

Leading Class Teams

Class teachers in special schools are all leaders in their own classrooms. They will only be able to deliver high quality education and care to their pupils by working closely with teaching assistants and therapy and medical staff on a daily basis. This short piece from the National College of School Leadership identifies the range of qualities and skills that are needed to lead effectively in the 21st century educational context.

What is great leadership in schools?

National College has developed an understanding of what effective leadership looks like today, from its own work with education leaders. Leaders need to be clear about the outcomes they want to achieve and the steps towards achieving them. They need emotional intelligence, and effective team-building skills. But today's leaders also need to operate differently. Traditional line-management roles have evolved as a result of organisational change such as federations and trusts, workforce remodelling and the extended schools agenda. In such an environment, command and control styles of leadership cannot apply. Instead leaders must negotiate, influence and guide others.

Research supports this experience, suggesting that variations in leadership effectiveness in schools reflect a handful of leadership traits. The most successful school leaders are open-minded and ready to learn from others. They are flexible rather than dogmatic in their thinking, and they are persistent in their pursuit of high expectations (Leithwood et al, 2008).

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