

New to Headship:

Making the First Term Count





A bit about me

- 23 years experience, 17 years in school leadership, 3 years as head
- Write for education magazines, commentator for BBC news, blog for a parenting forum
- Just started MSc in Leadership in Education (last week)



A bit more about me



Overview

01 Culture

02 Operations

03 Standards

04 Strategy

05 Wellbeing



First Job ...

Do Nothing

FACT FINDING MISSION!

Culture

Standards

Operations



01 Culture

- Most important and vital to get right
- Soak up the current culture from all sources
- Be physically present, out of your office, absorbing information
- What behaviours are driving your school? Do they match the promoted culture?
- What are the staff like? Who will be your early adopters, who will be blockers?
- Become BFF with your admin and site staff, quickly.



Edgar Schein - Cultural Iceberg

- Explicit/Visible Culture - vision, rules, policies - what's on the walls
- Implicit/Invisible Culture - how we do things here or what you have to do to survive here

Fact-Finding By-Products

As you're out and about, talking to everyone, absorbing your culture, you'll discover what's working and what's not.

Some of these will be big things – put this on back burner at first and save for when you turn your attention to Strategy.

Some of these will be small things – easy fixes and instant wins. Do some of these to win over your stakeholders.



Getting to Know the Staff



Informally...

- Join them for lunch
- Go in the staff room at breaks
- Go outside/corridors to join them for duties
- Walk around before school starts and check in on them
- Do the same after school – how's your day gone?

Getting to Know the Staff



Formally...

- Arrange 1-2-1's or 2-2-1's with all staff over the term.
- What do you do here?
- What's working?
- What's not?
- Do we have a culture problem?
- **The Dream Question** – if you could do anything in your job, what would it be?
- So, who is on your bus, where are they sitting and what are they doing?



Setting your Culture

- Present the reasons for change - Start with Why - Simon Sinek
- Invite ideas and consult
- Working party to take from ideas stage to your final product
- Launch, Implement & Drive



02 Operations



- Crack on with some **OPERATIONS** fact-finding meetings early on
- Spread them out, do 1 a week so as not to overwhelm yourself, with:
 - SLT
 - Office Manager, School Business Manager or/and Secretary
 - Site Manager or Caretaker
 - Finance Officer/Bursar
 - Chair of Governors & Clerk of Governors
 - DSL or Deputy DSL
 - PTA chair
- Get a sectional notebook and make notes on what you're told
- Ask "**So, how do things work here? What's working? What's not? What would you change if you could? Why?**"

03 Standards

Behaviour & Attitudes **Teaching & Provision** **Curriculum**

- What is it like to be a child in your school?
- Is everyone getting a good deal?
- If not, why not?
- Methods – Day in the life learning walks, surveys, coffee with the head, surgeries

- Assessment Leader – discuss data
- Staff meet – what's behaviour & attitudes like?
- Curriculum Leader or Subject leaders – what are standards like in your subject?



Pulling it all together

- give yourself time to process all you've gathered
- what's jumping out?
- do you need to find out more about anything?
- do you want to bring in some expert opinions before you proceed with a strategy?
- consult with your SLT & governors about findings





04 Strategy



- Culture eats strategy for breakfast
- Strategy is a plan of action to achieve a goal. Can be simple or complex
- Usually a School Development Plan/School Improvement Plan and Subject/Phase Leader Action Plans
- What have you inherited? Has it been achieved and is it relevant now?



When Culture & Strategy align....

When you invest in getting the culture right, then when you set your strategy, your stakeholders will:

- See leadership as accessible and relevant
- Staff support each other more, they learn from each other and aren't afraid to make mistakes
- Tell you when something's not working or there's an issue (without them having to have a solution!)
- Innovation rises to the fore, leading to even greater success





Use your support network to strategise

01 LA, Academy Trust advisers or independent consultants

02 SLT and governors

03 Prioritise and make your first plans simple and achievable. In the first year, things need to be within your grasp.





Implementation

01 CPD schedule

02 The Dip

03 Revitalise



Vision, Values, Mission, Core Purpose, Goals, Principles, Ethos, Aims....



- Where do you want to be?
- What values are going to guide you?
- Take your time - get the culture sorted, get the strategy in place, then the vision and values should fall into place
- Always consult and collaborate for shared ownership

05 Wellbeing

**Who is looking after you?
Who is your support network?**

- get a professional coach
- use counselling services
- use WFH days
- mental and physical health
- Don't lose sight of yourself
and let the job consume you

