Optimism of the will: the development of area-based education partnerships

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Successful area wide collaboration for improvement

- Local allegiance to a shared purpose
- Resolute, outward-looking leadership
- Professional power and skills
- Shared responsibility
- Sustainability
The opportunities

- The glue in a diverse and potentially fragmented system
- A force to drive improvement by energising teachers, leaders and schools to build expertise
- A focus for involving the local community and business in education
- An opportunity for efficiencies of scale
- A space to build children’s social, emotional and cultural capital
The role of the local authority

‘…..there is a clear role for the local authority to not only support the formation of partnerships but to use its current powers and influence to ensure sustainability for the future- to act as the midwife and to prevent schools being left as isolated islands.’

Claire Kershaw, Director for Education, Essex 2016
MODEL 1
Statutory school improvement
Traded school improvement
Traded business and support services
e.g. Herts for Learning, Octavo (Croydon)

MODEL 2
Statutory school improvement
Traded school improvement
e.g. Birmingham Education Partnership,
Learn Sheffield

MODEL 3
Traded school improvement
e.g. Brent School Partnership
Traded business and support services
e.g. Newham Partnership Working

MODEL 4
Various collaborative partnerships
e.g. between schools and LA in Wigan
e.g. SCHOOLS NorthEast, a school-led regional network

The range of partnerships
Effective local area partnerships

- Intelligence gathering
- Brokerage
- Development and improvement work
- Evaluation: evidencing progress and impact
## Collective commitment & expectations

E.g. Lincolnshire Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMMIT AND CONTRIBUTE</th>
<th>SHARE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>to supporting each other’s improvement</em></td>
<td><em>and act upon evidence to improve learning</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>BUILD NETWORKS</td>
<td>WELCOME CHALLENGE</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>and work together to serve children and their communities</em></td>
<td><em>from each other to ensure no school fails</em></td>
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The key challenges

- Danger of distraction from core purpose
- Developing new skills and finding capacity
- Maintaining rigour in the land of nice
- Shifting the current accountability mindset
- Resourcing the partnership
Successful area partnerships

- Collective moral purpose and vision linked to place and community
- A clear model of change, using professional power and skills, and aligned with evidence
- An inclusive culture of openness, trust and mutual accountability
- Attention paid to developing networks
- Good planning, quality assurance and business development
- Capacity building to develop a self-improving system
Optimism of the will

‘I am a pessimist because of intelligence but an optimist because of will.’

Antonio Gramsci