages are invited to join project teams focused on the priorities. Examples of teams currently in operation include: 'The 'Healthy Eating Team', 'The Buddying Team', 'The Transport Team' and 'The Africa Link Team'.

Once formed, each team is provided with a training session which is values driven and focuses on team members as individuals. The training aims to launch the teams as self-managing groups in which leadership is shared and reliance on the Community Link Teacher diminishes over time. These training sessions are critical; the CLTs have a significant challenge in that their aim is to enable the team to take control within a very short time span. The training is necessarily intense and very teacher led, but the desired outcome is for the future activity to be student-led.

Team meetings are held at lunchtimes, after school and, in some cases, during scheduled lesson time. The students draw on the tools provided as part of their training to structure their team meetings which might feature the design of a project action plan or a project review. Agendas are drawn up and minutes recorded, and the meetings are led by student facilitators. The task of facilitating the discussion is not tied to particular individuals but is a shared responsibility with the leadership of the meeting often taken up by the younger students within the team. The decisions taken lead to practical action of all kinds including such things as painting murals on the walls of the sports changing rooms, distributing recycling bins around the school, tending a vegetable patch, raising funds to support the work of other teams or producing a podcast to tell the rest of the school what is happening within the LtoL teams. These activities are entirely led by the students themselves with a teacher coordinator – the 'Community Link Teacher' – in the background ready to help if called upon.

Built into the Learning to Lead model are arrangements for management and governance underpinned by the concept of 'holarchy'. This refers to the interdependence of parts of a system wherein those parts have their own identity, purpose and momentum. Individuals are encouraged to see themselves as part of a team; teams are seen as part of the school, and the school is seen as part of the wider

community. The teams all come together under the aegis of the School Community Council which also includes a team made up of elected representatives of student year groups. All teams carry equal weight in discussions and decision making. The LtoL governance model also includes a 'Management Support Team' which meets to address problems that require decisions or action by members of the school staff. There is also a 'Governance Support Team' which includes the Headteacher, a member of the Governing Body and a number of student representatives. This connects the work of the teams with the School Development Plan. Each term the School Community Council organises a School Forum in which all the teams share their work and discuss issues arising.

The ladder of participation

Learning to Lead takes 'participation' to a new level. There are numerous versions of Roger Hart's eight rung 'ladder of participation' (Hart, 1992, 1997). It is essentially a theoretical model which can help us to analyse how schools can, on the one hand, silence and marginalise students, perhaps making token gestures towards voice while remaining firmly in control, or, on the other hand, take the more risky path of encouraging the latent creativity and agency of children. The seventh rung in Hart's ladder is 'young people lead and initiative action' while the top rung of the ladder is 'young people and adults share decision-making'. It is significant that, in other versions of the model (for example, Per Schultz Jorgensen, 2003), these seventh and eighth rungs are reversed, but for Hart the argument was that in the most mature of organisations there is a genuine sharing of power and collaboration as to significant decision-making.

As a sociologist Hart provided a useful conceptual tool but not an exemplification of how that theory plays out within hierarchies of states and accountability. The Learning to Lead programme aspires to the seventh and eighth rungs of the ladder. It was founded on the belief that students have an incipient capacity for leadership, that they can make a difference to their schools and communities while at the same time contributing to their own personal growth. Evidence from the Learning to Lead project justifies the belief that schools flourish as learning communities when young people accept the invitation to participate and schools discover the 'the treasure within' (Delors, 1996).

Trust, it is said, takes a long time to build and only a moment to destroy. It was a key to the success of the LtoL programme that the fragility of trust was recognised and was seen to grow through collaborative activity which harnesses the ideas, energy and enthusiasm of students and school staff, with a quality of team work that promotes reciprocal trust.

Leadership is not just about being the person in control. You learn to listen and work as a team. You learn to trust each other.

(Student, School I)

Agency, teamwork and trust are key internal principles within the Learning to Lead approach. In LtoL these principles are carried forwards as students reach beyond the confines of the classroom and school to parents and the wider community.

Section 2: Evaluation methodology

In 2008 the Learning to Lead programme was offered to 13 'pilot' schools, most of them secondary but including one special school and one middle school. The Leadership for Learning group at the Faculty of Education was asked to conduct an evaluation of the programme in these schools. The purpose of the evaluation was to:

- illuminate the model that had developed at The Blue School
- examine the implementation of the programme in the pilot schools
- identify and assess the benefits and impacts of the programme
- identify and assess challenges to the widespread development of the approach

The design of the study is influenced by the concept of 'illuminative evaluation' which features the examination of a programme within its milieu (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972). This tradition has evolved to embrace the goal of clarification and that of making visible to outsiders practices that have themselves evolved within a specific context. Clarifying the Learning to Lead model through observation and interview was considered essential in order to provide a firm basis for exploring the transfer of the model to new contexts. This corresponds to the concept of 'theory based evaluation' (Birckmayer and Weiss, 2000) which requires that a study of a programme in action can only be understood with reference to the theory or assumptions about the purpose and aims of the programme. In the case of Learning to Lead, this theory was embedded in the practice as it had developed at The Blue School. The study therefore sought to make visible the model as it could be discerned in practice rather than being dependent on what its advocates and sponsors claimed about it. Once the model and its antecedents had been clarified, the evaluation concentrated on the application of the model in the 13 pilot schools where it had been adopted in 2008.

Illuminating the Learning to Lead model

Members of the research team visited The Blue School and a small number of neighbouring schools where the model has been adopted. Data were collected through observations of a number of key activities. One such was a meeting of the Forum of The Blue School Council (BSC), an event involving 250 students and four adults with the proceedings being entirely led by the students. Another significant event observed was an annual review meeting for one of the student project teams involving nine students with the Community Link Teacher being in the background. A project team meeting led by a student facilitator was also observed.

Interviews were undertaken with approximately 20 students who were actively involved in Learning to Lead activities as well as with the Headteacher and two

Community Link Teachers (CLTs). At least 10 other teachers, four parents and three members of the local Community were interviewed.

Application of the LtoL model in the pilot schools

In order to monitor the LtoL programme as it was implemented and developed in the pilot schools the research team asked Community Link Teachers in each school to respond to regular email surveys. Each one consisted of only a small number of questions designed to gather quite basic information but also some clues as to the issues to be explored through subsequent school visits. These emailed responses were collated and a summary of experiences and issues were fed back to the CLTs and responses to this summary were sought.

Nine months after the beginning of the adoption of the LtoL programme, members of the research team visited most of the schools to carry out a series of interviews and observations. These were informed by the email surveys and focused on:

- the nature of the context in which the programme had been seeded
- the extent of implementation
- the depth of penetration of the LtoL approach
- the particular ways that the programme was operating
- ways in which the programme had been adapted
- perceptions of the value / benefit / impact of the programme
- challenges for the development of the programme

The illuminative dimension was a continuous thread prompting the research team to try to capture rich descriptions of practice and to provide opportunities for students, teachers and other stakeholders to express their views and display their activities and achievements.

A few months later most schools were visited again or received follow up telephone calls from the research team in order to update the account and discover the extent and nature of the development over time.

The evaluation has not sought to measure the programme's effects in quantifiable terms. Such a goal would be inappropriate given the time scale of the intervention and the evaluation. Rather the study sought to illuminate the nature of the LtoL programme, indicate its potential and inform its development.

The most important purpose of programme evaluation is not to prove but to improve.

(Stufflebeam, 1983)

Section 3: Genesis and evolution of the initiative

Learning to Lead began in 2002 as a strategy for enhancing student participation and engagement in one secondary school - The Blue School in Wells, Somerset. It evolved over a number of years into the model that has been observed in action in 13 'pilot schools' in 2008-09. The initiative was welcomed and encouraged by the Headteacher, Steve Jackson and its development was led by a married couple, Neil and Susan Piers-Mantell. Neil, a teacher of Science at the school, and Susan had two children at the school and wanted to help to create an environment where students are considered to be part of the crew rather than passengers (Watkins, 2005).

The work began as a development of the school council which continues to be referred to as the 'Blue School Council' (BSC). The Head was open to exploring new ways for this body to operate and was open to proposals for activities that would involve students genuinely taking ownership and making things happen themselves. As cross-curricular environment co-ordinator, Neil was interested in 'green issues' and was also keen to generate wider involvement in the work of the school council. He arranged a whole school survey entitled 'Turning the Blue, Green' which featured a questionnaire that was distributed to over 1,000 people, both students and staff. Subsequently students 'self-elected' to the first teams which all had a practical, environmental focus. The teams worked well, but capacity to support more teams was limited. A small steering group of older students was formed. The question of the role of teachers in the process, and the extent to which it was necessary for them to be involved in all activities, was discussed. What emerged from this was the idea of training students to run the teams themselves. Susan designed a training process which, combined with a clear set of expectations and parameters, would enable students to take a greater lead. Nevertheless, the role of what became known as 'the community link teacher' in co-ordinating and supporting the teams remains a very important and demanding one.

Over time the training and structures have been progressively refined and The Blue School Council (BSC) has widened its reach to greater numbers of both students and staff. A diplomatic, careful approach has enabled other members of staff to become involved with an emphasis on staff and students working together respectfully, willing to compromise and learn from mistakes. The BSC is now embedded in the school structures and Year 7 tutors are all involved in a collapsed timetable day that includes looking at the issues and actions arising from the annual Year 7 survey. Year representatives are elected to represent and communicate with other students. They form a team alongside the other teams as part of the holarchic structure.

A Community Interest Company (CIC) (see page i) was formed in 2007 in order to disseminate the model; its directors include students. One of these students is taking a lead on the Information Technology side both in relation to the online survey now being used by other schools and the new Blue School Council website. Learning to Lead CIC continues to support the school via training and review days for students, but the headteacher is confident that they can deliver these themselves in the future.

By the autumn of 2008, there were 28 teams in The Blue School and over 250 students involved. The headteacher likens this to finding an elegant solution that brings unanticipated benefits, over and above the brief.

While in the beginning Learning to Lead may have been seen as a ‘bolt on’ to existing practice it now impacts on the whole school. This is manifested in terms of the culture of respect, but also via structures that facilitate communication between students, staff and the senior management team.

The ‘Blue School Council’ continues to develop and, at the time of this report, has 260 students involved in over 30 teams. It has its own website and there are plans to set up a radio station. Students are working with the Parent Teacher Association to raise funds for a dedicated office and meeting space. Teams that enrich the school in different ways have been formed, for example the ‘Be Human Team’ offers break dancing training. Teams focussing on curriculum matters are also developing.

Student teams at The Blue School January 2010	
Buddying Team	Shelter Team
Quiet Team	Toilet Team
Transport Team	Africa Link Team
Fitness Cuisine Team	Beautiful School Team
Dyslexia Support Team	Fundraising Team
Waste and Recycling Team	Badger and Spoon Team (wildlife)
Fair Trade Team	Year Reps Team
Aquarium Team	Minibeasts and Reptiles Team
Garden and Growing Team	Energy Team
Science Support Team	Office Support Team
Wild Bird Team	Blue Bow Fundraisers
New Office Team	Children of Chernobyl Team
New Kitchen Garden	Radio Team
Circus Skills Team	Stationery Team

Strategy, sustainability and a sense of agency

The sustainability of the programme in The Blue School is owed to a very deliberate and strategic approach to supporting student leadership. It is recognised that it takes time to win trust and to foster self-belief and that it is not an overnight

accomplishment to embed a sense of agency in students used to being at the receiving end of others' decisions. The rationale for LtoL in The Blue School was that when schools take on the characteristics of communities, they enable all community members to exercise agency, to develop the capacity to act purposefully and to influence their own environment. Communities by definition are concerned with the wellbeing of their members and, when they create opportunities for the enhancement of human agency, they promote wellbeing and contribute significantly to the goals of the 'Every Child Matters' agenda (DCSF, 2007).

I've seen initiatives come and go and I must say none have made such a sustained change for the good in the school as this one. It has had a profound effect.

(Steve Jackson, Headteacher, The Blue School)

Teachers and parents also observed significant changes amongst students, or their own children, often young people with low self-esteem who had become disaffected from school. One student said:

I wouldn't be at school without the school council. I would have left half way though year 8 if I'm honest, either through being expelled or leaving voluntarily. The school council was the one thing I didn't want to leave behind. (Its) the feeling of involvement and community. You know that there are people there who will always accept you for what you are. People will always be nice to you, because that's what the training is all about – we work with respect.

Teachers gave examples of young people beginning to take part in discussions, facilitate meetings, showing astonishing lobbying and negotiation skills and, through the Community Council, finding other meaningful roles and tasks. In one case this had led to a student designing an interactive new school website which met with Local Authority security requirements while at the same time providing IT training to adults in his spare time. A forty-year-old client spoke of this student's training as being superior to that she had received from a local IT company.

Teachers also spoke of the BSC providing opportunities for highly able students to experience challenges and find fulfilment in combining their studies with extra curricular activities. They valued the opportunity to develop exceptional confidence from exercising demanding leadership and public speaking roles. Evidence of this was seen in one student who was an outstanding chairperson throughout the School Forum (a termly meeting of over 200 BSC students) and another who facilitated a team meeting of a dozen students in a way that was quiet, engaging, authoritative, relaxed, organised and sensitive.

Learning by mistakes

Building confidence comes through the emphasis placed on learning from mistakes and avoiding the language of 'failure'. Supportive, trusting relationships have also played an important part as well as students having the opportunity to take on responsibility and to discover and develop their abilities. A head of year commented that students can '*all be leaders but in a different element of the task*'. There is a great deal of emphasis on feeling valued and a number of teachers commented on how children's self-worth has been boosted. The students' ideas and work are also of a quality that deserve and receive recognition and praise from others such as governors and local charities. For example the BSC's new strap line 'Change doesn't happen on its own' was launched at the School Forum arising from a background of painstaking consultations with other students (including over 200 emails), management of disagreements and a ringing endorsement from governors who considered it to be 'bordering on genius'. A video made by the BSC of their work captures the young people's sense of fun, freedom, ownership and order that is a characteristic of their team meetings, reviews and forum. The scale of their work is striking.

The sense of belonging that the school council gives to some students has had a powerful effect on their overall attitude to school. Students talked about the relaxed atmosphere and fun - '*It's a good laugh*' - and at the same time they recognise the importance of what they are doing - '*By doing something wrong you learn from your mistakes. You know it's directly affecting what happens in your school*'. This high level of motivation was also evident even when seeing their work vandalised a number of times (a polytunnel where one of the teams grew vegetables was damaged a number of times outside of school hours). The whole ethos of the BSC is to take events like this and the disappointment they naturally bring to students and staff in their stride through positive thinking, problem-solving and perseverance.

A safe, tidy and non-violent place

A teaching assistant who supports a boy with Down's syndrome explained how BSC had been invaluable as it has provided a sense of belonging, being needed and the opportunity to be outside, rather than in a formal classroom setting for long periods of time. For children with special needs it helps to build relationships with other children in the school. Being part of a team and being able to chat while working works well for some children and when put in a position of responsibility, treated as adults and involved in decisions it can bring out the best and make them feel that it is '*up to them to build a safe, tidy, non-violent place*'. The TA's own children learnt through BSC that they could make a difference and grow in maturity and self-awareness.

‘Sense of purpose’ was cited by a number of adults and is reflected in the way that young people talked about their involvement and the importance of what they were doing. They identified real needs and decided themselves what action to take. This confidence is bolstered by the school making a significant strategic investment by providing the Council with an annual budget of around £4,000 and supporting the Management Support Team and Governance Support Team. These arrangements enable BSC students to share and discuss agendas and their implications with adult school leaders, influence the school development plan and provide an account of the value of the BSC’s work. These teams include all the school’s senior managers including financial management, heads of upper and lower schools, the Community Link Teacher (CLT) and governors. These meetings require students to possess, develop and maintain a high degree of confidence and wide range of skills in order to participate effectively on behalf of others. They also present opportunities to see where the school sets particular boundaries and for what reasons. The previous, more traditional school council had a budget and was involved in the school planning process, but due to the turnover of students each year they tended not to see tangible outcomes and so became frustrated.

BSC students also arrange meetings with other staff including site managers, catering staff and cleaners. A number of the students also noticed how busy the Community Link Teacher was and decided to set up a coordination and support team to help the BSC and CLT. A greater degree of empathy, combined with the confidence to take action, has benefits not only for students but staff as well.

Extending the franchise

As the potential of the Learning to Lead approach to transform the nature and intensity of student engagement became clear, a professional development programme was created to make the approach available in the first instance to a handful of schools close to The Blue School. To this end the Learning to Lead Community Interest Company (CIC) was formed. The role of the Community Interest Company is to provide training, tools and support, including an annual online survey service, an annual Review and Renew sessions for teachers plus an online teacher’s forum. The organisation supports the development of self-sustaining networks for staff and students. It is a not-for-profit organisation with ten young people included on its board of Directors.

In 2008, the Learning to Lead model was adopted by a further 13 schools in various parts of England including a number in economically disadvantaged areas, a special school, a middle school, rural and city schools and schools with students from a mix

of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. All of these schools agreed to participate in an evaluation of the programme.

The Learning to Lead programme has appealed to senior leaders for different reasons. In some cases it was through a desire to re-invigorate a school council that had become less effective. For others Learning to Lead offered a more inclusive approach to student participation. For others, Learning to Lead offered a way of creating a greater sense of ownership amongst students, enabling them to learn through taking responsibility, build their confidence and contribute to the improvement of the school. Common to all, however, was the belief that adopting the Learning to Lead approach had the potential to transform the school culture, to change attitudes, to enhance relationships and to help in redefining the nature of learning and teaching.

Learning to Lead is the most important thing I can bring to this school.

(Deputy Headteacher, School M)

This comment by a senior leader in a school in a disadvantaged community reflects the way Learning to Lead can play an important part in helping schools to respond to the challenges involved. It became increasingly apparent that the approach can be just as powerful in schools in challenging circumstances as in those serving more advantaged communities.

To date Learning to Lead has been adopted by over 40 schools including secondary, primary and special schools. This evaluation was commissioned to explore the question of how the LtoL programme could be implemented and developed in a wider range of schools.

Section 4: The Learning to Lead model

This section focuses on the model as it emerged from The Blue School in 2008. The detailed illumination is drawn from the secondary school context but the adaptations for the primary school context are then discussed. This section is organised under the headings:

- A. The values underpinning the model
- B. Essential elements of the programme
- C. Key principles

A. The values underpinning the model

The LtoL model is based on clear values that are articulated in a variety of documents, presentations and guidance material. These values are also reflected in the design of the arrangements for governance and are modelled through the approach to the training for the staff assigned to coordinate and support the programme and the training they subsequently provide for the student participants.

The core values of Learning to Lead include: shared leadership, respect, care and compassion, community, inclusion and learning through action.

Shared leadership: The LtoL programme rests on the assumption of the value of enabling all students to exercise leadership of themselves and others. Responsibilities are not foisted upon young people but they are encouraged to ‘self-elect’ or volunteer to participate and initiate project work and the governance that surrounds it.

Respect: At the heart of the values that underpin the Learning to Lead approach is the all-embracing commitment to respect. This is manifest in the dialogic style of all LtoL activities and in the tools which articulate and reinforce the value of listening to other members of the school community and being considerate of their feelings and needs. Teachers are encouraged quite explicitly to model the value of respect for example in the way they greet students at the beginning of a session.

Care and compassion: There is an emphasis on the need to establish a safe and supportive environment in which it is possible to learn from mistakes. The quality of relationships in classrooms and around the school is highlighted and actively pursued. Texts such as ‘The Compassionate Classroom’ (Hart and Hodson, 2004) are referred to and deal with relationship building and conflict resolution.

Community: The programme promotes the concept of ‘holarchy’ in which students are encouraged to see themselves as members of teams which are linked to the school council which is located within the school as a community. The school’s link to the wider community is also emphasised.

Inclusion: A fundamental characteristic of Learning to Lead is the explicit commitment to inclusive participation regardless of any suppositions about ability, ethnicity or social background.

Learning through action: The value of self-initiated action is central to LtoL. The creation of project teams led by the students themselves and the practical activity that the teams undertake enables students to learn about themselves, their strengths and weaknesses.

B. Essential elements of the programme

The Learning to Lead programme has a number of essential elements which ensure support, coherence and accountability. These elements are described here under the following headings:

- Designated programme coordinator
- Training for coordinator and other teachers
- Survey of student views
- Analysis and reflection involving the whole school
- Reconstruction of school council
- Training for project teams
- Operation of project teams
- Inclusive management
- Whole school governance
- Review

The model assumes flexibility in the implementation and development of the programme in each case but participating schools are encouraged to embrace the programme as a whole. Each element of the programme is described below.

Designated programme coordinator

The Learning to Lead model rests on the recruitment of one or two members of staff to take on the role of ‘Community Link Teacher’ (CLT). The role of the CLT is to support the setting up and co-ordinating of the programme. This includes the administration of the whole school survey, support for other teachers and form tutors,

training and support for the student teams and assistance with the events such as Review and Renew sessions and the termly School Forum.

The burden of coordination can be shared by establishing a coordination team in which students assist with the co-ordination role. Such a team might organise the survey of students' views and the collating of responses.

Training for coordinators and teachers

A teacher and, ideally, a deputy headteacher attend the Learning to Lead training programme provided by the LtoL CIC to discover how to develop LtoL in their schools. Over the course of 2 days participants experience the LtoL processes and materials for themselves to enable them to become Learning to Lead co-ordinators in their own schools. The training emphasises the overarching function of the CLT which is to develop a positive rapport with the students through which values such as mutual respect are modelled. The training emphasises the key importance of this attitude and approach whilst at the same time introducing teachers to the tools and logistical considerations.

Survey of students' views

The programme in school normally begins with an online, whole school survey to elicit the views of students and staff about their school and community. The Learning to Lead CIC provides an online questionnaire and support for analysing the results. The survey enables students to express their views about the school and priorities for development. The survey is usually used subsequently with each new Year 7 cohort of students.

Analysis and reflection involving the whole school

The data from the online survey is normally analysed by the Community Link Teacher or coordinating team and then presented to the whole school for consideration. A school assembly is normally used to present the outcomes which are then discussed by each form as part of a session with the Form Tutor. This is referred to as a 'This Is Our School' planning session which is a workshop style session in which the survey data informs and stimulates discussion. What emerges from this is a set of priorities for change and improvement which are then publicised throughout the school.

Reconstruction of school council

Following the discussions in the 'This Is Our School' session the 'School Community Council' is reconstituted as a series of teams including one which comprises students who have been elected to represent the views of the student body (Year Reps Team). The other teams are project teams each having a brief to address one of the priorities identified through the 'This Is Our School' sessions. All teams carry equal weight with the School Community Council. Students of all ages are

invited to join the project teams. There are logistical challenges in establishing teams so it is normal for there to be a small number in the first instance.

Training for project teams

Once formed, the teams are provided with a training session which is values driven and focuses on team members as individuals. The training aims to launch the teams as self-managing groups in which leadership is shared and reliance on the Community Link Teacher diminishes over time.

The Community Link Teachers' role in supporting the student project teams involves a skilful balance between standing back to allow the students to lead and being available when they are needed. It involves gauging the level of input that is required and having the courage to allow teams to make their own mistakes and learn from them, whilst at the same time ensuring that they are safe.

Operation of project teams

Each team has regular meetings teams normally at lunch times and after school. The timing and the extent of the team's activity depends on the nature of the focus. In a school which participates in Learning to Lead there will be a number of project teams in operation. Meetings are facilitated by one or more student members with support from the Community Link Teacher who encourages them to become increasingly independent.

Inclusive management

The Management Support Team involves student facilitators and members of the senior leadership team who meet to solve problems that require decisions or action by members of the school staff. In addition the 'Governance Support Team' which includes the Headteacher, a member of the Governing Body and a number of student representatives ensures a connection between the work of the teams and the School Development Plan. Once each term there is a meeting of the School Forum in which all teams meet together to share their work and discuss issues that relate to the work of the Community Council as a whole. At this meeting a number of students are proposed and seconded to serve on the Governance Support Team.

The provision of a designated office enables student facilitators and Community Link Teachers to meet and carry out the necessary administration. This becomes more important as the scope of the teams and the number of students involved in Learning to Lead increases.

Whole school governance

The most important structure for ensuring whole school is the Forum in which all teams meet together once a term to share the work of each team and to facilitate communication and discussion of issues that relate to the work of the Community

Council as a whole. The meeting is facilitated and led by students themselves with discreet support from the Community Link Teacher. Teams are asked to report on progress and matters of general concern such as a new web site are discussed.

Review

The idea of review is built into the training approach and the design of the tools. Teams are provided with a 'Project Review' template which supports the periodic review of the work of the team; it asks: What went well and why? What could have gone better and why? What can be learnt for the future? This activity would be a normal feature of team meetings.

In addition, the model requires an annual meeting to formally review what each team has achieved and to produce an annual plan to steer the work of the project in the next academic year.

Finally, teachers are provided with support from the LtoL CIC for an annual 'Review and Renew' session which helps the Community Council and the CLTs to reflect on how the programme has developed over the course of the year and to set development goals for the year ahead.

C. Key principles

Observation of typical events that feature in the structure of the 'Blue School Council' on which Learning to Lead is modelled indicates a number of key transferable principles which become embedded in the ethos and community life of other schools. These principles include:

1. Organisational activity is student led
2. Student-led practical activity is central
3. Support is discreet and respectful
4. Student voice is promoted
5. Communication and openness maximise involvement
6. Review maximises learning and improvement
7. Respect is modelled
8. Tools support planning, discussion, review and reflection
9. Inclusion is an explicit goal
10. Commitment is built actively and deliberately
11. Achievement is the focus of celebration

These principles are now illustrated using extracts from vignettes based on observations of key events in The Blue School Council calendar. The vignettes themselves can be found in the Appendix.

Principle 1: Organisational activity is student led

The Learning to Lead programme rests on an holarchical organisational structure each part of which is led by students.

In the following extract from the ‘A Team Meeting at The Blue School’ vignette we see an illustration of how students take the lead.

A Yr 10 student, Aled, was facilitating the meeting. There were over a dozen students sitting around him eating lunch. A couple of students are drawing. Three more students arrived as he was speaking. Aled explained the importance of the meeting given the problem of feeding the team’s chickens over the school Christmas closure. He had drawn up a timetable and asked when the rest of the team would be around over the Christmas break. He maintained team members’ involvement through his calm and confident body language, voice and eye contact. He suggested another lunchtime meeting in the same place on the last day of term to cement the timetable and offered to organise early lunch passes for people if they needed them. The CLT went over to check on progress. Aled asked him if they could double feed the chickens on Christmas Eve but the CLT said that the chickens would need to get out every day. He asked if they needed him and Aled said that they did not so he went away.

It is clear from this account that the student has prepared for the meeting but is also very responsive to the discussion in the meeting and the needs and interests of other team members. Aled’s leadership skills are evident and meetings such as these present opportunities for their further development. The Community Link Teacher is in the background, offering help and stepping in when needed but the meeting is entirely student-led.

In the following extract from the ‘A Meeting of the Forum at The Blue School’ vignette, we see another student leading a very large meeting.

The meeting included 250 students who make up the 28 student teams. All year groups were represented although younger students seem to be in the majority. The Coordination and Support Team ran the Forum with minimal support from the CLT. A confident, perceptive and articulate Yr 10 student, Amy² welcomed guests and used the microphone confidently.

Not only does this give Amy an opportunity to shine and hone her leadership skills, it also models the idea of student leadership for the 250 students who were present.

² Students’ names are fictitious

Principle 2: Student-led practical activity is central

In the meeting of the Forum, we see project teams reporting on their activities which are predominantly practical and entirely led by the students themselves.

The forum opened with members of the Fundraising Team presenting a cheque for £500 to 'Horses for the Disabled'. A representative of the charity spoke about their work and that the cheque would buy 'two front legs of a horse'.

The Fundraising Team had engaged in a range of activities such as running a cake sale in order to be able to support their favourite charity.

In the vignette of the team meeting already mentioned above, it is clear that the business of the team is very practical. The students keep chickens and this requires a great deal of organisation and practical problem solving.

Aled worked through the timetable checking when people would be able to feed the chickens. He offered to do New Years Day himself and another student volunteered for Christmas Day. Aled checked that any offer would be OK with the others. When people offered to help he double checked with them especially if they had already committed themselves to a number of days. One student offered to do four days in a row but Aled asked if someone else could take some of these days. Aled drew people in to the discussion. He asked two of the team members to be organisers and emergency contacts and if it would be OK for everyone to share home telephone numbers. He gained their attention and said: 'Can everybody please note down this number, if not see me and I'll give you a copy of it'. He checked that they were all ready then gave out the number, and told them that, if they are unable to do a session they must contact the emergency contacts volunteers straight away. Finally, he asked anyone who will be doing a day to see him for a photocopy of how to feed the chickens, the quantities of food and where to feed them.

This particular example rather suggests that one particular student is carrying a great deal of responsibility. In other teams discussed in interviews it is clear that this is not always the case and that leadership tends to be more distributed.

Principle 3: Support is discreet and respectful

This principle is illustrated in the extract already included above which describes how the Community Link Teacher had offered help with one of the team meetings.

The CLT went over to check on progress.He asked if they needed him and Aled said that they did not so he went away.

The observation of this team meeting also focused on the role of the CLT. It is evident that the CLT's support extends to activity beyond the team meeting but it remains minimal.

The CLT asked what they had decided and how confident they were that the plan would work. He made suggestions such as posting the timetable up on a window facing outwards onto the field emailing it to team members. They talked about such things as emergency arrangements, health and safety issues and the need to get first aid at the Sports Centre on site if anyone's legs were to get bitten by the chickens. The CLT told them that he would be following up actions from other meetings and negotiating with the groundsman about a new hen house.

The CLT had been very skilled in using the structure, tools and attitudes of the Learning to Lead approach to strike a balance between giving the students the freedom and responsibility to plan and run things for themselves and helping them to anticipate any dangers or challenges that may lie ahead. With such a combination it is unlikely the parents' fears would be realised and the students would be able to engage in a real learning process with manageable consequences and the satisfaction of taking meaningful responsibility.

The health and safety issue brings into focus the question of accountability. The teachers concerned retain their responsibility while allowing maximum freedom for students to lead themselves. It is a role that requires sensitivity and the skills of facilitation but these are supported by the LtoL package of tools.

Principle 4: Student voice is promoted

The Learning to Lead programme begins with a survey of students' views about the school. This is a very recognisable 'student voice' strategy. However, in LtoL voice becomes more embedded in a wide range of action.

The meeting of the Forum is of crucial importance in that it provides a space for sharing, but also for accountability and voice. The team which comprises student representatives participates along with the project teams. In the extract from the vignette based on the observation of a Forum meeting it is evident that the reports from project teams carry with them the opportunity to raise issues and give voice to concerns.

The Buddying Team led by their lower sixth form facilitator made a presentation about their work. They talked about what had worked well, what could be improved and what could be learned for the future. The powerpoint slides contained a range of grounded observations, responses and ideas for action. There was some criticism of teachers' behaviour in general. They identified desirable changes such as bringing in vertical tutor groups. They

spoke of carrying out research in other schools. Feedback was sought from Forum members who expressed views and asked questions such as those below:

How would we be taught as we'd be at different levels?

It's a big plan. I think there should be consultation with the whole school. I think everyone should be involved.

Why do we need houses back?

Aren't vertical tutor groups daunting for Year 7s?

The team responded well to the questions from the floor. The Buddying Team wanted to consult students but were not sure that students would complete on-line surveys. They discussed these dilemmas openly in the forum.

This extract illustrates well not only how the students can express their views but how this expression is linked to a wider discussion and follow up action. Here we see the 'school council' revived and enriched by the work of the project teams.

Principle 5: Communication and openness maximise involvement

Schools are often quite large organisations and therefore activities can take place in isolated pockets. In the Learning to Lead model it is assumed that every member of the school community will at the very least be informed which opens up the possibility of more active participation. The Forum is an excellent opportunity to share what happens in the smaller units such the project teams, the governance support team and the coordination team, but in the extract below we see how students can use information and communication technology to make their work visible to all.

A video of the work of the BSC teams was shown. There is a sense of fun, freedom and ownership but the approach was orderly. The scale of the work was striking. The new BSC website (www.blueschoolcouncil.org) was introduced by one of the students who has designed and constructed it.The presentation explained that the site is attractive, accessible, informative and comprehensive. It has documents to download and facilities for uploading. There are blogs, a showcase facility to allow other schools to see students' work and each team has pages which incorporate videos. However, some students said that they would like to see more pictures and videos on the site. Students have different levels of access depending on whether they are team members or facilitators. Students can comment on other people's blogs but accounts can be blocked if difficulties arise. The site is moderated by the Coordination and Support Team which includes adults and the level of site security satisfies local authority requirements. The lead student described how he would be training facilitators of teams to use the site at lunchtimes. Facilitators would then train other team members.

The following extract from the vignette portraying a Review Meeting shows how tools are used routinely within a range of meetings to make explicit participants' ideas, to capture them and share them beyond the confines of the particular meetings.

Each team member then placed their 'hexie' on the 'sticky wall' which had been set up along one side of the room. This 'wall' is a long piece of coloured cloth which has been sprayed with repositionable adhesive allowing members of the team to place their 'hexies' on it and build a record of their review as they go along.

The use of hexagonal cards - 'hexies' – on which students are asked to write statements is just one of many techniques for making visible action, planning and thinking.

Principle 6: Review maximises learning and improvement

Review is built into the programme at all stages. It is a central feature of the annual 'Review and Renew' meetings and is portrayed in the vignette of the Annual Review with the chicken keeping team (Badgers and Spoons).

Each project team engages in an annual review of their plans and achievements during the first term of the academic year. This enables them to reflect on and set their priorities for the coming year and hold purposeful weekly team meetings that will enable them to achieve their plans. The Learning to Lead (LtoL) approach to forming teams from all year groups ensures continuity of the membership. The reviews have taken place in a room at the local museum and have been facilitated by Susan Piers-Mantell.

The review meeting centres on the activity of reflection and discussion of what has been achieved and how it could be improved upon as the following extract from the same vignette illustrates.

Susan then talked about how looking back and remembering what you have done can help your future. She asked everyone to write a hexie reflecting on what they think is going well in the team and why. Statements included the following.

We all came together to build the chicken coop. It was a really good thing for the team building and everybody had fun!!!

We all came together to clean the pond and find what wild life there was there and we found 29 newts and two different types, which means the pond is healthy.

I think when we showed the Year 6s around so they could see what we did as a school it helped them to decide whether they wanted to join the Council.

The team also reflected on what could have gone better with comments such as those below.

Sometimes the key went walk about and we could not find it so we had to climb over the fence.

We couldn't get to the food in the garden shed - there were things on top of the bins.

I think that we could have finished off the pond. We didn't finish it because we had other priorities.

The review moved on to the stage where the team was able to think about what can be learnt for the future. Comments included the following.

We should get a shed of our own to store the chicken food, straw and things we need to look after them.

We need to gain money for the garden shed and make a rota of what to feed the chickens and who is feeding them when. We need better fencing around the chickens to protect them.

Let's do a survey around the neighbours to see what they think about us having a cockerel.

The idea of review is clearly established and explored experientially in the training provided for each project team at the beginning of their programme and the tools that the students become familiar with enable them to engage in the process of review integrated into the way the teams operate.

Principle 7: Respect is modelled

Respect is part of the core value system that underpins the Learning to Lead approach. It is highlighted in the tools and in the team training sessions in which the tools are used and explored. However, it also modelled through interaction and the relationships between teachers and students.

The meeting began with everyone sitting in a circle with Susan. ... (she) models respect in her quiet calm manner with positive encouragement and praise. She explained the origins of LtoL and explained the presence of a researcher. Susan

started off by asking ‘Why are you here?’ and ‘What do you want to do?’. She told the group about her own life history, growing up on a farm in Zambia and starting school in England when she was 11. She said that at school she felt as if everything was being ‘done to her’ so, when her own son began his schooling she decided that she must work to help young people to see themselves as partners in the enterprise.

Here we see that the teacher’s personal disclosure is part of the way she established a respectful relationship. The message is that we are all persons. The sitting in a circle emphasises that everyone in the room is recognised and has equal importance.

Later in the same meeting the value of respect is addressed in a more direct way working with one of the LtoL tools.

Susan talked about the ‘Working with Respect’ poster and asked members of the team to read in turn the seven points. She discussed with the team the idea of respect and the importance of meeting in a circle. Sam said that it is ‘*so everyone can get an equal view*’ and Aled said that ‘*it helps give a nudge but doesn’t control or take over*’.

The word ‘respect’ becomes an acronym to remind everyone about the ideas such as collective responsibility, mutual support, inclusion, and being considerate.

Principle 8: Tools support planning, discussion, review and reflection

Here the word ‘tools’ is used to refer to devices such as the respect poster described above but also the techniques and routine behaviours that are taught through the training sessions provided for the Community Link Teachers and which the CLTs provide for the project teams.

The extract from the vignette of the review meeting illustrates how the package of LtoL tools can provide structure for the collective experience.

Their next activity involved going through the ‘A SMILEY’ checklist which helps them plan for the coming year. This sheet has the letters ‘A SMILEY’ written in a column down one side and each letter prompts a question. For example the letter ‘A’ prompts the word ‘Accountability’ which led to a rehearsal of the team’s purpose. Aled read out the purpose statement; they all repeated this and then he stuck it to the sticky wall. Each letter prompted questions, which elicited further discussion on their goal for the year, the people who they needed to involve, the steps they needed to take and the economic considerations. Susan asked questions to help clarify points and extend their planning. Aled gave an update on the accounts which he says are ‘doing well’.

The ‘sticky wall’ is a tool used often to document ideas, views and decisions as they arise. The use of ‘hexies’ (hexagonal coloured sheets) to stick on to the sticky wall recurs at various stages in the LtoL programme. The use of hexies and a wall covering on which adhesive has been used to make it receptive to the sheets is an excellent way to do this but it is not difficult to imagine this technique being adapted to other formats such as large ‘post-its’.

The programme is supported by a range of tools presented in a number of forms. A book extending to 190 pages produced by Susan Piers-Mantell and aimed at teachers contains guidance which defines ‘learning to lead’ and its attendant key ideas, for example: ‘Towards self-leadership’. More specific guidance is presented according to Key Stage. At Key Stage 2 for example, there is guidance on how to facilitate the ‘Hand washing ceremony’. At the key stages relevant to secondary schools there is detailed guidance for example on the facilitating of the form tutor’s ‘This is Our School’ planning session, the provision of team training and the conduct of a ‘Review and Renew’ meeting.

Much of the material in the original book is reproduced in the form of either the ‘Secondary Teaching Manual’ or a ‘Primary Teaching Manual’. These are slimmer volumes which contain guidance for teachers, specifications of the role and activities of a typical range of teams and tools.

The collection of tools includes the ‘Consensus Map’ which is a group decision-making tool. It presents a hierarchy of responses to a proposal where a series of statements is assigned a score: for example ‘Yes’ scores 6 points whereas ‘Don’t know’ scores 3 and ‘Don’t like it and won’t stop it but may not help’ scores 1.

Another key tool is entitled ‘Working with RESPECT’. This is pivotal in establishing the groundwork. Each letter in the acronym is a reminder of a sentence such ‘We are **R**esponsible for what our team has agree to do’.

Principle 9: Inclusion is an explicit goal

The first part of the LtoL process – the survey of students’ views – is inclusive in the sense that all students are asked for their views but Learning to Lead pursues inclusion through a much wider range of strategies. In the vignette of the Annual Review we see a student facilitator using the LtoL tools to include all members of the team.

Aled³, the team's facilitator, ensured that everyone had the opportunity to speak. These statements are typical:

I am here to help to create a better environment for wildlife and to help people better understand nature and wildlife.

(Sam, Yr 8)

I am here because I like animals and I want to help and make the school a better place and improve on what we have already done.

(Harry, Yr 9)

The website created by students at The Blue School is described above under the heading of communication and it is this proactive and deliberate approach to sharing information and building different opportunities for participation that maximises inclusion. It is through such tools and strategies that key values such as inclusion are realised in practice.

Principle 10: Commitment is built actively and deliberately

Learning to Lead is located in schools. For children in the UK, schooling is compulsory for all and we are largely successful in making sure that families send their children to school. However, securing the commitment to learning is a far greater challenge. The LtoL programme focuses quite deliberately and explicitly on commitment. In the vignette of the Annual Review meeting we see a portrayal of a recurring activity in which students are asked to say why they have come to the meeting and what they want to do as a member of a team. These are the sorts of statements they have made:

I am here because every day on the news, you hear catastrophic stories to do with animals – terrible diseases and cruelty and pain. In my old school, people used to play with dead birds and squash insects and kill things. I want to that to change – to stop animal cruelty.

(Elsa, Yr 8)

(See also the statements under Principle 9 above)

The students' sense of commitment rests on their choice and their moral viewpoints but it builds on this through activities that encourage them to articulate what they are committed to. The action orientation of the LtoL activity enables young people to strengthen their commitment.

³ Aled is a fictional name

Later in the review meeting the question of expanding the team to include new members came up. The students discussed the delicate question of commitment to this voluntary activity.

The team talked about how to get the work done and Elena suggested inviting other students to help. The team agreed and decided to advertise this through an assembly. Aled cautioned that they should only invite students to help at lunchtime so that they only get the serious ones rather than the '300 people skipping classes!' James added that if people want to help in an afternoon session they should be obliged to come to a lunchtime session first. Aled commented: *'I think our school lessons should just turn into this.'*

It is evident that once Learning to Lead has become established in the school, the students themselves take responsibility for managing commitment and resolving issues related to it. However, this is constantly reinforced by the facilitation of the teachers who are familiar with the LtoL approach as the following extract illustrates.

Towards the end of the session Susan asked the team members to order the 'hexies' to see what tasks needed to be done first. She said that she would take these away and write them up. It was clear that they needed a little more time to think through the practicalities of the tasks, but at least they would have enough information to help them do this in team meetings to come. Finally they considered if they felt able as a team to accept responsibility for implementing their plan. Susan asked them to shout 'Yes' if they agreed they were able to make this plan happen. They all did.

Accepting responsibility is a very significant challenge for young people and it is evidence that Learning to Lead has the potential to address this.

Principle 11: Achievement is the focus of celebration

Learning and achievement are intrinsically rewarding but commitment and enthusiasm can be nurtured with explicit strategies for celebrating a job well done. The idea of celebration is integral to the Learning to Lead approach. In the vignette of the meeting of the School Forum there is a portrayal of the closing moments of the meeting in which there are elements of ritual and conviviality that engender respectful celebration.

The Forum appears to be very productive, engendering genuine respect between students and adults. It appears to be treated as a thoughtful and spiritual space signified for example by a candle being blown out after 10 to 15 seconds of silent reflection on their time together. Following this the 'Beautiful School Team' had organised drinks and mince pies for everyone present to enjoy as a Christmas, end of term celebration.

Similarly we can see in the closing stages of the review meeting another example of an explicit act of celebration.

Finally they reviewed the session by standing in a circle and patting the next person on the back to say well done. The session seemed to be inspiring, thoughtful and orderly. The team had clearly achieved a great deal and the way they interacted showed how much they had learnt personally over time. The students were clearly animated and motivated by the prospect of real change and taking responsibility. After the review Susan typed up the hexies and combined reflections.

The achievement is recognised in a very concrete, physical way.

Transferability

As discussed below, schools new to the LtoL programme will tend to adopt and adapt the activities in their own way but the most important question is the extent to which the principles outlined and illustrated above travel and underpin the development of the programme

Section 5: Learning to Lead in the ‘pilot schools’

Can what has proved successful in The Blue School provide a ‘Blueprint’ for other schools? Can the structures and principles outlined in the previous pages travel across boundaries of place, school type and community context? What issues arise for schools in adopting or adapting the Learning to Lead model? These are questions that the ‘pilot schools’ have been grappling with, bringing sharply to the surface the nature of organisational adaptation and what it means to be a learning community.

A perennial question for policy makers is ‘How does good practice transfer?’ It is the question that lies behind successive government initiatives such as Beacon Schools and publications of ‘good’ and ‘outstanding’ practice (Fielding *et al.*, 2005). Yet there appears to be an inherent problem in notions of ‘transfer’ and ‘implementation’, defying the best intentions of systemic reform. Some of these ‘organisational learning disabilities’ may be characterised by comments such as: ‘It’s a great idea but it wouldn’t work here’ or ‘Yet one more initiative for an already overstretched staff’. Negative attitudes to change are often deeply ingrained within a school culture and not easily dismissed. Teachers have for decades been at the receiving end of so many demands and ‘brilliant’, but ephemeral, ideas so that any impetus for sustained change has to be understood within the context and developmental history of the school.

This was the challenge of the pilot project with 13 very different schools, each with their particular histories, staffing structures, and approaches to improvement planning, all of which lead to varying demands and pressures. So, how resilient and ‘transferable’ are the structural elements and principles developed in The Blue School?

The issue for the pilot schools was the extent to which these could be adopted as a ‘package’ or introduced as discrete elements. For The Blue School these are all seen as integrally related and it is believed that to lose any one element is to detract from the integrity of the model. Nonetheless, most schools found that change had to be taken step by step. It is crucial that school staff, and students, have a genuine sense of ownership, so among the schools the response tended to be staged adopting or progressively adapting to suit the context of the school.

At the time of writing the pilot schools are at various stages of development. Most have undertaken the survey, established teams and taken significant steps to embed the approach. Two of the original pilot schools who withdrew in the early stages due to lack of staff capacity or change of headteacher, have since rejoined the programme. Staff changes and absences have necessarily caused a hiatus in activity and a few schools have had periods when development has stalled. Some teachers expressed a feeling of disappointment that the initiative has not developed as widely

or as deeply as they hoped, comparing themselves unfavourably with The Blue School and concerned that the level of penetration was insufficient.

Some Community Link Teachers were daunted by the achievements of The Blue School and needed reassurance that progress would be slow but that what they had achieved in a short space of time was worthwhile and a solid foundation.

In a process of change, often unsettling, there is a need for reassurance and reinforcement that development is a gradual and graduated process, responsive to the character and needs of the school. Such encouragement is necessary for the most reluctant or fragile of schools but the message from the evidence is that the high level of commitment and enthusiasm of staff and students has enabled schools to come through challenging times. In some cases the programme has been successfully adopted and is already having a significant impact, as the comment from a deputy headteacher from one of the schools reported.

It's the only thing I've seen work at such a deep level after such a short amount of time.
(Deputy Headteacher, School M)

The attraction and subsequent adoption of LtoL followed differing paths but, as the following example shows, did meet a perceived need at a given time.

A process of change

Information about Learning to Lead landed on the desk of the acting Head, 'catching his eye' at a time when the school council was faltering and he saw the potential in this approach to engage much larger numbers of students. He describes it as empowering because it gave 'permission to do things that we want them to do anyway.' He saw it as an investment in building a positive culture and ethos that would help students knit together. The simplicity and achievability of it struck him and he passed it to one of the assistant heads who subsequently attended an Insight Day at The Blue School. It was then presented to the curriculum committee who agreed to support the adoption of the approach. Volunteers were requested amongst the staff and, significantly, staff who volunteered were those highly respected by the children and in whom the acting head had complete faith. These two staff members attended the three day training. While one subsequently left the school, another teacher took her place and now have two allocated lessons each week for LtoL. The new CLT has attended a one day training and is also learning by working alongside Ms P. In addition other teachers are beginning to get involved and one teacher works effectively with the eco team. There has been a deliberate attempt to invite key staff to attend the training for teams where they may be able to have an input and this serves as an induction for these staff into the workings.

In the above case the initiative came through the acting headteacher, in a sense, from the top down. There are also other entry points for change as the example shows. In that case a student came across the LtoL programme and discussed it with teachers in school. This auspicious start led to the school's full involvement in the programme and LtoL is now well-established in the school. It is not coincidental that the school was already rich in traditional forms of student leadership, with a variety of leadership opportunities offered to students such as acting as form, year and school council representatives, charity representatives, sports captains. These were, however, all elected posts and relatively few in number. The opportunity to offer all students the chance to self-elect to teams was the signal appeal of the LtoL programme for this school.

LtoL may be seen as yet another initiative, needing a long lead time to 'add on' to current plans and structures. The achievement of depth within a short space of time is made possible where LtoL is seen as encompassing all the school's practices which celebrate student achievement and empower young people. It has been described as contributing positively to the 'learner voice' aspect of the Citizenship agenda, as underpinning the business and enterprise skills which the school wishes to encourage as a specialist college for business, enterprise and sport, and addressing the *Every Child Matters* agenda in an authentic rather than mechanistic way.

A priority for all schools has been the establishing of project teams but not all have yet integrated elected year representatives into the programme nor developed the proposed government and management structures. Different models are also emerging: for example, one school has set up a Communications Team to keep the whole school informed and, where schools have retained their existing school councils, there is ongoing discussion about how Learning to Lead can best work alongside them. These schools and a number of others have chosen not to use the term 'School Community Council' and they refer to the programme simply as 'Learning to Lead'.

The autonomy and latitude for student teams, while a common issue, has different boundaries in different schools. The nature of direction, support, and risk taking depends on the willingness and ability of staff to 'let go', to have faith that when students are clearly trusted they will reciprocate that trust. It has also to be recognised that trust does not come easily in a situation where distrust has been the more prevalent norm. In one school students have an LtoL office with computer and telephone and this backs onto a classroom where they can meet. The teacher is trying to instil in them that she does not need to be there and is finding that they are now starting to make decisions themselves, only coming back to check things out with her as needed.

Community Link Teachers

The pilot schools were asked to identify two Community Link Teachers who were invited to participate in a three day training course which included a visit to The Blue School.

The training confirmed my whole belief in education and has been the first initiative that has done that in five years of teaching. Since the training I have used some of the skills and philosophies in my classroom. Child-centred learning is very important ... a child that is valued, respected and listened to will become an adult who carries those traits with them.

(Community Link Teacher, School G)

Where schools were only able to recruit one person rather than the two recommended, it was generally more challenging to establish Learning to Lead.

Staff and students alike were very positive about the role of the Community Link Teacher. The comment below is quite typical and indicates the impact on relationships between teachers and students.

I love the role; it gives you a completely different relationship with the pupils. They're more willing to talk to you; it becomes more friendly.

(Community Link Teacher, School L)

Community Link Teachers also emphasise the challenge of the need to be flexible and responsive as well as well organised; to be able to stand back rather than take control. On the whole, feedback from students suggests that this balance is being achieved.

He doesn't take over, but helps if you need him to. ... You get treated like an adult.

(Student, School D)

We cover a lot of things and we don't really need her. ...we're kind of in charge.

(Student, School L)

Comments such as these represent a widespread impression that Community Link Teachers are having considerable success in enabling students to take the lead. In that respect it is critical that they are allocated time to carry out that role, although it is often felt that time for such an important and demanding job is not enough. Some schools have been creative in addressing this; one approach being to recruit other staff to support the teams, although this can require more time initially to set it up and train staff.

The role of the Community Link Teacher in capacity building and spreading the approach across the school is emerging as a key requirement if Learning to Lead's transformative potential is to be achieved and sustained. This is difficult when some of the senior managers do not fully understand or actively support the programme, but in most cases headteachers have attended a Learning to Lead 'Insight Session' which has had a major impact on their commitment to the approach.

The following vignette illustrates how the work of Community Link Teacher can be shared with students from the outset by creating a 'Steering Team'.

Learning to Lead in challenging circumstances

This school is in an economically disadvantaged city location and students' aspirations and commitment to school are generally low. The headteacher saw a presentation about Learning to Lead and was inspired. It was decided to embrace fully the Learning to Lead programme and a deputy headteacher subsequently attended the training for Community Link Teachers. The Senior Leadership Team identified Learning to Lead as a key strategy in raising students' attainment by building self-belief and sense of ownership. The deputy head explained that Learning to Lead was helping to address a fundamental issue which concerns the way our expectations can put limits on what students can achieve.

The school developed a new way of engaging students in the Learning to Lead process. The Community Link Teacher established a 'Steering Team' of students who went through the team training and then took on the organisation and promotion of the whole school survey. The survey was due to take place around the time when there were incidents in the vicinity of the school, caused by racial tension, but the students persevered. The survey provided an opportunity for some to express their views about what had happened and this led to the formation of a team called 'Building a Better Community' which aims to address racism and bullying and help people feel more positive about their community.

The Steering Team includes students who had not always felt at ease in the school context and it became apparent that the experience of being involved was making a big impact on their lives, particularly in developing a sense of purpose and a belief in their ability to make a difference. The deputy head talks about '*lending the students energy and belief until they can take it for themselves*' and this strategy seems to be paying off. She is investing time in encouraging this team who will then help to support other students. She is also building awareness and capacity amongst the wider staff group.

(School M)

It is also significant that the CLT in the above case saw the LtoL programme as playing a key role in tackling issues that can arise in schools in disadvantaged communities.

The whole school survey

The whole school survey is an important element in the model as it provides the platform for identifying the issues, a ‘tin opener’ for further discussion and elaboration of the issues arising. Everyone in the school is invited to participate in a survey by completing the online questionnaire which asks about aspects of school including rewards and sanctions, homework, favourite subjects, communication, feelings of safety and wellbeing. Almost all the pilot schools carried this out, in some cases adapted to the local context. For example, the special school created their own version which was more accessible to their students. In another school, the questionnaire was supplemented with an art activity that enabled students to convey their views about school through pictures. While there is scope for schools to personalise the instrument to make it more relevant to their school, in the first instance schools tended not to take up this option. In some cases senior leaders were aware of the potential to broaden the questions to reflect issues of particular relevance to their own school and to involve students in constructing the survey.

Schools are encouraged to repeat the survey in the subsequent year with their new intake and some schools have done this. In one school it was not possible to arrange access to computers for the purpose of the online questionnaire so the survey with the new Year 7s took place through discussions held during the geography lessons which happened to be taught by the Community Link Teacher to all Year 7 students.

‘This is Our School’ planning session

The majority of the schools arranged for the Form Tutors to lead this half day session to discuss the survey results. Some tutors found the interactive nature of the session quite challenging, but often very rewarding too, enabling a level of discussion with their tutor group that they would not normally have. They appreciated the clear and simple guidance provided. CLTs see these sessions as important professional development experiences that introduce an approach to learning that can be applied in the classroom more generally. In a few schools it had not been possible to arrange these sessions. During the sessions, students mapped out their ideas on large sheets of paper, and in one school the Steering Team of students used these as part of an assembly presentation in order to demonstrate that students’ views and ideas were being listened to.

Establishing teams

The Community Link Teachers usually analyse the data from the whole school survey together with records of the discussion in the ‘This Is Our School’ planning

session. Through this they are able to identify the priorities around which the student project teams are formed. In the school that has set up a student Steering Team, the students were central to this process and actively involved in feeding back the findings and promoting the teams. The schools normally announced the titles of the teams in an assembly and invited students to 'self-elect'. All volunteers are accepted, which means that some teams start off with 20 to 30 members. Most of the pilot schools reported some drop-out from these teams with other students joining at a later stage.

The range of students participating is diverse, including some very academically able, some with complex learning difficulties, some who had become disengaged with learning and some who lacked confidence in social situations. The evaluation in the pilot schools indicates that the Learning to Lead programme can work in different kinds of schools with a range of students. The deputy headteacher in a school in a relatively disadvantaged area said that: *'This approach works with our students and they are tough kids'* (Deputy Headteacher, School M).

The teams set up in the pilot schools are quite similar to those at The Blue School in that they are in the main practically focussed and concerned with physical and visual aspects of the school environment. However, we are beginning to see movement towards the creation of teams that address curriculum, learning and issues beyond school. Generally schools aspire to encompass these, although most are not yet doing so.

One of the secondary schools in the pilot has adopted a quite different approach to the creation and renewal of teams through a link to RSA Opening Minds⁴ programme. The Community Link teacher and the Director of Key Stage 3 collaborated to produce a scheme of work in which the LtoL approach is mapped on to the Opening Minds curriculum. The scheme of work uses the LtoL materials without the need for adaptations in the course of a series of 42 lessons over a 6 week period. It includes elements of subjects such as History and Science, but also more generic themes such as 'Building Learning Power'. 31 teachers were inducted into the LtoL philosophy of empowering pupils to make a difference in their everyday lives. The series of lessons helps the new Year 7 students to adapt to their new school. They are asked to walk around the school taking photographs and making a note of the things that they want to improve. They also investigate teams that are already in existence in the school. Students are invited to present their projects to the whole year group for feedback and discussion. Proposals included: 'Recycling', 'A lunch base', 'A collection point for chewing gum', 'Anti-bullying support' and 'A

⁴ Opening Minds is a competencies based programme sponsored by the RSA which has aims that resonate well with Learning to Lead (RSA, 2008).

comfy room'. The students are then asked to vote for the most important initiatives and they can then 'self-elect' or volunteer to join a team for further project work.

Team training

The team training is a crucial element of the programme and in the majority of schools half a day is allocated for each team. Students report positive gains: they learn to work as a team and use the Learning to Lead tools; they also develop their enthusiasm and commitment to making a difference. The training provides a foundation for the self-development that continues through their participation in the work of the teams. The following vignette portrays a typical training session led by the CLT in one of the pilot schools.

A Learning to Lead Team Training session

This two hour training session for the Recycling Team takes place in the afternoon. There are only 6 students at the start of the session. Two more join later and explain that the notice had not been read out that morning so they only found out about the meeting at the afternoon registration session.

The Community Link Teacher leads the training session according to a predetermined structure. She starts by posing the questions: Why have you decided to join this team? What should be the purpose of this team? What should be the focus of our activity? In response to each question students share their ideas verbally and then are asked to write them on small hexagonal pieces of coloured paper – 'hexies' - and add them to the 'sticky wall' on to which a set of headings had already been attached.

The session features experiential learning, including the use of Russian Dolls to explore and experience working in a team. The students seem to be very able, using sophisticated language including terms such as 'consultation', 'raising awareness' and 'strategy'.

During the session the students discuss possible obstacles and focus on the problem of students perhaps joining the team but only wanting to 'mess about'. They wanted to find ways to restrict entry to the team but the CLT deftly deflected them from this train of thought.

At the end of the session they had covered the questions posed at the beginning and had made decisions about who to consult, the logistics and timescales involved. They had the outlines of an action plan. The CLT said that she would type up the decisions made and circulate these to members of the team.

(School I)

Some schools were concerned about whether the training would suit their students and in some cases it has been shortened or significantly adapted. There is an emerging debate about whether all students should be given the opportunity to

experience the training and if so, whether this should be in its entirety or simplified, in some cases, to make it accessible. The evaluation suggests that the training can work for most students, although where students have lower levels of concentration or confidence, there may be a need for more support and therefore the allocation of more staff time. At The Blue School, some students who do not engage with the training or attend meetings may nevertheless take part in practical activities through which they gain acceptance and become exposed to the values of Learning to Lead.

The aim of the training session is to start the teams on the road to becoming self-managing groups in which leadership is shared and responsibility shouldered by the students themselves. This cannot be achieved within a single workshop session of course, but the tools and techniques that the students are introduced to in the session will continue to develop their capacity to lead through engagement with the subsequent project work.

Project teams at work

Each of the pilot schools set up about four teams in the first year and some have since set up additional teams. Many would have liked to establish more teams, but time is a constraint since each team requires a training session and ongoing support.

Teams normally meet during lunch-times, which restricts what they can achieve, especially in schools where the lunch break is only 40 minutes. In some schools they are allowed time out of lessons to work on their projects, but in others, time out of lessons either for the team training or project work is a source of tension. It can be seen to be in conflict with academic study. In spite of this challenge, teams are working effectively, achieving results and gaining a great deal from the experience. The following vignette illustrates the way that teams work.

A meeting of the 'Beautiful School Team'

The team meeting take place during lunchtimes and students bring their lunch to the meetings. This team is well facilitated by one of the students who encourages others to contribute. Notes are kept using the Learning to Lead proformas provided.

The Beautiful School project aims to improve the ambience in the school hall by designing and painting a mural on one wall. The team are in touch with partner schools in Uganda, Germany and Spain and they are planning to include these schools' logos into the mural design. Team members are enthusiastic, keen to share ideas and become involved. Discussion focuses on the idea of organising a competition for the design of the mural and fundraising. The meeting with the Headteacher to seek approval is also discussed. One team member talked about her experience of the meeting and how successful she felt when the initial funding was agreed.

It was noted that the original plan had changed following the team's investigation into health and safety as well as the practicalities of painting the mural.

(School I)

Some teams have a very practical focus and do not have formal meetings. In some of the pilot schools, teachers were directing some of the activity, whilst encouraging students to make decisions within this more teacher led framework. At the same time the teachers themselves are learning and changing their practice, so that they feel more able to stand back and allow the students the space to take a lead. The Community Link Teachers demonstrate that they value students' views and ideas. They believe in students' ability to make their own decisions and achieve the goals they set for themselves. This in turn is recognised and valued by the students.

He shows you respect. He always asks your opinion before he does anything.

(Students, School D)

The following vignette illustrates the inclusivity of Learning to Lead teams and the way project work can build a commitment to moral purpose.

The Charity Team

The co-facilitators of the Charity Team say that they have people in their team who they would not have expected to get involved, but believe that this makes the team stronger. As facilitators it is sometimes challenging to manage the meetings, to make sure that everyone turns up, that their views are taken into account and that they get along with one another. They have learnt a great deal, developed confidence and are happy that the team is working well.

The facilitators set the agenda for the meetings and take turns in writing the minutes. Their goal is to raise £1,000 within six months. The team is not simply about giving money; they are keen to find out more about the causes which they raise money for. For example, they telephoned a church in the town and arranged a visit to find out more about a charity working with people in Africa.

The facilitators noticed the positive effect on a couple of team members whom they saw as the kind of young people who would not have expected to make a positive contribution. These boys were shocked to discover that some people do not have proper toilets and became determined to do something to help. The Headteacher has also observed how students that might have been labelled as 'naughty' are now playing a full part.

(School L)

There is variation in the extent to which the teams use the Learning to Lead tools, but generally students find them useful and understand how the tools can help them. The following comment is typical.

If we have a goal, we can write it down and work out how to make it happen and then say – let's look at the checklist and see if we've done what we planned to do.

(Student, School G)

There is a difference of view among Community Link Teachers as to the appropriateness of tools that require record keeping, written plans and the like. Some feel that some students are discouraged by this and would much rather be engaged in practical work than attending meetings. Other Community Link Teachers have been surprised by the active participation in team meetings of students who they would not have expected to get involved. Learning to Lead is keen to get across the message that the function of meetings and of tools is to support practical activity and to help students engage more purposefully with planning and execution. Team training is key to enabling students to develop their understanding of the tools and how to manage the affairs of the team.

The special school has adapted the tools to make them accessible to their students. The Community Link Teacher has created visual images including the use of Widgit software which are easier for students to relate to. Simplifying the case study examples and reading them as stories has also helped the students to stimulate their imagination and identify what they would like to improve. Two teams have been formed and they are focusing on improvements in the playground and the library. The Community Link Teacher talks positively about how the programme gave the impetus to set up teams and to make improvements that are seen as relevant by the students.

Annual 'Review and Renew' sessions

It is recommended that each team has an annual review. This is an interactive session that helps teams reflect on their achievements and set goals for the future. It reaffirms their commitment and is a vital part of the process.

While at The Blue School these are given high priority they have not yet been established in most of the pilot schools. This illustrates one of the difficulties schools face in adopting a new way of working within established structures and priorities. Community Link Teachers have expressed concern about the time required for these meetings, and require a period of adjustment, so that only in the second year of the operation will planning allow for incorporation of dedicated and protected time. Where review and renew meetings have taken place in the pilot schools, they have proved extremely valuable.

Section 6: Significant adaptations

In most cases the new schools are attempting to implement the programme in the way it has been explained to them in the initial training, but there are a number of adaptations mostly as a response to difficulties experienced. For example:

In the special school the formats for documenting the meetings have been replaced by a simple notebook and a notice board has taken the place of the recommended memos to arrange and remind people about meetings.

The time slot for Project Team training sessions has been reduced in some cases because of the lack of availability of the CLT to lead the sessions or because there is a perception that the students cannot maintain their concentration for that long.

In some cases, the tools have been adapted to suit the needs of particular students. The survey tool for example has been transcribed into a more visual, graphic form for use in the special school.

Such adaptations help to overcome the difficulties experienced by very young students and those with special educational needs or from disadvantaged backgrounds. The principles and essential practices of LtoL are being embraced by schools which cater for such young people because of its potential to re-engage students.

Section 7: The benefits and impact of Learning to Lead

The evidence from students, teachers, headteachers, and from observations by the research team is that the Learning to Lead programme has had an overwhelmingly positive impact on the young people who participate as well as on the schools more generally. Evidence from Ofsted inspections supports this view. Variations in the extent to which each of these benefits are experienced in different schools can be attributed in part to the degree to which the various aspects of the approach have been adopted.

This section draws from the evaluation study to highlight the benefits and impact of the Learning to Lead programme on students, on their schools and beyond. It is organised under the headings:

- A. Benefits to students
- B. Benefits to the school
- C. Benefits beyond the school

A. Benefits to students

The benefits to students cannot be fully appreciated within a brief study such as this. Some of the benefits may not be felt until many years have passed. Nevertheless it is possible to identify 11 specific but inter-related benefits for students.

1. Developing a stronger sense of commitment to their own learning
2. Experiencing a strengthening of their emerging sense of moral purpose
3. Having an enhanced sense of belonging to the community of the school
4. Valuing and looking after one another
5. Acquiring skills, particularly social, communication and organisational skills
6. Developing confidence as learners and members of society
7. Enjoying learning and enhancing achievement
8. Becoming more aware of their strengths and talents
9. Developing a positive approach to challenges
10. Being more willing to take risks and try new things
11. Experiencing and acting on enhanced agency

Each of these eleven benefits is supported by the evidence and they are elaborated below.

1. Students develop a stronger sense of commitment to their own learning.

It is evident that participation in the Learning to Lead programme is transformative for many students who respond positively to the opportunity for self-directed learning. The success experienced carries over into a general commitment to their own learning and to their place in the school. Teachers talk about the positive transformation of students' attitudes which they attribute to participation in Learning to Lead. Students also express satisfaction about leading their own learning.

(Being in a Learning to Lead team)... *It's like our own little lessons.*

(Student, School B)

The comment expresses a sense of ownership seems to be fostered by Learning to Lead.

2. LtoL activities strengthen and provide direction for students' emerging sense of moral purpose.

Young people tend to respond badly to adult moralising but have a natural sense of fairness. Their concern with social issues, such as the environment, can be nurtured in a context which allows expression and provides opportunities for issues to be acted on. Dealing constructively with people in authority is a hugely important social skill, one which avoids confrontation and is not self defeating.

I've gained confidence in talking to people who have authority. Before I would sit back and let people in charge tell me what to do. I think this would continue in other ways, like with government, if they wanted to tear down a building say, I would try and do something to stop it happening.

(Student, School B)

This comment reflects the widespread experience of students who discover, through LtoL, a channel for the expression of their sense of moral purpose.

3. Students' sense of belonging to the community of the school is enhanced.

As we know from research, failure is closely allied to young people's perception of their place and sense of being valued by their teachers and their peers. The testimony from some students is that Learning to Lead has given them a reason for coming to school. Others highlight their renewed sense of pride in being part of their school.

I've gained more respect for the school. I used to think about school – get it over and done with. I didn't think much of it. Now I am going out of my way to help the school rather than just turn up.

(Student, School G)

This comment reflects a common feeling.

4. Students value and look after each other.

The peer effect is powerful and can be either disempowering or empowering, particularly influential in teenage years. In a Learning to Lead team, students experience both acceptance and protection. Not only does this promote positive attitudes to school and feelings of self-worth but it also lays the groundwork for academic success.

There's a feeling of inclusiveness. There are little things that stand out in my mind ... like one Year 7 student who was being really badly bullied. A Year 11 student, who was also in the energy team that he had just joined, turned round and said 'what are you doing? That is such an unkind way to behave to somebody'. So there's a sense of protection, a sense of belonging.

(Community Link Teacher, School B)

This observation is illustrative of many observations by teachers in participating schools focusing on the improvements in relationships between students.

5. Students develop skills, particularly social, communication and organisational.

Life skills can only be developed by being practised, having opportunities to fail as well as succeed, to experience setbacks and overcome them. Teachers observe that students are developing remarkable levels of capability in relation to organising meetings, carrying out practical tasks, facilitating each other and making the commitment.

I've gained lots of skills, confidence, and organisation. You've got to plan the meetings, write agendas, put reminders in registers. There's lots of commitment to it, but it's worth it.

(Student, School B)

The exercise of leadership in meetings and in project activities is not limited to a few but is a shared responsibility that gives many students the opportunity to develop social and life skills.

6. Students develop confidence as learners and members of society.

The experience of many young people of schooling is one of failure and demoralisation. For many there are few avenues for success and opportunities to develop the feelings of self-worth that come with it. In contrast participation in Learning to Lead activities has helped many students to feel that they can solve problems, that they are capable individuals and have power ‘to use in a good way’.

It feels like we've got the power to do something. ...We have a bit of power, but we use it in a good way.

(Student, School N)

The development of self-confidence is a recurring theme in interviews with students and teachers and was also remarked upon by parents.

7. Students enjoy learning and achievement is enhanced.

‘Enjoying and achieving’ is one of the five key planks of *Every Child Matters*. Achievement is intrinsically related to enjoyment and, as evidence from the project shows, students enjoy being involved, their enthusiasm and energy enabling them to keep going and breakthrough to learning.

We didn't want to stop. We wanted to keep on going and going. We all had light bulbs on top of our heads that day.

The energy I felt from the team was really good. I was sitting there and feeding off the energy. We were laughing, smiling.

(Students, School M)

This is linked to the point about a sense of belonging (see above) but it is specifically about students’ experience of ‘flow’ (Csíkszentmihályi, 1996) through engagement in LtoL activities. This sense of joy that arises from immersion in such activities carries over into mainstream lessons.

8. Students become more aware of their strengths and talents.

There is a great deal of research evidence to show that what is learned at the classroom desk does not transfer well to other unfamiliar contexts. Learning in unfamiliar contexts or ‘learning in the wild’ as David Perkins calls it, requires that students experience problem solving in a range of different environments (Perkins *et al.*, 2000). Learning to Lead has helped many young people to discover new skills and strengths when put into situations they have not encountered before.

As a team we realised we'd made a mistake and knew what we had to do....as a team I think it's made us stronger and realised, yes, we are learning all the time and we make mistakes in our lives and we can lead our lives how we want to.

(Student, School M)

The emphasis in this student's comment is on the team which reflects the way in which collaboration can provide the support for students to develop their self-awareness.

9. Students develop a positive disposition to challenges.

The experience of LtoL activity reframes problems. The concept of reframing refers to an attitude and a skill which is put to use when problems arise and the negative internal voice rises to the fore. Putting a new frame around the issue can turn problems into opportunities and, as Learning to Lead team work illustrates, helps students to develop resilience and a positive frame of mind.

To make positive changes, you need to be positive about it, so if things go wrong, you say 'this is where it went wrong', but this is how we can improve it.

(Student, School M)

Learning to Lead provides opportunities for students to respond to challenges of their own choosing. It is evident that, on the whole, they tend not to take the easy option but instead stretch themselves. Their capacity for problem solving is thereby enhanced.

10. Students are more willing to take risks and try new things.

Fear of the unknown, making a decision without all the information and taking a risk are not always taught or learned in school. In schools in disadvantaged areas where students have less natural resilience and trust in 'the system' these issues become particularly salient. A key strength of Learning to Lead is in helping to broaden horizons, to raise aspirations, to take that daring leap into unknown territory.

Life isn't just about people. It's about decisions that people make. If you make a decision, paths open to you. You can walk down a path that seems straight, that you know what's going to happen or you can take a risk, take a leap into the unknown and have fun while you're doing it.

(Student, School M)

11. Students' sense of agency is enhanced.

The concept of 'agency' is not one that would be familiar to many young people but one that is crucial to their achievement and sense of self. As the evidence from this evaluation shows, the sense of agency, of empowerment and purposeful engagement is experienced as transformative, transcending individualism and enhancing the feeling of belonging to something bigger.

It's made a difference because you ain't just affecting yourself anymore, you're affecting everyone else, like you're getting involved with others to make a difference and like you ain't just an individual anymore, but you recognise you're part of everything else.

(Student, School M)

Learning to Lead draws on human agency and responds to this innate capacity and in so doing allows it to flourish and grow.

Learning to Lead and PLTS

Another way to consider the benefits of Learning to Lead activity is to map it on to the QCA's 'personal, learning and thinking skills' (PLTS) framework.

Mapping Learning to Lead onto personal, learning and thinking skills

The QCA's framework for personal, learning and thinking skills aims to develop 'successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens'. It is evident that Learning to Lead addresses these aims.

Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills	How these skills developed through Learning to Lead
Independent enquirers	All the project teams go through a process of investigation in order to plan what to do and how to do it.
Creative thinkers	The Learning to Lead approach includes tools and processes to help students generate and explore ideas and different ways of tackling issues and problems.
Reflective learners	The reflective process is continuous and facilitated by the supportive relationships. Students are encouraged to learn from mistakes.
Self-managers	Students make a positive choice to join a team and the experience is challenging, requiring them to take initiative, develop new skills and organise themselves.
Effective participators	The teams provide the opportunity for students to play an active part, achieving real change and improvements in the school or wider community.
Team workers	Students take responsibility for running the teams themselves. They take on different roles, learn to negotiate and work together to achieve their aims.

The impact of the Learning to Lead programme on the schools' effectiveness is difficult to measure but there is an abundance of testimony that indicates improvements to students' motivation, standards of behaviour, dispositions towards learning, standards of literacy and numeracy, and the development of a range of personal, learning and thinking skills. The contribution that Learning to Lead makes the QCA's 'personal, learning and thinking skills' (PLTS) framework is illustrated in the table above (QCA, 2008).

B. Benefits to the school

Learning to Lead activities can contribute to transforming relationships within the school. The following are 7 of the benefits identified:

1. The development of more respectful and collaborative relationships between teachers and students
2. The development of respectful and collaborative relationships between students
3. Improvement in the school environment and facilities
4. Contributions to the improvement of the quality of learning and teaching
5. Teachers are becoming more aware of their students' potential
6. Participation is seen as more attractive
7. Students play a part in building capacity and sustaining the work in the future

These are more fully described below.

1. More respectful and collaborative relationships between teachers and students are developed.

Respect and collaboration are key principles that are linked to an overall concern with a sense of community characterised by mutuality and reciprocity. In Learning to Lead teachers report a more positive sense of collaboration and a change in the dynamic, particularly when the differential in subject related expertise is no longer at issue.

In the school council the teachers treat you with respect. They are doing it because they want to. They trust you and believe you can do it.

(Student, School A)

2. More respectful and collaborative relationships between students are developed.

Teamwork is, by definition, a process in which tolerance of difference, solidarity and empathy are at a premium. Being in a team with students of different ages, with others you would not normally associate with, and working together for a common cause has been shown to strengthen peer relationships.

We socialise with people we don't normally talk to around school.

(Student, School D)

The fact that students 'self-elect' or volunteer to join this or that project team means that teams are socially mixed and sustained through explicit principles of respect and inclusion.

3. There are contributions to the improvement of the quality of learning and teaching.

While still in its infancy, there is growing evidence that Learning to Lead is beginning to impact more directly on what happens inside the classroom. Some project teams address aspects of teaching and learning and some teachers are using the Learning to Lead tools in the classroom. Students are making the connection between Learning to Lead and learning in the classroom.

It helps with English because it is expanding our minds and with Maths because if we plan to do something it costs money and we have to work this out.

(Student, School M)

4. There are improvements in the school environment and facilities.

The curriculum is often taken to mean something that takes place in the classroom yet it is through the wider experience of school life and relationships that young people exercise their initiative, extend their learning and make a contribution to the collective life of the school. The Learning to Lead approach enables students to improve many aspects of school life. One such contribution is through creating a more effective system of recycling in the school. Another is to address perennial issues of graffiti and vandalism.

It has given a buzz around the school. People can see results. It's visible.

(Headteacher, School D)

Vandalism and graffiti has been knocked on the head. (Referring to toilets)
(Headteacher, School L)

Learning to Lead has impact on these issues both directly when project teams take on the challenge of improving the fabric of the school building but also indirectly by fostering a stronger sense of belonging as mentioned above.

5. Teachers are becoming more aware of their students' potential.

The term 'potential' is one of the most limiting concepts in the vocabulary of teachers and students. Potential grows and expands with experience and when teachers see how students respond to the challenge of project team activity, they tend to form a more positive view of what students are capable of.

You see this grumpy attitude in the classroom and then you get them in this situation and they're completely different.

(Community Link Teacher, School L)

Teacher expectation is a significant factor in determining levels of student achievement and it is evident that Learning to Lead impacts directly and positively on this.

6. Participation is seen as more attractive.

Being 'cool', or being seen to be cool in the eyes of their peers, is of paramount importance to most young people. Whereas many students saw involvement in activities such as the school council as 'uncool', participation in Learning to Lead activities are proving more attractive to a wider range of students.

The best moment was when I saw the names (of students wanting to join teams) and realised how many people want to make a change.

(Student, School M)

7. Students contribute to building capacity and sustainability.

It is often the case that, as students pass through school and move on to work or higher education, there is often little legacy left for those who follow. However in the Learning to Lead schools we see students making a contribution to the future of their school communities. Sustainability is nurtured when young people begin to think about others who follow and implies a commitment to the next generation of

students. The deep understanding of leadership and teamwork is an essential part of that legacy.

We have the feeling that we will pass it on. We start things up for others to carry on.

(Student, School I)

We're changing stuff and doing this for other generations who come to this school as well. This will stay. It won't finish when we leave.

(Student, School M)

LtoL project teams are self-renewing and so sustainability is built in, but it is interesting to note that students express an explicit awareness of this as a goal.

C. Benefits beyond the school

The concept of 'holarchy' includes the idea that students belong to communities which are themselves nested within wider communities. The concentric circles in the LtoL diagram (see Frost and Stenton, 2010) extend fully to encompass the idea of a global community. It is evident from the evaluation that participation in Learning to Lead is leading to benefits beyond the school. These are indicated briefly below under three headings.

1. Inspiring other students and schools to participate
2. Contributing to the local community
3. Contributing to the global community

1. Inspiring other students and schools to participate

Students involved in Learning to Lead have inspired others to participate in the LtoL programme and related or similar activities. For example, students have spoken at events outside school to celebrate and publicise their achievements and this tends to encourage other students and teachers to take up the challenge of Learning to Lead. Some students have talked to year 6 students at the primary schools and have helped to run the Year 6 Induction day. In some cases teams from different schools are meeting to share ideas.

2. Contributing to the local community

Some project work contributes to improvements in relationships with the wider community. Learning to Lead provides opportunities for good publicity to challenge the negative stereotype of young people and improve the reputation of the school.

Where the work of a project team involves charitable efforts in the community, teams may decide to contact the beneficiaries and find out how the money is being used. Other teams draw on the expertise or ideas of community members. The leader of a local Chernobyl charity spoke of his experience of working with a Learning to Lead team at The Blue School.

We sat with the Fundraising Team and gave them a report and pictures – they were just throwing ideas out - within a week they'd had a mufti day and raised £1,000. The kids were totally involved. They look after different parts of the school.... It took us both by surprise at the number of ideas – some of the children are not very old – the ideas they came up with – They all came up with different ideas – all very sensible suggestions. We were skipping when we left...We're really excited to be working with them.

(Leader of a local charity)

One school in a disadvantaged area has recently formed a team called 'Building a Better Community' which aims to tackle racism and increase people's pride in their community.

People think if they live (here) you can't achieve anything; 'who cares what we put down, it's not going to be read by anyone'. This made us more determined. Some people are starting to see that (this place) is not so bad.

(Student, School M)

3. Contributing to the global community

Some project teams focus on raising money for charities and some are concerned with 'Global Links and Fair Trade'. Links between participating schools and their counterparts in other countries such as China and Ghana are common.

Section 8: Adopting Learning to Lead: challenges and issues

Adoption and implementation of the programme has been enthusiastic and largely successful in spite of it being faltering and tentative in some cases. There have been fruitful adaptations which suggest that the essence of the programme can survive as some aspects of the recommended activity are adapted to suit the nature of the particular context.

It is inevitable, however, that ambiguities and tensions will arise in the transfer of practice from one context to another. The strength of the programme in The Blue School was its rootedness in its own cultural soil and the cultivation and nurturing that went into it over time. As we know from studies of good practice and of change, conditions and readiness will necessarily vary widely. As this study shows, Learning to Lead was able to take root most easily where there was a pre-existing commitment to, or emphasis on student voice. Linked to this was an interest in education as being wider than the pursuit of academic performance. Learning to Lead seems to flourish where the school's view of education encompasses the goals of citizenship and personal and social education and where it build on, extends and enhances current practice. It was, according to the head of the primary school, that the strength of existing PSHE⁵ programme already in place helped LtoL to 'take off':

We were already doing well in this area but Learning to Lead helped us to fly.

(Primary School Headteacher)

In almost all cases:

- Schools have designated a Community Link Teacher, sometimes two, who have participated in the training programme provided by the Learning to Lead CIC. In most cases ongoing senior leadership support is in place.
- CLTs have facilitated a survey and the follow up tutor group sessions through which priorities have been identified.
- Student project teams (ranging from 1 – 8 in number) have been established and maintained during 2008-09 and have held Annual Reviews.

Organisational structures are developing more slowly. In some cases the Management Team and Governance Support meetings have not yet been established.

⁵ Personal, Social and Health Education

Nonetheless, there are indications that, however faltering or incomplete the degree of implementation in the first academic year, most participating schools are building on the lessons learnt and are extending and embedding the Learning to Lead approach. The Annual Review and Renew sessions play a key role in enabling schools to move to the next stage of development, establishing Management Support and Governance Support meetings for example.

Overall, the main challenge has been the comparison between what schools have been able to achieve in the first few months of participation and the model that is in place at The Blue School.

Particular challenges and issues are considered below under the following headings:

1. The availability of time
2. Perceptions of students' capacity to lead
3. The level of participation
4. Protecting the principle of choice
5. Sustainability and capacity building
6. Coherence and the role of management and governance
7. The link between representation and practical action
8. The tension between alternative pedagogic codes
9. Ownership of the agenda
10. Physical space for project work and administration
11. A clash of organisational cultures
12. Matters of scheduling
13. The professional culture
14. Headteacher commitment
15. Getting the right Community Link Teacher
16. Salary points and financial rewards
17. Community Link Teachers and succession planning
18. Budgets
19. From consultation and representation to support and facilitation
20. Compulsion and voluntarism
21. Practical arrangements

1. The availability of time

Community Link Teachers report that time is a significant challenge. The tasks of co-ordination, organisation, support and training for the student project teams is time consuming. This varies according to the extent to which the workload is spread between a number of people and it is evident that the co-ordination function can be shared by establishing a co-ordination team. One CLT who undertakes the role as

part of her senior leadership responsibility suggests that the creation of a full time post with responsibility for student liaison would be a reasonable step given the benefits that are apparent with the LtoL and related approaches.

2. Perceptions of students' capacity to lead

In a minority of cases there is a perception on the part of some teachers that students are not ready to lead their own meetings which can be a self-fulfilling prophecy. It seems that students need time to develop the art of leadership and their belief in their own authority to lead. This inevitably means that they require a great deal of support from CLTs in the early stages of implementation. Where students seem to lack confidence and motivation, a greater leap of faith on the part of teachers is required, but the rewards are all the more significant.

3. The level of participation

Potentially all students in a school can participate in Learning to Lead or at least be touched by it, but it takes time to develop this level of participation. Some team activities inevitably involve the whole school, for example when the Fundraising Team runs a non-uniform day. Students have a vital part to play in promoting Learning to Lead and in some cases there are teams which have taken on this task.

4. Protecting the principle of choice

Defining characteristics of the Learning to Lead programme are the principles of student choice and invitational leadership. However, school timetables tend to allow little space for optional, student-led activity. Project work is often limited to lunch breaks and at the end of the school day. In some schools Learning to Lead is built into the timetable which seems to be a positive step as the tools and ways of working can be of value in whatever situation a student chooses to use them. However there is a danger that the voluntary principle may be violated if students are required to join a team because it has become part of the formal curriculum.

5. Sustainability and capacity building

The successful adoption of Learning to Lead has relied on the commitment and enthusiasm of one or two Community Link Teacher(s). The work is time consuming and challenging, but at the same time highly rewarding. If the programme is to be sustained, it needs not only to be relatively self-supporting through the power of

student leadership, but also to have practical support from other members of staff and active support from senior managers. In some schools there are growing links between subject areas and the work of particular teams.

6. Coherence and the role of management and governance

Many schools have yet to establish the structures of management and governance. Experience of the programme as it developed in The Blue School suggests that these structures help to create coherence and to embed the programme in the life of the school. The meetings of the Management Team ensure that key elements of the school's management arrangements can be mobilised in support of the work of project teams and the potential synergies between them are husbanded. The Governance Support Team ensures that the student's activity is acknowledged and supported as part of the overall vision and plan for the school. As the number of teams grows, it becomes increasingly necessary to establish these structures.

7. The link between representation and practical action

The Learning to Lead programme can enliven student participation and engagement in a way that the traditional representative school council often fails to do. However, if the recommended governance structures are not effectively established, the representation of the student body and a key strategy for student voice may be lost. The Forum ensures that the work of the project teams is open to scrutiny by the student body and facilitates communication between the teams.

8. The tension between alternative pedagogic codes

The values and pedagogical assumptions implicit in the Learning to Lead approach may be at odds with the dominant pedagogic norms, or 'codes' of the school.

Learning to Lead pedagogy	Traditional pedagogy
Student-led agenda	National curriculum led agenda
Student-led activity	Teacher-led activity
Student determined goals	Prescribed goals
Negotiation	Instruction
Assessment of learning implicit in review and reflection	Assessment of learning determined by curriculum related criteria
Focused on practical action	Focused on academic learning

There are signs that the introduction of Learning to Lead is contributing to the development of a pedagogy that is more personalised and one that recognises the need to enhance students' agency. It is perhaps inevitable that some students will feel frustrated by the discontinuity of experience, between the norms and rules that apply in the classroom and those that determine the way a Learning to Lead project team works. Congruence is not achieved overnight but takes time to resolve.

9. Ownership of the agenda

The Learning to Lead programme has the potential to enable students to pursue activities that are meaningful to them. Students are consulted, but the tools used to survey the students' views tend to point towards a particular range of themes: for example, 'Recycling', 'The Beautiful School' and 'Healthy Eating'. As the programme gathers momentum and Community Link Teachers feel more confident, students are being encouraged to set up teams focused on what might be seen as more challenging issues such as those which touch directly on teaching and learning.

10. Physical space for project work and administration

About half the schools have a Learning to Lead office where the students can use the phone, computers and connect to the internet. Most of the others are working towards this or have this aspiration. There are issues concerned with resources and the availability of space.

11. A clash of organisational cultures

There is a tension between the values of Learning to Lead, particularly in relation to the concept of holarchy, and the traditional hierarchical relations that characterise many classrooms, particularly where teachers are under pressure to cover the curriculum and regard time for discussion, exploration and side excursions as a luxury. Students are highly sensitive to these issues and adapt accordingly. Knowing how to play the game is the first important lesson you learn in school. Yet it causes frustration for those who have had a taste of something different.

You get your say in BSC but in lessons you don't get chosen or have a say. It's SO frustrating.

In lessons you don't have influence and power. In lessons you sit back and are told what to do. If someone's being demanding in a lesson you wouldn't want them to be like that – assertive.

(BSC students)

Students are clearly functioning in two different worlds, skilfully negotiating the codes that determine behaviour in either place but knowing which one they largely prefer.

12. Matters of scheduling

Linked to the above is the tension that arises over the scheduling of Learning to Lead activities and the academic timetable. Teachers who are under pressure to 'get through the syllabus' may in some cases resent students missing lessons or even just the ends of some lessons and, although there are agreed procedures in place for students to attend Learning to Lead meetings, some make their displeasure known to students. This is clearly a challenge for members of senior leadership teams who will want to innovate sensitively, taking account of competing priorities.

13. The professional culture

The nature of the professional culture within which the Learning to Lead programme is seeded is a crucial variable, particularly in relation to values such as those associated with student voice, citizenship and the relative importance of personal and social education. However, professional cultures are not homogeneous. Programmes such as Learning to Lead correspond with the values of some teachers but not others. For some, involvement in the programme provides them with a valuable opportunity to realise their values in practice. The question is whether teachers who have not previously shared those values are influenced and drawn along through their contact with the programme, or are persuaded by evidence of its impact on such factors as student dispositions, levels of attainment, standards of behaviour and the like.

14. Headteacher commitment

It is evident that the commitment of the headteacher to the programme is crucial to its success. In the case of the small primary school, the role of Community Link Teacher and Headteacher reside in the same person. This allows for strategies such as having the whole school working on Learning to Lead on Monday mornings. In some cases the senior leadership team is said to be less than fully briefed on the nature and demands of the LtoL programme which leads to difficulties being experienced by CLTs.

15. Getting the right Community Link Teacher

The designation of a suitable teacher as the Community Link Teacher is also pivotal and the professional development they experience appears to be powerfully influential. However, the challenge of leading a programme such as this is must not be underestimated. It is evident that there is a certain degree of uncertainty, modesty or reticence when faced with the challenge of influencing colleagues by making the work of the programme visible and celebrating it. Teacher leadership demands confidence and skill; some believe that it also requires the authority of established position.

16. Salary points and financial rewards

Community link teachers and others involved in the Learning to Lead programme seek maximum support. The question of salary points and financial rewards are mentioned but the most significant issue is to do with time. The work appears to be very time consuming and demanding and the challenge grows along with the success of the programme. Headteachers may be committed and supportive but not necessarily able to command the resources to allocate salary points.

17. Community Link Teachers and succession planning

The question of sustainability arises particularly in relation to the leadership question. Particularly in the early stages of development, the programme rests heavily on the shoulders of the Community Link Teacher. This is not just a matter of hard work but also draws on personality qualities such as vision and commitment. This raises a concern about what might happen if that person were to leave the school or become ill. Succession planning is talked about in The Blue School and in some of the pilot schools there are examples of helpful ways forward such as engaging other staff in the enterprise, linking the development of LtoL to the school development plan and making links with the subject-based curriculum.

18. Budgets

The allocation of budgets to student teams or support for students to raise their own funds is a very powerful factor in enabling students to take responsibility. As the limit to students' decision making becomes apparent it creates frustration but also serves to highlight the art of negotiation and compromise. These are key dimensions of the learning for both students and teachers and can breed a sense of collaboration and ownership.

19. From consultation and representation to support and facilitation

There is evidence of some tension between the student councils as they have existed prior to the initiation of Learning to Lead and the new approach. Doubt seems to have crept in as to whether there is any point to organising council elections, for example. This may be a key issue in the transition process. It is not just a matter of organisation; rather the new arrangement demands a different way of conceiving of student leadership. The Learning to Lead programme seeks to move from a situation where student demands are expressed through consultation and representation, to a situation where students are supported and facilitated in the practical pursuit of their goals.

20. Compulsion and voluntarism

The values underpinning the Learning to Lead programme are essentially inclusive but the realisation of such values is problematic in relation to the question of compulsion and voluntarism. Arguably school attendance and a statutory common core curriculum are compulsory in order to ensure equality of opportunity, but membership of a team is voluntary with some students choosing not to join a team at all. Linked to this is the question of identity and the social pressures that might contribute to a student's decision to opt in or remain detached. In one primary school all students are obliged to take part because it is built in to the timetabled activities for the year group. In one secondary school students are introduced to Learning to Lead through a process of training which involves them putting forward proposals for teams. They are then invited to self-elect to the teams that emerge.

21. Practical arrangements

There are practical difficulties to be faced such as the limitations imposed by transport arrangements particularly in rural settings. The security of installations and equipment particularly where these are placed in the outside environment is a concern. How to prevent vandalism and attacks on poultry for example have been significant problems for some.

Overcoming the challenges

The challenges outlined above are by no means insurmountable and the evidence from the pilot schools is that they are being overcome through ingenuity and creative thinking. As confidence grows, solutions are found.

Section 9: Key questions for schools

In this section we pose a number of questions for schools which are considering the adoption of the Learning to Lead programme. These questions arise from reflections by members of the research team on their experience of data collection.

1. Can LtoL be sustained if it is extra-curricular? In most cases the programme is added on rather than integrated and it competes for the attention of pupils. Particularly in relation to the older students, the spectre of formal examinations can lead to a prioritisation that is unhelpful for LtoL.
2. To what extent does the LtoL approach penetrate pedagogic relationships directly? It is evident that LtoL is experienced by students and teachers as operating according to a different pedagogic code. It may even be that the principles and values of LtoL are in tension with the school culture.
3. The burden on the Community Link Teacher is heavy. To what extent can schools allocate sufficient time to this activity? When the role is taken by a member of senior leadership team there may be greater flexibility, but where this is not the case it is difficult to complete the necessary tasks within the time available.
4. In some cases, CLTs are simply shouldering all the responsibility for the programme as individuals, whereas others seem to be acting as agents of change, drawing colleagues in and spreading the load. If the programme is to be sustainable, how can it involve many more supporters within the staff team?
5. The LtoL approach is seen to be far more productive and engaging than the more traditional school council model. However, what issues arise if the representative dimension has been removed and not replaced in the way that The Blue School model suggests?
6. For some students LtoL activities are associated with the school council and, although this may have changed quite markedly, the association can still be a barrier to participation. How to challenge the perception the school council involves meetings and writing rather than action?
7. The materials are well received but it is clear that there remains scope for clarification and streamlining. Should this be addressed centrally or is it

better for schools to make their own adaptations and produce their own materials?

8. In some schools there is a tendency for the responsibility for facilitating meetings to pass from the CLT to the more senior students which is a threat to sustainability if those senior students are not able to attend. What could be done to avoid this and what learning is there from other cases in which younger students have been able to develop the confidence and skill to facilitate meetings?
9. In some schools there are the beginnings of links between project teams and particular subject areas. How can this be further explored so that the work of the project teams can be more integrated into the curriculum?
10. The development of a network for the teachers involved is helpful, but how can teachers use this most effectively to generate mutual support and knowledge sharing?
11. There is currently a high level of dependence on Susan Piers-Mantell as an individual and the Learning to Lead CIC directors. What needs to be done to develop more localised training, networking and mentoring?
12. To what extent can Headteachers and CLTs draw together evidence of the LtoL activities and the students' views of it as part of their school self-evaluation process?
13. To what extent can schools adapt and change the LtoL model as recommended without it becoming unrecognisable? There is a tension between on the one hand the aim of enabling schools to embrace the principles and values and to make the practice their own, and on the other hand, to maintain the identity and ultimately the goals of LtoL.
14. To what extent does the survey successfully identify the issues that teams subsequently address? Schools may find ways to complement the survey in order to ensure that important issues are not overlooked.

Conclusions

The portrait offered in this report and in the document, *Learning to Lead: the story so far* (Frost and Stenton, 2010), is a very positive one. It is abundantly evident that the Learning to Lead programme has enormous potential to transform the experience of school for young people and in so doing to transform the life of the school itself.

As stated in the section on methodology (Section 2, page 5), the evaluation did not attempt to generate quantitative data in order to judge effectiveness through correlations with levels of attainment. Instead an illuminative approach was adopted in which the most important aim is to make visible the characteristics of the programme being evaluated. Nevertheless, qualitative evidence of extensive impact on students, their schools and communities has been presented. As the Learning to Lead programme develops and becomes embedded in the participating schools over the next few years, it will be important to monitor the way in which trends and patterns in attainment fare. A clear causal link will always be difficult to establish, but this should not stand in the way of evaluation. Headteachers in collaboration with the Learning to Lead CIC will want to draw on the statement of values, principles and good practice described here as a framework to support to the process of continuous self-evaluation.

Developing this programme inevitably demands an investment of time to plan and implement it and to connect it with the broader aspirations of the school. Those contemplating the adoption of the Learning to Lead programme in the future will want to make themselves aware of the challenges and issues referred to above. The evidence clearly indicates that the challenges that have been highlighted in this report are being addressed and as the LtoL approach spreads, processes and solutions are evolving and are beginning to be shared between schools by both students and staff.

The evidence so far is that the programme is making a huge contribution to building capacity for learning in its deepest sense. The qualitative evidence points to radical shifts in student dispositions, marked improvement in the quality of relationships and the development of participative school cultures which enable young people to flourish and achieve. By inviting students to exercise leadership in the way that the Learning to Lead programme does, we take a major step towards the restoration of trust in young people. This is badly needed in order to mobilise the energy, creativity and moral purpose of students for the benefit of their own education and for the benefit of their schools and communities.

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Appendix

Vignettes from The Blue School

The following vignettes are based on the observations of three key events which took place at The Blue School in the Autumn of 2008.

A Team Meeting at The Blue School

The meeting took place during the lunchtime on the last Friday of the term. This was one of a series of weekly meetings which take place in the Community Link Teachers' (CLT) science lab. The 'Polytunnel Team' were also meeting in the same room with the CLT.

A Yr 10 student, Aled, was facilitating the meeting. There were over a dozen students sitting around him eating lunch. A couple of students are drawing. Three more students arrived as he was speaking. Aled explained the importance of the meeting given the problem of feeding the team's chickens over the school Christmas closure. He had drawn up a timetable and asked when the rest of the team would be around over the Christmas break. He maintained team members' involvement through his calm and confident body language, voice and eye contact. He suggested another lunchtime meeting in the same place on the last day of term to cement the timetable and offered to organise early lunch passes for people if they needed them. The CLT went over to check on progress. Aled asked him if they could double feed the chickens on Christmas Eve but the CLT said that the chickens would need to get out every day. He asked if they needed him and Aled said that they did not so he went away.

Aled worked through the timetable checking when people would be able to feed the chickens. He offered to do New Years Day himself and another student volunteered for Christmas Day. Aled checked that any offer would be OK with the others. When people offered to help he double checked with them especially if they had already committed themselves to a number of days. One student offered to do four days in a row but Aled asked if someone else could take some of these days. Aled drew people in to the discussion. He asked two of the team members to be organisers and emergency contacts and if it would be OK for everyone to share home telephone numbers. He gained their attention and said: 'Can everybody please note down this number, if not see me and I'll give you a copy of it'. He checked that they were all ready then gave out the number, and told them that, if they are unable to do a session they must contact the emergency contacts volunteers straight away. Finally, he asked anyone who will be doing a day to see him for a photocopy of how to feed the chickens, the quantities of food and where to feed them.

Aled was very clear and authoritative about the instructions. The team were all listening. They knew where to get equipment and how they have adapted their programme for Christmas feeding times instead of school term times. He said that they should try and move the chicken run to fresh grass if possible and emphasised that they must arrive for their session no later than 10am. If they would be likely to arrive after that they should telephone and rearrange the session. They would also need to return between 4 and 7pm on that day to let the chickens in. They also discussed where the best place would be to leave the keys.

Aled said that during the following week he would do the chickens every day. He checked to see if this was OK with the team. He reminded them that they would be meeting the following Wednesday and that they would do a new rota for the following term then.

The CLT asked what they had decided and how confident they were that the plan would work. He made suggestions such as posting the timetable up on a window facing outwards onto the field emailing it to team members. They talked about such things as emergency arrangements, health and safety issues and the need to get first aid at the Sports Centre on site if anyone's legs were to get bitten by the chickens. The CLT told them that he would be following up actions from other meetings and negotiating with the groundsman about a new hen house.

The CLT had been very skilled in using the structure, tools and attitudes of the Learning to Lead approach to strike a balance between giving the students the freedom and responsibility to plan and run things for themselves and helping them to anticipate any dangers or challenges that may lie ahead. With such a combination it is unlikely the parents' fears would be realised and the students would be able to engage in a real learning process with manageable consequences and the satisfaction of taking meaningful responsibility.

The meeting lasted for 20 minutes and most of the team departed leaving Aled going through instructions with team members who were not sure what to do. He then moved the tables back to their former positions and others offered to help with this.

A meeting of the Forum at The Blue School

The seating and audio visual technology for the Forum had been set up by the students in the Coordination and Support Team and the Community Link Teacher (CLT).

The meeting included 250 students who make up the 28 student teams. All year groups were represented although younger students seem to be in the majority. The Coordination and Support Team ran the Forum with minimal support from the CLT. A confident, perceptive and articulate Yr 10 student, Amy⁶ welcomed

⁶ Students' names are fictitious

guests and used the microphone confidently. There was a little flurry of excited chatter which the CLT responds to by modelling a calm and respectful attitude to the students. He reminded them that: *'We treat people with respect so if you think you can't listen then it's a good idea to leave now as it would be embarrassing to be asked to leave'*.

The forum opened with members of the Fundraising Team presenting a cheque for £500 to 'Horses for the Disabled'. A representative of the charity spoke about their work and that the cheque would buy 'two front legs of a horse'. Amy held the forum together expertly while another older student, Thomas, talked about how they had arrived at the new Blue School Council strap line 'Change doesn't happen on its own'. He told the forum that the governors thought the line was *'bordering on genius'*. He also described the work which involved composing and sending out 200 emails and dealing with disagreements. He received positive feedback from members of the forum.

The Buddying Team led by their lower sixth form facilitator made a presentation about their work. They talked about what had worked well, what could be improved and what could be learned for the future. The powerpoint slides contained a range of grounded observations, responses and ideas for action. There was some criticism of teachers' behaviour in general. They identified desirable changes such as bringing in vertical tutor groups. They spoke of carrying out research in other schools. Feedback was sought from Forum members who expressed views and asked questions such as those below:

How would we be taught as we'd be at different levels?

It's a big plan. I think there should be consultation with the whole school. I think everyone should be involved.

Why do we need houses back?

Aren't vertical tutor groups daunting for Year 7s?

The team responded well to the questions from the floor. The Buddying Team wanted to consult students but were not sure that students would complete on-line surveys. They discussed these dilemmas openly in the forum.

A video of the work of the BSC teams was shown. There is a sense of fun, freedom and ownership but the approach was orderly. The scale of the work was striking. The new BSC website (www.blueschoolcouncil.org) was introduced by one of the students who has designed and constructed it. He had been on the point of exclusion until he became a member of the BSC and found support from the CLT. This had provided the opportunity to develop a range of practical and meaningful skills and pursue his passion for ICT. The presentation explained that the site is attractive, accessible, informative and comprehensive. It has documents to download and facilities for uploading. There are blogs, a showcase facility to allow other schools to see students' work and each team has pages which incorporate videos. However, some

students said that they would like to see more pictures and videos on the site. Students have different levels of access depending on whether they are team members or facilitators. Students can comment on other people's blogs but accounts can be blocked if difficulties arise. The site is moderated by the Coordination and Support Team which includes adults and the level of site security satisfies local authority requirements. The lead student described how he would be training facilitators of teams to use the site at lunchtimes. Facilitators would then train other team members.

The Forum appears to be very productive, engendering genuine respect between students and adults. It appears to be treated as a thoughtful and spiritual space signified for example by a candle being blown out after 10 to 15 seconds of silent reflection on their time together. Following this the 'Beautiful School Team' had organised drinks and mince pies for everyone present to enjoy as a Christmas, end of term celebration.

An 'Annual Review' session at The Blue School

Each project team engages in an annual review of their plans and achievements during the first term of the academic year. This enables them to reflect on, and set their, priorities for the coming year and hold purposeful weekly team meetings that will enable them to achieve their plans. The Learning to Lead (LtoL) approach to forming teams from all year groups ensures continuity of the membership. The reviews have taken place in a room at the local museum and have been facilitated by Susan Piers-Mantell. The account that follows is based on an observation of a Review Meeting for the 'Badgers and Spoons' Team.

There were only nine students from the team attending the review because the Yr 7 students had an inter-sports event. There were five students from the same Yr 8 tutor group, two from Yr 9 and two from Yr 10. The four girls in the group were all in Yr 8. The meeting began with everyone sitting in a circle with Susan.

Susan models respect in her quiet calm manner with positive encouragement and praise. She explained the origins of LtoL and explained the presence of a researcher. Susan started off by asking 'Why are you here?' and 'What do you want to do?'. She told the team about her own life history, growing up on a farm in Zambia and starting school in England when she was 11. She said that at school she felt as if everything was being 'done to her' so, when her own son began his schooling she decided that she must work to help young people to see themselves as partners in the enterprise.

Each member of the team was asked to choose a different coloured piece of hexagonally shaped paper, called a 'hexie', and write down why they were there and what they wanted to do. As they wrote, they shared their thoughts with the team. All of them had pets and wanted further opportunities to look

after animals. Aled⁷, the team's facilitator, ensured that everyone had the opportunity to speak. These statements are typical:

I am here to help to create a better environment for wildlife and to help people better understand nature and wildlife.

(Sam, Yr 8)

I am here because I like animals and I want to help and make the school a better place and improve on what we have already done.

(Harry, Yr 9)

I am here to make the school better and to help wild life and other things. By the time I leave the school, I want to look back and say that I helped a lot in the school.

(Elena, Yr 8)

I am here because every day on the news, you hear catastrophic stories to do with animals – terrible diseases and cruelty and pain. In my old school, people used to play with dead birds and squash insects and kill things. I want to that to change – to stop animal cruelty.

(Elsa, Yr 8)

Each team member then placed their 'hexie' on the 'sticky wall' which had been set up along one side of the room. This 'wall' is a long piece of coloured cloth which has been sprayed with repositionable adhesive allowing members of the team to place their 'hexies' on it and build a record of their review as they go along.

Susan talked about the 'Working with Respect' poster and asked members of the team to read in turn the seven points. She discussed with the team the idea of respect and the importance of meeting in a circle. Sam said that it is 'so everyone can get an equal view' and Aled said that 'it helps give a nudge but doesn't control or take over'.

Susan then talked about how looking back and remembering what you have done can help your future. She asked everyone to write a hexie reflecting on what they think is going well in the team and why. Statements included the following.

We all came together to build the chicken coop. It was a really good thing for the team building and everybody had fun!!!

We all came together to clean the pond and find what wild life there was there and we found 29 newts and two different types, which means the pond is healthy.

⁷ Aled is a fictional name

I think when we showed the Year 6s around so they could see what we did as a school it helped them to decide whether they wanted to join the Council.

The team also reflected on what could have gone better with comments such as those below.

Sometimes the key went walk about and we could not find it so we had to climb over the fence.

We couldn't get to the food in the garden shed - there were things on top of the bins.

I think that we could have finished off the pond. We didn't finish it because we had other priorities.

The review moved on to the stage where the team was able to think about what can be learnt for the future. Comments included the following.

We should get a shed of our own to store the chicken food, straw and things we need to look after them.

We need to gain money for the garden shed and make a rota of what to feed the chickens and who is feeding them when. We need better fencing around the chickens to protect them.

Let's do a survey around the neighbours to see what they think about us having a cockerel.

The discussion was rich and well structured discussion. A number of times throughout the meeting Susan checked for agreement. There were a couple of girls who had made good contributions during the review but towards the end they began to talk between themselves. The other team members had noticed this during the preceding year and identified it as a weakness in some of their meetings. They talked about it in a light-hearted and good humoured way.

After break the team went back into the circle and Susan led them in a quick game of 'The sun is up'. This activity helps to get everyone active and ready to focus again.

Their next activity involved going through the 'A SMILEY' checklist which helps them plan for the coming year. This sheet has the letters 'A SMILEY' written in a column down one side and each letter prompts a question. For example the letter 'A' prompts the word 'Accountability' which led to a rehearsal of the team's purpose. Aled read out the purpose statement; they all repeated this and then he stuck it to the sticky wall. Each letter prompted questions, which elicited further discussion on their goal for the year, the people who they needed to involve, the steps they needed to take and the economic considerations. Susan asked questions to help clarify points and

extend their planning. Aled gave an update on the accounts which he says are 'doing well'.

The team talked about how to get the work done and Elena suggested inviting other students to help. The team agreed and decided to advertise this through an assembly. Aled cautioned that they should only invite students to help at lunchtime so that they only get the serious ones rather than the '300 people skipping classes!' James added that if people want to help in an afternoon session they should be obliged to come to a lunchtime session first. Aled commented: *'I think our school lessons should just turn into this.'*

Towards the end of the session Susan asked the team members to order the 'hexies' to see what tasks needed to be done first. She said that she would take these away and write them up. It was clear that they needed a little more time to think through the practicalities of the tasks, but at least they would have enough information to help them do this in team meetings to come. Finally they considered if they felt able as a team to accept responsibility for implementing their plan. Susan asked them to shout 'Yes' if they agreed they were able to make this plan happen. They all did.

Finally they reviewed the session by standing in a circle and patting the next person on the back to say well done. The session seemed to be inspiring, thoughtful and orderly. The team had clearly achieved a great deal and the way they interacted showed how much they had learnt personally over time. The students were clearly animated and motivated by the prospect of real change and taking responsibility. After the review Susan typed up the hexies and combined reflections.