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Defining and addressing the professional development needs of school leaders in England: promoting positive behaviour

Philip Garner
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TEPE Annual Conference, University of Vienna
May 14, 2011
SEN/Disability: current principles...

- most children with special educational needs can be successfully included in mainstream education providing staff receive appropriate training, strategies and support

- inclusive education service should offer excellence and choice and provide opportunities for the views of parents and children to be heard

- Schools, local authorities and others should actively seek to remove barriers to learning and participation

- Mainstream education will not always be appropriate for every child throughout their compulsory years of schooling
“The development of inclusive education is as much about developing a personal theory, as it is about increasing professional knowledge.”
Teacher characteristics – 40 years of pupil-feedback

• Well-prepared
• Respectful
• ‘Allows us to speak’
• Fair
• Knowledge of subject
• Clear rules and punishments
• Humour
• Not unpredictable
• Honest
• Deals with own ‘problems’
Recent research on leadership & behaviour (NCSL, 2010)

Exploration of 4 leadership-related issues:
• school cultures, relationships and behaviour
• partnerships and communities and
• professional characteristics and behaviour
• promoting inclusion, limiting exclusion
Methodology

• Purposive sample of schools (primary, secondary, special)
• Focus on school principals
• Schools identified as ‘outstanding’ based on official criteria
• 4 interview themes
• Video recorded / audio transcription
• Manual transcript analysis using reference group
• Constraints & provisos
Individual professional characteristics which appear to be significantly present:

- Motivation
- Use of positive affirmations
- Modelling positive behaviour
- Recognition of personal strengths and capabilities
Institutional leadership characteristics which appear to be significantly present:

- Distribution of Leadership
- Promotion of professional learning
- Encouraging calculated risk-taking
- Redefining pupil ‘behaviour’
Key findings:

• little in the literature presents as innovative practice in promoting positive behaviour;
• the literature is consistent in linking leadership skills and attributes to improved pupil behaviour;
• much of what is reported represents perceived ‘effective practice’ in school leadership;
• effective leadership skills, like effective classroom teacher skills, appear to be generic and have been recognised over time;
• leadership skills include many which are regarded as ‘affective’;
• leaders who emphasise educational attainment tend also to place equal importance on appropriate social behaviours;
• innovation occurs in context-specific locations; issues of transferability;
• professional development of leadership skills for inclusion.

Transforming lives, inspiring change
An electronic copy of this presentation may be obtained from:

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