

# Next Practice in System Leadership: Field Trials



## Introduction: What is Next Practice in System Leadership?

In its earliest days, this Next Practice project was provisionally called 'Next Practice in leadership beyond a single institution', which gives some indication of the initial territory being explored. We changed its name to 'Next Practice in System Leadership' to reflect the focus of all the sites on addressing the needs of all learners across their local area or system.

Our current thinking is that Next Practice in System Leadership involves approaches to leadership and/or governance that:

- do not, to the best of our knowledge, exist elsewhere in the same form (in terms of structures, scale, pace of change, or range of partners involved)
- enable groups of schools, or schools and other organisations, sustainably to deliver new, enhanced or more coherent services
- aim to achieve significantly better outcomes for their young people and their communities than can be achieved by schools working on their own.

## Next Practice in System Leadership: Field trial vignettes

There are 17 field trials and the focus for their work varies – from whole town 14-19 provision, to joined-up *Every Child Matters* (ECM) arrangements, 0-19 full-service provision, and even authority-wide educational transformation. The organisational arrangements within which leadership and governance is exercised are even more varied. There are 'hard federations' of schools or academies and a geographically dispersed coalition or 'chain' of schools. There are whole-town models – one for 14-19, some for ECM, one for fully integrated provision. There are campus approaches. There is a 4-19 family of schools. There are two approaches to authority-wide transformation, co-designed and led by school and local authority leaders.

What they have in common is the commitment to new forms of sustainable leadership and governance appropriate to these purposes and challenges.

The field trials are potential sources of learning for the wider system. Making this innovative practice and learning available to others was from the start an explicit purpose of the programme for The Innovation Unit and NCSL.

As an introduction to the work of the sites we have included below a short vignette for each one – a description of their work focus, their organisational arrangements and the system leadership part. A point of contact in each site is also provided, and we have organised them into 'north' and 'south', purely to help those using this leaflet to find sites they can visit within easy travel distance. We have also developed a tool, *Looking to Learn*, which is designed to support and to bring rigour to such site enquiries. Copies are available from The Innovation Unit.

For more detail about this Next Practice project and the resources available, visit The Innovation Unit's website at: [www.innovation-unit.co.uk/projects/system-leadership](http://www.innovation-unit.co.uk/projects/system-leadership) or NCSL's website at: [www.ncsl.org.uk/research/nextpractice/research-nextpractice.cfm](http://www.ncsl.org.uk/research/nextpractice/research-nextpractice.cfm).

# Next Practice in System Leadership: Location of field trial sites

**Cumbria 14-19 Strategic Partnership**  
Cumbria  
Adrienne Carmichael (01539 773455)

**Knowsley System Leadership and Governance**  
Knowsley  
Elaine Ayre (0151 443 3233)  
Pam Jervis (0151 546 6804)

**Winsford Education Partnership**  
Winsford  
Val Godfrey (07817 214002)

**Yewlands Family of Schools**  
Sheffield  
Nicola Shipman (0114 2467916)

**3Es Coalition**  
Various locations across the West Midlands and the South East  
Valerie Bragg (0121 7791302)

**West Wiltshire Federation of Schools**  
West Wiltshire  
Jane Taylor (01225 785260)

**Chichester Community Alliance**  
Chichester  
Candy Daffern (01243 782540)

**Extended Services**  
North Hartlepool  
John Hardy (01429 273041)

**Darlington Education Village**  
Darlington  
Dela Smith (01325 254000)

**Central Leeds Learning Federation**  
Leeds  
Liz Talmadge (0113 3368310)

**Remaking Learning**  
Barnsley  
Diane Heritage (01226 774507)

**Haven**  
NE Essex  
Caroline Haynes (01255 672116)

**Queens Park Alliance**  
Bedford  
Anne McCormick (01234 352901)

**Stevenage 14-19 Partnership**  
Stevenage  
Russell Ball (01438 31004)

**Harris Federation of South London Schools**  
London  
Dan Moynihan (020 8771 2261)

**Hailsham Partnership**  
East Sussex  
Lesley Farmer (01323 841468)

## NORTH

### **Central Leeds Learning Federation, Leeds**

Lead contact: Liz Talmadge, 0113 3368310, liztalmadge@talk21.com

*New leadership models for a 0–19 federated school serving a dynamic multi-ethnic community*

A 'hard federation' of two highly challenged inner city secondary schools is implementing a new leadership and governance structure across a broader 0-19 federated school, with strong internal and external community engagement, aiming for enhanced achievement levels across all five *Every Child Matters*' outcomes.

To achieve this, they have joined together to form a soft federation involving a range of education and voluntary sector partners. These include the primary school which shares the new campus with one of the secondary schools. They intend, through extensive consultation with stakeholder groups across the schools and in the local community, to develop a new governance and leadership structure.

The executive headteacher will then increasingly concentrate on strategic and business issues in order for the headteachers of the component schools to focus on teaching and learning. These approaches have opened up significant new possibilities for leadership across the federation, for a new community vision and for wider service involvement with the federation.

The project is well networked with other sites and has actively utilized tools and learning events to advance the work.<sup>1</sup> An extensive consultation exercise to engage staff, students, parents and the community is planned following sustained engagement with *The Leadership and Governance Landing Pad*.

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### **Cumbria 14-19 Strategic Partnership, Cumbria**

Lead contact: Adrienne Carmichael, 01539 773455, adrienne.carmichael@cumbriacc.gov.uk

*New models of governance and leadership for 14-19 provision in challenging localities*

Cumbria's field trial began by testing out different approaches to the leadership, management and governance of coherent 14-19 provision across three geographically

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<sup>1</sup> A number of tools and frameworks have been developed in partnership with the field trial sites. These are also available to support wider adoption of system leadership and governance approaches. They include a process to support the strategic leadership of change, developed by The Innovation Unit and NCSL in partnership with Bridge – an award winning consultancy. It is called *The Bridge Change Leadership Framework* and is supported by a number of other tools mentioned in these vignettes – *Delta 6* (to support the creation of a living vision), *To Be* (which helps sites to define an emergent strategy) and *The Leadership and Governance Landing Pad*, to build leadership partnership and design new leadership and governance arrangements.

different parts of Cumbria – Eden, Carlisle and Furness. Each selected area faced a different mix of challenges, including falling rolls and widely dispersed populations.

Building on the work of the 14-19 Pathfinder, with the Local Authority intimately involved in the initiation, but transferring responsibility to the localities, the governance and leadership models explored include a trust and a company limited by guarantee. Increasingly the work is focusing on developments in Furness where, following use of *The Bridge Change Leadership Framework*, there is growth from the 14-19 Partnership to a wider Learning Partnership with a holistic vision for educational provision for all children in Furness, and the creation of a Trust, brokering alliances with local business, to sponsor an academy.

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### **Darlington Education Village, Darlington**

Lead contact: Dela Smith, 01325 254000, [dsmith@educationvillage.org.uk](mailto:dsmith@educationvillage.org.uk)

*Implementing innovative leadership and governance arrangements for a 0–19 ‘educational village’, structured around the five ECM outcomes*

Darlington’s ‘Education Village’ is a PFI (private finance initiative) new build formed from a special school, a primary school and a community secondary school, which has a strong focus on community engagement. It has a single governing body with an innovative sub-structure linked directly to the five ECM outcomes. It is in the process of implementing a radically new ‘whole village’ leadership structure, supported by a national consultancy group. Darlington has already been a significant catalyst for other sites, including some in the NPSL programme, and is a strong indicator of the power of Next Practice sites to act as ‘advance organisers’ for wider system learning.

The effective implementation of this radically designed single leadership and governance model across the Village’s three-school hard federation includes an emphasis on the creation of a unified leadership culture using joint purposes and shared professional learning as key levers. *The Bridge Change Leadership Framework* has been one element of this shared professional learning.

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### **Extended Services in North Hartlepool, Hartlepool**

Lead contact: John Hardy, 01429 273041, [head.stjohnvianney@school.hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:head.stjohnvianney@school.hartlepool.gov.uk)

*Radical proposals for community leadership of extended service provision in North Hartlepool*

Challenging communities often lack local leaders. Extended Services in North Hartlepool plan to develop a network of community leaders – adults and young people – in this challenging area who will be empowered to lead the development of extended service provision. This work will have a new form of governance through a ‘brokerage board’

containing community partners and membership from the six locality primary schools and one comprehensive secondary school. The aim is to create a personalised, multi-agency and community driven approach to meet the needs of learners of all ages. A programme of community engagement has energised a wide group of stakeholders and the Local Authority is partnering the work and adapting its borough-wide arrangements to support the project.

The schools in the locality, working in partnership with the Local Authority, are creating a community interest company which can first house and then 'float' the Brokerage Board, so enabling local community-driven leadership of extended service provision and growth of community leadership.

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### **Knowsley System Leadership and Governance, Knowsley, North West**

Lead contacts: Elaine Ayre, 0151 4433233, [elaine.ayre@knowsley.gov.uk](mailto:elaine.ayre@knowsley.gov.uk) and Pam Jervis, 0151 5466804, [pam.jervis@knowsley.gov.uk](mailto:pam.jervis@knowsley.gov.uk)

*New district-wide governance and leadership models designed to ensure coherent services and strong community leadership and engagement – supported by movement towards three regional learning centre federations*

The Local Authority is the third most deprived in the country and has a history of innovation to offset the challenging circumstances. A significant challenge for both leadership and governance in Knowsley is to meld the principles of system-wide education reform with the renewed focus placed upon neighbourhood and community regeneration by 'Concept Knowsley'. It is closing all of its ten secondary schools and opening seven new learning centres. It is developing radical federated leadership and governance structures designed to secure high levels of collective ownership. These structures will support neighbourhood regeneration and be integrated with the delivery of wider public services, in order to secure whole system transformation.

Leaders of the new Learning Centres will collaborate both within their federations and across the authority to transform learning and achievement. They are also evolving new models of leadership partnership between the Local Authority and secondary heads.

Through the field trial, Knowsley is also investigating ways in which new governance models are able to adopt aspects of system organisation devolved by the Local Authority so that the system becomes self-regulating and self-organising. Particularly, they are seeking:

- to find new ways in which governance is able to respond to the changing nature of learning
- to move to a form of adaptive governance which will play a more active role in change through a pioneering culture of creativity, innovation and risk taking so as to address the most deep-rooted social and education issues
- to establish formal and structured ways in which governance can respond to the rapid shift to partnership working both within the education community and with other stakeholders

- to establish new modes of accountability to local communities, parents and pupils.

Initially **two** field trials, the work has come together to build from the early successes and will expand to the co-design and leadership of Knowsley's new educational provision, together with new models of curriculum and learning for the Learning Centres.

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### **Remaking Learning, Barnsley**

Lead contact: Diane Heritage, 01226 774507, [dianeheritage@barnsley.gov.uk](mailto:dianeheritage@barnsley.gov.uk)

*Putting local communities and their needs at the heart of service provision through new governance and leadership models*

'Remaking Learning' is a programme aimed at transforming lifelong learning across the whole of Barnsley through *Building Schools for the Future* (BSF). The two localities of this field trial are working with the Local Authority on behalf of the whole of Barnsley to develop new forms of leadership across localities – including Local Area Wellbeing Partnerships with strong community and multi-agency engagement, a Director of Community Wellbeing with a focus on developing community literacy. New governance models are also now being developed in partnership with the Local Authority as prototypes for 'Remaking Learning'.

Following facilitated work with *The Bridge Change Leadership Framework*, a multi-agency, cross-service leadership development strategy is being designed as an integral part of the 'Remaking Learning and Care in Barnsley' vision.

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### **Winsford Education Partnership, Winsford, Cheshire**

Lead contact: Val Godfrey, 07817 214002, [vgodfrey@valeroyal.gov.uk](mailto:vgodfrey@valeroyal.gov.uk)

*Whole town 'one school' provision to meet ECM and inclusion aspirations*

The 17 schools in the Winsford Education Partnership have worked well in partnership for a number of years. Through this field trial they are seeking to develop from comfortable collaboration to harder-edged system leadership of a whole-town plan to deliver ECM outcomes, working with the Local Authority to redesign its emerging strategy to fit the Winsford context and vision. Work with *The Bridge Change Leadership Framework* crystallised the need for the schools to relax their commitment to full consensus in order to make more rapid and radical progress.

They are jointly developing, with Local Authority and Local Council support, a town-wide plan for the future of education locally. Winsford aims to become a 0-19 centre of education with a full commitment to inclusion and the delivery of ECM. This is likely to be driven by a change leadership group, possibly involving the creation of a trust, and a principle change manager.

### **Yewlands Family of Schools, Sheffield**

Lead contact: Nicola Shipman, 0114 2467916, [Headteacher@monteney.sheffield.sch.uk](mailto:Headteacher@monteney.sheffield.sch.uk) and Angela Armytage, [angela.armytage@yewlands.sheffield.sch.uk](mailto:angela.armytage@yewlands.sheffield.sch.uk)

*A paradigm shift in leadership and governance across a family of schools in pursuit of radical change in curriculum provision and the culture of learning*

Yewlands is developing, through a bottom-up evolutionary process, from the previous collaborative working across the 'family' of schools, to harder-edged proposals for new and sustainable leadership and governance arrangements.

Yewlands is a family of seven schools involving one secondary, one special and five primary, based in a challenging and mainly urban context on the northern edge of Sheffield. The schools have been working as an advanced collaborative for four years, including shared staffing, joint leadership appointments and cross-phase curriculum development projects. Their aspiration for the field trial is to construct a 21st century model of leadership and governance across the family. They describe this as a 'paradigm shift' in the leadership of the family, in succession planning and in the collective culture of learning.

Ambitious proposals are being driven forward by a partnership of headteachers, working as a family with the Local Authority. Facilitated sessions with *The Bridge Change Leadership Framework* gave impetus to their work, including the use of the *To Be* tool to define an emergent strategy. A Spring 2007 weekend conference for governors and senior leaders from the schools, attended by Sheffield's DCS, used *Delta 6* to build a collective 'Living Vision' and to establish a strategic governance group across the family.

## **SOUTH**

### **Chichester Community Alliance, Chichester, West Sussex**

Lead contact: Candy Daffern, 01243 782540, [head@chichester-nur.w-sussex.sch.uk](mailto:head@chichester-nur.w-sussex.sch.uk)

*New leadership and governance for a nursery school and children's centre, providing multi-agency services for the locality*

The field trial involves a nursery school and children's centre seeking to implement new leadership and governance arrangements with a view to ensuring continued high quality educational provision whilst extending opportunities for integrated working across agencies. Through a new Community Alliance between key services, this provision will support children on-site in the nursery and in the local community, providing multi-agency services for children and families.

The Community Alliance leadership and governance structure is also utilising its potential constructively to influence or adapt locally the Local Authority's wider strategy for ECM implementation, particularly its definition of locality and the allocation of services.

Significant momentum was generated by using *The Bridge Change Leadership Framework* and *Delta 6*, and they are extending the approach, with Local Authority support, to a rural children's centre in West Sussex.

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### **Hailsham Partnership, Hailsham, East Sussex**

Lead contact: Lesley Farmer, 01323 841468, farmerl@hailshamcc.e-sussex.sch.uk

#### *Whole town governance and leadership of the five ECM outcomes*

The five schools in Hailsham (one secondary and four primary) are aiming to establish 'whole town' delivery of the five ECM outcomes across all phases. To achieve this they are creating new structures for 'whole town' leadership and governance of ECM outcomes across all phases of education.

The site is using the expertise of Hailsham Community School as a full-service extended school across the whole community. It is looking to create a governance arrangement which will agree strategic objectives, oversee implementation and be the ultimate accountable body for the town. An executive headteacher and an ECM development manager, working with the individual heads and a multi-agency group, are accountable for developing the plans, securing stakeholder support, and monitoring progress. This strong partnership is generating considerable momentum.

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### **Harris Federation of South London Schools, London**

Lead contact: Dan Moynihan, 020 8771 2261, D.Moynihan1@Btinternet.com

#### *New leadership models and flexible leadership deployment across a federation of six academies*

A group of six academies in a highly challenging south London area have formed a hard federation which will operate as a single legal entity with one board of trustees. It will incorporate a seventh school in 2008. It is implementing a new leadership and governance structure across the federation of academies – including the role of the CEO, a single governing body, the mobilisation of leadership capacity across the federation, the use of an internal researcher and a bespoke, federation-wide Masters programme.

The new leadership arrangements include flexible leadership deployment and federation succession management strategies. The site is designing and implementing these new leadership arrangements, and leadership learning strategies across the federation, to generate the leadership capacity for its bold plans and is also exploring federated 14-19 arrangements.

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### **Haven, north-east Essex**

Lead contact: Caroline Haynes, 01255 672116, caroline\_haynes@ttc.uk.net

*Bringing three schools into one strategic trust to provide for all post-16 learners across a local area*

Three secondary schools in north-east Essex are establishing and implementing a social enterprise to oversee and commission coherent, joined-up provision of elements of post-16 learning across the area covered by the three schools.

This will provide, in partnership with local businesses and other strategic partners, post-16 education, training, apprenticeship or employment for all their students, in particular the high proportion of NEETs (not in education, employment or training). The three schools have explored forms of non-profit-making company organisation to host this shared work. Proposals have been accepted by each of the governing bodies and they are currently building the wider partnerships necessary for success. If achieved, this could offer a powerful, sustainable and replicable model for the creation of new provision to meet local priorities.

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### **Queens Park Alliance, Bedford**

Lead contact: Anne McCormick, 01234 352901, annemccormick@schools.bedfordshire.gov.uk

*Leadership and governance arrangements for a 0-19 full-service, inclusive, extended school which embraces other than school provision*

A Children's Centre, lower school and upper school on the same broad campus are seeking to create a 0-19 full-service, extended and inclusive school in an urban, multi-cultural environment. A newly created and professionally facilitated Governance Group has been established across the existing three-tier system and children's centre, to offer strategic leadership for newly introduced aspects of all-through education. One such innovation is the partnership's initiative to provide for in excess of one hundred previously home-educated pupils a flexible and personalised provision.

The intention is for the full-service 'school' to have a radically new leadership and governance structure, which will be developed with the existing governing bodies, and built on evidence from the pioneering work currently being undertaken. The strategy for Queens Park's work has been accelerated by use of a facilitated seminar with *To Be*, and by the use of *Delta 6*.

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### **Stevenage 14-19 Partnership, Stevenage**

Lead contact: Russell Ball, 01438 310046, sv1419@lea.herts.sch.uk

*Town-wide governance and leadership of 14-19 educational and vocational provision*

Stevenage is developing and implementing a new governance structure and shared leadership, linked to possible Trust status, for town-wide 14-19 provision. All the 11-19 community schools, the two special schools, the Pupil Referral Unit and the FE College have established a 14-19 partnership, with a full-time director funded by the partnership, to deliver all 14-19 provision in Stevenage. They plan to create a hard-edged and dynamic governance group to be directly accountable for the configuration of provision, which will include town-wide curriculum planning and joint blocked timetables. The intention is to make the 14-19 entitlement a reality for all Stevenage's young people, and so significantly increase participation and achievement levels.

The Local Authority is also engaging with the partnership to address proposed changes to school reorganisation within the town and, in doing so, creating a relationship that could provide a basis for devolved or decentralised working in the future.

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### **West Wiltshire Federation of Schools, west Wiltshire**

Lead contact: Jane Taylor, 01225 785260, janesuzannetaylor@yahoo.co.uk

#### *Area-wide governance and leadership of 14-19 educational and vocational provision*

The aspiration here is to create a Company Limited by Guarantee for area-wide 14-19 provision. West Wiltshire is a relatively low skill, low income rural area with rising numbers of young people not in education, employment or training. Nine specialist secondary schools, an Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties special school and the FE College have been working jointly to develop and deliver a personalised 14-19 curriculum by using a new leadership structure with legal status and a governors' scrutiny group.

The site has appointed a project manager to work for the 10 participating schools and they have used *The Bridge Change Leadership Framework* to confront the challenges inherent within their work and to make the breakthrough towards new system leadership arrangements.

### **No particular geographical location**

#### **3Es Coalition; centres in the South East and the West Midlands, but expanding**

Lead contact: Valerie Bragg, 0121 7791302, valerie.bragg@3es.com

#### *Extension of an existing 'chain' of schools to include additional schools in challenging contexts and address leadership succession challenges*

This coalition originally comprised six schools spread across the country, with a chief executive and operational heads based on each site. Over a number of years the schools have implemented a set of radical innovations covering both curriculum and school organisation, which have very significantly raised standards.

The coalition has opened up the network's membership to bring in new stimulus and to partner schools in challenging circumstance. A TES advert inviting new members has produced additional schools and a new Coalition Director has been appointed to develop the coalition further. The field trial involves creating and implementing a new and sustainable model of practice and leadership structure for this extended chain of federated schools.