*2024 Tony Stephens, Education Support*

**How to lead and manage a successful secondary school**

**The Essential Guide**

Tony Stephens

**C O N T E N T S**

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**This is the companion booklet to the school improvement material on the website** [**http://tonystephens.org.uk**](http://tonystephens.org.uk)

2021 Tony Stephens

1997, under the title
”366 pieces of Advice for the Secondary Headteacher”

# Introduction

Whilst it is probably immodest to put it in print, all my four headships could be described as succesful in terms of indicators such as Ofsted reports, rising rolls, improved public examination results and enhanced school reputations. This has not come from any natural talents I have as a headteacher (as most staff with whom I have worked would confirm), but because I've made full use of the basic principles of good leadership and management coupled with attention to detail, a personalised approach, the building up of good relationships, the use of rigorous systems whilst keeping it simple and relentless implementation, monitoring and review. There are many other heads who have achieved much greater success than me, but by using similar methods.

 My subsequent work as a consultant to schools that have been put into a category, or are in danger of being put in, has only confirmed that this approach can work in all schools.

Governments have spent billions of pounds following false trails trying to achieve school improvement. Modern leadership and management gurus tend to show scant regard for matters of detail, looking just at simplistic innovation and blue sky thinking, not always realising that these will only work if you get the basics right. I just retain the simple belief that if the kind of advice given both in this booklet, and also on the website mentioned above, was followed in all schools, then there would be major school improvement at minimal cost and this would be true in all types of school.

Some of the advice is practical, some mildly controversial and some seemingly obvious (but still raising the question, yes it should be done, but is it actually being done and done well?). It is written from a secondary school background but may still be of some use to the primary sector. Apart from being a guide to the new, or potential, headteacher, it could also be used as a checklist by the experienced headteacher who is reviewing and assessing his/her own performance in the job.

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2024

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The Head teacher and the Staff

All good schools have good staff and a Head can do little on his/her own - possibly the most important aspect of the job is motivating and developing the staff of the school.

1. ***Motivating staff*** is essential - you should have analysed how you are trying to do it, have a policy for it and be evaluating how successful you are both individually and collectively - get to know your staff as well as you can - their strengths, weaknesses personalities etc – always be consistent and be seen to be fair,with no favourites – great heads have people management skills of a high order and an enthusiam and passion for the job
2. Hold a ‘***briefing*’** for staff at least twice a week - ensure staff on duty or absent get ‘minutes’ of the meeting - keep it light-hearted – aim to have staff laughing.
3. Make a note of all ***staff birthdays*** - send them a card and/or congratulate them personally.
4. ***See each*** ***member*** ***of*** ***staff*** formally at least once a year - partly a professional development interview, partly a friendly chat about school and life.
5. ***Thank staff*** for everything extra they do - check each week that you have missed no one - thank publicly eg briefing, and also privately.
6. ***Praise*** ***staff*** for everything they do well - check each week that you have missed no one - thank publicly eg briefing, and also privately- spoken praise is usually better than just sending emails or notes - praise your staff as a whole whenever you can, eg to parents, governors, students.
7. In giving feedback to staff ***be*** ***positive*** - any criticism should come after and then in the context of the praise - not being accepting of poor standards does not mean it is necessary to over-react, upset staff, or be destructive in your comments - teachers are very sensitive- if staff have been out of order in some way then address it but calmly and professionally- don’t get nasty or bear grudges- it is necessary not to avoid “fierce conversations” but handle them so that you achieve your objective with relationships maintained
8. Have senior staff of both sexes who are responsible not just for professional development but also ***staff*** ***welfare*** - you and your team should be sensitive enough to recognise signs of distress, stress etc in individual staff - members of your team may be the ones to respond to this or they may mobilise staff support mechanisms in the staff room - show a personal concern when you know staff have personal or professional problems even if it is someone else within your team who is best placed to be the one who works with or counsels these staff.
9. Be aware that ***female*** ***staff*** have needs and feelings that are not always recognised or understood by male senior management, however well meaning they may be - make sure there are enough ***women in your senior management team***.
10. If you ***feel*** ***angry*** towards staff, don’t show it - W***ait*** at least twenty four hours before saying anything that could lead to a ***confrontation*** with staff and then still be careful what you say - what are you trying to achieve and will this help? Never make a decision or say anything important to anyone ***when you are tired or feeling less than one hundred per cent*** - If you half know that something you are going to say to staff is not going to help the situation then ***don’t say it*** - If you hear things said that you believe are ***grossly unfair***, don’t overreact in your response but defend yourself calmly and in a planned way - Don’t ***shout or lose your temper*** with staff, especially in public - it always arouses staff contempt - Encourage staff to be ***frank in their views*** and then don’t take offence at what is said.
11. If you are told that ‘***the staff’ are saying certain things***, check out just how many staff your informant has actually talked to and who they are.
12. Be aware that, if you ***walk around*** feeling either tired or deep in thought, then staff who see you will believe you are angry or in a bad mood and probably worry that it is them that have offended you - ***Smile***, acknowledge or talk to every member of staff you see around school - Get feedback on your ***body language*** - is it helping you or hindering you in your management of the school?
13. ***Keep your office door*** ***open*** wherever possible and let staff know that they can then just drop in if they need to see you. Otherwise, have a system of quick appointment times via your secretary when staff can see you. You should be spending most of your time out of your office, around school, in classrooms, at the school gates at the start and end of the day etc
14. Go in the ***staff room*** frequently - Make a point of ***seeing staff*** who do not often use the staff room and also the support staff - be systematic, check regularly on which staff you have not seen for some time - Think about the ***'silent majority'*** in the staff room - spend time with the quieter staff.
15. ***Encourage humour*** in every way you can in your dealings with staff.
16. Some ***senior leaders*** may be better at tasks than policy making so use them only for the former whilst keeping them informed of the whole school issues.
17. ***Keep staff informed*** of everything that is going on that is not confidential eg in briefing - issue a weekly bulletin to staff about the two weeks ahead and giving other pieces of information.
18. Full ***staff meetings*** should only be held on crucial issues [they are rarely very productive] – it is usually better to have the staff meet in smaller groups eg house or year teams, and then ensure that there is free discussion, the conclusions from which are reported back to you and all staff.
19. Hold annual ***surveys of staff views*** on all school issues – act upon the findings.
20. Ensure that the basic procedures and processes of the school are ***administratively efficient*** - without this, it is difficult to get full staff respect for senior leadership - Don’t forget anything - operate from ***lists*** of things to do that are comprehensive and inclusive - every time you fail to do something that you should, it causes much offence to others - write down everything that you have to do or take notice of - it is useful to use a small voice recorder, noting everything that you see around school.
21. Once you know people, ***delegate*** widely and trust these people fully - meet with them regularly as a form of check, but let them make important decisions and feel that they have power and responsibility delegated and not just tasks.
22. Allocate enough money for good ***staff continuing professional development*** provision – it is money well spent. Include internal cpd provision of high quality, rather than just pay for outside providers – the most effective cpd is individualised for each member of staff and is mainly focussed on enhancing teaching and learning - cpd is best co-ordinated via the School's Teaching and Learning Centre (see the section on raising achievement) - check out the quality of outsiders brought in for PD Days - staff hate to have the time wasted. Staff going on individual courses can be very expensive, and such courses have to be very relevant to the school needs if there is to be value for money. Ensure there are plenty of opportunities for support staff. Ensure that there is evaluation of all inset, both in its quality and then in the longer term on how it actually influences what goes on in the school and affects student achievement. Allow departments a lot of time to work together, but balance this by sufficient input from those outside the school with new and different ideas. All staff development should be closely and clearly related to the School Improvement Plan and also to meeting the development needs identified in the School’s Self Evaluation, but with attention also given to the professional needs of individual staff, especially via the appraisal process while it exists, and SLT audits of the strengths and weaknesses of individual staff - staff should be asked to submit a list of their perceived needs for the year - you can then draw up a Staff Development Plan and staff should have a professional development interview once a year with the CPD Co-ordinator from which they can drawn up their own professional development plans - staff should be given the time each year to update their personal inset records.
23. ***Middle Managers***, eg Heads of Department, play a crucial role and need particular, planned cpd opportunities, especially in management and leadership skills and in monitoring and evaluating their departments - give them real power and responsibility within their subject areas and they too should then lead teams where all enjoy responsibility and equal status and get the chance to develop personal leadership skills- in any half term have as many department meetings as possible, in addition to timetabled meetings, so that this empowerment of middle leaders is given the time it needs if departments are going to work together to become major drivers of school improvement
24. Monitor the effects of ***supply teachers/cover supervisors*** in school and get the balance right between good cpd and the disruption caused to students’ lessons - many discipline problems come from ***supply teachers***. Try to use as few as possible and cherish the good ones, making them want to work at your school - get to know them personally and show an interest in their work - give them all possible support and CPD
25. Monitor ***staff absence***, but with great sensitivity - staff who have frequent absences have to be seen but with the aim of providing help and support until it becomes clear that there is blatant absenteeism - such cases are usually very rare and the HR department should then be quickly involved - Be very liberal in response to ***staff requests for absence*** – you will be rewarded in most cases by appreciative staff putting in extra time in many other ways- school run on goodwill- show it, and you will get it back many times over
26. Where staff are unfairly criticised or attacked, don’t just ***support*** them but make it clear that you are supporting them, eg non confidential letters of support to others from you can be put on the staff room notice board.
27. ***If*** ***staff have been wrong*** in some way, tell them privately and take firm action as necessary but don’t humiliate and don’t use disciplinary procedures unless you really have to - operate a "no blame" culture - the problem is sorted and then forgotten as we look forwards – at the same time you do always need to see staff who have let you or your colleagues down, eg those who never get reports done according to schedule, those who let students leave lessons early etc
28. ***Listen*** to staff views, and consult, but if you believe you are right then go for it - if you prove to be right, the good consequences will be obvious to staff and you don’t need to gloat - if things go wrong, admit you made an error
29. ***Management of change*** is painful for staff and you cannot avoid upsetting some people - your aim is to minimise staff feelings of insecurity and be sensitive but push ahead with necessary change.
30. ***Look after staff*** who support you and are ‘with you’ - do everything you can to help develop those staff with exceptional potential, eg by giving them some experience or responsibility in a whole school area – in this way you will get new ideas, assist their professional development and make it less likely that they will leave - at the same time, try and avoid the impression that you have favourites.
31. Do all you can to win over the ***staff who doubt you*** - if you fail in this and they are a risk to your plans for the school then deliberately sideline them - ***Staff room*** cynics can be damaging - don’t overreact to them, but if there are those with strong personalities who tend to be vocally negative most of the time, then have a definite strategy to counter them.
32. Try all you can to professionally develop ***staff with limited ability -***  some however, are incapable of responding and need to go, eg where the students are suffering, but this must be handled in a way that means you have the support of most other staff and there is no damage to staff morale.
33. Insist that ***staff dress*** to a clear code, eg ties for men etc - this is especially the case if you are concerned with marketing the school and/or the students have to wear a uniform.
34. Have the staff, all staff, call you by your ***first name***.
35. Find the money to pay for ***staff treats***, eg drinks at Christmas, chocolates after an Ofsted inspection - send flowers, wine etc., or at the very least cards, to staff who have cause for celebration or upset.
36. Do everything you can to raise ***staff expectations*** of themselves and also the students - if every teacher starts expecting more of each child a school can leap ahead.
37. Have as few ***compulsory meetings*** as possible - ensure that they are well conducted have clear aims and are seen to have useful outcomes - voluntary meetings are useful on a wide range of aspects of the school, even if they do attract the same people, but make sure that staff do not feel that it will be held against them if they do not come and the meetings need to be as well conducted as compulsory meetings – department meeting are the most useful and your calendar should make it possible for their to be as many of these as possible, with the timetabling of these meetings wherever possible
38. ***'Carry the can'*** - accept that you are ultimately responsible for most things that happen in the school - don’t try and shift the blame publicly even if privately you may need to talk to staff about what happens.
39. Be prepared to help out and “***get your hands dirty***” on occasion - staff always appreciate seeing a head doing menial, difficult or unpleasant tasks.
40. ***Respect and value your staff*** - all teachers have strengths and weaknesses but the vast majority are nice people who try their best and are willing to support you
41. Move staff to ***jobs which suit them best*** - in many cases the job they are presently doing may not be the right one for them – better a sidewards move than demotion.
42. Don’t ***socialise with the staff*** too much - support the staff social functions but be aware that often they want to relax and have a good moan without the Head being present.
43. ***Moaning*** can be therapeutic for staff but if it is continuous then there is a morale problem - it is important to be able to distinguish between the two.
44. Spend money on good ***staff facilities***, eg comfortable staff rooms, refreshment facilities, staff work rooms, good ICT facilities.
45. Make it clear that you value good ***classroom teaching*** and that good teachers are all 'stars'.
46. Wherever possible, a teacher should be able to ***teach in one room*** and register his/her tutor group there as well.
47. ***The initiatives to reduce staff workload*** deserve a high priority i.e the reduction in teachers’ levels of administration, planning, marking and work load and improved work/life balance. Aim to reduce the time needed for report writing by better use of ICT and existing data and less written comments. Make it part of the School’s assessment policy to use all means to reduce teachers’ marking load. End staff duties by using a prefect system to back SLT if you have one. Target tutors’ time on pastoral care and nothing else. Make full use of support staff and teaching assistants. Only ask for returns from staff if they are really vital. The aim overall is to allow staff to concentrate on teaching and learning, with all unnecessary bureacracy removed from their lives
48. Nothing has done more for staff morale than the reduction in ***cover*** – cover supervisors have to be chosen very carefully and given intensive training- it is pointless keeping on cover staff who just cannot manage behaviour– try to get a deal with staff over transfer cover, e.g. when Year 11 leave, so that it can be used to allow trips, visits, special events and cpd to still occur – for examinations employ lead invigilators who you trust and then take on other invigilators at the cheapest possible cost, e.g. lunch supervisors.
49. Ensure that the ***TLR/grading structure*** for the school is in the public domain for teachers and support staff and that all promotions are fully publicised and can be justified if necessary. Your scheme of teaching and Learning allowances should have been introduced exactly as laid down in the guidance to avoid legal challenge whilst ensuring that the posts in your new structure receive money values that match the job and with the same criteria used in assessing all jobs – ensure that all TLR posts given out internally have been advertised with subsequent interviews so that everyone has had a chance to apply..
50. Let all teachers move up the ***threshold*** upper scales as per the recommended criteria unless they are pretty useless and all staff know this and thus won't hold you keeping them back against you - keep the unions with you and have proper procedures in place to justify rejection and help assist improvement and eventual success - movement up the threshold gives teachers pay they deserve and boosts morale, and they can take on useful extra responsibilities - give assistance to teachers with the process when they first go through the threshold.
51. ***Personnel law*** issues are a minefield - make sure that you have access to HR advice and support even if it costs.
52. Don’t let there be any ***special Senior Leadership Team (SLT) privileges or costs***, eg parking places, expensively decorated and fitted offices - staff really resent this and the money is best spent on students.
53. Set out to secure ***'Investors in People'*** certification - it is a good value for money check of how good your personnel and staff development policies and procedures actually are.
54. Treat teaching and ***support staff*** with equal respect in an integrated and unified personnel policy - Make full use of support staff - they cost little and are often very skilled - they can save hours of work for staff and also do much of the routine work of the SLT – reducing workload for teachers has given so much scope now to allow non-teachers to take on administrative or management roles and allow teachers to concentrate on teaching and learning - There is also a whole range of work that support staff can do beyond administration e.g. cover, invigilation, counselling, lunch duties, clubs, trips, mentoring, classroom support etc. Support staff are not highly paid and moves to higher grades cost the school very little - raising the level of support staff work, and paying them more, is thus a highly cost effective way of motivating these staff, giving them more job satisfaction and saving work for teachers or managers.
55. Don’t try and be liked by all staff - aim to get their ***respect*** and it is then a bonus if many of them also like you.
56. ***Don’t lie to staff***, make promises you don’t keep or let them down - some staff never forget! - Don’t be ***two faced*** - keep confidences - be professional at all times.
57. ***Appraisal*** of teachers was complicated by the link to pay increments based on performance management with the ending of automatic yearly pay increases - this can be a minefield for schools and if badly handled can damage goodwill and staff morale, cause jealousies and resentments within teams, and provoke interventions by unions or even lawyers- the sensible way ahead is to take the view that the vast majority of staff who work hard and do their best will get their increment very much as before and the staff know this- the only staff who do not receive it will be those on capability or attendance monitoring- in this way the staff can still be set challenging appraisal targets knowing that if they don’t quite meet them they will still get their pay increment because of their overall good performance
58. Show staff the ***references*** you write on them - such openness is always appreciated - write down everything that you can that is positive - use omission for all but the most serious negative points
59. Help staff with ***job application*** forms and give them interview practice if they want it - encourage and assist ambitious staff in planning their career development.
60. Put a lot of time and effort into ***staff recruitment and retention*** procedures - be proactive and go out to seek good staff – form close links with the teacher training institutions - good staff are vital - don’t just use interviews, which favour certain types of people - ask candidates to teach lessons - use group work exercises etc - the people you use on recruitment panels should have proven track records of good judgement - if you are in an area where it is difficult to recruit staff, then put in a mammoth effort to impress possible recruits in every possible way - pay over the odds if you have to - retention of staff is also easier if you ensure that staff are happy and you do everything in your power to have an environment where staff want to stay – ensure that all necessary safeguarding procedures are in place for recruitment.
61. Have a member of your staff who can give advice on ***stress*** to staff - they need to be properly trained - have a policy for dealing with stress.
62. Respect the ***unions*** and meet regularly with the union representatives in the school, building up close relationships built on trust – seek agreement wherever possible. Don’t try and thwart ***industrial action*** - keep good relations throughout - you have to work with these staff after it is all over.

# The Headteacher, Leadership and Whole School Management

1. Make sure you are clear in your ***vision*** of where the School is going and that you are communicating it - keep checking that all remain aware of the vision and agree with it - You should be sure of your own educational and personal ***values*** and not keep them hidden from staff, student, parents and members of the community - Try to get everyone on board - schools work so much better when ***everyone shares the vision*** - this takes time and effort with much consultation and discussion with staff, students, parents, governors and the community.
2. Undertake regular ***audits*** of the overall strengths and weaknesses of all aspects of the school as part of your monitoring and review process making use of hard data wherever possible with assessments of current and likely future progress following data tracking and collation of other key data, e.g, attendance, lesson observations, behaviour, praise etc – following this there should be an updating of the self evaluation which is integral to your School Improvement Plan – honest, accurate self evaluation is essential.
3. ***School aims*** should be simple and clear - mission statements in ponderous language are of no value - it should be possible to express the aims of the school in few key words and they should feature in all aspects of the school’s life.
4. Link the sections of the ***School Improvement Plan, (SIP),***  directly to both the School Aims and also the Ofsted criteria - in that way you will be concentrating at all times on the school’s core purposes- incorporate the SEF within each section of the SIP and do not have it as a separate document
5. Link the School Improvement Plan (SIP) directly to the ***Staff Development Plan***.
6. Make the SIP a ***user friendly*** document and not too complicated - in education too much is made ultra comprehensive and thus completely unworkable in practice - produce an abridged, summary version as well - link in monitoring and evaluation and measurement of impact into the plan so that it is an integral part - make the SIP freely available to everyone concerned with the school- there should be concise action plans related to each element of the SIP which show the actions that will be taken and how impact will be assessed
7. A possible ***layout for the SIP*** is as follows:

 For each key Aim:-

* KPIs with milestones
* Desired outcomes from actions taken
* Specific actions including cpd
* Date to complete
* Person/body responsible
* Resources required
* Monitoring and evaluation
* Current status, (RAG rated)

8. Have a ***Business Plan*** of which the SIP is the centre point – included in the Business Plan could be:-

Staffing projections/implications of curriculum plans

School Budget in the context of the financial implications of the School Improvement Plan

Budgetary planning, monitoring and evaluation, principles and processes

Planning schedule for the year

Building (maintenance) *Asset Management Plan*

Building (estate development)

Information Technology, (ICT) equipment purchase and maintenance plan (Curriculum)

ICT equipment purchase and maintenance plan (Administration)

Audio Visual and reprographics purchase and maintenance plan

Staff Development Plan

Resources Development Plan

Plan for income generation

9 ***Involve*** everyone connected with the School in drawing up the SIP, parents, students, staff, governors and the community.

1. The SIP should be adjusted following the SEF revisions after data tracking, but once a year is enough for a major **revision** ofthe SIP and ‘roll it on’, this being done after a full self evaluation exercise and at the time of the year that best suits the schools strategic planning process
2. Each ***department*** should have its own concise ***development plan based on a department audit*** and revised once a year after the SIP has been revised and then reviewed after each data tracking - all department members should play a part in drawing up this Department Development Plan (DDP) and not just the Head of Department (HoD) alone – the DDP should concentrate on key objectives and be in the same format as the SIP - Senior Leadership Team (SLT) line managers will work closely with the department in drawing up and then reviewing the DDP
3. Along with the concise and meaningful aims of the school, there should be a statement of the ***values and principles*** underlying the aims of the School - in an appendix to the SIP each aim can also be broken down into ***detailed objectives*** - these prescribe in some detail what will need to be happening in school if the overall aim is to be met - as such they can be seen as necessary conditions for the successful achievement of the aim and also as a useful list of evaluation criteria by which to judge how successful the school is in trying to achieve the aims.
4. Aims, objectives, values and principles make up in shades and level of detail the School’s overall ***vision***.
5. The ***Action Plans*** that support the SIP should be “remit documents” by which SLT members carry out their key responsibilities – These should cover:
* Responsibility
* Audit of present situation, (bullet pointed)
* Targets for the year, (in measurable data)
* New provision planned, (bullet pointed)
* Evidence of impact in relation to targets as measured at first data tracking exercise
* Any revisions to planned provision in the light of the impact measurement, (bullet pointed)
* *This is then repeated at each data tracking point*
* End of year measurement of impact in relation to targets
* Planned new provision for the next academic year, (bullet pointed)

Ensure that important initiatives are carried through systematically and continuously developed and monitored - it is no use just having plans, they have to be carried out and regularly reviewed with regular assessment of impact. Policy statements are too often long and ponderous. They should instead be brief action statements based on bullet points which are guides to both actions and also success criteria.

1. ***Monitoring*** (regular checking of what is happening), ***Review*** (systematic research using evidence to ascertain information) and ***Evaluation*** (using criteria to assess the information and to see how much of what was wanted has been achieved) will be an essential element of the the SIP if the SEF is integrated into the SIP with the SIP itself then showing when it should be taking place, and how impact is being measured being shown in the supporting documents - it will be a mixture of self evaluation and the use of external observers
2. ***Whole school monitoring*** can be carried out by SLT members, review groups or individuals but should again be kept simple and concentrate on key criteria and evidence and especially the use of data showing impact on student achievement – build up banks of evidence - information gained is fed back into the planning process - the Governing Body should decide which aspects of the School it is going to specifically monitor and evaluate, and how and when it will be doing it.
3. ***Departmental monitoring*** policies should be related to whole school practice based on a school department quality assurance system, and are the responsibility ultimately of the HoD and overseen by SLT line managers - the departmental monitoring should concentrate on the basic factors that impinge on raising achievement ie observing teachers in the classroom; lesson plans; homework logs; checking the quality of student work; analysis of key assessments; analysis of public examination results – all departments should be using the same criteria and methodology for monitoring The aim is department monitoring that is seen as a cooperative, non threatening exercise that does not engender suspicions or hostility or affect departmental team spirit - evidence should be recorded from both formal and informal monitoring and it can then be used as part of the analysis that leads to the termly reviews of the departmental development plan – these are best done in departmental meetings –there is little to be gained by department SEFs of great length and detail which mirror the school SEF –evaluation is best related to the DDP in bullet point format listing successes and areas for further development
4. ***SLT line managers*** should be working with the department on a continuous basis to assist with departmental monitoring, wherever possible working closely with the Head of Department, (and the better the Head of Department the less the line manager will need to do). This could include:
* Visiting lessons informally.
* Lesson observations
* Learning walks
* Checking selected schemes of work.
* Looking at a selection of class books.
* Taking in all work from three students in a year group (high, average and low ability) and then discussing progress with students.
* Taking in a set of books from one student and then discuss progress.
* Marking and homework checks
* Carrying out student pursuit days.
* Looking at a selection of student planners.

Regular monitoring is better than one off checks. There is however, a case for department review days during which the SLT line manager, other SLT members and the whole department, review progress and then review the department improvement plan, the progress made and the areas for further development.

1. When you are ***monitoring a department*** and visiting lessons, it must be as non- threatening as possible - it can become almost a joint discussion about teaching and learning styles rather than an inspection, with very positive feedback giving context to the specific criticisms or suggestions – use a whole school agreed, standard lesson observation checklist proforma.
2. Monitoring, evaluation and review should be planned and systematic - draw up ***data*** on all aspects of the school and then use it in this process - do not rely too much on 'gut feeling',although this has a place- audit the strengths and weaknesses of each of your staff, and then each individual can receive personalised support and CPD.
3. Ensure the SLT job descriptions mean that there are **drivers** in place for all the key areas of school improvement, with use of other talented staff via an extended SLT no driver means little chance of progress in that area
4. Ensure that monitors, ie senior and middle management, are trained in the ***skills of lesson observation and checking through students' work.***
5. Having individual ***SLT members linking with specific departments*** produces a line management system where senior leaders work closely with specific middle managers and is essential not just to aid department monitoring, review and planning, but to allow these line managers to be agents of change in terms of school improvement, eg, ensuring that AFL, G and T provision, underachievement intervention etc, etc are being fully developed and enhanced in each department –middle managers should still have the right of access to the headteacher when they wish to raise an issue –SLT members need to ensure that there is agreed common practice in how the line management is carried out.
6. There is a case for having two types of **SLT meeting** each week. At one the SLT concentrate on the wider aspects of the school’s management and leadership. The other meeting is focussed on the implementation and monitoring of the SIP. Those present will be line managers as well as SLT members and this makes it possible for their to be consistency in how the line managers carry out their role as agents of change and improvement within each department area Schools also need “engines for change” beyond just the SLT, e.g. Innovation Groups, Curriculum Strategy Groups, involving as many staff as possible – these teams can then be led in such a way that becomes very creative and provide excellent CPD for those involved.
7. Only give out the bare minimum necessary to departments in straight ***capitation*** (this can be done by a simple formula based on teacher periods, ages of students and a weighting for textbooks, equipment etc). Resource spending should match the SIP and this is best done by departments putting in ***special bids*** based on their department development plans which are assessed by a committee of the governing body with SLT advice – the main criteria for awarding money will focus on how it will raise the achievement of the students and classroom resources will always be the highest priority - computer provision, audio visual equipment and the purchase of equipment, fitting and fixtures are best done centrally. Overall, ensure that the school's finances are efficiently run and there is tight budget control and then evaluation - it is worth paying for a high quality Burser or Finance Manager - the most valuable expenditure is on staff and classroom resources - your overall aim is always to keep your marginal costs down whilst increasing income.
8. Departments must show evidence of ***evaluating their expenditure*** and looking at what difference if has made to the quality of teaching and learning.
9. Consult extensively when drawing up the ***Year Calendar*** and let staff have the time to go through the final draft - avoid meetings in weeks when there are parents’ meetings, open evenings, cpd sessions etc - a well planned year calendar with, eg, the right amount of time allowed for data tracking etc, makes a great difference to the smooth running of the school and is worth a lot of time devoted to its preparation.
10. Most ***governors*** are pleasant and supportive - keep them informed, be honest with them, admit problems and errors - accept their role in the scheme of delegation and just ensure they have the necessary information and guidance to enable them to make the correct decisions, whilst accepting their right to find out information for themselves. Don’t try to go to every committee meeting if these exist, use SLT members to service some of them. Build as close a relationship with the chairman as possible. If there are awkward or difficult governors, work on the other governors to isolate them - if any governor, or the whole governing body, seek to go too far into day to day school management then resist it in every way – governors will usually back off if they trust you and know you are good at your job. Governors take up time but they are often a source of support and also good ideas and advice- The Ofsted specification puts a lot of importance on the role Governors play in the leadership and evaluation of the school and it is important that they understand what is expected of them and that they have the evidence to prove that they are carrying out this role, (see guidance note on the website) it is best if Ofsted meets with governors who have been specifically trained for this role
11. ***Ofsted inspections***  With minimum notice, schools need to be on top of all their performance data and be acting upon it - there also needs to be rigorous self evaluation as a continuous process, with the self evaluation in the SIP as its overall summary - policies and procedures will always need to be up to date - ensure that you complete your self evaluation fully and honestly - inspectors give credit for this. Ofsted inspections can still be used to improve a school and the process will still need managing to make it as stress free as possible. Managing the inspection period well is simply a question of the Head showing he has the necessary skills to do his job properly - it is a time for staff support and then praise and thanks - there should not be much bad news that isn’t known already and then there should be no overreaction to any criticisms, particularly criticism of individual staff. The resulting action plan should be integrated within the SIP, even though it still may have to exist as a discrete document. All in all, a good Head uses Ofsted to improve the School and can manage the process to get a better report than the school probably deserves, without causing too much stress for staff (see the note on preparing for Ofsted inspections on the website)
12. ***Creative thinking exercises*** give schools the opportunity to think laterally about how we organise schools and how we can then improve, with the primary aim of advancing teaching and learning - involve all the staff, students and community in this process - take account of future likely trends, e.g. demographic, family, employment etc. – aim to reduce bureaucratic burdens from staff as well as reduce workload so that they have more time to concentrate on teaching and learning
13. Being a ***specialist school*** can give you excellence in one area even if there are no longer any extra funds –it is now for the school to decide whether or not there are advantages in having a specialism- if it does, then the skilled part is to ensure that the initiative improves the whole school and teaching and learning and the achievement of the students across the curriculum
14. Don’t keep ***failing systems*** in place, eg detention systems, KS4 praise and rewards system, tutor time etc – make the effort to replace them with systems that actually work.
15. The ***great headteachers*** are those who will only settle for every aspect of the school being outstanding and who ensure that staff and students have only the highest of expectations
16. ***Successful schools*** have high expectations -they have inspiring leadership -the management systems have been very carefully designed with great attention to detail and a high degree of personalisation
17. ***Every few years*** look back and reflect on how well you personally have done -- concentrate on your successes and celebrate them.

# The Head teacher and Day to Day Leadership of the School

No matter how many leadership courses a Headteacher may attend and how clever is the school’s management structure, it will all go wrong if the Headteacher is managing the school poorly on a day to day basis.

1. One of the ***deputies*** at least should know everything the Head knows in case of the latter’s sudden demise - in fact there should be someone who is covering all the vital jobs in the management of the school – SLT members should have tasks which match their strengths and interests - rotation of functions may be valuable for their professional development but does not necessarily improve the management of the school unless they have become stale - in some cases the team members can do certain things better than the Head and the latter should accept this and make use of it. There is a case now for just having one deputy and more staff on the leadership scale – this flatter structure gives more flexibility and brings in more ideas –it is also useful to have extended SLT sessions where best use can be made of the ideas of other talented staff – it is also important to identify talented young staff and give them early opportunities to be involved in whole school initiatives; in this way you gain extra ideas, strengthen their CVs and make it likely that they will stay for longer
2. Be ***loyal to your Senior Leadership Team (SLT)*** members – defend and support them publicly - be sure that their roles and responsibilities are understood by all staff - The SLT is a ***team*** and the usual principles of good team building should be followed - Heads only get loyalty from SLT members if they act in a way that means they deserve it - Know yourself, your strengths and weaknesses - other members of the SLT should be used to cover for your weaknesses - accept the isolation of the job at many times whilst also enjoying the team work.
3. Heads should not get too involved in big projects, eg raising the money for major initiatives, negotiating the selling of land etc - ultimately the Head’s highest priority is the ***day to day management of the school and the leadership of teaching and learning –*** make full use of a Business Manager.
4. Looking back on a week in school, the Head should find that at least half of his/her time has been spent on activities that directly relate to ***improving students’ achievement and enhancing teaching and learning*** - this is a key test of good time management and prioritising.
5. Limit ***new*** ***initiatives*** that you introduce into the school to the vital and the manageable - too much new being brought in is usually counter-productive.
6. Be upbeat about the school especially with staff, student and parents - ***confidence*** ***breeds*** ***confidence*** - Heads can ***'create*** ***myths'*** that then become accepted by all to the benefit of the school - Encourage ***pride in the school*** and its successes, in staff, students and the community.
7. Plan how to achieve things with great ***attention to detail*** and the intoduction of rigorous systems – be sure before you start that you know how you are going to do it - It is vital to pay attention to detail in every part of the school’s operations - getting the detail right is as important as the overriding stuctures – make sure that new ideas are skilfully implemented and carried through and completed – implementation is as important as the idea and needs to be rigorous, relentless and effective,
8. If ***Heads teach*** then they should choose lessons which do not involve excessive preparation or marking - otherwise they will not have the time to do it well and thus not be a good role model as a teacher - this consideration should be in mind even if there are holes in the timetable that need filling - taking the odd, difficult group is usually appreciated by other staff - Rather than teach it may be better to only do ***'covers'***, with a minimum number each week - staff appreciate you doing it and it is an excellent opportunity to see what is going on in a whole range of classrooms, look at books, talk to students, learn names, check on the state of rooms etc, etc - there is no preparation or marking and your absence from school on occasions does not disrupt the teaching of any one class.
9. Don’t have ***directed time*** - any school that needs this has failed in terms of staff morale and motivation.
10. Encourage ***collective staff feeling*** - the school should move forward as a whole - similarly departments should be working together to raise achievement –it is for these reasons that performance related pay for can be counter productive
11. ***Listen*** more and talk less - ***Never talk for too long*** in any part of your job - more than twenty minutes at the outside and people won’t be listening.
12. Don’t go ***out of school*** too often - your job is to run the school and staff don’t like Heads to be absent too regularly - only go to essential external meetings where the school will undoubtedly gain by your attendance.
13. Encourage staff to take part in extra- curricular activities and/or lunch duties by publicising and making available ***free lunches*** – it is money well spent - it may also be necessary to pay staff for key activities e.g. Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.
14. Not all staff want to be continuously ***consulted*** or involved in the planning of the school’s future development - don’t force it down their throats, but keep them informed.
15. Your ultimate aim should be to ***improve every aspect of the school to the point that is outstanding***, although there are obviously priorities - ultimately the lost property system, for example, should be working just as well as higher level procedures and processes - every bit of the school should be outstanding. Good schools are created by lots of small improvements rather than just the applying of 'big ideas'.
16. Heads need ***good judgement*** - how good is yours - are you checking? – how often do you get it right/wrong?
17. ***Seize the moment*** - you can’t plan everything - when the chance comes or the idea strikes, then act upon it ***-*** Take risks but only after you have analysed them and looked at the pros and cons - Whilst everything needs to be thought through carefully, it is still necessary to have some ***speed*** in making decisions and carrying things out - staff appreciate quick decisions and actions, (as long as they are the right ones).
18. If you or the school are wrong then ***apologise*** and admit it, whether it is to students, staff, parents or the community.
19. It is sometimes necessary to ‘***wheel and deal’*** - it is an important skill and justified if the aims are good and the means not so devious that they affect your reputation and the trust people have in you.
20. If you are not creative and don’t have too many ideas of your own then develop the skill of ***seizing on other people’s ideas*** and developing them and then applying them as effectively as possible – “customise” the ideas to the school.
21. ***Lateral thinking*** produces ideas that really improve the school, but these often come best from a group of people who are brainstorming in an atmosphere of trust and mutual support - you get more inspiration when you don't think alone.
22. Fight for the school and do everything you can to secure what is ***best for the school*** as long as you are sure you will not be hurting students in other institutions - otherwise, let others take the wider view whilst you pursue the self interest of the school.
23. Cooperate and try and get on with the ***other local secondary schools and academies*** - there are benefits to be gained from working together in some areas and sharing views and information - peer support and cooperation from other heads can be very valuable.
24. Heads and senior managers get paid well - ***work long hours*** and be seen to work long hours - it is the least staff expect.
25. ***Bin*** ***all mail and emails that are of doubtful value*** in terms of improving you or your school - it has to have sufficiently useful outcomes that justify the time spent reading it - it is actually only necessary to read a few documents, with most discarded or very lightly skim read - only take part in surveys, questionnaires etc., if you have to or if they are very valuable.
26. Read the ***Academy and School News Updates*** that are on the website – they are useful summaries of what is going on - forward relevant sections to your staff.
27. ***Don’t be distracted*** from your key tasks by trivialities - Keep working on your ***time management*** skills - it does make a difference - Heads still tend to work less than efficiently in how they prioritise tasks - timetable in all essential tasks in advance, so that you cannot then avoid them.
28. Change the ***pattern of the day*** so that the school has longer mornings and shorter afternoons - it always improves the learning in the school - there is now the scope to have extended days and imaginative new uses of school time - use lateral thinking and aim for solutions that do actually improve teaching and learning.
29. Go for relatively ***short lessons in academic subjects*** and then double them up for the practical subjects – there is also scope for longer periods of learning time when themes and cross curricular projects are being pursued, as long as these are well structured and resourced.
30. Make ***your own office*** student friendly by having lots of photographs of the students and also examples of their work all over your walls - schools are about children and such an office is a good reminder of this to you as well – let students have access to your office on a day to day basis.
31. ***Don’t live in the catchment area*** of the school - you and your family deserve some peace, given the hours you will be working already.
32. If you get ***stressed*** frequently, then either you shouldn’t be in the job or you need to get out - look out for the signs!
33. There is nothing wrong with school being not just a job but a hobby, interest and lifestyle - even so, you still need to do other things, and above all, ***spend more time with the family*** than the job seems to let you.
34. Be visible and ***be*** ***see*n** - around school, at the school gate, at parents’ evenings, at Parent Teacher Association events - stay in your office on your own as little as possible - be out in the corridors as much as possible and certainly at all lesson changes - be around the school, dropping into lessons.
35. Do your ***administration work*** outside school hours – school hours are precious for working with staff and students.
36. What ***example*** are you setting to staff and students? - think about it! - ask other people.
37. ***Keep learning*** as a Head - you can never know it all - go on the very best courses - reflect on what you are doing all the time.
38. Be ***tough*** when you need to, but remain polite, fair and professional - If you have made a decision, ***stick with*** ***it*** until you are convinced you are wrong - then admit your error and make the necessary changes.
39. Keep administration spending down to the minimum - judge yourself as a manager by how much of the money spent can be seen to ***directly benefit students***' ***learning***.
40. Remember the adage, “when you are in the fertiliser, grow roses out of it” - good Headteachers recover from ***disasters*** and make use of them to improve things.
41. Good ***communication*** in a school is vital - plan your channels of communication very carefully - include school communications in your own job description and monitor it continuously - don’t engage in blanket moaning at staff eg over the setting of homework etc – instead talk to the “offenders” and don’t upset staff who are actually doing what you want.
42. The procedures for settling ***Heads and Deputies pay*** are now clearly laid down by statute - only try for more pay if you believe you really deserve it and at least take account of the fact that any pay rise you get will upset the staff.
43. ***Market*** your school strongly only if you need the extra student numbers to survive or at least to be able to run the school and the curriculum efficiently - if you do market be professional and cost effective but don’t make comparisons with other schools or seek to do other schools down. If you don’t need the extra numbers then just concentrate at minimum cost on keeping your own community informed of what their school is doing - glossy, expensively produced brochures etc are just a waste of money that could be best spent on the students - ultimately parents will send a child to a school where the results are at least reasonable but, above all, where they believe the child will be safe and happy and the school is approachable - this is the vital image to project.
44. Each Head must closely analyse his/her personality and professional skills and work out which is his/her most appropriate ***leadership style*** and then make use of it - don’t try to be charismatic if you are not but rely instead on an alternative leadership style eg on being straight, honest and good at your job and getting your respect that way.
45. Cooperate closely with governors/trust in the annual process of receiving and setting the ***headteacher's targets*** - link these into targets that you already have, e.g. from the ***SIP*** and from statutory targets - build a good relationship with your Education Adviser if you have one, and make full use of his/her knowledge and analysis of how the school is doing.
46. When you start as a ***headteacher*** put right what is obviously wrong and what you can improve quickly. High profile changes which impress students, staff and parents are also useful in your first year, e.g. improving the state of the toilets, ending graffiti/vandalism, reducing bullying and violence, being seen all around the school, being more approachable to parents etc. At the same time, put in place the measures that will bring longer term improvement, and especially building up from Year Seven so that in 4-5 years there is further clear progress. At this stage it is vital to put in a fresh input to keep the School developing - if you have run out of ideas then it is probably time to move on

# The Head teacher and Raising Achievement

See also [**http://tonystephens.org.uk**](http://tonystephens.org.uk)**,** which give much more detail on these issues; this section only makes general points

***Raising the achievement*** of students is the primary task of a school - you need to have a clear policy and action plan showing how you are planning to do this and how you will be evaluating your success - this is likely to include many of the issues listed below and elsewhere in this document and on the website- to raise achievement it is necessary to enhance both teaching and learning and also the overall learning environment offered by the School

1. ***Improving the academic and general performance of boys*** is crucial in most schools, and, if successful, can make a huge difference to the overall public examination and learning performance of the school as well as enhancing the boys’ overall involvement in the school - have a comprehensive plan and strategy in place
2. G**irls** often also underachieve in certain subjects as do **minority ethnic groups, white British, and the other Raiseonline student groupings** and their needs also require full attention.
3. Every school should be attempting to close the **disadvantage gap** as a high priority, with all possible support for PP students, both academically and pastorally. PP students are not a homogeneous group; they are individuals, and need a personalised approach to meet their particular needs, whether it be academic underachievement of personal issues of problems
4. ***Learning*** itself should be something that is highly valued throughout the school and an essential element of its culture - the head is primarily the leader of teaching and learning - this is the key job and this should never be forgotten - establish a Teaching and Learning Centre within the School , making use of your own staff and selected outsiders - this is for ITT, NQTs, ECTs and all staff, primarily looking at how students learn best, teaching and learning styles within the school, assessment for learning and the developing use of e-learning - cpd is best co-ordinated through the Centre - staff will need to be released to work in the Centre and in its activities, e.g. lesson observation, analysis of students' work, sharing of good practice, teachers developing their professional skills - it needs to be totally non-intimidatory, with staff able to admit weaknesses and then be helped to improve. It is especially useful when staff within and between departments can observe each other and then meet to discuss their practice and methods, ie “peer partnerships”
5. Outstanding schools have developed an **achievement culture** based on high expectations and aspirations, with all students having challenging targets
6. ***Accelerated learning*** methods vary greatly in their usefulness and relevance but good schools will be improving the way in which students learn by making use of the best of the new ideas that have come from the recent studies of how the brain works and the range of learning styles.
7. Getting teachers to ***raise their expectations of students*** is the key to success - good teachers give the students the confidence to produce work at a level they never dreamed they could achieve – the best schools have impressive achievement cultures.
8. ***Data based target tracking*** will identify underachieving students and lead to personalised intervention strategies in all subjects and all years, as well as showing which students deserve praise and also how well the student groupings are achieving ***-*** it can also produce ***regular summary reports*** which give the school, students and parents the regular update on progress being based on data about each student from the data tracking that gives some indication of how well they should be doing in relation to targets and can also give their behaviour, attendance and praise and rewards. One at least can be linked to a parents’ evening, and comments can be added to some of them from pastoral managers and SLT. If these are done well, then there is no need for teachers to write reports
9. Time should be made available for the tutors or mentors to ***see each tutee individually*** after each tracking exercise to discuss progress and especially in relation to their targets – it is a good system to have two tutors per tutor group so that one can use tutor time to have learning conversations with students whilst the other stays with the rest of the tutor group – schools should accumulate as many trained mentors as possible from SLT, volunteer staff, support staff, outside people.
10. There is a need for the enhancing of the level of expectation and challenge in **KS3**, with more intense provision for cross curricular literacy, reading and numeracy development and the teaching of key learning skills and focused preparation for the demands of KS4- it is in KS3 that a school makes clear to students what are its standards and expectations in all aspects of school life
11. There needs to be effective induction and provision for **EAL students** which is led and managed by a driver of some status within the school
12. ***Mentoring*** of students targeted from data tracking has been proved to be very effective eg with those students underachieving in terms of Attainment 8 subjects and Progress 8 - ***Public examination performance tables*** exist whether we like it or not and, given the emphasis given to them by the government and the media, a school is quite entitled to aim at improving its position by giving a special emphasis to ensuring that the curriculum and student pathways and support are to some extent geared up to maximising Attainment 8 performance and thus Progress 8 - At the same time, in a comprehensive school, ***all students should get equal attention*** - it is wrong just to spend time on certain key students.
13. ***Able students*** are too often left because they seem to be achieving at a satisfactory level - good schools go beyond this and push and stretch higher ability and gifted and talented students in all areas to the limit - The number of ***exceptionally gifted or talented students*** in a school is often exaggerated but they certainly do exist, and few schools have a clear strategy for spotting them and then meeting their needs – Ofsted will certainly be monitoring carefully the attainment and progress of those students identified as higher ability on entry to secondary school– it is essential to have a co-ordinator for Able and Talented student provision.
14. The watered down academic diet still rules in too many lessons and particularly for ***less able students*** - there is the scope for much more interesting, relevant and participatory lessons based on active learning which engage such students, and improve their learning, attendance, behaviour and attitude towards schools yet it is still not always seen as a high priority in too many schools - there is a need for a complete rethink of teaching and learning styles for students of all abilities with imaginative use of ICT and account taken of students’ different learning styles and much more emphasis on active learning.
15. ***The Learning Support Department*** should be something the school is proud of - well resourced, housed and staffed with teachers and a good number of classroom assistants. Comprehensive and regular testing should be continuously revealing how much progress students are making - diagnostic testing should be skilled and lead to individual learning programmes. There should be a sensible mix of withdrawal and in-class support - basic skill development is best done out of the classroom - There should be a heavy emphasis on systematic and intensive skill development in Years Seven and Eight. The department should be open at lunchtime for students allowing 'drop in' sessions for students who need assistance. The Code of Practice should be operated with minimum bureaucracy - Individual Educational Programmes (IEPs) should be as simple as possible for staff to follow. Parents of students with Special Education Needs (SEN) should be closely involved in their children’s progress and be trained, when they are willing, to help the child at home. Much of the Special Education Needs Coordination Officer's (SENCO’s) time should be spent working with Heads of Department and their staff, ensuring that their schemes of work cater as well as possible for SEN students. The learning support department should liaise especially closely with the pastoral system, as SEN students are often very vulnerable and in need of individual support, and with the behaviour management programmes in place within the School. The SENCO should use data tracking to monitor the progress of SEN students across the curriculum and ensure that action is being taken where there are issues and problems. The school should have a full understanding of the best way of introducing the new national arrangements for SEND students
16. ***Student data tracking*** should result in student targets being raised in many cases over time, thus showing how high expectations are being realised
17. There is evidence that setting challenging ***targets*** for students does help raise overall achievement as long as teachers respond to them by raising expectations and developing an achievement culture - the important thing really is the whole school straining to improve the performance of students in every way possible - departments will have challenging targets as well but there should be no sanctions, public shame or negative feedback if departments have tried their best but failed to achieve them - a limited form of competition between departments in meeting targets can be healthy - it is divisive and thus counter productive to set public targets for individual teachers in comparison to others in the department and then publish the results, but behind the scenes it is a useful exercise to do this comparison, obviously ensuring that like is being compared with like.
18. ***Teaching and learning methods and styles*** should be a matter of continuous discussion within the school, with a review group leading the way and based on the Teaching and Learning Centre - this issue should always feature highly in the cpd programme - the aim for students is to make them better learners, enjoy learning more and be more involved in their own learning - for teachers it is to make them more reflective about how learning takes place and the different learning styles of students and how their teaching can make effective learning more possible- all teachers should have their own individual plans which highlight the aspects of their teaching that they most need to develop - teachers within departments should be observing each other in a non-threatening way, concentrating on teaching and learning styles. Teachers' best ideas should be made freely available and circulated to other staff - good practice should be celebrated - there should be at least one teacher within each department that is pioneering new and more exciting teaching and learning styles.
19. The ***Key Skills***, including study skills and thinking skills, need developing in students but not ‘in a vacuum’ - the best way is to ensure that all departments are developing Key Skills within their schemes of work so that they have context - this point has to be considered when learning to learn courses are being introduced - there is clear evidence in particular of the value of developing the students’ ability to think critically.The only possible exceptions are revision skills and examination techniques which can be developed centrally, eg in Personal, Social, Health and Vocational Education lessons or tutor periods, and as early as possible in the students’ school career with reminders and refreshers during the revision periods prior to exams in all years - give students the very best advice on how to revise and help them set deadlines and revision targets – with linear GCSEs, it is even more important that students have revision friendly notes and know how best to revise- we have to do better in teaching children how to learn and there are useful new software packages that help in this process.
20. The School’s ***Homework or extended learning policy*** should be clear to staff, students and parents - the timetable set should be observed and students normally given more than one day to complete work - a homework room should be made available, at lunchtime and/or after school, for students - a centrally run school homework detention system at lunchtime or after school, supervised by the SLT, will help all staff enforce homework with no burden upon them - it can be called a homework club, but attendance would be compulsory when homework has not been done on a continuous basis. Each department’s homeworks need to be checked continuously by HoDs /line managers - are they integrated into the schemes of work? - are they either differentiated or open ended so that they are suitable yet stretching for all abilities? - is homework being set when it should? At the same time it is possible to plan a range of homeworks that do not overburden staff with excessive marking. Staff should keep some form a log of homeworks set, which heads of departments check regularly but this need only be seen by SLT when there is a reason, eg parental complaint. It is possible now to put homework outlines and also materials on the website or e-learning system so that students and parents can access them at home, while taking account that not all families have the necessary equipment. Homework and extended learning has to be differentiated – students have different needs depending on their ability and learning position – some student get more homework than they need or is of real value to them – some other students who will need skills in independent learning don’t get enough. Remote learning provisionon and support should be available for students unable to attend school.
21. Students’ ***homework diaries*** or planners if used must be kept graffiti free and smart - teachers should write homework down on the board and ensure that students copy it down and have written when it is due in. Sanctions could be imposed on students who forget their planners, but with sensitiviy to the home circumstances of some children - children should not write none set, and if they have work set over a period of time, it should be entered on each week of the planner to avoid the impression that there has been no homework. Tutors should sign the planner once a week, and be given the time to do this - parents should be asked to sign it once a week and then frequently reminded about the need to do this - SLT should be checking planners on a regular coordinated basis, and staff and students should know this – staff should be seen when there is missing homework – planners are seen by parents and they will have a very poor impression of the school if these are scruffy and contain little evidence of homework being set- because of the difficulties in ensuring the planner system works well, there is an argument for using on-line systems for recording homework rather than planners as long as all students are able to access them, with support for those students who do not have wifi or ICT facilities at home.
22. Departments should be revising ***schemes of learning*** on a continuous basis, using checklists of criteria for improvement agreed by the staff -this process should be integrated with the development of ***progress ladders*** as part of the School’s “life after levels” system and associated assessments- all these should then be checked by SLT members before they are implemented - this should be seen as the highest priority task for departments –rapid progress comes from revising schemes of learning so that they embody best practice.
23. Schools should spend a lot of time monitoring the **quality of students’ work** using agreed criteria, as part of the process of checking the extent to which teachers are achieving progress over time for the students rather than just delivering”flashy lessons”
24. The School’s overall ***assessment and recording policy*** should be clear, and department policies should be based on it - the aim is for systems that are not too onerous for staff - cutting the time staff spend on marking is a top priority - we need to aim at leaner, more effective systems of assessment and there are now plenty of ways of assessing via ICT - diagnostic information should be extracted from key assessments and applied in revising the learning plans of individual students and also in the review of schemes of work. The marking policy should be coordinated across all departments so that students have the benefit of a common system. Teachers should be urged not to over mark, but rather also give clear basic oral feedback on essential points - positive feedback which aids motivation is always the best - students should be given every opportunity for self assessment and peer assessment, eg reviewing progress made at the end of each topic - above all, students should be given clear guidance as to how they can improve, and be given the chance to respond to teacher advice - the use of formative assessment or ***assessment for learning*** is crucial - students must be able to see and understand how they can improve their work - check regularly, but in a non threatening way, that marking is actually being done.
25. Every penny that can be found should be put into enhancing ***Information Technology (ICT)*** facilities and developing ***E-Learning*** according to a clear plan - the E-Learning coordinator should be well paid and of high quality - cpd for staff should be continuous and seen as a top priority in the school e.g. drop in sessions after school which your ICT staff can be paid to deliver - the coordinator must have in place an overall plan of how and where in the curriculum ICT is being applied and assessed and that there is sufficient differentiation allowing students access to the higher skills - discrete ICT lessons are needed in Year Seven and Eight to match the ICT national curriculum, but increasingly students come from primary/junior schools with sufficient basic skills - there is a case for all students in Key Stage Four taking an ICT qualification, but the time has to be made available - all departments must recognise that students enjoy the use of ICT and thus learn better by using it, and this is especially true of the least able, and the most important use of the new learning technologies is in enhancing learning and, in particular, helping teachers resource student active learning - all students should have internet access and their own email address - schools should be preparing for a situation where all students have their own lap top in school - the best schools are now fully exploiting the opportunities offered by e learning, VLEs and gateways in all its forms and heads need to get the best possible advice - as much of the curriculum as possible should be going on line, so that students can access it at home - the school should be helping poorer families to get computers via a laptop scheme or e.g. by loaning out machines that have come to the end of their lease period.
26. Specific ***public examination preparation for students pays off in better results –*** e.g, finishing the syllabus in plenty of time for in-class revision; plenty of past paperwork; extra mocks, timed exercises and work on examination techniques which is done throughout the whole course. The School can launch revision programmes for the whole school well before key examinations with advice given, expectations set, monitoring and individual intervention – any remaining coursework production by students should be monitored very closely- it is crucial hoewver that the school does not rely just on Y11 “firefighting”, and there should be intensive support for students as needed from the very start of KS4 and not just in Y11- time should also be spent in KS3 in giving students exam and revision experience
27. Students need to be specifically trained in ***research and presentation skills*** before they begin any assignments– projects are best done in stages so that they can be broken down for the students - there should be clear deadlines for each stage - students should have the opportunity for redrafting (within the rules of the Examination Board if it is exam related) - they should see plenty of examples of previous good project work - time should be devoted to helping individuals, and account taken of the differences in the facilities different students have at home.
28. ***Literacy*** is a key weakness in many secondary schools and it is worth appointing a cross curricular literacy coordinator who champions literacy across the curriculum with special attention given to KS3 - having specific policies in place for developing cross curricular oracy and literacy is absolutely vital, these need to be linked closely to the literacy work in the feeder primary/junior schools- there should be a marking for literacy policy – there also needs now to be some discrete teaching of literacy/technical skills in Key Stage Three - similarly reading should be encouraged in every way possible - book weeks, readathons, reading clubs, school bookshop, certificates for completing books etc etc. - students can be achieving much more in KS3 and KS4 - A ***numeracy policy*** for the whole school begins in the Mathematics Department - do they have one, and is it effective? - it should then be applied step by step into chosen schemes of work of other departments where numeracy is a key element starting with Science, Geography, Technology.
29. ***Curriculum and teaching/learning liaison with primary/junior schools*** is vital given the dip in student performance that seems to happen between Year Six and Year Seven - primary/junior schools do not have the staff or free periods to be able to cope with as much as the big secondary school, and it is best therefore to concentrate on the key issues and do them well eg oracy, literacy and numeracy policies, the core National Curriculum subjects. There should be a restricted number of joint working parties using after school meetings, but this still leaves scope for work with individual schools, eg in Physical Education, Music, Technology - secondary teachers spending time in primary/junior school is very valuable for the experience and information it gives - also useful are projects/pieces of work begun in Year Six, jointly planned by teachers from both phases and then carried on into Year Seven. Your school's cpd budget can be usefully used to finance joint initiatives in each others' classrooms.
30. ***Personal, Social Health and Vocational Education*** in best taught within the curriculum by specialists as a component of the school’s overall **SMSC** provision - it can’t be right that such often sensitive and difficult issues should be taught by tutors who in many cases do not have the expertise, experience, time or even personal qualities to teach these difficult topics well – this is particularly so, now that citizenship is part of the National Curriculum. - health education should feature strongly across the school curriculum with co-ordination between departments and with high profile events to highlight its importance. ***Citizenship*** has to be delivered across the curriculum and not just in PSHVE - there also have to be well defined assessment and reporting systems for it. ***The Every Child Matters (ECM)*** agenda remains vital and a continuous guide to schools in all they do, even if the DfE can’t see this.
31. ***SMSC*** should be tracked across the school to check on its effectiveness – it should include the discussion of British values, and policies for monitoring students’ possible access to those pushing violent extremism, and this should be linked to safeguarding. It should be linked to tracking the effectivenes of the School’s ***equality*** policies
32. An attractive, well stocked ***library or resource centre,***, which is a centre piece of the whole school, is an excellent demonstration to all of how important learning is in the school culture - it should be open after school and at break and lunch time - it should have a quiet working atmosphere and having a full time librarian is worth the cost - the library should not just be based on books but also the internet and CD roms and should be a real resources, literacy and learning centre - ICT should be fully integrated into the Library.
33. Whilst most schools have shifted back towards GCSEs rather than vocational qualifications, there should still be available in KS4 a range of ***qualifications other than just GCSE*** including the revised ***vocational*** qualifications, nvqs, on line core skills tests etc. – there are many good alternative qualifications available, they motivate students and reward them and impress employers and those in the community - they allow more imaginative and enjoyable teaching and learning – clearly the school will mainly offer courses that count in the performance tables, but there is also a place for “alternative curriculum” activities for some students which can be accessed well via schemes such as ASDAN and these can tie into students’ hobbies and interests - - getting disaffected students out on work experience as soon as possible, linked to such vocational courses, is usually highly successful from everyone’s point of view - community service projects are equally valuable along with a day at the local College if this can be arranged - work related learning and enterprise is not just for the least able or disaffected and it should feature in a planned way right across the curriculum. Set up a small team of staff to develop work related learning and enterprise for the School and this will cover, e.g., links with employers, enterprise days, Young Enterprise scheme etc.
34. ***The KS4 Curriculum*** has to be developed in a 13-19 context, with excellent, personalised guide choice through the offered pathways – much of the learning in Y9 can be geared towards public examinations and allows more flexibility for students of all abilities – the EBacc pathway should be there for those students who have a realistic chance of achieving it and where the students and parents have made this choice, having been fully informed of the advantages and disadvantages- GCSEs need a range of skills skills from students if they are going to be successful, and the development of these needs to begin in KS3- great teachers are going to be those who still produce exciting lessons with a wow factor whilst still ensuring the students are fully prepared for all the requirements of the new examinations. Overall, the whole school curriculum will take full account of the expectations of Ofsted.
35. The performance of students seem to dip in Year Eight, and this is especially true of boys -schools need to be sure that the whole ***Key Stage Three*** curriculum, (ie years 7and 8), is sufficiently demanding and stretching, and that there is planned basic skill and competency development integrated into the schemes of learning, so that students enter KS4 as skilled learners with high expectations and good levels of literacy and numeracy
36. Planning ***where students sit in class*** makes a big difference to how much work students get done - but be sensitive, nice children don’t deserve nuisances sat by them all the time - checking groups and sets to separate students who do not work well together can make a big difference to overall behaviour.
37. ***Examples of good work*** related to grades or levels should always be available in lessons, both in displays and also around the classroom, along with well displayed level descriptors – it is in this way that students are able to see what outstanding actually looks like.
38. ***Setting or mixed ability*** is a decision for the school but some would argue that students deserve the opportunity mixed ability clearly gives them in at leasr part of Year Seven to show what they can do - if there is not setting after this then the teacher must be able to show the differentiation occurring in the mixed ability situation - the idea that top sets should be very big and bottom sets very small is not necessarily true and can be very unfair on students in crowded sets and also on the teachers who teach them - the employment of as many well trained classroom assistants as possible is particularly valuable in increasing differentiation- students in bottom sets deserve good teachers and interesting teaching and learning styles.
39. Check continuously on what other schools are doing in their curriculum/teaching and learning - ensure that information from cpd is distributed around the school - there are plenty of ***good ideas*** about that schools can learn from and thus schools should always be on the look out for them - the Teaching and Learning Centre should always be researching new ideas and then disseminating them within the School.
40. Adding a ***multicultural*** emphasis to the curriculum as part of the school’s overall SMSC policy often gets left, especially in mainly ‘white’ areas of the country but it is a high priority if children are to get away from a narrow, parochial, ‘Little England’ view of life. The curriculum should include emphasis on global and international issues including problems of the developing world. A link or partnership with another school in the developing world can be very powerful in giving a focus to this work. At the same time there should be full discussion about what are British values
41. Possibly the biggest problem of a comprehensive school is that of those students who are keen to work and learn being called ‘***swots' or ‘squares’*** - the school that fights back against this syndrome will gain immensely by moving to a culture where successful and enjoyable learning is seen as something of value by the students.
42. Periods of ***silent working*** in class are excellent training for students, and thus this should be a school policy - too much chat and a general lack of concentration in class is one of the biggest barriers to students' academic progress - ten minutes silent reading at the start of every English lesson is valuable in itself and also sets a good tone for the rest of the lesson.
43. Employing ***classroom assistants*** is cost effective and offers students very valuable extra help in the classroom – these classroom assistants are still cheap to employ and often of high quality - their role and salaries should be enhanced in every way and they should be given all available career development and it is now possible to look at new relationships between teachers and assistants in the delivery of teaching and the managing of student learning – it is necessary to show staff how to manage the work of teaching assistants so that they can be used as effectively as possible.
44. Encourage ***Heads of Department*** to see themselves as both curriculum managers and also ‘leaders of learning’ - good Heads of Department make a huge difference to how well subject areas are delivered within a school - the best Heads of Department run mutually supportive teams that plan and work together.
45. ***Faculty structures*** can create artificial barriers in the curriculum – in larger schools, it may be better to have a structure of smaller departments, but which come together in a flexible way where cooperation is valuable, eg Personal, Social, Health and Vocational Education, English and Drama or Geography and Science etc - cross curricular themes can still be emphasised e.g, by having cross curricular theme weeks or days – it is always good to cancel the timetable on a regular basis and have these day, e.g. health, enterprise etc.
46. Having ***student teachers*** in a school is valuable in that they bring in new ideas and make their teacher mentors think more about good practice in teaching - it is, however, a mistake to have too many at the same time - it is neither fair on students nor your own staff - ITT and assistance for ECTss will be largely based on the Schools' Teaching and Learning Centre, with associated mentoring.
47. A ***two week timetable*** can give a school much more flexibility of curriculum delivery and causes the student less confusion than is often thought but it is not to everyone’s taste.
48. All schools should have put together a ***framework of a good lesson*** in terms of techniques and structure - after discussion with staff this will be the model for the school and the basis of lesson observation criteria - such a lesson model still leaves enough scope for teacher initiative and individuality.
49. It is crucial to act to deal with ***variations in performance*** between departments- there are clear reasons why schools seek to ensure that the core departments are of high quality, but this should not mean that less is expected of the other Ebbac subjects and the foundation subjects
50. There is nothing wrong with there being an organisational ***divide between the curriculum and pastoral system*** as long as a key aim of the latter is to support efforts to raise achievement and this is understood by all concerned.
51. ***Schools do make a difference*** - schools can raise achievement and should be doing so.

**Year Twelve/Thirteen Students**

1. School ***sixth forms*** should be aiming at a ‘college’ type atmosphere and social provision but with an academic stringency and high expectations and standards that the students should have experienced throughout their time in the school. Monitoring the progress of students is the key - students can be allowed ‘flexitime’, the freedom to use free periods as they wish and a high degree of individual discretion as long as they are attending well and getting the work done - if this is not the case, then these privileges should be withdrawn. Students' progress should be viewed in relation to their GCSE performance in a systematic and continuous way - there are plenty of value added schemes which show how students should be doing. Schools tend to not pay much attention to sixth forms believing that they run themselves but in fact they need as much attention as is given to KS4 and the same range of initiatives applied to them
2. All the ‘***A’ level teachers*** should be ‘vetted’ to check they are good enough - schools also don’t spend enough time discussing the techniques of good ‘A’ level teaching - it tends to be taken for granted - regular meetings of ‘A’ level teachers should be held - teachers should avoid the ever present tendency to use chalk and talk and plan a wide range of stimulating teaching and learning styles - all ‘A’ level lessons should last the full length of time available. ***Vocational*** courses should be valued - they are just as stretching as ‘A’ level, if sometimes in a different way - efforts should be made to prevent there being an ‘A’ level/Vocational divide amongst the students.
3. Sixth form students bring schools a lot of money but students should only be allowed to stay on if they have the ability and/or it is the right place for them - it is criminal to recruit students who should be elsewhere - with this proviso, the school’s ***recruitment*** strategy should be thorough and well planned, both within the school and in the outside community - recruiting adults to the sixth form is valuable, in that they can be good for the younger students they work with even if you may get no money for them. There should be a good sixth form induction programme. Above all, the Year 12/13 curriculum must be part of a co-ordinated approach to the 13-19 age range, with as much co-operation as possible with other local institutions.
4. ***Sixth form students*** should have their own committee and the freedom to make decisions in agreed areas as to how they organise themselves - they should sign in rather than be registered. Sixth form tutors are best seen as ‘mentors’ of sixth formers and spend time giving guidance to individual students - all possible help should be made available with UCAS forms, Careers, interview practice etc - a uniform for sixth form students is almost impossible to justify and any code of dress has to have reasons for it that the school has thought through. Sixth form common rooms are usually a mess but there must be limits for the sake of the cleaners. Sixth form students should be encouraged to help out with younger students elsewhere in the school but only if they want to - it should not be compulsory. There should be counselling and pastoral back up which is suited for students of what can be a difficult age. The Head of Sixth Form should be capable of putting his/her stamp on the Sixth Form, but also be in touch with the philosophy and processes of the rest of the school so that there is a high degree of continuity. Parents should be kept informed when there are problems - they are keeping their children! There should be lots of help available when ‘A’ level results and Vocational qualifications come out, especially for those who need assistance in finding university places. Beware of sixth form social events booked in the school’s name if they result in under-age drinking and/or ‘trouble’ when teachers are present - school events have to be tightly controlled or the students will have to run their own functions independently of the school.
5. ***Partnership or close cooperation*** with other educational institutions and other players in the 13/14-19 area can be very useful, especialy in the sharing of ideas

**The Headteacher and the Students**

Good Headteachers always remember that students are what schools are about.

1. Never forget that the ***vast majority of children in school are pleasant, friendly, hard-working and keen to do well*** - they need full appreciation, and this includes the quiet, hard working, middle ability students who often get forgotten.
2. A school should have a ***friendly atmosphere*** which visitors can feel when they have been in the school only a few moments - it is the Head who can ensure there is such an atmosphere in his/her school by personal example and leadership. It is quite possible to have a very happy school but this combined with a zero tolerance for violence, bullying, disruption, rudeness, defiance, racism, vandalism and sanctions to match – good schools set their standards and get students to respond to them, making then possible close and friendly relationship between staff and students and have support systems what give students all possible care and guidance. There really should be no need for these schools seemingly based on ultra discipline and sanctions; they should spend more time on working at building relationships instead
3. A good message to students from you personally is that if they ask for something, ***nothing will be too much trouble*** - all you ask is for similar good will in return.
4. Try and ***learn the names*** of as many students as possible – deliberately set out to do this on a planned basis as an important personal aim.
5. ***Take on a routine task*** whereby you will have a lot of contact with students eg lost property or lockers - staff and students will appreciate it and you will get to know students very quickly.
6. ***Be*** ***seen by students*** as much as possible - be everywhere around the school.
7. ***Be approachable***, be friendly in your dealings with students - go out of your way to be helpful - talk to students individually around school and especially the disaffected, unhappy and lonely.
8. ***Eat your lunch*** with the students.
9. You have a pastoral system and you should use it but if a child comes directly to you ***don’t turn them away***, rather pass on the information you have gathered and then check up later how it was resolved or take up the matter yourself but keep pastoral staff fully involved and informed.
10. Insist on knowing about all ***bullying cases*** and be personally involved where appropriate - ensure that the school’s determination to deal with bullying is known and carried out by everyone - check on the systems in place - talk to children and parents about how well the school is doing in trying to stamp it out - use methods such as having a box where students can secretly pass on a message if they are being bullied, but ultimately you defeat bullying by succeeding in creating a situation where children trust the school and know that if they are being bullied they can report it and it will be sorted out without any come backs on them.
11. Aim for a school where ***children are listened to*** - children have a right to politely give their point of view or their side of an incident - staff do not always like this but with sensitivity by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) it can become accepted into the culture of the school - staff are not always right. Encouraging “Student Voice” is vital, and this can come from using focus groups based on all types of students, as well as the more traditional School and Year Councils, which do not always reflect the whole student body – students should be encouraged to give their views on important aspects of the school including teaching and learning – they should be involved in your reviews of aspects of the school – student voice should be linked to encouraging students to be fully involved in school activities and having the chance to organise events and exercise leadership
12. ***'Courtesy'***  should be noticeable throughout the school from both students and staff.
13. Be ***very supportive of staff*** in cases where they are threatened, sworn at or simply ignored or disobeyed - it has to be clear to all that you are backing staff to the hilt in these types of situation - this is the key to getting the support of the staff- at the same time, have good strategies in place for dealing with the low level disruption that is the major irritant to a lot of teachers.
14. Do your fair share of ***mentoring work***, eg with the disaffected, academic monitoring etc and do some ***counselling*** of students because you have the time.
15. There should be a clear ***‘school morality’*** which has been arrived at by consultation with all parties involved in the school including the students - the school's code of conduct springs from this and will outline student responsibilities but also their rights - it should be posted all round the school and put in school documentation – students and staff have both to follow this code. At the same time there should be every opportunity for students to develop in terms of ***SMSC*** via the curriculum, extra curricular activities and the wider life of the school.
16. ***Sanctions*** should be clearly thought out, consistent, fair and widely publicised and thus understood by staff, students and parents.
17. ***Detention*** systems are inevitable but can be made more positive by the students doing their own school work or reading rather than doing artificial tasks - after school detentions held in the school library are a good example of a more civilised and constructive use of detention time - it is the detaining which is the punishment and this still applies – students need to know that if put in detention they will be made to do it – a good detention system will be economical in the use of staff time
18. ***Offenders need to be caught***, eg the school needs a reputation for being one where students can’t get away with things eg if you let off a fire alarm, vandalise or bully you will be found out – good detective work by SLT members remains a valuable skill - it takes time but is worth it - By all means have good ***‘grassing mechanisms’*** in place – offer rewards for information if necessary but ensure complete confidentiality for informers - even better is where students will tell staff because they don’t think something is right, eg bullying, vandalism - don’t encourage tittle-tattle grassing, encourage it only when it can be justified in terms of the information given benefiting the whole student body.
19. ***Natural justice*** must always rule - children shouldn’t be punished unless there is sufficient evidence, eg at least one unbiased witness - in deciding the nature of the punishment, the facts have to be analysed in detail - eg were the two students equally guilty and do the sanctions imposed exactly match the crimes of the individuals?
20. ***Permanent exclusion*** is something to be avoided if possible and something you can never be proud of - a pastoral support plan should be drawn up for every child who is a concern and ***everything*** tried, and recorded, that can possibly be done to secure an improvement in behaviour and attitude - work closely with external agencies - however, if you and external agencies have tried everything you can with a child and he/she is still disrupting students’ education and/or bullying others students then he/she has to go for the sake of everyone, whether it be by managed transfer or permanent exclusion.
21. You must have a clear policy on ***short term exclusions***, eg for violence, gross rudeness to teachers, defiance to teachers, damaging the building - if exclusion is only going to be a holiday with no parental sanctions, then it is better to isolate students inside school via a staffed internal exclusion system – these should not be prisons- students should be given valuable and relevant work to do, and there should also be room for discussions with students about why they are there and how it can be avoided in the future– these sessions can to be very effective and students also get a lot of work done -For exclusions, if there is parental support, the exclusion need not be too long, you have made your point - why go for five days when three days or less has achieved the desired object? - always set work, even for short exclusions - insist that parents come in with the child on his/her return so that the future can be discussed - make it clear that references to exclusions on student records will not be made in the future if there is no recurrence of the bad behaviour - keep very accurate exclusion records - check that the governors are happy with the principles of your exclusion policy, thus avoiding possible differences at any appeal stage.
22. When asked to ***take in excluded or ‘nuisance’ students*** from other schools, don’t say no automatically - check out the child’s record - talk to the previous school - see the child and parents – ultimately though, you can only take the child if you think you can do a better job than the last school and there are reasons why this would be the case - if not, then, if you can, say no.
23. Make it absolutely clear that all forms of ***violence***, physical and verbal, are unacceptable in the school and the consequences for such actions should be known by all - in this way, you can almost eliminate fighting in school and most of the premeditated violence - also make it known that name-calling and ‘mental cruelty’ are just as serious as the physical violence - never underestimate how much hurt and pain comes from situations where male students are harassing female students in a range of ways, and also where girls, are being "bitchy" to each other - these situations need calming and sorting.
24. Make it clear that you are responsible for the ***students’ behaviour to and from school*** and will take sanctions against them which will be no different than for bad behaviour inside school.
25. When you are informed of ***student behaviour outside school hours***, make it clear that you have no legal responsibility but that you will do your best to help, eg talk to the child, inform parents - do this, but be careful, you are always vulnerable to the charge that such incidents are none of your business.
26. Schools should be kind, caring places but ***discipline and order*** are essentials if real learning is to take place and students are to feel secure - good Heads never forget this although they achieve it not by suppression but by running a good school in all aspects.
27. A student should feel that he/she is ***known as an individual*** within the institution, ie by the adults with whom he/she has the most contact and, hopefully, by the Head - look after, especially, the 'invisible children', ie the quiet, hard working students who can easily be forgotten - make sure also that students who join during the school year are integrated into the school according to a clear school policy.
28. Student ***self esteem*** is a crucial factor in student success and happiness - the school should be about using every way possible of raising self esteem – self confidence is such an important asset in life.
29. ***Lunchtime supervisors*** have a difficult role but can sometimes cause more trouble than assistance - you should organise regular inset for them as a high priority and only keep on those that respond and learn.
30. ***Praise and rewards*** are one of the most essential parts of the school - spend a lot of time encouraging a praise culture – all staff need to be aware of the power of motivation, encouragement and boosting of self esteem that they have by the consistent and planned use of justified, personalised praise for students – devise a rewards and recognition system that actually works - be imaginative - try to go beyond just merit marks eg postcards home, free gifts, raffles, special offers (eg students get discounts from local retailers and service providers when they achieve a certain number of merits) – it is in KS4 in particular that rewards systems fail, but even older students like achieving certificates that they can take home, especially if they can add these to their leaving school profile folder. Aim to try and secure as much consistency amongst staff as is possible in their giving of praise and rewards. Ensure that all students get an equal chance of receiving justified praise and reward, including the quietly hard-working ones who don’t always stand out and less able students – ICT systems that record how both how much praise each child is receiving, and how much praise each teacher is giving, are essential so that remedial action can be taken to create a fairer situation - praise systems should be used to encourage the idle and disruptive, but they shouldn’t end up with more rewards than the consistently conscientious students. Spoken praise in the classroom and positive comment in books remain just as powerful in motivating children as they always have been. The Head should play a high profile role in the praise and rewards system eg by having a system of Headteacher Commendations where you see students and inform parents where students have met the criteria for this special praise - even then, monitor the type of student you are seeing and whether or not the whole school population is having an equal chance. Clearly praise in a comprehensive school must celebrate attainment and excellence, but must also be based on effort and personal qualities and not just achievement – also be aware that some students prefer to receive praise privately – be sensitive to the differences between individual students.
31. If you have a ***‘Speech Day’*** or the equivalent, apart from awards for achievement, all students should have an equal chance of receiving their due recognition via awards for effort, service to the school or community etc – because only a few will be able to attend this type of event, it is a good idea to have a celebration event on the same day in school time to which other worthy students can be invited.
32. Spend a lot of time in the Learning Support Department and get to know the ***Special Educational Needs (SEND) students*** and spend time with them - a good Head always does his/her best for the most vulnerable members of the school community - make sure also that you know who are your ***looked after* *students and adopted students*** - they should have a special mentor who keeps an eye on them and to whom they can go to when necessary - they should have personal education action plans (PEPs) and all possible support from the school in helping them achieve and develop personally - also make sure you know who are **“*student carers”*** and ensure they receive support - ensure that the School meets all its legal and moral responsibilities for disabled students.
33. ***Mentoring students*** is a very effective back up to the work of the tutor - this is particularly so with disaffected students, who can be set regular short term targets based on a counselling relationship with a member of staff - just a few disaffected students cause huge problems for schools and it is well worth time and resources being put into backing a positive approach rather than just sanctions - putting students on class report is very effective in the short term - better still are achievement logs where students are given clear, simple targets for improvement and receive praise for achieving them - all this can be co-ordinated by a Student Support Team based on a wide range of staff including teaching assistants. who manage the behaviour programmes of the most difficult or disaffected students as a back up to the pastoral system via counselling, anger management, parental liaison etc.
34. There should be several trained ***counsellors*** amongst the staff, who have the time to counsel those children who have problems beyond the average tutor or Head of Year and for whom there are no external agencies available.
35. The ***school nurse*** can be usefully used as an addition to the school’s counselling provision - she/he has the medical knowledge and is detached from the everyday life of the school - she/he is perhaps best known as a Student Welfare Officer so that her/his wider role is made clear.
36. A high quality ***Year Seven induction programme*** is essential – the aim is to maintain the enthusiasm most children still have in the junior school, capitalise on their desire to do well at secondary school and get them used as soon as possible to your standards and expectations - this programme will run well into Year Seven and be skilfully planned and led.
37. ***Survey students’ views*** at least every year and act on the findings - use the same format each time so that comparison is possible.
38. Let the children have facilities to ***stay inside the school at break and lunchtime*** - a caring school does not let children freeze in the winter, and these periods of free time can be so much more productive if the students are inside - it also improves behaviour and is easier to supervise than is often realised.
39. Make ***lunchtime*** as short as possible - a high proportion of the school’s pastoral problems still spring from lunchtime.
40. Holding ***'case conferences'*** of staff who teach a child who is posing problems can be very effective if clear strategies are compiled which are then carried out by all who teach him or her. Older students can also be used to mentor younger students.
41. ***Tutor***s vary enormously in their talents and skills and any pastoral system based solely on them will never be sufficiently consistent, and will mean different children getting different standards of care - there must be strong Heads of Year/House to coordinate and ‘moderate’ the system - they can give keen and able tutors their head whilst covering for the more limited tutors - clearly the aim is to improve the performance of all tutors but there will still be limits to what can be achieved in some cases - some good teachers are not good tutors and vice versa - tutors should also not be given unfair work burdens that they then resent and which can also affect their teaching in the classroom - tutors can all, however, do an invaluable job at registration by calming students down, checking unforms, insisting on punctuality and quiet and by putting across notices for students. ***Heads of Year/House*** now have a bigger role in overviewing the achievement and overall progress of the students in their Years – day to day pastoral matters can be dealt with by a student support team comprising non-teachers – Heads of Year/House have to take the strategic, wider view and perspective, concentrating on enhancing student learning, intervening where there is identified underachievement and removing barriers to learning – pastoral leaders need good quality admin support.
42. A ***pastoral manager*** to coordinate the system and to have the time to pick up emergency issues during the school day is very valuable and this then allows the Headteacher not to be frequently dragged in to such cases and thus have the time to carry out his/her major job of managing the school – this person need not be a qualified teacher, but will be in SLT – there is also a case for appointing non teaching behaviour managers who can do much of the "legwork" for the Heads of Year/House - there is now scope for enabling a range of suitably experienced non teachers to play important roles within pastoral systems. It is a good idea for SLT members to be on pastoral duty for just a few specified periods each week, then leaving them free to send the rest of the time on their own responsibilities and not keep being dragged into behaviour and pastoral issues except in emergency
43. ***House or vertical systems*** allow there to be continuity of care over five or seven years - at the very least with a Year system, the Heads of Year and tutors should move up with their years/tutor groups, starting from Year Seven, (there is no case for a special Head of Year Seven - getting to know the children as young as possible and then moving up with them is the key to success for a Head of Year or tutor - there can be someone else responsible for liaising with the primary/junior schools).
44. Getting ***student involvement*** in school activities seems to get harder as time passes, but is still an important aim - students need the experience of being involved, exercising leadership and taking responsibility. Student and Year Councils remain a very valuable experience, but they only involve a few and the aim must be to get every student participating in some way in the life of the school - students can be used to greet visitors, help organise events, run clubs and trips etc, etc. A prefect system whereby students apply and then are trained and well organised can be useful for the School and excellent for the students as part of an overall school policy of developing student leadership skills – involving students in charity fund raising initiatives and community projects is usually very successful.
45. A school ***uniform*** if wanted must be observed by all - it should be simple and should not necessarily include a blazer unless you feel you must have this for marketing reasons (expensive, too hot in summer, too cold in winter) but be more than just colours. The essential items eg jumper or sweatshirt, should be supplied by the school to ensure uniformity. If you insist on shoes and not trainers then ensure that you can enforce it - rules on outside coats are usually not enforceable. If you have rules on jewellery, hair styles and make up, it usually means counter productive and unnecessary arguments with students and parents, whereas a relaxed stance means that nearly all students don’t go too far and you only need a quiet word with a few where there is a health or safety issue - if a child feels better with some make up or jewellery it helps with self esteem - rings etc can be taken off for Physical Education or Technology and it can be made clear that it is at the students’ own risk of loss and not the school’s. Help should be available to all parents who genuinely cannot afford items of uniform - it helps them out and means that no one has an excuse not to wear the uniform. Uniform should be unisex and as attractive to the wearers as is possible but cheap to buy and easily available – allow mobile phones in school but make it clear that you accept no responsibility if they are lost and that there will be sanctions imposed if a phone goes off in a lesson or assembly, ie if they have not been turned off.
46. The School should set aside a ***fund to help children, from poor homes***, with not just uniform but also trips and other school activities - children on free meals should have the offer of waived charges for all activities that cost (except highly expensive items such as ski trips where the cost to the school would just be too great) – schools should be offering equal opportunities to all students - running school discos can raise a lot of money very easily and these can be the basis of a “Social Fund” for students. This should be part of an overall strategy and policy to support student and family poverty, which is such a problem for so many families at present- many schools are now providing an impressive range of support for these families
47. ***Child abuse*** is more prevalent than we ever used to believe and all staff must be trained in safeguarding, as a high priority, and the school’s procedures for referral to external agencies should be known by all – all the school’s safeguarding procedures should be outstanding
48. Make it crystal clear that any form of ***racism*** is unacceptable in the school - make sure you carry out all the monitoring that is laid down in the Race Equality Act and act upon it.
49. ***Equal opportunities*** tend to have become a taken for granted concept, but remain a vital aspect of a good school at every level - staff, students and in the community. Gender issues also remain as important - girls may do better at school than boys, but they still suffer at their hands far too much, especially in the comments made and verbal abuse- there is an equal need to stamp out homophobia. Sexism still is a major problem in staff rooms and in how some SLTs treat and view staff.
50. ***Assemblies*** do have value in bringing the students together; teaching them how to behave on a formal occasion; putting over spiritual and moral thoughts and allowing time for reflection; giving experience of collective worship. It is also an excellent forum for the Head to get across the values and morality of the school as well as communicate important information on day to day matters - however, assembly takers should be brief – children won’t listen for very long and you have probably lost them after the first five minutes - there is some value in separating secular assemblies from collective acts of worship if you have the accommodation.
51. Visit ***extra curricular activities***, watch sports teams, go on the occasional school evening visit - this done regularly shows your support for such activities and is appreciated by staff and students – in particular a school gains enormously by having good Music, Drama, Art and Sport and it is worth putting in resources to support these areas of school life – do everything you can to encourage staff to run the activities and encourage others to work in the school with students, e.g. coaches, community groups- check which students are taking part, and, in particular, try to ensure that disadvantaged students are fully engaged
52. ***Punctuality*** in schools tends to be poor and can be improved by having members of the SLT on duty at school gates in the morning - registers must be accurate about lates and lates detentions held with parents informed - students late to lessons for no good reason can be made to sit in special late seats at the front and/or detained for a few minutes after a lesson - there are many imaginative ideas for discouraging lateness, eg those not late in a week can take part in a weekly draw offering students prizes.
53. Have staff and systems in place to monitor and encourage good ***attendance*** – this is best done via a member of the support staff, who liaises with the pastoral system and the EWO/ESW - this person can identify the poor attenders and ensure that a support plan which meets their needs is put in place for each one of them. Beyond this , Heads of Year/House should know their exact responsibilities for attendance monitoring and improvement Check ***registers*** yourself on a regular basis - then talk to the staff to see what action is being taken in the cases you spot. Internal truancy can be cut by all teachers taking registers for each lesson and immediately passing on any details of suspicious absences, using ICT systems. When children are absent, parents should be contacted by staff on the first day of absence, and this is best done by ‘truancy call’ phone system. Poor attenders often have family/social/personal problems and warrant full and sympathetic attention from the pastoral system. The philosophy towards poor attenders of the Education Welfare Officer /Educational Social Worker needs understanding and discussing - is it the same as the school? – in a few cases, strong action is needed towards parents of non attending students and is this forthcoming? Considerable care should be taken in devising a programme of helping poor attenders back into school
54. You don’t want students wandering around school in lesson time - give each teacher just one card which they must give to a student who leaves a lesson - this soon cuts it down, as does encouraging staff at all times to ***keep students in their classroom.***
55. If ***students ask to go to the toilet***, then teachers should let them go even if they do not believe them - a good system is to keep toilet goers for a few minutes at the end of the lesson if you are suspicious- if a child asks to go frequently in lesson time, then the pastoral system should be involved to contact the parents.
56. Have a ***lesson support system*** whereby teachers can have lesson support or have a student removed from a lesson via a call out system, but only when he/she is disrupting and disturbing the education of others, and the decision as to whether or not the student should be removed rests with the remover– departments can also have their own internal exclusion arrangements - removed students should be isolated within the internal exclusion system, and sanctions imposed, eg letter home, after school detention - at the same time this is an excellent opportunity for counselling and discussing with the removed student how and why they have been removed - also removed students are often the same people on many occasions and this time can be used for seeking to work through with them the causes of their disaffection - the SLT member on duty can patrol the corridors throughout the hour and be seen to be around and deal with any other pastoral problems that arise, supported by the non teaching behaviour managers.
57. ***Records of Achievement (RoA) or Progress Files*** should be kept as simple as possible - students get thoroughly fed up of them if they are constantly reviewing their progress or filling in yet more pages - it is enough that students review their progress once per term and have a file where they can keep certificates etc and on a regular basis summarise what they have done or achieved in or out of school, eg in special tutor periods every half term. A Progress File is a valuable document and appreciated by students and the school should be sufficiently efficient to be able to produce it by early January of Year Eleven so that it can be used for interviews - there must be time allocated for relevant content from the ongoing RoA file to be transferred by student to the Progress File and there has to be enough that goes into the file to make it valuable for students.
58. There is no excuse for not having excellent ***Careers Education and Guidance (CEG)*** in the school - the basic principles of good provision are not difficult to apply via Gatsby and the school will need to take the lead in this area and not just rely on external help - it is worth the effort to ensure that your school has excellent CEG starting in Y7 and then including individual destination interviews for all student throughout KS4 and well organised work experience, for it has been shown that it can mean your students of all abilities and personalities getting a head start in the job, training or further education market – it is also a valuable way of motivating KS4 students - less able and difficult students need special help in giving them something to move on to.
59. Make ***morning registration*** time as brief as possible - it is poorly used by many tutors and is a waste of prime teaching time - registration needs to be just long enough for tutors to do their administration and basic pastoral work - issue notices for students each day -if thought necessay, have an extended registration on a regular basis, using a different day each week e.g. for checking homework diaries.
60. When you start as Head of a school ***you too may have discipline problems*** at first because you are not known and some children will try it on - take account of this, be prepared for it and take action to assert yourself in the right way in every way you can.
61. ***Raising achievement*** is the primary aim of the school and thus a major role of the pastoral system is to support this - however, it still remains the case that aiding students in their ***personal development*** is still a vital role of schools - at the same time schools also play an important part in helping students with their problems – there is often nowhere else they can go for help.
62. There is room within curriculum time for setting out to help children acquire ***life*** ***skills*** - this has been too much neglected of late.
63. Have regular ***discos*** especially for the younger students - the children much appreciate them and the School can also make a lot of money from them - why not run them yourself? - students and staff will appreciate it.
64. Allow Year 11 an enjoyable ***leaving day*** with a leaving 'Prom' - it is much appreciated by them – one test of a good school is that this is a happy and trouble free day- students should only be banned from the prom in exceptional circumstances and not for trivial reasons .
65. One of the best tests of a school is how well protected and happy are the students who are ***isolates or natural victims*** - check continuously on this.
66. Make ***health education*** a big part of the school via the curriculum and whole school events especially nutrition and health related fitness – it is a vital part of ECM.
67. These days there is still scope for involving a wide range of ***external agencies*** within the pastoral system e.g., Relate, Youth Workers, Social Services, Family Support Worker, EWO, Educational Psychologist, counsellors etc. - this can revolutionise the quality of pastoral care as long as there is good co-ordination and communications established – if possible, there should be a discrete area set up where these agencies can operate on the School site and have more confidential access to students – the school should be fully involved in the CAF process.
68. Ensure that the school has a policy for providing for the ***disabled***, staff, students and vistors, and that all statutory requirements are being followed.
69. In summary, yes, a school should have ***a zero tolerance*** policy as regards disruption of lessons: defiance or rudeness to staff: bullying, racism and harassment or unkindness of all types: vandalism or graffiti. Effective sanctions should be in place e.g. a detention system that actually works, is coordinated and does not over burden staff: an isolation system that is a real deterrent to poor behaviour. At the same time, the school should provide :-
* student support – e.g. counselling, anger management etc
* a concern and personal interest in students
* warmth and humour that is immediately apparent to a visitor
* effective and enjoyable teaching and success for students
* a praise culture
* inclusion and equal opportunities
* effective anti bullying procedures
* student involvement in the life of the school and its direction, as well as in their own learning
* an effective implementation of the ECM agenda
* cpd in behaviour management for its staff
* effective support for supply teachers and cover supervisors
* All students who need then should have individual behaviour improvement plans.

**The Head teacher and Parents/carers**

A real partnership between parents/carers and the school will help raise the achievement of students and improve relationships all round - schools are too often resentful and suspicious of parent involvement.

1. The ***vast majority of parents are supportive***, very keen to see their children do well and do respect teachers and especially Headteachers - they are almost too accepting of what goes on in schools.
2. ***Involving parents*** about their children as early as possible is useful in every way, eg mentoring of the disaffected, academic monitoring, helping with reading etc etc - we don’t do it enough or soon enough- parents can also be shown the best ways of helping their children’s education
3. Get to know the parents who are the ***‘opinion leaders’*** in the community and make constructive use of them.
4. Work with your ***parent governors*** but ensure that you and they are agreed in the way they operate, eg on how they deal with and relay parental complaints - invite parent governors to all parents’ evenings where they can mingle with parents.
5. ***Parent Teacher Associations*** raise valuable money for the school and are a useful sounding board for parent opinion and a way of passing on information throughout the parent body - they can, at times, be demanding, unrepresentative of the feelings of the whole parent body and have members who only pursue their own children’s interests - on balance they are a positive asset and the Head should go to as many meetings and events as possible without getting too entangled in the organisation of them.
6. ***Communications*** with parents/carers have been revolutionised by the use of ICT gateways and platforms, websites and also by collecting their email addresses and mobile phone numbers. It is for schools to ensure that as many parents as possible can access the school in this way whilst still providing paper communications for those who can’t. it is also essential to have a process which keeps parent contact data up to date
7. ***Newsletters*** home should be not just informative but also attractively presented and written - students should record in their planners if letters are still sent home so that parents know what they should be receiving - letters are best sent home on one day of the week so that parents expect them – post the most important communications -reply slips should only be on the most vital letters as they are time consuming for office staff - letters will usually be sent out by email, put on the gateway or available on the School website, which should not just be attractive and user friendly but always kept up to date
8. Parents tend to be nervous and apprehensive when they come to school - good schools put them at their ease as soon as possible and are not patronising or superior - parents will be more supportive, ***the more approachable the Headteacher***.
9. Do a ***survey of parents’ views*** at least every year and act upon its findings - use the same one each time, so that comparison is possible.
10. The ***Annual Report*** is now no longer required but there is still a case for giving parents regular written reports on school progress.
11. ***Annual meetings*** are also no longer legally required, but is is good practice to hold a “Parents Forum” each term to give parents the chance to express their views about the school and discuss these with you
12. All schools should have an ***telephone answering machine*** which is accessed each morning, term time and holidays - a Head can also have a ***school mobile phone*** and give all parents the number for out of hours emergencies - this is much appreciated, very useful and is seldom abused by parents, meaning that it is little hassle for the Head - similarly, parents can be given your email address. It is hard to overstate how much parents appreciate this and the kudos you will gain.
13. Use the student ***planner/homework diary*** as a means of communication between parents and school, ie both sides can make comments or pass on information through the planner – it is vital to ensure that these planners are kept in a good state by students and are a credit to the school – otherwise it just gives parents a very bad impression of the school.
14. ***Every year send parents:***
* a summary of the year calendar
* a summary of fund-raising activities and when they will occur
* details of trips and visits that will cost money
* a skeleton outline of the schemes of work and homeworks in all subjects in all years; these can be on line or on the website.
1. Parents who do not appear to be coming, or parents who you really want to see, should be specifically invited to parents’ evenings or offered another time slot to come in; if necessary there should be a home visit. Students should come with their parents to all ***parents’ evenings***, as discussing future progress is a three way partnership – parents hate excessive waiting and staff sticking to time is essential.
2. Parents’ evenings can be made even more useful and likely to attract parents if there are **other activities going on at the same time**, e.g, short plays, music, displays. Issuing student data at these evenings may draw more parents in- it is also a good time to carry out parental surveys
3. The rights of ***separated*** ***parents*** should be respected and, even though it is time consuming and expensive, they should receive copies of reports, important letters and invitations to parents’ evenings- it is also important to invite carers of students
4. ***Specific evenings for parents*** attract only a relative few, eg meetings on school subjects, revision for exams, GCSE coursework etc, but are still worth doing - parents have the right to such information and guidance.
5. ***Home/School agreements*** are a flawed idea, in that some parents are unable or unwilling to carry out their side of the bargain and thus the existence of the contract will make little difference in the last resort - however, drawing them up is a useful exercise and it does make both schools and parents reflect on their mutual obligations - they can certainly be used in discussions with parents when it would seem responsibilities are not being carried out.
6. If parents are just ***angry***, never lose your temper - most parents soon calm down - reason the matter through - be polite and friendly - aim for the parent to leave happy whilst defending the school’s position if you are sure it is right - If ***parents continue to use foul language or threaten*** on the telephone then you or your staff should put the telephone down after explaining why - if they do this in person then they should be asked to leave and if they refuse told that the police will be called.
7. Parents will often want to ***tell you their problems*** - listen, they may have no one else to talk to.
8. When parents ***complain***, listen and say you will investigate, never give an opinion at this stage - feedback to the parents is then best done in person, with as much speed as possible, rather than on the telephone - if the school has been wrong, admit it and apologise - parents appreciate a school that doesn’t cover up things or doesn't just back its staff regardless - if staff have been wrong, take the blame on yourself and don’t use them as sacrificial lambs.
9. A few parents try and ***bully*** the school every time they make contact - they need to realise that this is a tactic that doesn’t work and the school will stand up for itself when it has acted correctly.
10. Try and educate parents to make ***appointments*** and not just call in - but if they do, make someone available to see them.
11. Don't let parents who are ***picking*** ***up*** ***or*** ***dropping*** ***off*** ***children*** bring their cars on to the site - it is usually dangerous – frequently publicise the need for safe parent parking near the school - if you have to, politely ask parents to move their cars, even if they don't like it.
12. Be prepared to see ***parents out of school hours*** and at times convenient to them - give them enough time for a full discussion of any issue raised.
13. Using ICT and the data schools now keep, it should be possible to issue a **report** to parents three times per year with no extra work for teachers.
14. There are statutory requirements for what must be on your school ***website***, but beyond this make sure that it is attractive and informative for both parents and prospective parents

# The Headteacher and the Community

1. All schools are part of their community, but to what extent they aim to be ***community schools*** varies greatly - schools should closely define their objectives in this area and be sure of what they are seeking to do for the community and what the community can do for the school - sloppy thinking and vague aspirations just cause confusion. A school that sets out to cater for all sections of the community has to be fully organised for that purpose with everyone seeing this as one of its vital aims - schools must also ensure that community activities are fully integrated with the other core tasks of schools, ie work to raise the achievement of students and their personal development, and that there is neither conflict of objectives nor tension in day to day operations - if you are serious about being a community school there should be a well paid senior member of staff responsible for these links - there are now new opportunities to develop as an **extended school** and involve many sections of the community as part of a community approach to education, but these initiatives need very careful planning and costing and require co-operation with other local partners.
2. Heads should seek to be ***well known in their communities***, and to this extent it is wise to accept invitations to open fayres or attend Rotary meetings etc, however boring or unattractive a proposition such events may be, as long as it isn’t too often - it is also a useful way of making contacts that can help the school so get to know opinion leaders and those with useful skills or resources.
3. Heads need to make a ***good impression*** at all times, so it may not be wise to walk around your catchment area in scruffy or outlandish clothes.
4. If community groups or individuals phone up asking for ***help***, give it unless your students or staff will lose out in some way from the consequences of giving the assistance - the school should be in continuous dialogue with all sections of the community always looking for joint activities and mutual assistance.
5. Be ***at the gate(s)*** at the end of school as often as you can – it gives a very good impression to all.
6. You and Senior Leadership Team members should patrol the area around the school at ***lunchtime*** and occasionally further afield – be seen doing it - you being there, and the effect on students’ behaviour because of it, will do much for the reputation of the school.
7. Take steps to stop any students except Years Twelve and Thirteen leaving the premises at ***break*** or smoking and/or being a nuisance ***before*** ***school***.
8. Regularly write to the ***school’s*** ***neighbours*** - send them Christmas cards and a free invitation to school events - get to know them -respond quickly and courteously to their complaints. Give them and other key people your mobile ‘phone number so that they can contact you at any time – you can also give this to your school bus company and drivers
9. Get to know the ***local*** ***shopkeepers*** - give them the school telephone number and/or your mobile and then respond quickly if they telephone with a problem concerning your students.
10. Have an attractive ***school*** ***sign*** - have maps of how to find the school which you send to visitors - have a special visitors car park near to the school reception and provision for the disabled - make sure reception and deliveries are well signposted - have good signposting around the school.
11. Become friends with the ***editor of the local paper*** or the chief news reporter - invite him/her into school for coffee and informal discussions - the same applies to local radio and TV reporters.
12. Have a policy for responding quickly and effectively to ***bad*** ***news*** about the school in the local media.
13. Try and ensure that the school is ***open throughout the holidays*** - schools are businesses and need to act as such - it is usually possible for bigger schools to arrange caretakers and APT & C staff holidays so that there is cover on every working day of the year.
14. ***Be welcoming to all regular visitors***, eg Education Welfare Officers/ Educational Social Workers, Careers Officers, Educational Psychologist etc – if they like your school then they will do a better job for you and your students and say good things about the School all around the area.
15. Ensure that your ***receptionists*** are recruited and then trained to be friendly and welcoming both on the telephone and in person - do regular checks that visitors feel that they have been well looked after and that those calling by telephone gained a good impression of the school by how they were treated - have enough telephone lines to ensure that callers do not have to wait for too long - use students as well to welcome visitors.
16. Don’t allow ***externally organised discos, parties*** or similar social gatherings on your site unless you have special facilities or have a representative you trust supervising the events.
17. Keep in touch with ***students who have left*** - they can be useful advocates or contacts for the school, as well as being usually a pleasure to see again – they can also be role models if they come back and talk to present students.
18. Be vigilant concerning those who ***hang around the school gates*** or intrude on to the site - all staff should understand the procedures in these cases - staff and students appreciate seeing the Head take a lead in dealing with nuisances of this sort but try and avoid being in situations where you lose your dignity in front of your students
19. If you are in a situation where you need extra students, then show around ***prospective*** ***parents*** yourself - if not, have a member of the Senior Management Team do it whilst you just say hello – such tours of the school should be carefully planned - staff should know parents are coming and checks should be made for litter, or anything else that could put off parents, on the route of the tour
20. ***Income generation*** is crucial - hopefully your governors will play a major role and set up a committee for this purpose - if you have a member of staff doing this work they must be good enough to raise enough money to cover their salary and more - the Head should not play a major part in organising the raising of money, but should be willing to be wheeled out as a figurehead.
21. Build up close links with ***local industry and commerce*** - have someone on the staff whose job it is to do this - don’t just ask for money or favours but forge links based on mutual help and assistance and then one day the money might come as well.
22. Even academies should keep on good terms with the ***Local*** ***Authority*** - they have enough power and influence still to be useful eg in capital money - also get to know leaders and top officials on any other councils in your area, eg the district council, parish council.
23. ***Links with other secondary schools*** are always useful at all levels and in some cases this can also be with independent schools – cooperation is better than competition.
24. Build up links with the local ***Further Education College and Universities*** – there is a lot of scope for cooperation and joint projects e.g. on life long learning.
25. Not all ***primary/junior schools*** are as keen on links as most secondary schools are, but they have less time, resources and staff - persist, and aim for as close a link as possible - never patronise junior/primary schools, show your appreciation and understanding of the skill of good primary/junior teachers from whom many secondary teachers could learn a lot.
26. Cultivate a close relationship with the ***police*** - they will then more readily give you assistance when you need it, e.g. with intruders.

# The Headteacher and the School Buildings and Site

Obviously an attractive, well maintained building is a good environment for learning, and a reason for students, parents and the community being proud of their school. In academies, the trust will often play a bigger role in this area than the academy

1. Have a good and professional ***asset*** ***management*** plan in place which will cover the development of the site and building and also maintenance - look after the needs of the disabled via an Accessibility Plan.
2. Have a ***committee of the governing body*** established, specifically to look after sites, buildings and contracts.
3. Have a ***member of your SLT responsible for sites and premises*** - it is not your job to be dragged too closely into the details of site maintenance even if you sometimes would like to see the caretaker as your counsellor and adviser, and receiver of all your woes and troubles!
4. ***Health and Safety*** does matter - be eternally vigilant, with a Health and Safety Coordinator who is good, and ensures that Health and Safety is in the minds of everyone in the school at all times - a staff Health and Safety Committee can be backed up by a student Health and Safety Committee and all procedures and systems should be written up and known by everyone. Have a plan in place for disasters or emergencies.
5. Any bids for ***capital money*** should be professionally prepared - speculate to accumulate - if you are seeking private funds for building projects, your presentation should also be highly professional.
6. Make use of any ***expertise*** on your governing body - check out if any of your parents are architects or builders and get to know them.
7. Use ***professionals*** wherever possible - amateurs can cause severe health and safety problems and you can’t take risks with children’s safety - there is still much scope for getting the lowest possible prices for both labour and materials.
8. Is there any ***part of the site you can sell off*** - the gains can be enormous in terms of how you can improve the school with the money received.
9. Have a good centralised ***building fault reporting system*** – ensure that caretakers put things right quickly.
10. Have a different member of ***staff responsible for each room*** in the school, on which they keep an eye and report faults - SLT members can oversee whole areas of the school - caretakers can check corridors and public areas on a planned, weekly basis - students can be involved as well, eg by weekly best kept classroom competitions.
11. Train your ***caretaker*** with a planned inset programme – provide the proper tools - show him/her sufficient respect -Employ a school ***handyman*** - he/she will pay for himself/herself and be absolutely invaluable in keeping the school in good and attractive decorative and structural condition.
12. Keep thinking about the ***use of your building*** - could new spaces be created? - are areas being used in the best way? - is there scope for bringing teachers in a department closer together? etc etc.
13. In a bigger school, ***employ your caretakers on shifts*** from 7am to 10pm - there is then a huge saving in overtime payments and you have a caretaker in the evening to look after lettings and also do repairs and maintenance.
14. Be vigilant over ***energy saving***, it clearly makes sense, but do not become obsessed - the financial savings possible are useful but a warm, light school is a blessing for all who work in it.
15. Put up as much fireproof ***pinboard*** as possible around the school - Cover the school with students’ ***display*** work - make sure that SEND, disadvantaged and disaffected students have work up, but check also that it is work of which they are proud - in busy areas, cover the displays using rolls of clear plastic sheeting.
16. ***Carpet*** as much of the school as you can - it makes a huge difference to the working atmosphere.
17. Get all the ***toilets*** graffiti and damage free - have the caretaker check them at least twice a week using a special pro-forma which you receive personally - educate the cleaners to check toilets thoroughly and report faults everyday - ensure that the SLT duty system covers toilet supervision - SLT should be seen checking toilets on a regular basis everyday - get the message across to students that they all gain by having civilised, clean toilets - they can play a big role by not damaging toilets themselves, encouraging others not to do so and by reporting those who do - overall, there is some truth in the old saying that a school can be judged by its toilets.
18. Get all ***graffiti*** removed from the whole building - educate cleaners to check for it and report it everyday - educate staff to check for it and report it every lesson - educate students to check for it and report it every lesson - any graffiti should be removed ***instantly*** - students can be inculcated into a culture where graffiti just doesn’t happen - do regular checks yourself and be high profile in doing this.
19. Try and educate children not to drop ***litter*** if you can, but it is always a slow process and you may not totally succeed - make sure you have plenty of bins which the caretaker empties everyday, with a litter check after every lesson, break and lunchtime – employ a site cleaner for an hour at the end of each day - pensioners etc welcome this work, it costs little and there are huge benefits in having a litter free site - organise parent/student litter picks of the area surrounding the school - it is excellent public relations for the school - students who have no notes to miss PE can be useful litter pickers, but should use litter grabs to pick it up – it is also good for the Headteacher to be seen regularly picking up litter.
20. Make the whole site ***smoking/vaping*** free at all times. Be vigilant in stopping students smoking - searching them out and chasing them off can become a game, but you have to do it and it keeps some students sufficiently occupied and amused they have no time for other mischief! - make sure they don’t go off the site to smoke and that they never smoke in toilets - some desperate student smokers will smoke outside but ensure it is at least discreet if you can't stop all of it – don’t let Y12/13 students (or staff!) smoke on the edges of the school site where they can be seen by the public.
21. Raise money and provide ***lockers*** for which students pay a rental, (no charge for those on free meals) - students appreciate them and it cuts down on bags around school - you don’t need that many as not all students will want them – ensure that they are kept in a good condition.
22. The ***school*** ***reception*** should reflect the ethos and atmosphere of the school in terms of decoration and display - lots of photographs of the students and displays of work should be there but carefully chosen to reflect what you aim to put across - it isn’t necessarily a good idea to keep students out of reception - schools are for students!
23. Provide food and drink at break - have a breakfast service – children work better if they’ve eaten - it’s a high priority to ensure ***school*** ***meals*** at lunchtime are as cheap and attractive as possible, with every effort to provide healthy food by working closely with your caterers as part of the ECM agenda and healthy schools initiative - you want children in school if possible and not wandering the streets and catering is the key to keeping them in school - it is then possible to instruct that all students stay on site unless they actually go home for lunch – regular patrols at lunchtime will enforce this - have water machines in school so that students can always get access to drinking water - allow water bottles in class – do not have vending machines. Breakfast clubs are really useful, especially in deprived areas
24. Have a ***recycling*** system for paper - schools waste so much, it is good for the environment and may bring in a little money.
25. Organise ***working parties of parents*** to do the simpler do-it-yourself jobs, eg painting.

**Tony Stephens**