



# Leadership Coach role and skill development



## Leadership Coach – role and skill development

The role of Leadership Coach in Leading from the Middle is critical to the success of the programme. The Leadership Coach's main role is to facilitate participants' in-school learning by supporting them and challenging them to extend their practice in a number of ways. These include:

- awareness – developing and enhancing leadership skills
- leading teams – developing their team in school
- managing change – developing their in school Leadership Focus

Schools will have selected the most appropriate senior member of the team to act as Leadership Coach. The selection may impact on the quality of learning for participants, and experience has shown that an effective leadership generally enhances the learning of middle leaders.

The effectiveness of the Leadership Coach may be increased when:

1. The headteacher is not the Leadership Coach as this places an additional burden on the head which could impair the participants' coaching experience.
2. The coach has the professional respect of colleagues and the necessary experience and expertise to be able to carry out this role. This includes the ability to support participants in securing time and working effectively within the school culture.
3. The coach is able to take on the additional work without impairing their other duties and commitments.
4. The coach engages in his or her own learning as well as supporting the learning of others.



# Role Description

## Role

The role of the Leadership Coach is to provide ongoing support and challenge to participants individually and to facilitate learning sets.

## Key relationships

The Leadership Coach will liaise with the tutor about progress and the development of the participants throughout the programme. He or she will keep the headteacher informed about progress and activities in school while respecting the confidentiality of individual participants. The Leadership Coach will be the key contact between the school, the regional provider, the facilitator and NCSL.

## Responsibility for others

The Leadership Coach is responsible for the participants' progress in school. This includes;

- completing the seven coaching sessions for each participant
- leading a minimum of three learning sets
- engaging with the tutor at the points of contact identified in the coaching tasks model to provide information on the progress of each participant
- providing ongoing support for participants with their Leadership Focus

## Programme requirements

The Leadership Coach is expected to work within the Leading from the Middle programme framework.

The programme requires the Leadership Coach to:

- **Prior to programme commencement:**
  - familiarise themselves with the Leading from the Middle programme model
  - attend the Leadership Coach day prior to induction twilight
  - ensure participants log on to the Learning Gateway prior to Induction – Engagement
- **During Induction – Engagement:**
  - attend the Induction – Engagement twilight
  - actively support participants' learning before and during the Induction – Engagement twilight.



- **During the programme:**
  - attend and engage in the Leadership Coach Twilight and complete the intersessional tasks for Leadership Coaches in the handbook including the Viewpoints on Style online tool
  - monitor, support and challenge the learning and development of the participants in school
  - work with participants, individually and in learning sets
  - encourage participants to use their Reflective Journal to record their learning
  - to liaise with the tutor about the progress of participants
  - use the online resources and the Leading from the Middle Coach Community to support their own work
  - maintain familiarity of online materials and resources used by participants in order to support their learning
- **During Celebration:**
  - support participants in preparing for this session
  - attend and facilitate the Learning Conversations and provide feedback and a group summary of learning

## Ongoing support

The work of the Leadership Coach takes place over the duration of the Leading from the Middle programme and is supported by:

- the Induction – Engagement and the Celebration twilight
- the Leadership Coach development day and Leadership Coach twilight
- a Reflective Journal to record their learning and development
- regular contact with the tutor
- online resources, including:
  - the Virtual School
  - Learn to Lead resources
  - the Middle Ground community
  - the Viewpoints on Style inventory

## Accreditation

The content of this work can also be used as part of a focus for the school-based element of the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH).



# Leadership Coach Characteristics and Skills

## The Leadership Coach

The leadership coach in Leading from the Middle has a critical role to play in promoting participants' desire to learn and grow as leaders and their commitment to their own and others' professional learning.

Drawing on work from NCSL Leading Practice Seminars, (*Leading Coaching in Schools* – Jane Creasy/Fred Paterson NCSL Nottingham 2006, available from September, [www.ncsl.org.uk/coaching](http://www.ncsl.org.uk/coaching)) coaching in Leading from the Middle is based on four essential characteristics and five key skills. These form the basis of learning and development for coaches as well as informing the way in which they approach and carry out coaching on the programme.

## Coaching: four essential characteristics

- A desire to make a difference to student learning
- A commitment to professional learning
- A belief in the abilities of colleagues
- A commitment to developing emotional intelligence

## Coaching: five key skills

- Establishing rapport and trust
- Listening for meaning
- Questioning for understanding
- Prompting action, reflection, learning
- Developing confidence and celebrating success



## The coaching process

Coaching on Leading from the Middle depends first and foremost on the coaches ability to form and sustain a genuine learning relationship.

John West-Burnham argues in *Leadership Development and Personal Effectiveness* (NCSL, 2005) that leadership development is rooted in such relationships. To achieve these, coaches need to:

- establish high levels of trust
- be consistent over time
- offer genuine respect
- be honest, frank, open
- challenge without threat

Important as the relationship is, it is equally important that the coach holds on to the notion of developing awareness and responsibility in the participant. Coaching therefore is not about

- giving answers or advice
- making judgements
- offering counselling
- creating dependency
- imposing agendas or initiatives

The core purpose of coaching on Leading from the Middle is to support the development of the thinking and learning processes of the participants. It is not the role of the coach to provide answers or give advice even though this may initially feel uncomfortable to professionals whose daily work with pupils is pedagogic.

This is why the four essential characteristics and five key skills are at the heart of coaching and the learning process for the coach on Leading from the Middle.

*(Ref for above: Leadership Development and Personal Effectiveness NCSL, 2005. This publication was developed from the Leading Practice seminar entitled 'Understanding the Emotional Dimensions of Leadership' in November 2004, which was led by Richard Boyatzis and John West-Burnham. The publication draws on the work of both Boyatzis and West-Burnham)*



## Person specification

This specification is a guide that reflects the areas which contribute towards an effective Leadership Coach.

<p><b>Work and other relevant experience</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has a proven track record of team leadership at a relevant senior level</li> <li>• has experience of supporting the professional development of staff in a one-to-one situation</li> <li>• has undertaken some professional training or development in the area of mentoring, coaching or performance management</li> </ul>
<p><b>Personal qualities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has a commitment to lifelong learning and professional development</li> <li>• has respect of colleagues and professional credibility as a practitioner and team leader</li> </ul>
<p><b>Personal abilities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is aware of own abilities and areas for further development</li> <li>• is emotionally self-aware and recognises how own feelings affect the coaching situation</li> <li>• understands others' emotions and takes an active interest in their concerns</li> <li>• uses influencing skills to create new agendas, build cohesion and support others</li> <li>• builds rapport through effective communication skills</li> <li>• inspires and enables others to grow and improve professionally</li> <li>• creates alignment between the espoused values of the school and everyday practice and can articulate what this means in practice</li> <li>• coaches with integrity from a secure values-base</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• can access and navigate the Learning Gateway and support participants in its use</li> <li>• uses online resources to support their own development</li> <li>• promotes the use of ICT and online resources to further the learning of others</li> </ul>