

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

Dr. Phil Budgell

Education Leadership Consultancy – Sheffield (UK)

Abstract. In this paper, the principle of **subsidiarity** – that **agency** and **choice** should be delegated to the local level – is introduced. In education, it is proposed that:

– far greater responsibility should be delegated to **School Leadership Teams**; and that;

– successful **Leadership** in education requires a balance of **principle** (the moral basis of the school), **purpose** (the core business of the school) and **people** (social relationships in the school).

A clear distinction is then drawn between **leadership** (complexity), **management** (clarity) and **administration** (consistency). This is followed by a discussion on **distributed leadership**, the idea that the leadership role is not confined to the **Senior Leadership Team**; but should, for example, involve subject leaders.

Finally, the idea of **Governance** is introduced: a process whereby a legally constituted team of **local partners** support and challenge the **School Leadership Team**; helping them to fulfil their responsibility for the **leadership** and **management** of the school.

School leadership – in the same way that:
“Vision without Action is Contemplation, and Action without
Vision is just Activity”;
“Leadership without Subsidiarity is Administration, and
Subsidiarity without Leadership is Abrogation”.

Agency and choice

The ***Oxford English Dictionary*** defines **subsidiarity** as "the principle that a central authority should have a subsidiary function, performing only those tasks which cannot be performed at a more local level": it is concerned with the delegation of **agency** and **choice** to the local level.

In as much as education is ultimately for the benefit of the pupil, the:

1. the quality of the education; and
2. standards of achievement;

depend on delegating **agency** and **choice** to the level closest to the pupil. Consequently, it is the state's responsibility to determine the structure and

organisation of the education system and the levels to which **agency** and **choice** should be delegated. Table 1 provides examples of the delegation of agency and choice to different levels in the education system.

Table 1. Agency and Choice

Level in the Structure	Agency and Choice
The State	Allocating the national budget across different departments; e.g., 29% Health, 15% Education and 9% Defense. Allocating the national budget across local authorities – a local government finance settlement. Determining how much of that allocation must be spent on schools – a dedicated schools grant.
The Municipality	Determining the structure and organization of schools within the local authority – number; primary/secondary; grammar school/comprehensive. Determining a funding formula that will allocate resources to individual schools.
The School	Allocating the school's budget share across major categories of expenditure; e.g., 53% Teaching Staff; 24% Other Staff Costs; 6% Premises Costs and 17% Supplies and Services. Constructing the timetable and deploying the Teaching Staff.
The Department	Choosing the appropriate set of textbooks. Choosing an appropriate Examination Board. Establishing the assessment criteria and moderating teachers' assessment within the Department to improve the reliability and validity of assessment grades. Analyze the results of all assessment tasks to ensure that all pupils are making good progress.
The Teacher	Adopting a range of teaching methods that are appropriate to the demands of the curriculum and the needs of the pupils. Ensuring that all assessment tasks are properly organized and administered to comply with departmental, school and examination requirements.
The Pupil	Agency and Choice for the pupils are difficult to describe unless there is already sufficient subsidiarity to give them the right to choose what they wish to study. However, if they do have the right to choose, they also have the responsibility to exercise that choice with care and consideration for their future.

Each school is a community of pupils with a unique mix of learning needs that calls for a range of strategies if:

1. that excellent quality of education; with
 2. the highest standards of achievement;
- are to be attained. Rather than centralized decisions on:
- the detail of curriculum;
 - approaches to teaching; and
 - the allocation of resources
- schools should have the opportunity to:

- establish their own priorities to meet pupils' needs;
- select strategies to address these priorities;
- tailor the curriculum;
- allocate resources and select staff to ensure these strategies can be implemented;
- conduct professional development programs and in other ways help teachers acquire the knowledge and skill to deliver the preferred programs;
- monitor progress toward the achievement of targets; and
- provide incentives and reward success.

If all of these and other actions cohere and are implemented in the manner intended, there should be improvements for pupils and an overall contribution to school effectiveness.

The principle of **subsidiarity**, with its concomitant delegation of financial responsibility, authority and accountability, is the source of school autonomy. In which case, this autonomy ought to be delegated to the **School Leadership Team** within a centrally-determined framework of goals, policies, priorities, standards and accountabilities:

- clear financial regulations and procedures;
- the management of financial risk;
- the development of Key Performance Indicators (Budgell 2022); i.e., the national analysis of examination performance that measures progress, school value-added and enables the Governing Body to hold the **School Leadership Team** to account; and
- a national system of school inspection that will provide the Governing Body with an external evaluation of the Overall Effectiveness of the school and similarly enables them to hold the Leadership Team to account.

This Local Management of Schools (LMS), or school-based management, with its:

- clear framework for delegation; accompanied by
 - a similarly clear framework for accountability;
- should enable subsidiarity to be the driving force behind:
1. an improvement in the quality of education; and
 2. a raising in the standards of achievement.

Leadership

When an education system is characterised by **subsidiarity**, it is a natural corollary that **School Leadership Teams** live up to their name and provide effective leadership. It is no longer sufficient that their role and function can be characterised as routine **administration**.

The quality of **leadership** is fundamental to:

- school improvement;
- school effectiveness;

- achieving high performance; and
- bringing about change and innovation.

There is a high correlation between the quality of **leadership** and a school's success. It is possible to establish a direct causal relationship between:

- **leadership**;
- and

- organizational success;
- teacher performance; and
- pupil achievement.

The argument for a concentration on effective leadership in schools has been well understood for several years. It is now possible to argue, with substantial confidence, that leadership is a pivotal variable in explaining the relative success and failure of many human enterprises, not least schools.

Leadership is seen as having a responsibility for the values by which the school works. What the right things are is, of course, highly contestable and will be the product of:

- personal values;
- the prevailing moral consensus in society;
- the dominant moral hegemony;
- setting the purpose and direction of the school;

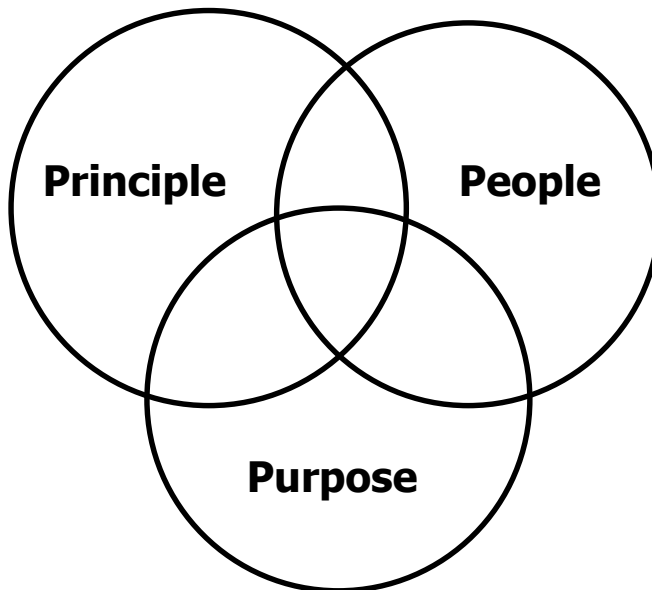


Figure 1. The nature of leadership

- defining the path forward;
- articulating what the school actually exists to do;
- how it should be in the future;
- the complexity of human relationships;
- performance; and
- engagement and motivation.

Leadership has to be seen as relational and only exists in the extent to which there is emotional engagement and sophisticated interpersonal relationships.

- so that they are balanced and mutually supportive – as shown in Figure 1.

Leadership, management and administration

The debate about the relationship between **leadership** and **management** is fundamental to an understanding of what makes schools effective. It is very clear that the personal priorities of leaders;

- how they schedule their time, resources and energy,

have enormous impact on the way in which a school works. In essence, the issue of the relationship between **leadership** and **management** is the issue of:

- stasis or change;
- the status quo or transformation;
- good or great; and
- improving or transforming.

Therefore, it is central to any discussion of the nature of roles in schools. **West-Burnham (2010)**. The quality of leadership is fundamental to:

- school improvement;
- school effectiveness;
- achieving high performance; and
- bringing about change and innovation.

There is a high correlation between the quality of leadership and organizational success. It is possible to establish a direct causal relationship between:

- leadership;
- organizational success;
- teacher performance; and
- student achievement.

Leadership moves us beyond the limited and narrow boundaries of **management** into far greater challenges where the demands and the stakes are higher but so are the rewards.

At the same time, it is important to remember that **leadership**:

- needs to be balanced by effective **management**;
- the strategic perspective has to be related to the operational.

Good **management** is beguiling, even seductive. There is a deep satisfaction to be found in order, structure and a sense, however artificial, of control. Equally

leadership can be demanding, challenging and even intimidating – it’s much easier to manage – easier still to administer.

Reports from OFSTED in England found that leadership at the school level had improved over the past 7 years but that there were still many schools where work was not managed effectively. Of course, we are talking about even greater expectations – not management but leadership that promotes the conditions of sustainability (Fullan 2005).

Management is concerned with:

- translating principles into actual practice;
- ‘doing things right’;
- focusing on systems, structures and delivery.
- ensuring that the purpose is reflected across the organisation in its day-to-day working; and
- deployment of staff, the allocation of resources and delivery.

Administration is about:

- doing all the routine tasks;
- the organisational routines;
- infrastructure;
- everything is in place – the path is kept tidy; and
- that consistency supports all the factors above.

One way of understanding the relationship between leadership and management to define their relative contributions to the way in which a school operates. In addition, because it plays an important role in the life of every school, it is also worth introducing routine administrative work into the equation (Table 2).

Table 2. Leadership, Management and Administration

Leadership	Management	Administration
Doing the right things	Doing things right	Doing things
Path making	Path following	Path tidying
Complexity	Clarity	Consistency

Distributed Leadership – The Myth of the Hero Innovator; (Georgides and Phillamore 1957).

- Individual/heroic leadership is not sustainable in a complex and rapidly changing school.
- Hierarchical leadership cannot be morally justified in a school committed to learning in a democratic society.
- Shared leadership recognises and enhances professionalism and genuine collegiality.

- A team-based approach to school organisation requires shared leadership.
 - Shared leadership increases the possibility of alignment on vision and values.
 - Shared leadership releases the creative capacity of everyone.
 - Sustainable performance is more likely to be achieved with shared leadership.
- The growth in interest in the development of **distributed leadership**, hence:

– middle leaders rather than middle managers;
has been illustrated by Leithwood et al (2006). They have stressed importance of middle leaders:

"The most significant results of this study... were the indirect effects of total leadership on pupil learning and achievement, through its direct effects on the three dimensions of staff performance:

- commitment;
- resilience; and
- effectiveness.

Total leadership accounted for a quite significant 27 per cent of the variation in pupil achievement across schools" (Leithwood et al 2006).

The key phrase here is 'total leadership', recognising that while the work of the designated leader is important, there is substantial leadership available in the school that is not necessarily linked to organisational role or status.

"Ultimately, leadership that stays centred on learning and that lasts over time is deliberately distributed leadership that stretches across a school or system, is a genuinely shared responsibility, and is taken as much as it is given." (Hargreaves and Fink 2006).

In essence, and this is the real challenge, distributed leadership means that leadership is seen as collective capacity rather than personal status.

Theory into practice

"...too many schools, school districts and state systems of schooling are over-managed and under-led. This condition leads to an undue emphasis on doing things right rather than doing the right things, on following directions rather than solving problems" (Sergiovanni 2005).

Sergiovanni is talking about education systems that are not characterised by **subsidiarity**: top-down autocracies that:

- are over-administered, under-led and under-managed; and
- focus on compliance – on following directions from the top, rather than doing the right thing.

It is in education systems like those described by Sergiovanni that **School Leadership Teams** only function as **administrators**: the system inhibits the development of high-level **leadership** skills. In fact, it positively discourages their development; filling the **School Leadership Teams'** time with 'busy work' (filling in countless, pointless forms) and then checking that they have complied with the latest set of instructions.

In as much as education is ultimately for the benefit of the pupils, **The State's** responsibility is to determine the structure and organisation of the education system and the level to which:

- agency and choice; with
- their rights and responsibilities

must be delegated. The most appropriate level is **The School**: a community of pupils with a unique mix of learning needs that calls for a range of strategies if:

1. an excellent quality of education; and
 2. high standards of achievement
- are to be attained.

School Leadership Teams must have the opportunity to **lead**, to:

- establish the priorities to meet pupils' needs;
- select strategies to address these priorities;
- tailor the curriculum;
- allocate resources and select staff to ensure these strategies can be implemented;
- conduct professional development programs and in other ways help teachers acquire the knowledge and skill to deliver the preferred programs;
- monitor progress toward the achievement of targets; and
- provide incentives and reward success.

There is no need for the **State** to specify:

1. The number of periods during the week.
2. The length of a period.
3. The number of pupils in each class.
4. The balance of subjects across the week.

These decisions should be left to the individual **School Leadership Teams** and **Governing Bodies**. The **State** need only specify:

- the number of teaching/learning hours during the week; for example, a minimum of 25 hours;
- and the percentage of free choice that pupils have as they get older; for example, 35% in Grades 9 and 10 and 80% in Grades 11 and 12.

Governance

A process whereby a legally constituted team of **local partners** support and challenge the **School Leadership Team**; helping them to fulfil their responsibility for the **leadership** and **management** of the school. In a national structure characterised by **subsidiarity**, the **Governing Body** is responsible for working with the School Leadership Team to ensure that the school delivers:

1. that excellent quality of education; with
2. very high standards of achievement.

Together with the **School Leadership Team**, who are responsible for day-to-day management, the **Governing Body** sets the school's aims and policies. The

Governing Body must be transparent and accountable in the recruitment of staff, governance structures and attendance at meetings and contact with parents.

The key roles of the **Governing Body** are to:

- ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- hold the Leadership Team to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
- oversee the financial performance of the school and make sure its money is well spent.

Conclusion

The successful reconstruction of an education system will be predicated upon:

- **School Leadership Teams** developing the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding to become effective **Leaders** and **Managers**; enabling them to
 - allocate the school's budget share across major categories of expenditure; e.g., 53% Teaching Staff; 24% Other Staff Costs; 6% Premises Costs and 17% Supplies and Services,

- construct the timetable and deploy the Teaching Staff.

- the introduction of **Distributed Leadership**, structures that enable **subject leaders** to

- develop their knowledge, skills and understanding of leadership at departmental, faculty or functional level;

- choose the appropriate set of textbooks;

- choose the appropriate examination;

- establish the assessment criteria and moderating teachers' assessment within the department to improve the reliability and validity of assessment grades; and

- analyze the results of all assessment tasks to ensure that all pupils are making good progress.

- the introduction of **Governing Bodies** to work with **School Leadership Teams**, supporting them but holding them to account.

NOTES

1. OFSTED: Office for Standards in Education www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

REFERENCES

BUDGELL, P., 2022. *Key Performance Indicators*. "Az-buki" Education and Scientific Policies [Submitted for publication].

FULLAN, M., 2005. *Leadership and Sustainability*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

GEORGIDES, N. & PHILLIMORE, L., 1975. *The myth of the hero-innovator and alternative strategies for organisational change*. In:

- C. KIERNAN & E.P. WOODFORD (eds). *Behaviour Modification with the Severely Retarded*. Amsterdam: Assoc. Sci. Pub.
- HARGREAVES, A. and FINK, D., 2006. *Sustainable Leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- LEITHWOOD, K. et al., 2006. Seven Strong Claims about School Leadership. Nottingham: National College [formerly National College for School Leadership].
- SERGIOVANNI, T., 2005. *Strengthening the Heartbeat*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- WEST-BURNHAM, J., 2010. *Understanding leadership and management*. Nottingham: National College [formerly National College for School Leadership].

✉ **Dr. Phil Budgell**

Education Leadership Consultancy
Sheffield, UK

E-mil: phil.budgell@btinternet.com