

Module D: Managing and Evaluating Change

Unit D3: The Management of Change at Policy Level

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Objectives of Unit D3

- To consider trends in public policy that influence schools' approach to the management of change
- To reflect on the impact of policy initiatives on practice in violence reduction within schools
- To consider the direction of policy making in light of schools' priorities and targets
- To develop a whole school approach for the review of existing policies
- To highlight the contrasting perceptions of different stakeholders in the management of change

Facilitation skills to be developed through this Unit

Knowledge and understanding of:

- the trends within national policy and their impact on school priorities
- how to review school policy to reflect the views of stakeholders
- how to review and manage change

Personal qualities and attributes include:

- having an appreciation of different perspectives of stakeholders within the management of change
- being able to deal with conflicting viewpoints and being an effective communicator
- being an effective trainer and advisor of staff, governors, parents, carers and pupils

Pre-unit reading

- Smith, P. K. (Ed.). (2003). *Violence in schools: The response in Europe*. London: Routledge. Each of the chapters in this book has a section on the national context that illustrate the range of national policies and their influence on local practice.
- Hopkins, D., & Harris, A. (1997). Understanding the school's capacity for development: Growth stages and strategies. *School Leadership and Management*, 17, 401-411.
- Osler, A., & Starkey, H. (2005). Violence in schools and representations of young people: A critique of government policies in France and England. *Oxford Review of Education*, 31, 195-215.
- Jennifer, D., & Shaughnessy, J. (2005). Promoting non-violence in schools: The role of cultural, organizational and managerial factors. *Educational and Child Psychology*, 22(3), 58-66.

Shaughnessy, J. (2006). Creating a school climate of convivencia through whole-school policies. In C. Gittins (Ed.), *Violence reduction in schools - how to make a difference* (pp. 39-49). Strasbourg: Council of Europe: Belgium.

Summary of current thinking and knowledge about the management of change at policy level

Concern over violence in schools in recent years has been reflected in public policies that have prioritised educational standards over social inclusion. Particular attention has been paid to communities and individual schools where young people are labelled as disaffected. However, it is often the case that policy makers are driven by narrow curricular outcomes rather than a holistic view of education that meets the rights of young people. Consequently, this leads to a level of exclusive practices in schools which can marginalise disadvantaged communities. Within these debates the policy context has increasingly considered the link between educational attainment and the social capital of families and communities (Gewirtz, Dickson, Power, Halpin, & Whitty, 2005).

“...research in this area is often taken to suggest that there is a causal relationship between the extent of social bonds within families and communities on the one hand, and children’s achievement at school and their future economic prosperity, on the other.” Gewirtz et al. (2005, p. 652)

Heavily influenced by such thinking since 1997 the Labour Government in the United Kingdom has introduced a range of initiatives designed to raise educational achievement and build the social capital of families and communities identified as socially disadvantaged. Much attention therefore has been given to urban schooling and to issues relating to inequalities and under achievement. Much of the literature suggests that young people can experience dislocation from school through inappropriate curricular, harsh discipline and discriminatory practices, which can lead to feelings of isolation (Osler & Starkey, 2005). This therefore brings into focus the importance of the school’s response to understanding the interests, well being and rights of young people as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (2002). The focus on children’s entitlement has brought the rights of the child into view and has been reflected within *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2004) which set out an agenda for the reform of children’s services centred on the needs of children and young people.

“We also need to go further to ensure that children who cannot live with their birth family get the stability and nurturing needed to thrive” (Blair, 2002).

School culture and violence

The importance of schools embracing the rights of young people is central to developing an ethos where participatory structures are valued and understood (Shaughnessy, 2006). Organisational responses to policy and practice therefore need to involve all stakeholders, the community, parents and young people in

policy construction, to ensure that policy and practice reflects the views of the whole school community. This is central to engaging with how young people are located within learning and how behaviour and violence are responded to (Shaughnessy & Jennifer, 2004). How schools communicate their ethos and how this is shared, made explicit and owned by the learning community is therefore vital to developing positive relationships and engaging learners beyond an academic curriculum.

“Schools can either be a force for violence prevention, or can provide an experience which reinforces violent attitudes and adds to the child’s experience of violence” (Gulbenkian Foundation, 1995, p.139).

In considering change in schools, Shaughnessy and Jennifer (2004) suggest five key aspects that are important for developing a positive school culture:

- Learner centred issues – e.g., school awareness of the mechanism to enhance children’s self-esteem and learning
- Positive approach to locating children within a safe and secure learning environment
- Positive relationships with children, adults, parents, carers and the community
- Effective modelling of behaviour within the school
- A broad curriculum focus which emphasises social, emotional, cultural and citizenship education.

As Potter, Reynolds and Chapman (2002) highlight, when raising awareness important structural and organisational factors include:

- having a vision: since without a concept of where we are trying to get to, the verb ‘to improve’ has no meaning;
- monitoring: we must know where we are in relation to the vision;
- planning: how will we get from where we are towards where we want to be?
- using performance indicators: to track progress over time in respects of the aspects we monitor.

In considering characteristics of less successful schools, Reynolds cited in Stoll and Myers (1998) points out the areas which can be identified through whole school and classroom practice:

Whole school

- *Leadership* - being controlled by change rather than in control of it, lack of competence to improve, unrealistic goal setting and unfocused possession of goals and vision, passive governing body;
- *Management and Organisational* - absence of data to inform decision making, improvement strategies being adopted but not followed through,

- passive in recruitment and professional development, unwilling to accept evidence of failure;
- *Human* - presence of dysfunctional relationships, blame culture (pupils, parents, Local Education Authority).

Classroom

- *Ethos* - low expectations, inconsistency (including some high levels of teaching), emphasis on supervision and routines;
- *Relationships* - low level of interaction and value in relationships, use of negative feedback, pupil perception that teachers do not care or praise;
- *Organisation* - disruption and change to academic time usage, a lot of non-work related movement.

O'Connor, Hales, Davis and Tomlinson (1999) considered schools which do not achieve a general level of improvement through a self-managed process. By definition these schools often displayed the following characteristics:

- unstable staffing - both at teaching and senior management (SMT) level;
- a history of factionalisation and unrest;
- unstable pupil population (e.g., migrant population (EAL), high special educational needs (SEN) demands) and a significant number of pupils who depress the exam and attendance statistics;
- poverty and deprivation in the local community; and,
- a crumbling physical environment - budget problems.

Some of these characteristics would typify schools in challenging circumstances where the linkage between sections of the community is more problematic and the development of partnership more challenging. In communities where families are bereft of social organisations and networks and have little inclination to participate, the school has a responsibility to be responsive in terms of recognising the importance of engaging with the community and recognising the inequalities that are linked to under achievement. The school organisation has an important part to play in developing and engaging young people to become powerful learners through encouraging autonomy and participation.

The training in this unit focuses on reviewing policies and practice and starting to manage change within the organisation.

Responsibilities of the Unit facilitators

Your tasks within this Unit are to:

- Send to all participants' information about when and where the session will be held and details of preparatory reading to be done.
- Familiarise yourself with the Unit text and the facilitators notes.
- Plan the session to meet the needs of the participants.
- Ensure that all relevant resources/materials are copied and or prepared.

- Lead the session and all the activities.

Sequence of activities for Unit D3

This Unit represents a half-day training of 2.5 hours.

Activity 1 Understanding school ethos and developing a vision for the school (30 minutes)

Purpose

- To increase understanding of the school ethos and explore the development of the school policy to reflect all stakeholders

Materials

Resource 1 *Aims and values of the school*

Resource 2 *Aspirations for an emotionally literate school*

Paper

Pens

Copies of school mission statements brought in by participants

Procedure

This activity can be linked to the needs analysis Unit in terms of linking priorities and targets for improvement (see Units D1 and D3). Put participants into small groups of 4 or 5 and spend 20 minutes considering the aims and values of the school using the prompt questions listed in Resource 1 *Aims and values of the school* and below. Encourage participants to share their perceptions and to nominate a spokesperson to feedback to the whole group.

- *What are the main strengths of the school?*
- *What features of school life are most worthy of recognition?*
- *What sort of place should the school be in five years time?*
- *If I were a parent considering sending my child to this school I would want...*
- *If I were a child at this school, I would want...*

This activity provides an opportunity for participants to think about what their school means to them and to discuss the meaning of words like *partnership* and *respect*, which can sometimes be overused. Agreement to the responses should be drawn out in the discussion and matched to the mission statement of the school. Does this match? What changes need to be made in light of the discussion?

A further set of questions could be used as an extension activity (see below) or Resource 2 *Aspirations for an emotionally literate school*. The aspirations for an emotionally literate school could be used to reflect on the ambitions for emotional literacy.

- *What do we mean by powerful pupil learning?*
- *Do lessons extend learning for all pupils?*
- *How are pupils involved in their own learning?*

- How can the school support the learning for adults as well as pupils?

Debrief

Participants may never have considered explicitly the importance of school ethos in instigating the process of change. It may be helpful to allow them time to share their reactions to the activity and the insights they have gained into what values their organisation is promoting. The facilitator may wish to ask prompt questions such as ‘*did anything surprise you?*’. The questions might also be used with other stakeholders, that is, parents, the governing body and the community.

Activity 2 Reviewing School Policy on Violence Reduction (30 minutes)

Purpose

- To increase understanding of current policies in order to develop new policies

Materials

Paper

Pens

Procedure

The facilitator will need to group the questions below so each group has three to four questions to answer. Discussion and awareness-raising are the starting point for turning an audit into a policy. Using the checklist below work in small groups of 4 or 5 people to respond to the questions. The following activity can be used as a framework or checklist for a group who are writing or reviewing a school policy on violence reduction.

One way of constructing a policy is to write a paragraph which will answer each of a series of questions.

How does your policy answer these questions?

1. What is your definition of violence – what behaviours does this policy cover?
2. What are the key principles underpinning the schools approach to behaviour and violence? Can you summarise these?
3. How does the curriculum embrace the social and emotional aspects of learning?
4. How does the policy promote effective learning and teaching about responding to violence and resolving conflicts?
5. What role does the school community play in violence reduction?
6. How does the school model positive behaviors?
7. How is a positive learning environment maintained to encourage violence reduction?
8. Is school policy well understood to discourage violence?
9. What does the school do to support children who have difficulties with

- their behaviour?
10. What support and training is available to help staff manage violence and inappropriate behaviour?
 11. How is the school community involved in reviewing the behaviour policy?
 12. How will the school know that it is effective?

Debrief

The questions contextualise violence across different areas of school life. The success of this exercise lies in drawing key themes from Activity 1 on vision and ethos to see how this matches focused questions on violence reduction. Key themes should be identified as central messages about how the school communicates its ethos and how stakeholders are involved in supporting a positive environment for violence prevention.

Activity 3 Managing change and improving practice inside and outside (30 minutes)

Purpose

- To become more aware of change management and how we feel about change

Materials

Paper

Pens

Flipchart

Procedure

Organise participants into groups of 4 or 5. Provide each group with flipchart paper and pens. Ask the participants to reflect on the management of change within their school. Divide the task into three parts and ask participants to spend a few minutes discussing (1) outside influences, (2) inside influences and (3) the future direction for the school. Use the prompt questions below as a guide for the discussion:

- *What's outside?* (Where is change driven from? Consider policy at national and local level)
- *What's inside?* (How does self evaluation inform practice? How does the school set development into action? Where are the targets driven from?)
- *What's us?* (What are the priorities for the school in this academic year? Within the next 5 years? What is the prevailing attitude of staff within the school towards change?)

Debrief

Key questions to support the feedback session:

- *Where is change driven from?*

- *Does your school tend to manage change as part of self evaluation?*
- *To what extent is there congruence between the vision of the leadership team and the bulk of the staff?*

Activity 4 Looking at ourselves (30 minutes)

Purpose

- To consider organisational, cultural and personal factors that influence change within the school

Materials

Resource 3 *Looking at ourselves*

Pens

Flipchart

Procedure

This is a jigsaw activity where the participants are divided into small groups of 4 or 5. Using Resource 3 *Looking at ourselves*, each group will respond to the questions and nominate a scribe who will note key ideas on a flipchart. Each group will summarise their responses and nominate a spokesperson to feedback to the other groups. The responses should be set out under key headings:

- *Intra and interpersonal Factors*
- *Cultural factors*
- *Political/organisational factors*

During the feedback session the facilitator will collate the responses, that is, put the pieces of the 'jigsaw' together.

Activity 5 Looking at how we use our community to support behaviour in school (30 minutes)

Purpose

- To increase understanding of the school community and to consider the importance of community involvement in supporting change within the school

Materials

Resource 4 *The role of a community support worker*

Paper

Pens

Procedure

Organise participants into groups of 4 or 5. Encourage participants to reflect on what aspects of their behaviour/anti-bullying programme are in place at the moment. How are they utilising these? How are they engaging with professional services for the school such as educational psychologists, behaviour support teachers and parents and the community? Are they making best use of these people to support the change process? You could use Resource 4 *The role of a community support worker* as a stimulus for the discussion.

References

- Blair, T. (2002). *The courage of our convictions: Why the reform of public services is the route to social justice*. Paper presented at the meeting of The Fabian Society, London.
- Department for Education and Skills. (2004). *Every child matters*. London: HMSO.
- Gewirtz, S., Dickson, M., Power, S., Halpin, D., & Whitty, G. (2005). The deployment of social capital theory in policy and provision: The case of Education Action Zones in England. *British Educational Research Journal*, 31, 651-673.
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- O'Connor, M., Hales, E., Davis, J., & Tomlinson, S. (1999). *Hackney Downs*. London: Cassell.
- Osler, A., & Starkey, H. (2005). Violence in schools and representations of young people: A critique of government policies in France and England. *Oxford Review of Education*, 31, 195-215.
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- Shaughnessy, J., & Jennifer, D. (2004). Beating behaviour in schools: Organisational readiness. *BERA Conference, 2004*. UMIST: Manchester
- Stoll, L., & Myers, K. (1998). *No Quick Fixes*. London: Falmer Press.
- United Nations. (2002). *Convention on the rights of the child*. Geneva, Switzerland: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Retrieved March, 16, 2004, from <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu2/6/crc/treaties/crc.htm>

Further reading and additional materials

Books and Articles

- Ainscow, M., Hopkins, D. Southworth, G., & West, M. (1994). *Creating the conditions for school improvement*. London: Fulton
- Department for Education and Skills. (2005). *Social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL)*. London: HMSO. Reference DFES0110-2005G.
- Gamarnikow, E., & Green, A. (1999). Developing social capital: Dilemmas, possibilities and limitations in education. In A. Hayton (Ed.), *Tackling disaffection and social exclusions: Issues for education policy*. London: Kogan Page.
- Jensen, S. E., & Størksen, S. (2001). Refleksjon som metode i systemisk endringsarbeid, *Skolepsykologi*, 4, 11-21.
- Midthassel, U.V. Kollegaveiledning (2003) – er det verd å bruke tid på? *Norsk Pedagogisk Tidsskrift*, 3/4, 168-174.

Runnymede Trust. (1993). *Equity Assurance in Schools: Quality, identity, society – A handbook for action planning and school effectiveness*. Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books.

Senge, P. M. (1990). *Den femte disiplin. Kunsten å skape den lærende organisasjon*. Oslo: Hjemmets boksforlag.

Skogen, K. (2004). *Innovasjon i skolen. Kvalitetsutvikling og kompetanseheving*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

Websites

National College for School Leadership <http://www.ncsl.org.uk>

UK Observatory for the Promotion of Non-Violence
<http://www.ukobservatory.com>

Resource 1 Aims and values of the school

Key questions

What are the main strengths of the school?

What features of school life are most worthy of recognition?

What sort of place should the school be in five years time?

If I were a parent considering sending my child to this school I would want....

If I were a child at this school, I would want...

Additional questions

What do we mean by autonomous pupil learning?

Do lessons extend learning for all pupils?

How are pupils involved in their own learning?

How can the school support the learning for adults as well as pupils?

Resource 2 Aspirations for an Emotionally Literate School

Young people

- have opportunities to explore their emotions
- work together with their peers
- have people they can talk to and know where to go when they have a problem
- have opportunities to participate within the life of the school

Teachers and other staff

- have a clarity and vision that reflects the ethos of the school
- have opportunities to express themselves within the teaching and learning environment
- have opportunities to explore challenging aspects of practice with colleagues

Parents

- are valued and share the aspirations of the school
- are offered opportunities to share any problems they have in helping their children learn and develop
- can air and work to resolve any conflicts they have with the school

Resource 3 Looking at Ourselves

Intra and interpersonal factors

Do people feel confident or intimidated in their skills to manage violence/challenging behaviour/bullying?

How does the school build positive relationships among teachers/pupils/parents and the wider community?

Do staff feel supported or isolated?

Does the organisation encourage risk taking (is it okay to make mistakes or to hold different views?)

Organisational/cultural factors

What do people think about violence/challenging behaviour/bullying? What is it and is it an important issue?

Is it important to act and respond to violence?

How do people respond to one another within the organisation?

What are the prevailing expectations about violence/bullying?

Conflicts amongst staff – what are they about and how are they dealt with?

Political/organisational factors

Does the school have a clear vision which gives priority to pupils' emotional and social needs?

Is there recognition of the effects of violence and bullying on the learning environment?

Is decision making shared?

How rigid is the role structure?

Are values shared across the school ?

Resource 4 The role of a community support worker and supporting community involvement in school

Family support

Available for parents
Work identified for vulnerable families
Parenting programmes

Enhancing attendance

Immediate follow up on absence
Liaison with Educational Welfare Service
Work with school refusers
Work with families who have endemic attendance problems or whose attendance is beginning to deteriorate

Specialist support

Cross project staff to work with issues of a particular need or culture

Prevention of school exclusions

Early work with families at risk
Take work to excluded pupils at home
Inform parents of school policies and procedures are parental rights relating to exclusions

Curriculum support

Work with parent helpers in the school
Encourage parents and carers to attend parents' evenings
Work with parent groups on a wide variety of topics e.g. curriculum expectations
Liaise with families regarding homework

Community liaison

Link with community organisations
Liaise with other agencies to provide information and support to parents
Accompany families when accessing services or for translation purposes

Pre-admission contact with home

Home visits prior to school entry
Provide support for families during transition phases of schooling

Prevention of truancy

Immediate follow up of unauthorised absence
Work with identified families of truants/potential truants
Liaise with families over re-admission to school

Welfare issues

Putting families in touch with other agencies regarding benefits and housing

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Support integration into school

Support applications for benefits associated with school e.g. free school meals

Adult education

Establish groups to provide information related to the National Curriculum

Provide support for parents wishing to help in school

Encourage and liaise with colleagues regarding adult education at base school

Provide taster opportunities for adults and occasional speakers on issues of interest to parents

Work with parent governors