



Department of Education



Matthew Goniwe
SCHOOL OF LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

No.1

Leadership Styles and Practices in Effective Schools

Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership
& Governance

Jennifer Roberts & Jane Roach

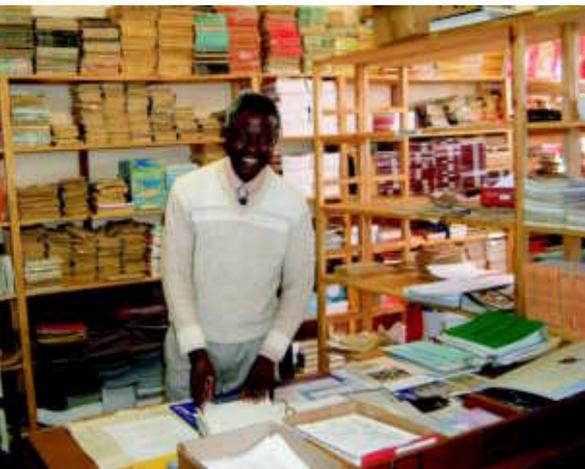
January 2006



Acting principal,
Reitsumetse



Classrooms,
Barnato Park



Educator in charge of
LTSM, Reitsumetse



Matric biology students, Reitsumetse



Main admin
section, Parktown
Girls

RESEARCH SERIES

After months of painstaking work, MGSLG is happy to publish the first report in the research series. As MGSLG is a relatively new institute, it is important that research is done to ensure MGSLG does not repeat the mistakes of the past but is able to pioneer a new understanding of leadership and governance fit for our South African context. We cannot rely solely on research and publications from Europe and North America for answering our questions on leadership and governance.

The goals of the research series are:

- To promote high quality research into school leadership and governance.
- To publish research, which will inform policy and practice within the GDE and which will enhance the quality, focus and impact of leadership and governance training programmes conducted for school managers and governors.
- To support the development and acquisition of knowledge about effective school leadership and governance practices in Gauteng schools.
- To identify and describe school leadership, management and governance practices with the intention of enhancing practice, service provision and policy.
- To publish research so that it is shared with schools to enable them to change their practice.

Look out for the following reports in the research series:

- School Leadership, Management and Governance in South Africa: A Systematic Literature Review
- Leadership Profile
- Evaluating the Role, Importance and Effectiveness of Heads of Department in Contributing to School Improvement
- Financial Management and Training of Gauteng Schools
- Section 21 schools

We hope you enjoy reading this research report. Keep up the good work you are doing as leaders and governors in our schools.

Stephen Sadie
Research Series Editor

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The research team would like to acknowledge the support of the following individuals and organisations:

- The Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance (MGSLG) for commissioning and supporting this study.
- The staff of MGSLG, in particular Ms Z Kunene and Mr S Sadie for their insightful and useful comments on the report.
- The principals, management teams, governors, teachers and administrative staff in all the schools that were visited during the course of the study. Without your patience, support and assistance this project would not have been possible.
- Aniesha Bulbulia for administrative assistance.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Theoretical foundations of the study	1
1.1.1 Defining leadership	1
1.1.2 Researching leadership styles	2
1.1.3 Leadership styles in schools	3
1.1.4 An African (or South African) style of school leadership?	4
1.1.5 Leadership practices associated with effective schools	6
1.1.6 What is the relationship between leadership and management?	7
1.1.7 The presentation of data in this report	7
Section 2: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	9
2.1 Selection of schools	9
2.2 Data collection methods	10
2.3 Presentation of data	10
Section 3: A SHORT INTRODUCTION TO THE SCHOOLS	11
3.1 Introduction	11
3.2 Barnato Park	11
3.3 Clapham High School	11
3.3 Nirvana Secondary School	12
3.4 Parktown Girls High School	12
3.5 Reitsumetse Secondary school	12
SECTION 4: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS	13
4.1 LEADERSHIP OF THE SELF	13
4.1.1 Personal values that influence leadership	13
4.1.2 Modelling positive behaviour and leading by example	14
4.1.3 Having a personal vision for the school	15
4.1.4 Having a pastoral vision	15
4.2 LEADING THE ORGANISATION	17
4.2.1 Developing a vision for the school	17
4.2.2 Joint development of organisational visions	18
4.2.3 Communication of the vision	18
4.2.4 To formalise or not to formalise?	19
4.2.5 Living the vision	20
4.2.6 Creating a positive culture and ethos in the school	20
4.2.7 Boosting morale	21
4.3 LEADERSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING	24
4.3.1 Introduction	24
4.3.2 A vision for teaching and learning	24
4.3.3 Setting high performance expectations for learners	25
4.3.4 Being improvement focused.	27
4.3.5 Innovation and risk-taking in respect of teaching and learning	28
4.3.6 The principal's connection to the classroom	28

4.4	LEADERSHIP OF HUMAN CAPITAL	30
4.4.1	Introduction	30
4.4.2	High expectations of staff	30
4.4.3	Selection and appointment of staff	31
4.4.4	Induction and orientation	32
4.4.5	Deployment of staff	32
4.4.6	Grooming of leaders	32
4.4.7	Staff development	33
4.4.8	Supervision and feedback on performance	33
4.5	LEADERSHIP OF RELATIONSHIPS	37
4.5.1	Introduction	37
4.5.2	Internal relationships	37
4.5.3	Relationships between the SMT and SGB	39
4.5.4	Relationships with parents	40
4.5.5	Relationships with the education community	42
4.5.6	External relationships: the local community, the private sectors and donor organisations.	43
4.6	LEADERSHIP OF SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES	45
4.6.1	Introduction	45
4.6.2	Teams, committees and formal structures	45
4.6.3	Advance planning	47
4.6.4	Communication	48
4.6.5	Documentation of procedures and expectations	48
4.6.6	Protection of teaching time	48
4.6.7	Resource management	49
Section 5:	CONCLUSIONS	50
5.1	Key lessons learnt from the study	50
5.2	Implications of the research for MGSLG's work	52
	REFERENCE LIST	55

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE REPORT

DAS	Development Appraisal System	MGSLG	Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance
DET	Department of Education and Training	NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education	QA	Quality Assurance
HOA	House of Assembly	RCL	Representative Council of Learners
HOD	House of Delegates	SACE	South African Council of Educators
HoD	Head of Department	SGB	School Governing Body
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System	SMT	School Management Team
JDA	Johannesburg Development Agency		

Section 1: Introduction

It is common knowledge that some schools perform better than others or seem to be more successful. This success is not always linked to the quality of buildings, the resources available or even the area in which a school is located – so what is it that makes the difference? Could it be the leadership at that school?

The Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance (MGSLG) commissioned Jennifer Roberts and Jane Roach to undertake a study of leadership styles and practices in schools which were performing well, particularly when their social context was taken into account. The purpose of the study was to isolate those leadership behaviours, habits and practices that contribute to a school being effective. This report summarises findings on leadership and management practices in these schools, with the aim of focusing on behaviours, habits and practices which can be learnt and emulated by other principals.

The intention of the research was to assist readers in identifying effective leadership styles and practices that could be applied in their lives and their schools. In the discussion of the research findings, particular emphasis has been placed on the behaviours, habits and practices exhibited by leaders that can be learnt and emulated by other principals. Special attention has been paid to practices and behaviours that are not resource dependent. It is also hoped that by reviewing effective practices in Gauteng schools that the research findings can influence the content of training courses offered by MGLSG and other providers.

Both the design of the study and the subsequent analysis of the data that was collected were based on a sound theoretical foundation. Two key research strands exerted a strong influence over the study: (i.) descriptions of different leadership styles that operate in schools and (ii.) school effectiveness research.

1.1 Theoretical foundations of the study

1.1.1 Defining leadership

Defining the notion of leadership is not an easy task, especially as there is no generally agreed upon definition. There are over 300 definitions of leadership in the literature (Cuban, 1998:190 – cited in Bush and Glover, 2003: 4), however the current study has focused on leadership as being the ability to influence the actions of others and to guide an organisation to a desired state of being or functioning. This is a fairly general definition of leadership and encompasses the range of aspects of leadership found in schools. Leadership is therefore not a monolithic behaviour or one that is only demonstrated at particular times – it permeates all aspects of the school's operation. In order to assist in the organisation of the report, a number of 'leadership domains' were identified through a thematic analysis of our data (which are summarised diagrammatically below). All of these domains interact with one another and, in practice, are not separate from one another.

1.1.2 Researching leadership styles

Early studies of leadership tended to focus on the characteristics and personalities of a single leader within the organisation. This meant that leadership was thought to be centred in a particularly dynamic and charismatic individual, who usually occupied the most senior position in a company, organisation or school, and who exhibited a number of personality traits that separated them from their followers. These kinds of “trait studies” were common before 1940 (see Gibson and Marcoulides, 1995:2). In this type of research, leadership would have been equated with principalship.

Later studies were influenced by the behaviourist movement of the 1950s and focused on key behaviours exhibited by leaders; these were the fore-runners of studies of leadership styles. During the 1980s and 1990s a number of influential books and studies were published that highlighted different leadership styles – an example would be that of “visionary leadership” promoted by Nanus (1992). Much of what has been written on management and leadership styles in education has been influenced by current (or what was current at the time) thinking in business management – many of the ideas receiving attention in the commercial world were then translated into the educational management arena. After an idea or theory had gained ascendancy in the business world, it was not long after that books would appear that applied that current theory to education.

Bush and Glover¹ (2003) provide a very interesting summary of the different leadership styles that have been described and isolated by different researchers. However, the writers of this report found that some of the different styles described by Bush and Glover (2003) had to be treated with some circumspection². As the current study progressed it became clear that:

- The leadership styles described by different writers and theorists blurred into one another.
- Descriptions of leadership styles were often caricatures of behaviour or focused on a particular aspect of school leadership (such as the development of the school’s vision) in isolation from the range of different tasks that a school principal is expected to perform.
- As one leadership style came into ascendancy, comparisons were often set up between the “new” model and the “old” leadership practices. These comparisons often exaggerated the differences between the models.

¹ This study discusses the range of leadership styles which enjoy popularity in school management literature and provides a comprehensive and useful summary of key theories. Bush T. & Glover, D. (2003) *School Leadership: Concepts and Evidence*. Nottingham . National College of School Leadership.

² As will be seen in the discussion that follows, this circumspection was prompted by the nature of literature on research styles and is no reflection on the quality of work by Bush and Glover (2003). Their paper is an extremely useful and succinct summary of the different leadership styles described in literature.

1.1.3 Leadership styles in schools

The following table summarises some dominant styles of school leadership and seeks to apply these to the work of principals in South African schools.

Leadership style ³	How the literature describes or classifies behaviours associated with a leadership style	Expected behaviours as they relate to South African schools.
Transactional leadership	Focus on systems and process. Doing what needs to be done in order to attain organisational purpose.	Putting in place the necessary systems to ensure smooth running of the school. Having systems which facilitate delivery of the curriculum.
Managerial leadership	Focus on functions, tasks and behaviours. Supervision, input controls and behaviour controls.	Supervision Human resource management Management of labour issues and adherence to labour regulations.
Transformational leadership	Focus is on organisational culture. Values, morals, norms, inspirational leadership. Develops people and relationships.	Development of school vision – focus on organisational change (of particular importance in South Africa as schools move away from racially-divided and authoritarian pasts). Creation of an organisational vision that is aligned with the South African constitution in terms of vision, values and morals.
Moral leadership	Values driven. Integrate intellectual, emotional and spiritual aspects of an organisation's operation. Authority and influence based on "what is good".	Personal values and integrity of leader infuse the organisation. Clear statement of values. Values inform vision and operation of school. Shapes what is seen as "important" in the school. Pastoral care within school.
Post-transformational leadership	Behaviour of the leader is contingent on context. Multiple realities exist in schools. Focus on human and emotional side of leadership.	Good inter-personal skills, allowing the leader to respond to different contexts and challenges. Multiple intelligences. Multi-cultural understanding and responsiveness.
Instructional leadership (sometimes called Pedagogic Leadership)	Development of teachers and learners. Focus is on curriculum delivery and instructional improvement. Teacher behaviour becomes leadership focus.	Leadership and management of the core purpose of the school. Creation of a supportive context for curriculum delivery (including policy context). Instructional improvement evident and strategies implemented. Direct involvement of leadership in instructional matters.
Distributed leadership	Shared and allocated responsibility and authority. Participative decision-making.	Team work. Interaction between SGB, SMT, RCL, parents. Internal and external relations.

³ This table draws heavily on the work of Bush and Glover (2003) and Harris (2002). The application of these theories to the work of South African principals is the work of the authors.

Leadership style ³	How the literature describes or classifies behaviours associated with a leadership style	Expected behaviours as they relate to South African schools.
		Shared or participative decision making.

From the above table it becomes clear that an effective principal (or even a principal that is simply operating in terms of South African legislation and in terms of his or her job description) would need to display behaviours associated with the full range of leadership styles. Several writers have chosen to focus on a leadership style that is referred to as “situational” or “contingency” leadership (Blanchard et al, 1999; Gibson and Marcoulides, 1995) where leaders adapt their style to the situations in which they find themselves. This means that styles vary depending on the nature of participants in an interaction and the relative balance of power between them and the outcome sought by the leader or the group. Within a single day a leader might therefore have to display behaviours associated with being “autocratic”, display visionary leadership and also be consultative and participative!

Our research in the schools that took part in this study showed that it was very difficult to identify a particular dominant leadership style displayed by any of the principals or members of school management teams. Instead, the researchers found it more useful to focus on common behaviour patterns displayed by principals in these schools and look for common strategies that were employed to ensure that their schools functioned optimally.

1.1.4 An African (or South African) style of school leadership?

One of the questions often posed to the research team was: Is it possible to identify practices or behaviours that could be described as a uniquely African style of leadership? Before answering this, it is useful to consider some of what has been written on African leadership styles. When looking for features or characteristics of African leadership it is perhaps instructive to keep in mind the words of Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi:

We also need to be careful to label something as "African" simply because it is voiced, demonstrated or embraced by a person from African origin. If the Zulu warrior Shaka believed in a particular management philosophy, does it make it African by definition or is it Shaka's personal (or at best a Zulu) philosophy?⁴

Fraser-Moleketi’s comments are particularly useful when one considers that Africa is a vast continent, with over 53 countries and many different cultures. The search for a single style of leadership that can be defined as uniquely African may be as elusive as the search for the Holy Grail. However, this does not imply that that which is African must be discounted. Colonialism and intellectual imperialism relegated indigenous knowledge and practices that originated outside of a Western context or paradigm to the margins. This has led, through the notion of an African Renaissance, to the desire to

⁴ Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, Minister of Public Service and Administration, “Opening remarks made at the colloquium/ anniversary of the School of Public Administration at the University of Pretoria”. 20 October 2003.
Available at: www.info.gov.za/speeches/2003/03102109461002.htm

accord African traditions and practices greater status and to see them as worthy objects of intellectual inquiry.

Two key themes emerge in the somewhat sparse literature on the features of African leadership: the importance of ubuntu and the consultative nature of African leadership (through the practice of holding lekgotla or iimbizo).

The concept of ubuntu is translated differently by different writers: Boon (1996) explains that ubuntu means “morality, humaneness, compassion, care, understanding and empathy, sharing and hospitality, honesty and humility” (p. 31). Ubuntu is not simply an individual action, but is made manifest through the actions (and notions of) community (Boon, 1996: 32). In terms of the ubuntu philosophy, community benefit is paramount and a leader must act in the interests of a greater good and the good of the community that he or she leads (and serves). Throughout the course of this report reference will be made to the values shared by the leaders of the schools, many of which echo those cited in the translation of ubuntu. Similarly, we make reference to the pastoral care shown by the principals and managers for their learners and those working at the school. All of these can be interpreted as manifestations of ubuntu. The message of leaders acting in the best interests of their learners and their communities (schools) came through very clearly in an examination of effective leadership styles. However, it must be noted that at no point did any of the leaders characterise their actions as having a particular African flavour and no-one made mention of the word ubuntu – their actions were simply described as part of their and the school's general orientation.

The other key theme that emerges in discussions of African leadership is that of consultative and interactive leadership (Boon, 1996: de Liefde, 2003). African leaders rely on the counsel of others and do so through having a team of trusted advisors and through the establishment of formal structures where different opinions and views can be voiced (lekgotlas or iimbizo). Following deliberations of the group, the chief can take a decision.

When one considers the history of management and leadership in South African schools, a clear shift in approach can be seen between the mid-1980s and the mid-2000s. These shifts are summarised below:

“Old style” leadership practices	Emerging practices
Centralised control	Site-based management. Greater decision making power devolved to school level.
Conformity encouraged – as innovation and individual action may have undermined or challenged State authority and the State’s ideology.	Innovation encouraged as schools expected to compete for learners and operate as “providers” in an education market place.
Power of principal – very often “positional” (came with the position)	Power of principal – drawn from co-operation and collaboration with management team and staff. Less emphasis on compliance because of the position of the principal.
Schools relatively isolated from the communities that they serve	Schools seen a focal point of community life (Minister Asmal’s <u>Tirisano</u> campaign). School Governing Bodies established to

	allow stakeholder participation in leadership of schools.
--	---

The legislative impact of the South African Schools Act and other policies (and campaigns) enacted after 1994 brought about significant shifts in the manner in which schools operated. These led to a more consultative approach to managing schools (through School Management Teams – SMTs – and School Governing Bodies – SGBs). In addition, the devolution of power to school level meant that principals, SMTs and SGBs needed to develop policies and take decisions in the interests of their schools. All of these changes (including a greater focus on consultation and collaborative management) have permeated the operation of schools.

Based on the nature of these changes it is very difficult to label the consultative actions of principals in the study as particularly “African” behaviours – especially as management books written in the rest of the world have also recognised the importance of collegial management styles. One can, however, conclude that many of the practices promoted by the new legislation have greater resonance with African practices.

1.1.5 Leadership practices associated with effective schools

School effectiveness research seeks to identify and isolate the relative effects of different practices on learner attainment and on overall school effectiveness. These studies have tended to identify four sets of features influencing school effectiveness: learner characteristics (including home-background and levels of prior attainment), management practices, school inputs (including teachers, physical infrastructure and the availability of teaching and learning resources) and teaching processes (the manner in which the curriculum is designed, delivered and assessed) (see Muller and Roberts, 2000, for a more detailed discussion on school effectiveness research). School effectiveness studies attempt to correlate in-school practices with levels of learner attainment, especially when attainment scores have been controlled for learner background. This helps theorists to determine which factors contribute to raising learner achievement – with the assumption that if these factors can be replicated then the general effectiveness of schools can be raised.

The research team drew heavily on management practices identified in school effectiveness research as making a significant contribution to the effectiveness of the school or to learner achievement. A table summarising the key findings of this research (both in developed and developing countries) has been appended to this report.

Some key features associated with effective (or high-performing schools) include⁵:

- Purposeful leadership by the principal
- Shared vision and purpose
- Clear goals and a clear focus on curricular goals
- High, but realistic, expectations (of staff and learners)
- Order and discipline
- Creating a caring and stable environment in the school – effective pastoral care
- Effective co-operation and a atmosphere of trust between parties⁶

⁵ Based on Muller, J. and Roberts, J. (2000) *The Sound and Fury of International School Reform*. Mimeo. JET Education Services

The researchers also paid special attention to the features of leadership practice that have been associated with schools that are thriving or performing well under difficult circumstances. The National College of School Leadership (NCSL) in Britain has commissioned a number of studies of leadership practices in schools that operate under difficult social conditions and where a large proportion (if not all) learners are drawn from working class or low socio-economic status homes⁷. In terms of the challenges faced by these schools, they have a great deal in common with the majority of South African schools.

1.1.6 What is the relationship between leadership and management?

A great deal of attention is devoted in management / leadership literature to the distinction between leadership and management. In this study we have not adopted this distinction and have instead focused on both leadership and management-related behaviours and practices. Leadership behaviours are often less tangible and less easily measured or researched than management practices, which are usually more visible as they are supported by policies, procedures and solid evidence that these systems are implemented. It is our view that leadership is required in order for a school to be well managed and well administered; leadership provides the framework for policies to be implemented and for systems and procedures to exist in the school. Leadership is made evident through the actions of different people and through the types of systems and practices operating in the school.

1.1.7 The presentation of data in this report

Given that much of the literature on leadership styles describes behaviours associated with the different styles in very broad terms and does not shed much light on specific behaviours associated with each style – the research team chose to focus on specific behaviours and practices exhibited by the principles in the five schools that were visited.

School managers and school principals are expected to carry out an extremely wide variety of tasks – from managing staff to financial management, from setting policies for teaching and learning to developing relationships with different stakeholders. In order to make the report easier to read and more coherent, several “leadership domains” were identified:

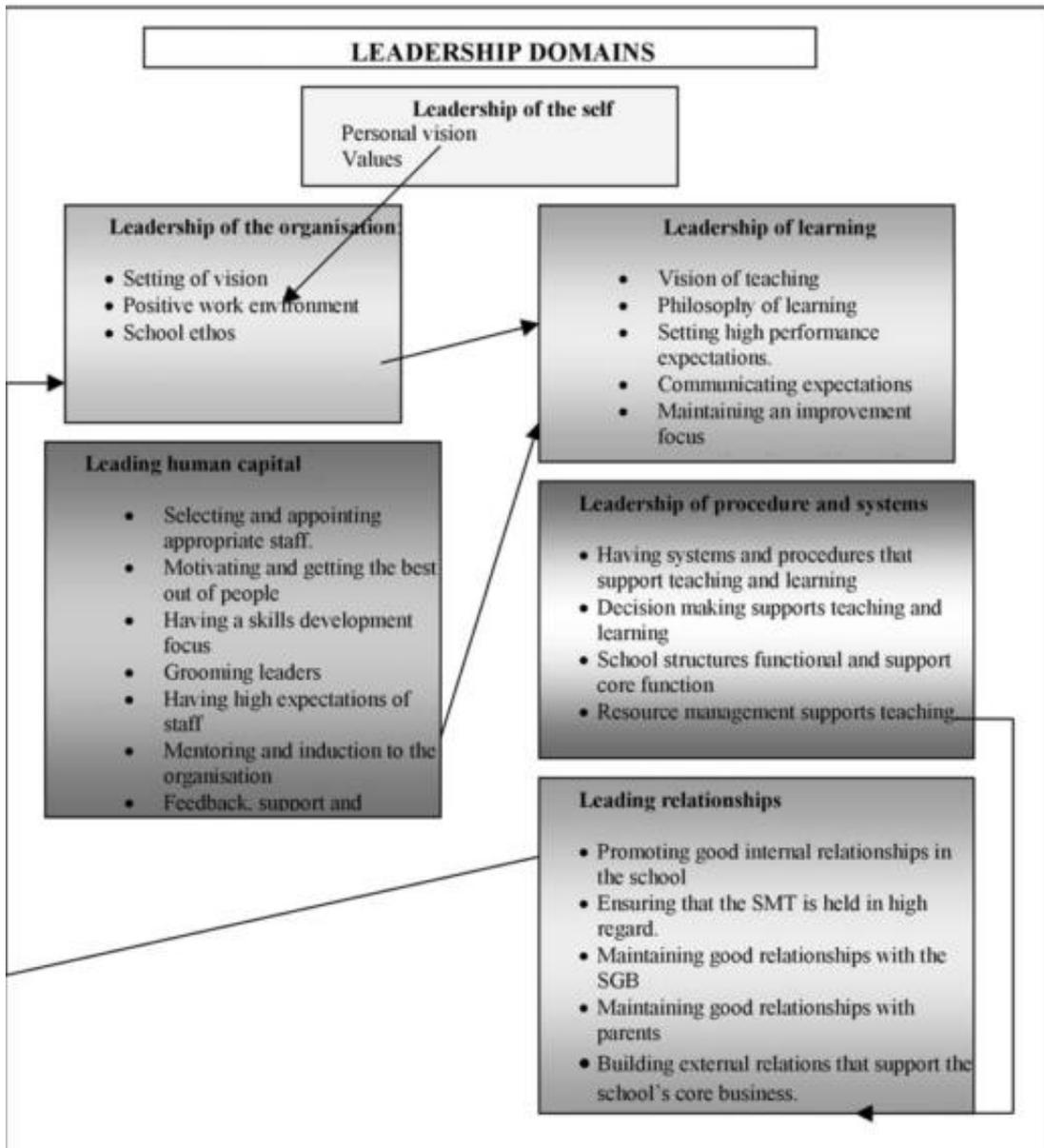
- Leadership of the self
- Leadership of the organisation
- Leadership of teaching and learning
- Leadership of human capital
- Leading relationships
- Leadership of systems and procedures

Each of these domains is discussed in more detail in section 4 of the report. The following diagram illustrates the relationship between some of these domains, however the boundaries between the different domains are not as rigid as the illustration

⁷ In particular, see Taylor-Moore (2004) and Harris and Chapman (2002).

suggests. The different domains overlap and influence one another (as is suggested by the arrows in the diagram).

Figure 1: Leadership domains and relationships between different domains



Section 2: Research methodology

2.1 Selection of schools

This study was conducted in five secondary schools in Gauteng. As the study wanted to focus on leadership practices in schools that were seen to be effective, the sampling of schools was done using set criteria that took into account the school's academic performance as well as the social context of the school. Unfortunately it was necessary to limit the sample to five schools. The identification of schools was done in the following way:

- A performance score was assigned to each school, based on their performance in the Grade 12 examinations in 2003. The score was a combination of the percentage of learners who passed and the percentage of those who passed with endorsement (or exemption).
- The school's poverty ranking (as assigned by the GDE) was used as a proxy for the socio-economic status of the school and the learners attending the school.

The researchers therefore adopted a "value added" approach to assessing performance.

Once schools had been ranked in terms of performance and socio-economic status the researchers selected the best performing schools in different quintiles⁸. This meant that schools did not have to attain a 100% pass rate in order for selection.

Care was also taken to ensure that schools were drawn from a range of contexts (suburban, inner-city, township), different districts and different parts of Gauteng. The schools were distributed as follows:

Inner city school	1
Township school	1
"Indian township"	1
Suburban	2

Former DET	1
Former HOD	1
Former HOA	2
Former Model D (State aided)	1

Greater Johannesburg	3
Greater Pretoria/ Tshwane	2

⁸. This *usually* meant that the best performing schools in each quintile were selected. However, this was not always possible as the researchers had to consider additional selection criteria that were put forward by MGSLG. These included ensuring that a range of districts and former Department of Education schools were represented. In addition, where some schools were known to have received high levels of external support (either material support or training and mentoring), they were excluded.

2.2 Data collection methods

The literature survey which preceded the study helped the researchers to identify key themes and practices associated with dominant leadership styles and those which were highly correlated with school effectiveness. This information informed the design of the research instruments.

The researchers spent three days in each school interviewing key individuals, observing the operation of the school and management structures, shadowing the principal and reviewing relevant documents. The following table summarises the key data collection activities:

• Interview with the principal ⁹
• Questionnaire completed by the principal
• Day-long shadowing of the principal
• Interview with SMT members
• Interview with SGB members (parent representatives)
• Interview with teachers who are not members of the SMT
• Questionnaires/ response sheets were distributed during each set of interviews (teachers and SMT)
• Review of management documents (including minutes of meetings, school development plans, records of staff development, policies, procedures)
• General observation of activities in the school (including assembly, break times, transition between periods, after-school activities, lessons taught by the principal, staff meetings and SMT meetings)

The researchers used a variety of data collection methods in order to build up a rich and detailed picture of how the school is led, managed and administered. It was also necessary to include the views of a range of different people in order to assess the consistency of reports, attitudes, values and the extent to which there was a shared experience or perception of the leadership in the school.

The data from each school was first analysed in order to obtain a good picture of the leadership and management practices; the data from all five schools was then analysed in order to identify common trends and extract themes.

2.3 Presentation of data

The data in the report has been organised according to the different domains of leadership described in section 1. Throughout the report we have tried to use illustrations from the schools that participated in the study – these snapshots of practice appear in boxes alongside the main discussion. These illustrate some of the ideas presented in the discussion and are not necessarily offered as “best practices”. However they do present interesting insights into how successful schools are managed or led. Where possible, examples have been selected of practices which will be fairly easy to replicate in other schools.

⁹ Copies of research instruments can be downloaded from the MGSLG website.

Section 3: A SHORT INTRODUCTION TO THE SCHOOLS

3.1 Introduction

The five schools in this project were purposefully selected so that they would represent a range of different social and economic contexts, but they were similar in that all were known in their communities as good schools, characterised by both a high percentage pass and the quality of passes obtained – as measured by the number of learners obtaining endorsements. Let us introduce you to the schools and the principals.

3.2 Barnato Park

Barnato Park is located in the heart of Berea/ Hillbrow in Johannesburg. Although the school buildings have been in existence for over 30 years, Barnato Park is a relatively new school, having been established in the early 1990s. Johannesburg Girls Secondary School previously operated from these premises. As the demographics of the area surrounding the school changed, fewer and fewer “white” learners were being attracted to the school. When the apartheid government refused to open the school to all races it became no longer viable for the school to exist. Barnato Park School was established first as a private, but church funded, school (in order to allow for learners from all races to be admitted). The school then became a Model D school in 1992 and is now a public school. The principal has been at the school for 13 years and has been principal for eight years.

Enrolment:	954 learners
Grades offered:	Grades 8-12
Percentage pass 2003:	100%
Percentage who obtained endorsement in 2003:	27%

3.3 Clapham High School

Clapham High School is located in Queenswood in Pretoria. The school has been in existence for 56 years and during that time has undergone dramatic cultural shifts associated with the racial integration of the learner population. The school no longer draws most of its learners from its immediate surroundings, but attracts a significant percentage of learners from townships around Pretoria.

In 2003 the principal resigned and for one-and-a-half years one of the deputies has been acting as principal. He has been at the school for 17 years, arriving as a post-level 1 teacher and later being promoted to deputy principal.

Enrolment:	915 learners
Grades offered:	Grades 8-12
Percentage pass 2003:	100%
Percentage who obtained endorsement in 2003:	59%

3.3 Nirvana Secondary School

Nirvana High school is located in Lenasia, south of Johannesburg. Although the school was originally established to serve Indian learners, the integration of schools has meant that a number of learners are drawn from Soweto and surrounding areas. The school is 40 years old and has established itself as a provider of high quality education. As such, the school is regularly identified to participate in pilot programmes and donor- or private sector-funded development initiatives.

In 2004 the principal was boarded due to ill health and one of the deputy principals assumed the role of acting principal. She had been in this position for six months at the time of the research study. At the time of the study, the school was undergoing significant changes with respect to the composition of the management structure: the second deputy principal had just left the school and two HoDs had been promoted to the position of acting deputy principal.

Enrolment:	1255 learners
Grades offered:	Grades 8-12
Percentage pass 2003:	98%
Percentage who obtained endorsement in 2003:	51%

3.4 Parktown Girls High School

Parktown Girls High School had the honour of being the top-performing school in Gauteng with over 95% of those who wrote the Grade 12 examination obtaining an endorsement. The school has been open for 82 years and has a proud history as one of Johannesburg's oldest schools. The principal has been at the school for 7.5 years, prior to which she had been principal at Waverly Girls High School. Of the principals in the study, she was the only one who had served as a principal at a school other than the present one.

Enrolment:	1048 learners
Grades offered:	Grades 8-12
Percentage pass 2003:	100%
Percentage who obtained endorsement in 2003:	95.3%

3.5 Reitsumetse Secondary school

Reitsumetse Secondary is located in Soshanguve township, just north of Pretoria. The school is 20 years old and has a fairly poor infrastructure. A few years ago the administration block burnt down and the principal, two deputy principals and the administration clerk now use a classroom (which has been partitioned using filing cabinets) as a make-shift office. The principal has held this position for 10 years. The school was one of the top-performing schools in its district and is participating in a number of development initiatives including being a "magnet" school for a Maths and Science programme.

Enrolment:	1117 learners
Grades offered:	Grades 10 -12
Percentage pass 2003:	92%
Percentage who obtained endorsement in 2003:	28%

SECTION 4: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 LEADERSHIP OF THE SELF

“When you become a leader, be courteous and see that your conduct is exemplary”.
Sage Ptahhotep (advisor to the pharaohs of the fifth dynasty – approximately 2300 BC)

One of the enduring characteristics of research on leadership is the emphasis placed on the personal characteristics of leaders. This current study approached this issue slightly differently and looked at how good leaders start from a position of being able to exert leadership over their own lives and themselves. Leadership of the self manifests in a range of ways:

- personal values (sometimes referred to as moral leadership),
- setting high expectations for one’s own behaviour,
- having a personal vision for the school and for learning that is then infused with the organisation’s vision, and
- having a pastoral vision, where concern and care is shown for both staff and learners.

4.1.1 Personal values that influence leadership

Principals in the schools that were visited were perceived as having a great deal of personal integrity. During the course of the visits it became clear that the principals valued qualities such as honesty, respect and humility. People were treated with dignity, respect and compassion. Being a teacher and being a principal was described as a vocation, with interviewees saying that it was ‘more than just a job’. Other values which were expressed (and demonstrated) included:

- dedication
- passion for education and learning
- loyalty to the school and the staff
- treating people with respect and seeing their individual worth
- love – particularly for learners and for education
- putting learners’ interests first.

“Leadership without morality is bureaucratic technique”
(English, 1994:231)

Effective leaders were described as being humble – able to re-consider decisions if new evidence or information came to light. These principals were also described as acting with humility when dealing with others. Humility often works in tandem with tolerance for other views and being able to see others’ views as being as valid as one’s own. This manifested itself as a willingness to allow members of staff to question and challenge the views of the principal and to have the freedom to voice their opinions. Humility was not equated with meekness. On the contrary, these principals had a sense of dignity and presence in the school. It was clear that respect was not simply demanded, but offered by staff and learners.

Reflection – both on one’s own actions and on the state of the school – is also a hallmark of an effective leader. The research process was often used by the principals as a tool to review and consider their own performance and it was clear that good

leaders reflected (often fairly critically) on their own behaviours, particularly when resistance was encountered from teachers, parents or learners.

The value-driven nature of leadership in effective schools echoes findings in international research (see Harris, 2002).

4.1.2 Modelling positive behaviour and leading by example

In the schools that were visited as part of this study it was clear that most of the principals demonstrated that they have high behavioural and performance expectations of themselves (and of others). In schools where strong “self-leadership” was evident, the principals arrived early each day (starting their work day before seven o’clock) and staying late, often attending evening meetings and functions after a full day at the school.

The principal of **Reitsumetse** arrives by seven o’clock and only leaves well after other teachers have departed for the day. The day starts with the daily staff meeting at 07h30 where she discusses general matters, but then hands over to the deputy principals and SMT members to discuss issues related to their specific areas of responsibility. During break times she meets with members of the SMT or other staff members.

The principals also showed a great passion for their work and spoke of their love for the learners in their schools. The principals also showed high levels of interest in school activities, attending school functions and sporting events, even when they were not directly involved.

The principal (acting) of **Clapham** ensured that he was present at an inter-school swimming gala hosted at his school as it was necessary to be seen to be supporting the school. The opportunity was also used to talk to visitors from neighbouring schools.

Many of the principals indicated that they felt it important to “lead by example”. In four of the five schools principals made a concerted effort to model the type of professional behaviour demanded of teachers by arriving on time, being committed to the school and conducting themselves in a professional manner, particularly when teaching. Staff members commented on what a powerful motivating factor this was. In addition, a principal indicated that she also felt that it was important for her to be a positive role model for learners, particularly where the social or home environment did not provide positive role models.

“I cannot expect people to do what I am not prepared to do”.
(Parktown principal)

This approach is consistent with the leadership principle that if one wishes to see change in others, then one must first make that change in one’s own life.

Sometimes principals indicated that, because they set such high standards for themselves, they became frustrated when staff members did not meet their expectations.

4.1.3 Having a personal vision for the school

All of the principals interviewed had visions for their schools. Often these were large, ambitious visions which encompassed, but stretched beyond, the organisationally endorsed visions in their schools.

The size and scope of the individual visions varied from school to school. In some schools, the principal's vision extended just to the organisation and its operation, while in others the vision extended way into the communities in which the schools are located. The following vignettes illustrate examples of where the principals' vision extends beyond the educational aspects of the school's work.

A vision of a school that is a community resource

The Principal at **Barnato Park** spoke with passion of her vision for the school. She would like to see the school become the focal centre for learning in the Hillbrow/ Berea area. Her vision includes a desire to close a road dividing her school from the neighbouring primary school so that a Grade R-12 campus can be created. The principal was quick to make ground available for the erection of two temporary classrooms to be used by the primary school, as this falls within the ambit of this vision. Her vision also includes a desire to purchase one of the neighbouring blocks of flats to create boarding facilities.

The principal's vision of the school as a community resource is being vigorously pursued: the Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA) assisted the school by erecting fencing that separated the school and the sports fields, which are now made available to the public over weekends. The school also hosts an adult learning centre and art classes for refugee children.

The extent to which principals developed personal visions for their schools appeared to be influenced by the security of their tenure. Two of the principals in the study had been appointed as "acting principals". The visions of these principals were characterised by the fact that they focused on maintenance and slow, but steady, growth in their schools. One explained that he did not want to introduce far-reaching changes or a dramatically different vision for the school as it would destabilise the school if a newly-appointed principal then adopted a different vision. We will show later that this was not to the school's detriment as the vision was one which was shared and lived by all those interviewed.

4.1.4 Having a pastoral vision

It was interesting that in most of the schools, the personal vision of the principals tended to encompass high levels of pastoral care for learners – this is consistent with Harris and Chapman's findings that leaders of schools that were performing well under difficult circumstances showed "high levels of concern for the educational and welfare needs of learners" (2002:3).

In this study, several principals saw their schools as havens where learners could receive counselling, develop self-esteem and self-worth, and where negative social influences could be addressed. This commitment extended to the provision of social

services through the schools by having fulltime or intern psychologists and on-site social workers available at the schools. Often this level of pastoral care was extended to staff and to parents. It was common to see the services of counsellors and psychologists being made available to staff (particularly service staff who could not afford private services) and parents in need.

All of the principals who participated in the study spoke of their love and concern for their learners and the need to take decisions based on the learners' best interests. These principals saw their role as extending beyond providing learners with a good education to one which allowed for learners' holistic development.

The notion of having a pastoral vision is consonant with many of the principles articulated in the vision of ubuntu – even though this term was not used by the principals or other interviewees.

Barnato Park Safe House

One of the pervasive problems affecting children is abuse and neglect. The principal recognised this and decided to transform an old house on the school property to become a place of safety for young victims of abuse (referred to as a Safe House by the school staff). The Safe House was established because a direct link was made between the safety of the home environment and the achievement of good results. At the moment there are five boys and two girls staying in the house, which is "run" by an old-boy who is now a student. Learners are taught life skills by being given the responsibility to shop for the house (with the principal) using the termly budget. Fresh food is purchased weekly.

Donations are sought to cover the costs of the safe house (R 44 000 pa – excluding lights and water, which are covered by the school's account). Fundraising for the Safe House has become a priority for the principal.

4.2 LEADING THE ORGANISATION

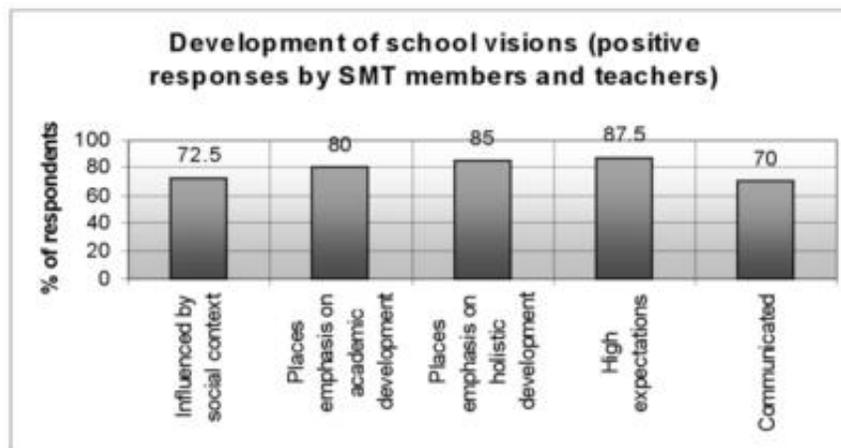
An effective leader is expected to provide leadership that will shape the organisation. In schools this responsibility typically rests on the principal, as the most senior member of staff, however it can be shared by the entire leadership and management team. In this section we consider how leadership is shown in shaping the organisation's vision and in the establishment of a particular ethos or culture in a school.

4.2.1 Developing a vision for the school

All of the principals interviewed had personal visions for their schools, which were often far larger or more far-reaching than the institutional visions which had been developed. Often the principal's vision had informed or influenced the institutional vision, however as these visions reflected the views of a much larger (and more diverse) group, the visions were often substantially different. The principals' visions were typically more wide-ranging, while organisational visions were more constrained and focused more exclusively on academic performance.

A vision should project a "desired future state" for the school, which implies that the school should be striving to attain something different from its current state. Schools which had attained high levels of academic performance either sought to raise these further by improving the quality of passes obtained, or had re-directed the school's vision to ensure that learners were well-rounded and prepared to play a meaningful role in society and in the South African economy.

The following graph shows the SMTs' and teachers' views on their school's vision and its development. The positive responses mean that respondents either "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with the statements presented below.



Different schools focused on slightly different elements and set the boundaries of the vision at different points. In one school, the vision was very inward focused with respondents focusing on pass rates and performance levels, with little or no reference to the type of graduate that was sought. Interestingly, this vision also had little "reach" in terms of improving the pass rate or the quality of passes attained. Another school (Reitsumetse) directed its vision to improving the quality of passes and ensuring that the

self-esteem of learners was developed so that they would be able to play a meaningful role in their communities.

The extent to which visions were responsive to or had been informed by the school's social context also varied and usually took the form of a focus on learner employability or the acquisition of scarce skills.

4.2.2 Joint development of organisational visions

Schools were asked to indicate who participated in the development of the schools' visions. The following table illustrates the extent to which schools involved different stakeholders.¹⁰

Groups involved:	Barnato Park	Clapham	Nirvana	Parktown Girls	Reitsumetse
Staff	Yes	Yes	Yes – one respondent indicates that teachers not involved	Yes	Yes
Parents and learners on SGB	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Parents and learners NOT on SGB	Inconsistent reports No clear trend could be discerned	No	No	Yes	No
Involved other external stakeholders	No	No	No	Yes – alumni association was consulted	No

In most schools the staff, SMT and SGB (including elected parents and learners) were actively involved in the development of the schools' visions, however the wider school community (parents not on the SGB and the learner population) tended to be excluded from the creation of the vision. At Parktown Girls the entire school community participated in an extensive vision development process.

4.2.3 Communication of the vision

The extent to which the schools' leaders ensured the communication of the vision to all stakeholders also varied, as is illustrated below¹¹.

Stakeholder groups to whom the vision was communicated	Barnato Park	Clapham	Nirvana	Parktown Girls	Reitsumetse
All learners	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

¹⁰ Different stakeholders were asked to indicate, on a response sheet, the extent to which different groups participated in the development of the vision. Where responses were unanimous the response is indicated with a "yes". Where dissenting views were expressed this is noted. As there were different numbers of respondents in each school it is somewhat misleading to reflect this information numerically.

¹¹ The same approach in representing data has been used as is described in the previous footnote.

All parents	Yes	Yes	Yes - but low levels of communication reported	Yes	Yes – but reports inconsistent
All staff	Yes	Yes	Yes – but reports inconsistent	Yes	Yes

Some schools communicated the vision to stakeholders through:

- Discussions at parents’ meetings (e.g. Barnato Park)
- School policy statements issued to all learners (e.g. Clapham)
- Integrated dissemination plan including activities and high visual presence of vision (e.g. Parktown Girls)
- School magazines (e.g. Nirvana. The copy that was seen by the researchers was somewhat out of date as it was published in 1997 and spanned the period 1997-2000. This could account for inconsistent reports with respect to the extent with which it was communicated to stakeholders).

In spite of the schools’ vision having been discussed by and communicated to a range of stakeholders, it was interesting that the vision articulated by teachers tended (in at least four schools) to focus more narrowly on academic achievement, while other groups expressed a broader vision (that included academic achievement, but was not limited to performance targets).

4.2.4 To formalise or not to formalise?

The extent to which school visions were well-documented and displayed prominently varied. In two schools the vision was well documented, with it being displayed visibly at one school. At **Parktown Girls** the learners had embarked on an art project that illustrated the content of the vision and its underlying values. At this school, the vision permeated every aspect of its operation and everyone was able to provide a short, consistent summary of the vision statement. At **Barnato Park** and **Reitsumetse** the vision was articulated in the school’s development plan and in funding proposals, however different groups within the school tended to focus on different elements of the vision, with some placing emphasis on social aspects and others focussing on academic aspects.

In the two remaining schools, the visions were not documented with the same level of formality as in the other schools. In both schools, some statement of vision existed, but these were not always aligned with how people in the school perceived the organisation’s vision.

This should not be taken as a blanket argument to document and formalise the vision, as it was in one of the schools that had *not* formalised the vision that it was best understood by different role-players and was “lived” in the school.

In order for the vision to play a meaningful role in the school it must inform action, people should be aware of it and it should be at the forefront of people’s minds. As the principal of **Clapham** said, “You must let people see the vision”. It is also important that the vision does not just remain a set of platitudes that are nicely presented and put up on the wall – schools should have clear strategies that will help them to attain their visions.

4.2.5 Living the vision

In both **Barnato Park** and **Parktown Girls** it was possible to see how the vision informed actions in the school and decisions taken by the leaders in the school. Living visions also had clear strategies that supported their attainment and moved the school towards the desired state.

Based on the data collected, the following lessons could be identified:

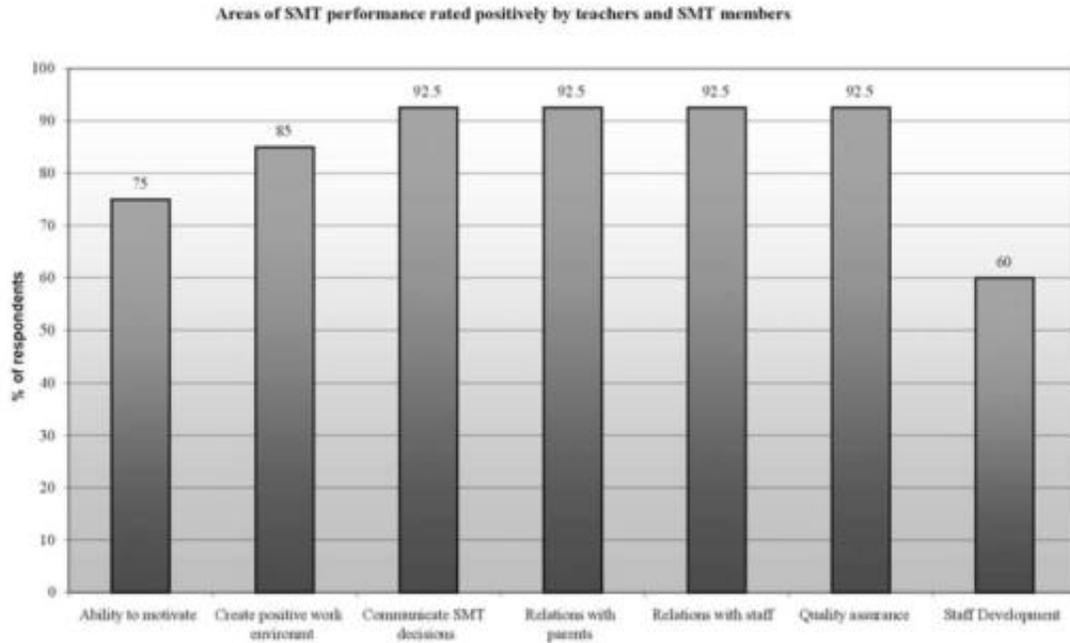
<p>Said about the vision: “It’s not clearly articulated, but it’s a vibe in the school.” (Clapham)</p>

- Having a more general vision which was less specific (such as the desire to be competitive and provide a well-rounded education) was easily integrated into the school’s normal activities.
- Academic improvement plans for each Department could be linked to the vision and become the vehicle through which it was attained. The challenge is to ensure that the different departmental plans are aligned and complement one another.
- School development plans should be based on the school’s vision and allow for specific projects to be initiated that support the attainment of the vision.
- Reaching one’s vision takes time and commitment – often the commitment of time and resources in support of the project. In Parktown Girls the school had to be prepared to commit additional resources to the sport and culture programme which was made compulsory for all learners. Teachers also had to be willing to participate in the programme, committing additional time and effort.

4.2.6 Creating a positive culture and ethos in the school

The leadership of the school is also responsible for creating a climate that fosters good working relationships between staff and that provides a positive and productive work environment. The SMTs and teachers rated the ability of the schools’ leadership to create a positive environment as follows¹²:

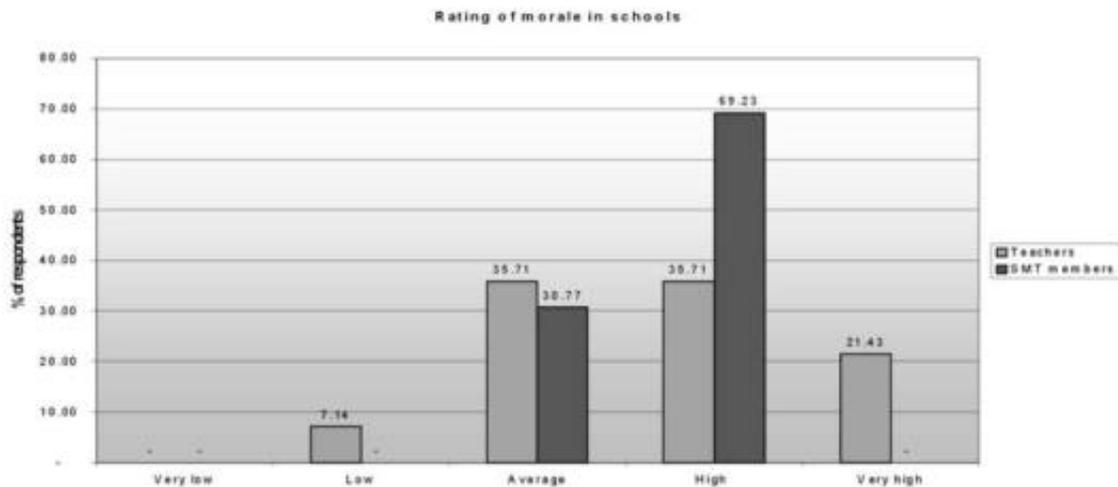
¹² Interviewees were asked to rate aspects of performance using a 5-point Likert scale. The total number of positive responses (rated as 4 and 5 on the Likert scale) have been calculated as a percentage of the total number of responses received. The graph below includes both teachers’ perceptions of SMT abilities and SMT member’s perceptions of their own performance.



We return to this issue when relationships between staff and the SMT are discussed in section 5.4.2.

4.2.7 Boosting morale

Staff and SMT members were asked to rate the morale in the school (summarised below).



This graph shows that very few people rated morale as being either very low or low. Over half of the teachers surveyed (57.1%) rated morale as either “high” or “very high” – this is remarkable when much is made in the media of low teacher morale. Given the general concerns about teacher morale, it is a credit to the SMTs in the schools

surveyed that morale is rated this positively. Almost 70% of SMT members rate morale as being “high”.

Teachers and SMT members were asked what steps had been taken by the SMT to promote a positive work environment, particularly where teachers were working under challenging circumstances. Interviewees made reference to the school’s management making use of a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic motivating factors:

Intrinsic motivation relies on the will of staff to be self-motivated and draw motivation from their interest in teaching and passion for learning. Several principals indicated that they rely heavily on the intrinsic motivation of their staff to maintain morale in the school by:

- Encouraging or fostering a passion for learning and for the school.
- Promoting a sense of dedication to their task.
- Appointing people to the staff who are self-motivated and display the qualities that are desired by the managers.
- Emphasising success. Seeing success and achievement encourages people. Staff are encouraged by the changes that they see in the learners and in the performance of the school.
- Promoting a sense of responsibility for learners’ welfare and education.
- Modelling or demonstrating the type of behaviours or practices that are desired.

Examples of intrinsic motivation:
“I’m motivated when I see learners doing well.”
“I enjoy seeing the effects of my teaching.”
(Comments made by teachers)

Intrinsic motivation is important, however all principals and SMTs recognised the need to supplement this through some other form of motivational activity, including:

- Arranging motivational speakers to address teachers.
- Offering praise and recognition for teachers’ efforts. Appreciation is shown for the work done by the teachers.
- Providing feedback and ensuring the open communication takes place.
- Being available to staff to discuss issues. The SMTs were described as being “approachable” and willing to discuss problems or ideas.
- Achievement was always seen as the result of group or team efforts.

Showing appreciation:
“The former principal used to hand out ‘thank you’ notes to teachers for a job well done.” (Clapham)
“Teachers need thanks from somewhere”. (Nirvana)

Structured activities were also held with the intention of motivating staff. These included:

- Holding team building days.
- Ensuring that there are social events for teachers where staff are able to develop social ties.
- Encouraging participation in meetings where teachers can take on different roles, not necessarily tied to their seniority or post level in the school. This is done to encourage sharing responsibility, promoting ownership for what takes place in schools and allows people to demonstrate their leadership potential.
- Promotion of a family ethos in the school. Accountability is promoted not through threat of sanction, but through a sense of responsibility and duty. Peer

support is offered and a climate promoted where staff can show care and compassion for one another.

It is interesting that many of these activities did not rely on external rewards (such as financial reward), but were based on recognition, praise and feedback. Team building events were held in two of the schools. These varied according to teachers' interests – in one school a braai was held for teachers, while in another a more structured team-building experience was included in the school's skills development budget.

The creation of a positive work environment is very closely linked to the leadership of relationships within the school and the inter-personal skills displayed by those in leadership roles. Small actions, such as the provision of tea in the afternoon in the staff area, were said to contribute to increased interaction between staff and encouraged interaction before teachers went home.

4.3 LEADERSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

4.3.1 Introduction

Teaching and learning, or the delivery of the curriculum, is arguably the most important function of the school. It is therefore not surprising that academic excellence featured prominently in the visions of the schools and that there was a very clear focus on the classroom and on teaching within the schools. This was manifested in various ways:

- Little erosion of teaching time by non-academic activities. Classes resumed promptly after assemblies and sporting practices.
- Learners moved quickly to their classes and were attentive.
- Teachers also moved to their classes promptly after breaks.
- Prompt change-over between lessons
- Low tolerance for learners loitering around the school or being unattended during lesson times.

Leadership plays an important role in shaping the school's focus on teaching and learning and in ensuring that all activities, systems and processes are aligned around the core function of the school.

4.3.2 A vision for teaching and learning

The visions of each of the schools visited were centred on academic excellence and learner performance. In some schools, the vision simply mentioned the desired pass rate, while in others there was a clearer definition of the type or quality of passes desired and or the area of specialisation that the school wished to develop.

One of the characteristics of effective school administrators (United States equivalent of principals) cited by Hoke, Joekel and Wendel (1996) was that they held a clear philosophy of teaching and learning. In several of the schools visited, this was particularly evident. Two examples of this are highlighted below: the need for the school to compensate for, or overcome, social disadvantage and the role of the school in promoting inclusive education.

The school as a vehicle to overcome social disadvantage

At **Reitsumetse** the principal emphasised the need for the school to help learners realise a sense of self-worth and to create "a sense that we all have a purpose". This was seen as particularly important given the legacy of apartheid and negative stereotypes (and negative self-perceptions) of black learners, particularly those who have attended township schools.

At **Barnato Park** the principal and staff recognised that learners come from impoverished home backgrounds and that it was the duty of the school and of teachers to help expose learners to some of the types of knowledge that they might not be exposed to at home and to extend the range of educational opportunities offered through the school. To this end the school offers extra classes in order to address knowledge deficits which may be carried over from primary school experiences. Computer classes and art classes are also offered.

Grappling with inclusivity

Parktown Girls has five hearing impaired girls in the 2005 Grade 12 class. These learners entered the school in Grade 8 and had transferred to Parktown from St Vincent's School for the Deaf, along with a Sign Language interpreter. The interpreter worked closely with the learners to help them adjust to their new school and also provided additional support over weekends.

The school provides two Sign Language interpreters for the learners, as they do not lip-read, at a cost of R16 000 per month. The school budget makes provision for this and the financial burden does not rest on the learners.

Unfortunately the need to provide interpreters has meant that all the learners have had to select the same subjects for Grade 12 and there is some concern as to whether these learners will qualify for endorsement, as Sign Language is not a recognised language for curriculum requirements (even though it is an official South African language). The principal has been trying to gain exemption status for the girls from before they entered the school.

Just over 70% of teachers interviewed indicated that the school's vision influences the way in which they teach and 79% said that the vision influences curriculum planning. This was particularly evident where specific efforts were being made to extend or change the range of subjects offered at the school in order to better prepare learners for higher education or the world of work. New course offerings had been introduced in order to provide learners with skills that are in demand (e.g. computyping and tourism). Two schools expressed a desire to develop their profile as "maths and science" schools. Another school indicated that the desire to offer more vocational subjects is unfortunately constrained by the cost of introducing these courses.

4.3.3 Setting high performance expectations for learners

In international studies it has been found that one of the characteristics of effective schools is that they set high expectations for learner performance. (Mortimore et al, 1988; Sammons et al, 1995; Scheerens, 1998; Levine and Lezotte, 1990; Edmonds, 1979; Craig and Henneveld, 1996). Harris and Chapman (2002) indicated that the leadership of schools in challenging circumstances was characterised by a belief that all learners can succeed.

All of the schools in the study said that they held high expectations for learners and that these were contained in the school's vision (80% of respondents).

- Maintaining or raising pass rates. In each school the learners are encouraged to maintain or better the pass rate of the previous year. Unfortunately, a focus on pass rates in isolation may compromise the quality of passes at the expense of volume.
- Promoting a sense of expectation and desire for excellence. Learners at **Barnato Park** are constantly reminded that "average is not good enough" and that it is important to strive for excellence.

In the schools visited (e.g. Barnato Park, Parktown Girls, Clapham) more emphasis was placed on setting individual performance targets based on learners' prior performance levels, with group targets being set in two schools. (Reitumetse, Nirvana)

How are these high expectations communicated?

- Setting individual performance goals. In two of the schools visited, each learner is required to set performance goals for themselves based on their previous level of performance. At Barnato Park, learners must also set behavioural targets for themselves as part of the establishment of expectations. Learners are also encouraged to prove themselves and compete against their prior performance levels. This is done in an encouraging and supportive manner.
- Seeing the value in individual learners. By building self-esteem one can make the attainment of high expectations easier.
- Encouraging learners to disprove negative beliefs or stereotypes
- Promoting inter-group competition
- Offering motivational talks
- Demonstrating the real-world value of high performance. Performance at school is linked to life expectations and the rewards of high performance.
- Teachers model a positive work ethic
- Reliance on intrinsic motivation Only one school (Nirvana) indicated that they do little to promote or communicate high expectations as the school relies on the intrinsic motivation of the type of learners that the school attracts and the desire for social mobility in the surrounding community.

Excellence is the best deterrent to racism. (Martin Luther King)

"I know you and I know that you could do better". (Teacher – Clapham)

What happens in a school that has already attained a high pass rate? This is something that Parktown Girls had to consider.

"Raising the bar" – developing well-rounded school-leavers

The principal and staff of Parktown Girls realised that although their academic performance is extremely good (with high pass rates and good quality passes) this does not necessarily mean that the girls are well-rounded. This means that the school is failing to achieve its vision. The fact that a number of girls were not participating in any extra or co-curricular activities, and the impact that this was having on the girls' physical condition, concerned the staff.

The SCEP (Sport and Culture Excellence and Participation) Programme was started this year. The school day has been extended to 3.00pm on Mondays and Thursdays and all learners and teachers are expected to stay and participate in a range of activities. The sport programme runs on Mondays and includes tennis, swimming, line dancing, Callanetics and soft-ball among others. On Thursdays there are 57 different activities (including debating, drama, choir, art and scrap-booking) in which the girls can participate.

Several teachers and managers were at pains to point out the need to set performance targets that are realistic and which take into account the learners' prior performance. There was a feeling that teachers should not be unduly penalised, or held accountable, for poor performance when a class has a history of performing poorly.

Based on responses received in the schools, the following recommendations were made with respect to setting performance targets:

- Take into account the general performance of the group.
- Set targets in relations to the prior performance of groups and individuals.

- Attainment targets are more effective when set for individuals than groups. It is important to create a culture where individuals strive to better themselves.
- Attainment targets must emphasise the quality of results.

4.3.4 Being improvement focused.

Leaders play an important role in ensuring that the schools maintain a focus on improving performance levels. All of the schools that participated in the study had a strong focus on maintaining current performance levels and further improving pass rates or the quality of passes. In schools where leadership was new or did not articulate a vision that had “reach”, maintenance was emphasised rather than improvement.

The focus on improvement would not exist without strong leadership as improvement demands additional effort and may require the commitment of additional resources. The improvement focus in schools was typically linked to the school’s vision.

Although all schools reported a *desire* to improve, not all had developed clearly thought-out strategies through which they would achieve this. Realising a desire to achieve or improve requires strong leadership in aligning people behind the vision and promoting actions that support the improvement vision. Schools were attempting to do this by:

- Having defined improvement strategies in place. Some schools had embarked on specific programmes aimed at improving performance by offering afternoon lessons. At Barnato Park teachers offer extra lessons every afternoon to learners who require additional support. Other specific strategies included the testing of learners in order to identify specific knowledge gaps on entry to secondary school.
- A more diffuse approach. The staff and management of Clapham reported that over the last five to ten years they had been involved in a process of changing the perception of the school in the eyes of local community. Efforts to improve performance were less specific and more integrated into the normal functioning of the school, including the provision of detailed feedback to learners on assessment tasks and providing learners with copies of test or exam memoranda.
- Identification of specific weaknesses. The analysis of learner performance results was used in most schools as a means of identifying learning areas where additional support or improvement was needed. Data-driven decision making is also a feature of effective schools. School managers and Heads of Department (HoDs) were responsible for analysing performance (pass rates, symbol distribution, specific causes of poor performance) and then developing programmes to remedy these problems.

Is maintaining an improvement focus just about improving academic performance? In several schools the leadership and management teams had promoted a focus on the all-round development of learners and had instituted programmes that sought to build team spirit, cultural and sporting performance, and general enrichment activities. In those schools where this was a priority, the schools had already attained 100% or close to 100% pass rates and wanted to ensure that learners receive a rounded education.

4.3.5 Innovation and risk-taking in respect of teaching and learning

The type of improvement strategies that are initiated are also linked to the extent to which a school is prepared to experiment with new ways of doing things. In several schools the means of improving performance did not extend beyond fairly traditional remediation approaches such as the offering of extra lessons. Although the strategy is not particularly innovative, leadership teams may need to be creative in how they motivate and reward teachers for their extra effort.

Innovative ways of teaching and delivering lessons were also encouraged. Effective leaders gave teachers the freedom to experiment with new approaches and methods.

Risk-taking need not be limited to the type of programmes offered, but can also be linked to the types of systems used to provide feedback on teaching and learning. Strong leadership is needed to encourage teachers to experiment with new systems or to see the value in existing systems which may be receiving negative press (such as appraisal or lesson observations). Several schools had shown that they were prepared to innovate and apply or adapt processes such as the Development Appraisal System in order to support and assist teachers and quality assure teaching.

Three schools¹³ conduct a form of diagnostic testing after learners have been placed at the school. This process provides teachers with an indication of gaps in learner knowledge and areas that should be covered in more depth during extra lessons. The results of diagnostic testing were also used to direct learners to extra tuition programmes (offered by the school or by external organisations) and also helped teachers to focus on problem areas during extra lessons.

Innovation was also seen in relation to the willingness of schools to re-examine their curricular offerings and adapt them to suit their learner profile (offering technology related subjects such as Computyping that would accommodate learners who did not have the ability to pass Computer Science or Maths courses, but that would keep learners within the school's focus on Maths, Science and Technology). Curricular offerings were also adapted in order to ensure that learners were employable, where this was part of the school's vision.

Proactive problem solving in support of teaching and learning was also evident in one school (**Reitsumetse**) which had identified over-crowding of classrooms as a major threat to improving performance. The school then embarked on a fund-raising campaign to obtain the resources necessary to build two additional classrooms using community funds and labour sourced from the community.

4.3.6 The principal's connection to the classroom

The principal's connection to the classroom was clear in all of the schools visited, with all of the principals carrying a significant teaching load. The principals all taught examinable subjects to learners and taught them at the Grade 12 level. All of the principals in the study indicated that they were passionate about teaching and that their

¹³ Another school indicated that they planned to introduce a programme of diagnostic testing for new entrants.

contact with the classroom was essential to their job satisfaction. The principals were teachers first and indicated that without their teaching, they would not be as happy in their positions. Their enjoyment was clearly evident when the principals prepared to leave for lessons or returned from teaching.

In addition to the personal rewards that teaching offered, the principals' contact with the classroom provided a number of managerial and leadership benefits, including opportunities to:

- Remain aware of curriculum trends and developments.
- Show solidarity with teachers who need to be re-trained or undergo professional development in order to respond to new curriculum policies.
- Understand curriculum developments in relation to the quality assurance of curriculum planning, delivery and assessment.
- Be able to interact with learners and obtain informal feedback on the tone, ethos and satisfaction levels in the school.
- Have the opportunity to walk around the school and “manage by walking around” in a more subtle manner.
- Model desired levels of professional behaviour with respect to classroom attendance, punctuality, preparation, delivery and assessment. Where principals felt strongly about “leading by example” this was particularly important.

4.4 LEADERSHIP OF HUMAN CAPITAL

4.4.1 Introduction

One of the roles that a leader must play is to lead people and to ensure that the organisation has the skills and capacity it needs to both fulfil its functions and achieve its vision. In this section we examine how leaders in the five schools set expectations for their staff; recruited staff who were likely to fit the organisation's culture; increased staff capacity through skills development programmes; held staff accountable and offered feedback on performance.

4.4.2 High expectations of staff

In the same way that high expectations of learners was correlated with increased school effectiveness,¹⁴ effective leaders also demand high levels of performance from staff¹⁵. In almost all of the schools the principals had high expectations of the performance expected of staff and staff also perceived that a great deal was expected of them. On the whole, staff lived up to these expectations and the schools had a culture of "going beyond the norm" (this was particularly evident in four of the five schools). All teachers (100%) and most SMT members (96%) felt that the school had established clear expectations of teacher performance.

This meant that principals expected more of their staff than was required through standard conformance to regulations set by the South African Council of Educators (SACE). At Reitsumetse, the principal expressed her frustration at the need to emphasise aspects of behaviour that were felt to be "standard" such as punctuality and classroom presence. At other schools "high expectations" of staff took the following forms:

- The ability to work hard

Teachers often commented on the fact that their workloads were perceived as being higher than in other schools (and this was supported by those who had previously taught in other schools) and that the demands with respect to curriculum planning and preparation were more onerous. In two schools, teachers commented that there had been cases where teachers had left due to the high workloads and an unwillingness to sustain the required level of effort.

- Dedicate time to the school

Teachers were routinely expected to devote at least four hours per week to extra-mural activities, be they sporting, cultural or academic. Some schools included this in the job descriptions that had been developed for staff. Teachers were expected to take an active interest in the life of the school – beyond the classroom. This included attendance at social events, parent-teacher conferences and other events.

¹⁴ See references op cit (section 4.3.3).

¹⁵ This is supported by Alma Harris in her book *Effective leadership for School Improvement*. London, Routledge. Published 2002.

The performance expectations of staff were usually decided by the SMT or the SMT in conjunction with the whole staff. A few respondents indicated that their SGBs or district officials had also participated in developing these expectations – however it was rare for this to be reported by all respondents in a school. In some schools, clear performance targets had been set for teachers (often as part of IQMS implementation).

In all of the participating schools, staff members met these expectations and dedicated a considerable amount of time and effort to the school – without receiving any financial or material reward for their effort. The additional effort displayed by teachers was attributed to their intrinsic motivation and the leadership of the management teams – many of whom modelled the type of behaviour desired.

Expectations were communicated through:

- *The induction of new staff* (discussed below)
- *Perceptions that staff had to maintain the standards which had been set in the school.* One teacher remarked that “when you walk into a department the standard has already been set and you need to maintain it.” Teachers also said that they felt a responsibility to do this or else they were likely to be reprimanded or sanctioned.
- *Learning Area or Subject Policies.* In three schools the teachers met with their head of department to develop a subject policy – these were detailed documents, which set out the Department’s vision for the year and outlined the professional expectations of teachers with respect to the frequency of assessment, professional review and preparation.

4.4.3 Selection and appointment of staff

Regulations introduced after 1994 allowed schools greater participation in the selection and appointment of teachers, with governing body members being allowed to participate in interviewing prospective staff members (both those appointed by the State and by the Governing Body). Several principals indicated that they take care when appointing staff to select people who they think will fit into their organisational cultures, contribute to the attainment of the school vision and who will meet the high expectations set for staff. Several also commented that they sought to appoint people who shared their passion for learners and education.

The fact that some schools are able to fill available posts quickly, while others struggle for months to find staff is an indication of the leadership of the school. Only one out of the five schools (Nirvana) struggled to fill posts – it is interesting that in this school the principal is relatively new and did not have a clear strategy for either recruiting staff or proactively grooming teachers to assume leadership roles. The time taken to fill posts varied from seven days to four months. Two schools (Barnato Park, Parktown Girls) mentioned that they actively sought out teachers to fill posts by:

- using professional networks to identify candidate teachers
- approaching teacher training institutions and requesting that the best students be placed at the school when doing teaching practice in order to assess their potential and asking to be forwarded the names of the most promising graduates.

4.4.4 Induction and orientation

Induction to the organisation provides new teachers with an orientation to the school's culture, ethos, vision and expectations of teachers. Orientation helps to provide teachers with information on the systems and procedures that operate in the school.

In two schools, there were structured orientation programmes for new teachers (in the form of a new teachers' lunch or formal mentoring through which new teachers were assigned to work closely with more experienced teachers).

Several schools (Parktown Girls, Clapham and to a limited extent Barnato Park) also had detailed policy manuals which set out how different aspects of the school's administration and management should function. These also contained job descriptions for different role players in the school (e.g. heads of department and administrators) so that task allocations were clear.

At **Parktown Girls**, the principal tried to ensure that a "hand-over period" existed where the out-going staff members help train and induct new employees. This was seen as particularly important when staff were appointed to senior or supervisory positions.

Subject policies, which explain the focus of the department, performance expectations (such as pace, supervision, administration of assessment tasks), can also play an important induction function.

Supervision (discussed below) also plays a role in staff induction. In some schools there is more extensive supervision and quality assurance of novice teachers.

4.4.5 Deployment of staff

One of the characteristics of a good leader is that they are able to identify a staff member's strengths and allocate tasks or roles accordingly. In **Clapham High**, several teachers noted that not all were equally good at extra-mural activities, but that the principal saw to it that they were "used to their best advantage" and were allocated appropriate tasks. Similarly in **Barnato Park**, it was clear that the principal had allocated roles and tasks based on an assessment of staff members' strengths.

4.4.6 Grooming of leaders

Good leaders also focus on building or developing the leadership capacity in the school so that succession is planned well in advance. In three of the five schools there was clear evidence of how the current leaders in the school had identified (or were identifying) the leadership potential of staff members in order to groom them to assume greater responsibility within the school. The following examples illustrate how different schools went about identifying and grooming leaders.

Clapham:

The school operates according to a house system where teachers and learners are allocated to houses for academic, sporting and administrative functions. The benefit of

the house system, with respect to grooming leaders, is that it has created additional leadership positions – such house heads and [grade heads within houses] – and allows for four people to be appointed to each of these positions (one per house). Through having a system that encourages people to take up positions of responsibility and through having the necessary structures to accommodate them, people are able to develop their leadership skills and demonstrate their potential. The principal also indicated that the system also encourages the development of leadership potential amongst learners as each house must have sporting captains and leaders of cultural activities.

Barnato Park

Staff are pointed to positions as “acting” Heads of Department in order to prove themselves and receive guidance from more experience HoDs. The school also has a strong tradition of volunteerism, which also allows people to demonstrate their potential.

Reitsumetse

The principal reported that people are groomed so that they will be prepared to take up HoD posts in the school. It was also indicated that the principal must also rely on individuals to take initiative in order to assume roles with greater responsibility.

4.4.7 Staff development

Leadership is required to develop the skills needed in the school in order to attain the organisation’s vision. Taylor-Moore (2004) found that one of the strategies that enabled schools to thrive (under challenging circumstances) was that staff were seen as a precious resource. In looking at the development of the school’s human resources it was decided to include supervision and feedback on performance in this section (and not in that dealing with instructional leadership) as one of the most common ways in which skills are developed in schools is through effective monitoring of curriculum delivery, good supervision and the provision of constructive, supportive feedback. This is especially so as many schools cannot afford to send teachers on skills development programmes that require fee payment and must therefore rely on internal means to develop skills and supplement what is offered by NGO providers and the Gauteng Department of Education.

4.4.8 Supervision and feedback on performance

Taylor-Moore (2004:5) notes that one of the characteristics of schools that managed to rise above difficult social and environmental circumstances was that they were “clear and acted on staff under-performance”. In each of the schools visited the leadership team had quality assurance measures in place. Quality assurance mechanisms varied between schools, with all schools conducting reviews of teachers’ planning documents and learners’ work, and three schools where classroom visits form part of the quality assurance programme. All of the schools are in the process of introducing Integrated Quality Management Systems (IQMS).

Quality assurance (QA)

Direct QA measures

In the three schools where classroom observations were conducted as part of the teachers' performance review, the frequency of class visits varied. In one school teachers are visited at least once a term, while in another the frequency varies from department to department with some teachers being visited only once a year. Teachers reported that they received verbal feedback immediately after a class visit and that this was sometimes followed with written feedback that served as a record of the visit.

Two schools reported that they did not conduct classroom visits due to union opposition of the policy (however, this was likely to change with the introduction of IQMS). In the remaining three schools, teachers indicated that there had been very little resistance to classroom visits as teachers were able to see the value of receiving feedback on teaching and understood the spirit in which observations were conducted. Teachers also indicated that they appreciated feedback from their peers.

Indirect QA measures

All schools indicated that teachers are expected to submit their planning documents for review. In two schools this must be done before the start of the new school year. Other forms of quality assurance included: reviews of teachers' administrative documents, team or cross marking of assessment tasks in order to ensure equivalence across a grade, the moderation of assessment tasks and reviews of learners' work. Reviews of learner performance also provided managers and leaders with a clear indication of the quality of work done by teachers. In two schools parent feedback was seen as an important means of quality-assuring teachers' work. Where a problem was reported by a parent, it was addressed through the school management team. In schools where teachers received meaningful feedback, it was gladly accepted.

The quality assurance of curriculum delivery is typically devolved to HoDs, who work very closely with the staff in their departments to plan the curriculum, draw up subject policies and undertake quality assurance. Principals indicated that HoDs are expected to lead the team of teachers in their learning area. Most of the teachers who were interviewed indicated that the HoD played a key role in providing support, guidance, mentoring and monitoring.

Quality assuring the work of HoDs

Part of the school managers' responsibility is to ensure that HoDs play their role effectively and that their delegated responsibility is exercised well. Very few schools seemed to quality assure the managerial work of HoDs overtly, but instead indicated that they would soon be made or become aware if HoDs were under-performing¹⁶. There appears to be a tension in some schools between the appointment of staff to HoD positions who have managerial competence and the appointment of those who have seniority by virtue of their length of service. Managers felt that the introduction of the IQMS system would help them to improve the monitoring and quality assurance of HoDs' work.

¹⁶ Only one school reported that the work of HoDs was regularly quality assured, however another was planning to introduce more formal measures with the implementation of IQMS.

Skills development programmes

A good leader is concerned with the development and acquisition of skills needed in order to meet improvement targets and realise the school's vision. Harris and Chapman (2002) also found that effective leaders developed the potential of others. In order to manage this process the importance and centrality of skills development in the school must be championed. In addition, the school should have a planned programme of skills development and attendance at these programmes should be guided by the results of appraisal processes and should be monitored.

In most of the schools visited there was an overt promotion of skills development by the leaders in the school. Although all schools recognised the necessity of skills development, the extent to which this realisation actually led to action varied between sites. Where skills development assumed a prominent focus, this was achieved by:

- Supporting the appointment of interns at the school and the use of the school as a site for the delivery of learnerships.
- Promoting attendance at skills training programmes.
- Having the governing body allocate funds to support attendance at training programmes, particularly where they would facilitate the realisation of the school's vision.

Creating a skills development focus

At **Clapham** High School, the SGB had decided that they would like to see the school become a more Maths and Science-focused school. To this end, one of the staff development programmes for the year was to encourage teachers to be trained to teach Maths Literacy (one of the new FET subjects). Money was set aside in the school budget to support skills training, particularly where programmes would help support the realisation of the school's vision. Teachers are also encouraged to have personal development plans in which skills development priorities are set out in writing and communicated to their HoDs.

At **Reitsumetse** the school development plan identifies the skills which are lacking in the school, showing that development plans are not limited to infrastructural development. Unfortunately, it was not clear how effectively the identification of needs had actually informed attendance at training programmes. Given that the development plan is circulated to potential donors it can be assumed that sponsorship would also be sought for skills development.

The extent to which staff development took place as a result of planned programmes was fairly limited. Attendance at staff development programmes was usually the result of "utilising the opportunities that present themselves".

In all of the schools visited, teachers (93%) reported that they communicated their skills development interests to their immediate superiors (usually HoDs), however this did not necessarily form the basis of a school-based skills development programme. The onus remained on individual teachers to find programmes or courses that were in line with their development interests.

Unfortunately, the link between quality assurance and skills development was often fairly tenuous. In only one school did teachers report that there was a fairly clear link between appraisal and quality assurance and teachers being encouraged or instructed to attend

skills development programmes. The link between quality assurance and development was often reduced to HoDs encouraging particular members to attend training programmes on the basis of perceived weaknesses, however attendance was not made mandatory. Teachers (and managers) believed that the introduction of IQMS would help to create a stronger link between skills development and quality assurance.

In most of the schools, the focus was on developing the skills of individual teachers and not of developing greater team co-operation or cohesion in the school.

4.5 LEADERSHIP OF RELATIONSHIPS

4.5.1 Introduction

Strategic leadership is needed in order to identify potential relationship partners and to work on establishing relationships which will be to the school's benefit. It may not be the sole function of the principal or senior managers to establish all of these relationships, but the identification of relationship opportunities and creating conditions which foster these relationships is a function of those in leadership roles.

There is a complex web of relationships that must be maintained by any group of leaders within the school. One of the functions of a leader in a school is to ensure group cohesion within the staff and the establishment of working relationships between staff. Some writers refer to this as the "micro-political" work of the school principal or management team. In addition to ensuring that the necessary internal relationships are built and maintained, leaders must also identify, build and maintain relationships with a range of external bodies, including the SGB and parent community, the local community, the education department and other schools, and donors and the private sector.

In this section we consider how school leaders demonstrated leadership qualities in the creation and maintenance of these relationships.

4.5.2 Internal relationships

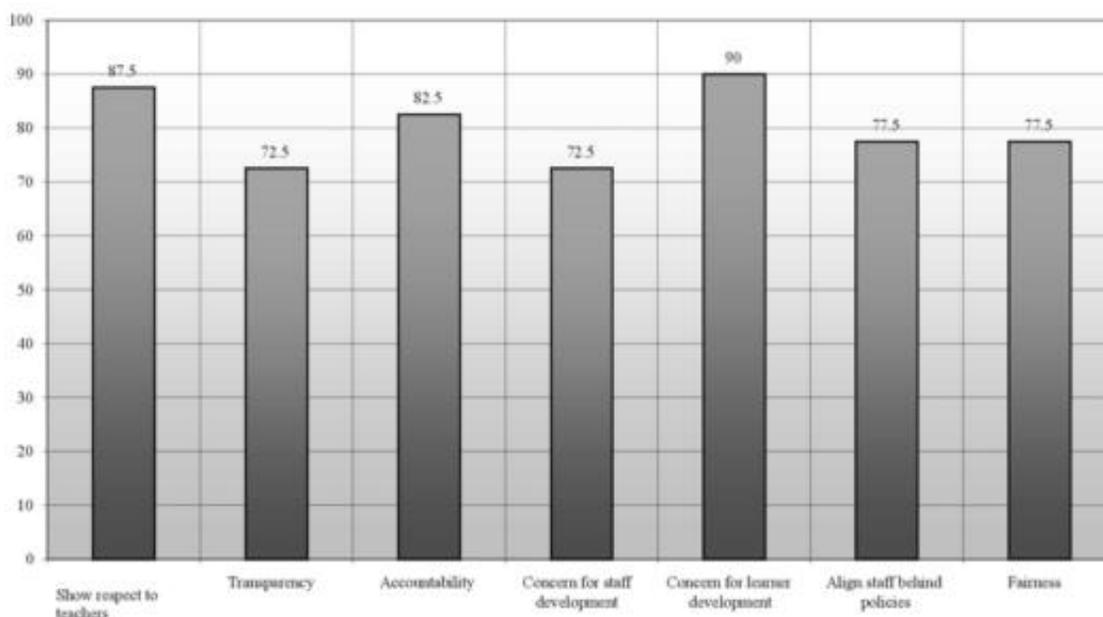
Two key sets of internal relationships were identified as hallmarks of good leadership: (i.) maintaining a cohesive leadership team and (ii.) maintaining good relationships between staff and the management team.

All of the participating schools indicated that fairly cohesive relations existed between members of the management team. Efforts were made to share responsibilities between different individuals (see section dealing with the leadership of structures and processes).

Most principals and SMT members reported fairly high levels of group cohesion within the SMTs.

Good interpersonal skills are needed in order to maintain good relations between staff members and the management team. We measured this by asking both staff and teachers to rate different aspects of the SMT's interpersonal skills – where skills were rated as either "good" or "very good" these were classed as positive ratings. The percentage of respondents who rated skills as "good" or "very good" are presented graphically below.

Positive ratings attached to interpersonal skills of the SMT by teachers and SMT members



One of the highest ratings was given to the management team’s concern for the academic and personal growth of learners. It is interesting that both teachers and management team members rated this very similarly, suggesting that this concern is something which is visible in the school. Other behaviours which scored highly were the fact that the SMT respects teachers as professionals (and as individuals) and treats them accordingly. Although scoring fairly highly, the SMTs’ willingness to be open about decision-making processes (transparency) and their perceived concern for staff development were rated less highly.

The health of relationships between staff and the management team was assessed in two ways: the ability of the SMT to draw out the best performance from staff and the reported levels of trust that exist between people in the school.

In schools with effective leadership there was clear evidence of the managers’ ability to draw out the best performance from the staff. People in these schools seemed to be willing to “go the extra mile”, without receiving any form of reward. This was in part due to the high expectations that are set for staff, but also the manner in which the SMT is able to motivate staff, lead by example and develop positive relations. A willingness to volunteer for tasks was also evidence of good internal relations, where responsibility is assumed and does not have to be “forced” on anyone.

Teachers and managers also spoke of the building of a family ethos in schools, where people showed concern for one another. One of the principals noted that there was a danger that this could be “taken advantage of” by staff members, but that this did not happen because of the mutual respect that existed. In another school this “family atmosphere” and concern for each other manifested itself in a more tangible way: staff members voluntarily provide financial support to colleagues who are facing serious personal challenges.

The levels of trust in schools were rated as follows:

	Very low	Low	Moderate	High	Very high
SMT	0%	0%	46%	54%	0%
Teachers	0%	7%	50%	29%	14%

Although there was greater variation in the levels of trust reported by teachers, the overall rating in most schools was fairly positive.

4.5.3 Relationships between the SMT and SGB

The Schools Act (1996) allowed for the creation of SGBs, which play an important role in the governance of schools, policy making, financial management, the upkeep of schools and appointment of staff. One of their important roles is to promote greater participation of the local community and of parents in the running of the school.

In each of the schools visited it was reported that the relationship between the SMTs and SGBs were cordial, collaborative and collegial. The nature of relationship was sometimes influenced by the skills level in the SGB. Where parents had fewer technical skills (e.g. legal expertise, knowledge of financial management processes or even literacy) it sometimes fell to the school principal to play a more proactive role in setting direction for the school and in assisting SGB members to acquire the skills needed to discharge their functions. On the whole, however, the SGBs played an active role in the schools.

The relationship between SGBs and SMTs was described as either “good” (Barnato Park, Clapham) or “very good” (Nirvana, Parktown Girls, Reitsumetse). This was attributed to good communication between the SMT and SGB, appreciation being shown for tasks performed well and a clear delineation of roles between the two groups.

It was noted earlier in the report that most SGBs had played a role in the development of the schools’ visions; SGBs also reported that the vision and mission of the schools guided their deliberations.

The SGBs played various roles in the schools that were visited (over and above their statutory functions).

- Direct upkeep of school facilities

Where schools had paid ground-staff there was less direct involvement of parents in the upkeep of schools. In spite of this, some schools arranged “action days” at the school where parents were requested to come to the school to perform various tasks related the maintenance of the school. These occasions were also used to forge relationships between parents and foster communication between school staff, parents and SGB members in a less formal setting. In two schools, SGB members were actively involved in

Handyman parent: Nirvana

One of the parents, who also serves on the SGB, is present at the school almost every day. He is currently unemployed and assists the school by providing an informal taxi service for learners resident in the townships and also helps with the upkeep and maintenance of the school. Other tasks (such as the collection of mail from the district office) are completed as is required. He indicated that he is grateful that his daughter is at the school and wishes to give something back to the school. His involvement in the school has been so successful that he has started rendering services to neighbouring schools.

maintaining school property (see inset boxes).

Fixing windows: Reitsumetse

On the day of the research visit, a group of parents were present at the school and were repairing broken window panes. The principal met with the work team to review progress. She also discussed other maintenance-related issues with them.

- Participation in other school activities

Parents can also assist schools in other ways that support the delivery of the curriculum. For example, at Clapham a parent, who took early retirement, has made his skills in computer networking, programming and maintenance available to the school. His technical expertise is used to ensure that the

school's computer laboratories function optimally. Although he is paid a small honorarium for this service by the SGB, it is cheaper (and more cost effective) than using external service providers on an ad-hoc basis.

- Provision of professional advice to the school

Where parents on the SGB have skills that can benefit the school it is not uncommon for them to render professional advice to principals. In one of the schools visited, the principal was observed approaching a governing body member, who is an advocate, for legal advice relating to an issue that had arisen at school.

- Assisting the school to build relationships with parents

This is discussed in more detail below where the school's relationship to parents is discussed in more detail. In one of the schools visited, Barnato Park, parent members of the SGB volunteer time at the school to telephone parents who have not paid school fees. The school has found it more effective if payment defaulters are approached by other parents.

4.5.4 Relationships with parents

Two types of relationships with parents were considered: (i.) the relationship between the school staff and parents and (ii.) between parents and the SGB. The relationship between the school and parents is an important one as it has been found that learner achievement is negatively affected by the size of the gap between the "world of the home" and the "world of the school".

In keeping with the high expectations that exist at the school, the school managers also had high expectations of parents. These expectations took the following forms:

- That parents should ensure that their children attend school and are properly prepared for the school day in that they are dressed appropriately and fed.
- That parents monitor task completion and ensure that learners complete their homework.
- That parents take an active interest in their children's academic progress by collecting reports and attending parent-teacher conferences.
- That parents provide the necessary discipline in the home in order to correct or avoid disciplinary problems at school. Parents were also expected to meet with teachers when there is a serious disciplinary problem in order to resolve it jointly.

These expectations were communicated to parents during meetings and through letters or circulars.

Relationships with parents were established and maintained in the following ways:

- Regular written communication with parents.
Newsletters and circulars are sent to parents informing them of issues related to the school and celebrating the school's and learners' achievements.

At **Reitsutmetse** the principal issues regular news bulletins, these serve to keep parents informed of important issues and also provide the school with an opportunity to publicly recognise those learners who have performed well over the last year.

- Each of the schools visited hosted parent-teacher conferences where parents can meet teachers and discuss their childrens' academic progress on an individual basis.
- Grade-level parents meetings were held where the principal and teachers were able to discuss their expectations of the learners for that grade. Schools often complain that parents do not attend these meetings, but high levels of attendance were seen at the schools that took part in the study.

Barnato Park held a Grade 8 parents' meeting which was attended by almost all parents. In one class, only one parent had missed the meeting and had tendered an apology. This is a significant achievement where many parents must travel long distances (from Soweto to Hillbrow) in the evenings, using public transport.

- Encouraging parents to approach the school when problems are encountered. Parents were encouraged to approach teachers when a problem arose. The number of parents visiting the school to meet with teachers varied: in one school over 75 parents visit the school each week, but the principal was involved in only four or five of these cases.

In the majority of schools issues were first addressed through the subject teacher and then, if not resolved, directed to the grade head. If a problem was still not resolved it was directed to the Head of House (where relevant) or the deputy principal. This meant that only the most serious matters were brought before the deputy principal or principal. In one of the participating schools, the principal sought to be part of each and every parent visit to the school, but was finding that this interfered with other duties.

- Keeping records of all parent contact
At **Clapham High** all teachers or managers who have contact parents must complete a "parent contact slip". This means that all interactions are recorded and as a problem is escalated from teacher to HoD then there is an accurate record of the discussions.
- Home visits were only conducted in exceptional circumstances. The Barnato Park principal indicated that she conducts home visits in serious cases of prolonged absenteeism or where social problems are suspected.

Governing Bodies help to involve the parent community in the running of the school and are also an important vehicle for promoting interaction between parents and the schools. Some SGBs in the schools had established a portfolio responsible for parent liaison. Very often the relationship with parents was described in slightly less favourable terms than the relationship that the SGB enjoyed with the SMT.

Schools had held “getting to know you” meetings with parents and also used “action days” (where work parties were organised to improve the appearance of the school) as a means of increasing interaction between parents and governing body members.

4.5.5 Relationships with the education community

In addition to maintaining relationships with staff and parents, the leadership of a school also need to maintain good relationships with the broader educational community, made up of other schools in the area, feeder schools and district office.

The schools that participated in this study also played an active role in their local education communities: with teachers serving as cluster leaders, schools being designated as “magnet schools” and principals assisting the district office with management training. Many of these relationships were based on the district office’s recognition of the school’s good performance and their commitment to excellence. This had, in some cases, resulted in schools being used as pilot sites for development projects and policy implementation (e.g. IQMS).

Reitumetse has been designated as a ‘magnet school’ for maths and science within its cluster. It is their responsibility to reach out to other schools in the area. Training is facilitated by the school and direct contact is maintained with the Minister of Science, Mosibudi Mangena. The programme also includes leadership and management training for the principal of the school.

Several principals indicated that they had also initiated contact with “feeder” schools in their areas and actively promoted their school amongst these schools. This took various forms including active promotion of the schools amongst feeder schools and inviting primary school principals to functions at the school.

Reitsumetse’s vision is to become a centre for excellence in Maths and Science. They have had to make feeder schools aware of this in order to ensure that the learners who apply to them are suitably equipped for this and wish to take Maths- and Science-related subjects. In a case where learners have taken Mathematical Literacy or where Mathematical Literacy is offered by a feeder school, then it is unlikely that these learners would fit into the curriculum offerings at Reitsumetse. The school has held meetings with schools in their vicinity to inform them of this so that they can guide learners appropriately when seeking placement. This is particularly important in an area where the highest grade in schools is Grade 9.

Leadership is required in order to form and maintain relationships with district officials. All of the schools in the study are performing well relative to their poverty rankings, it is therefore not unexpected that these schools would receive less support from the district office – as officials must prioritise poorly performing schools. The principals reported having good relationships with officials responsible for their cluster of schools. One of the principals noted that she seeks to support the officials wherever she can and that

this translates into mutual support from the district office. Her manner of interacting with officials was, during the course of our visit, firm but respectful. She was assertive, without being aggressive and solutions to problems were soon found.

The principals indicated that they receive a number of requests or invitations from the district office and that they need to prioritise these. This means that they sometimes decline or even fail to respond to matters that they do not deem to be in the school's or learners' best interests. Several schools noted that this was the criterion used when deciding between conflicting invitations, instructions or priorities.

4.5.6 External relationships: the local community, the private sectors and donor organisations.

The move to make schools more self-managing has led to a position where schools need to look for donor and private sector partners in order to supplement their fee-based incomes and state subsidies. A good leader is able to strategically identify partners who will benefit the school and is also able to enter into mutually beneficial or interdependent relationships, as opposed to the school simply being in the position of a recipient. In the schools that were visited, a range of relationships had been formed with external bodies, examples of which are given below.

Relationships established for financial gain with private sector entities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiring of facilities to organisations offering extra-mural activities (e.g. ballet) • Hiring of land for the erection of billboards or cell phone masts.
Relationships established that provided additional opportunities for learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowing organisations that offered extra lessons and opportunities to learners to operate from the school (e.g. art classes for refugees, Master Maths).
Contact established with organisations offering different learning opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools participated in subject-based Olympiads.
Relationships with donor organisations and development initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least two schools had received donor funding for school improvement projects. • Two schools had been selected as pilot sites for development initiatives (e.g. Mindset television broadcasts, Global Teenager Project.) • Two schools have “twinned” with schools in England. This gives learners contact with children in other countries and the schools have received donations from their partner schools.
Outreach conducted by the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One school, in particular, placed a very heavy emphasis on community outreach and the need for learners to “give back” to the community by volunteering time at various institutions including old-age homes and homes for children affected by HIV-AIDS.

The extent to which principals prioritised the establishment of relationships with external bodies varied. The level of engagement in the solicitation of external relationships is summarised below.

School	Attention given to establishing external relationships
Barnato Park	Very high The principal jokingly remarked that she “prostitutes” herself for the school and seeks funding for learners and for social development projects (such as the Safe House) at every opportunity. Donor agencies and private sector foundations have been approached, individuals are requested to sponsor the fees of promising learners and development programmes are invited to work with the school.
Clapham High	Moderate The principal indicated that the school relies on the SGB to help identify and form relationships with private organisations. The school works closely with local businesses and has a good relationship with those on the border of the school property. Private sector institutions also make use of the school property for community events – such as sponsored marathons.
Nirvana	Low The principal indicated that she had not prioritised forming relationships with external bodies. The school, as the best performing school in its area, is often approached by donors and development projects to participate in projects.
Parktown Girls	High Relationships were divided into those for financial gain (such as the hiring of facilities) and the creation of relationships with social service organisations where learners could volunteer. Greater emphasis is placed on outreach than on acquiring resources for the school.
Reitsumetse	High The principal actively seeks inclusion in programmes and initiatives that will benefit the school and learners. The district office has also been helpful in identifying partnership opportunities for the school, including the twinning of the school with a British school.

Relationship with the local community

One of the Department of Education’s (and the GDE’s) policy goals was to make schools centres of community life. Leadership qualities are required to identify ways in which this can be made a reality. The strength of ties to the local community varied.

Realising a vision of being a community school

At Barnato Park the principal has worked hard to forge relationships with the local community. This has been done by participating in the local Community Policing Forum, attending community meetings and making the school’s facilities available to the community over weekends. The school also allows an adult education centre to operate from its premises (free of charge) and its facilities are used for art classes that seek to help refugee children overcome the trauma of having to flee their homes – often being exposed to great hardship and armed conflict.

These relationships with the local community were seen as being beneficial as they had resulted in community members viewing the school as an asset. This had led to a decrease in vandalism of school property.

4.6 LEADERSHIP OF SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES

4.6.1 Introduction

Many of the activities in a typical principal's day revolve around administrative issues and addressing problems that arise during the course of the day. The majority of these tasks are administrative or managerial in nature, yet teachers, managers and SGB members often identified them as contributing positively to the effectiveness of the school. It can then be concluded that effective leaders do focus on and pay attention to the seemingly more mundane aspects of the school administration. Systems and procedures were often not seen as an end in themselves, but existed in order to enable better delivery of the curriculum and more efficient ways of using time so that more time could be spent on the heart of the school's purpose: teaching and learning.

All of the schools that participated in the study had good administrative and managerial systems in place. In this section we highlight those systems and procedures which were credited with contributing to the school being seen as particularly effective and efficient.

4.6.2 Teams, committees and formal structures

As could be expected, all of the schools had established management teams. These were typically made up of the principal, deputy principal and HoDs. In some schools however, the SMT also included grade-level heads, the school psychologist/ counsellor and heads of houses (the 'house' system operating at Clapham is described in more detail below). Some schools had deliberately tried to create as flat a management structure as they could.

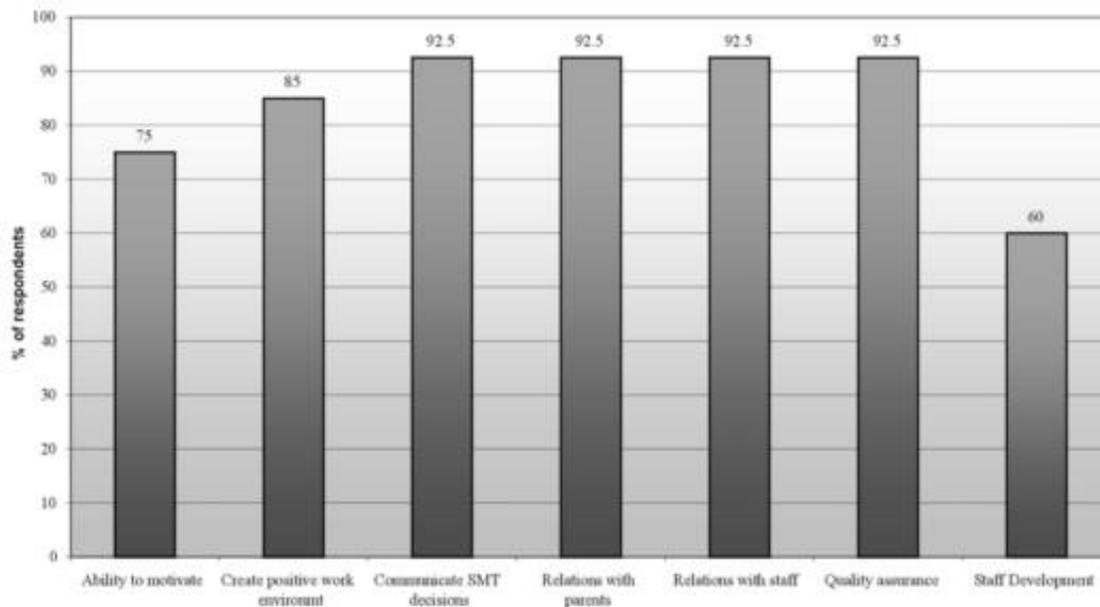
Within each of these SMTs members had clearly defined roles in addition to their functions as either grade or subject heads. These roles were allocated on the basis of personal interest or members volunteering to take on particular tasks.

Teachers and SMT members were asked to rate the visibility of the SMTs in their schools, their responses are summarised below:

	Visibility of the SMT				
	Very low	Low	Moderate	High	Very high
SMT members' own perception	0	0	19%	50%	31%
Teachers' perceptions	0	0	36%	36%	29%

The functionality of SMTs was rated by both managers and teachers using a five point scale, the graph below notes the percentage of respondents who felt that the SMT performed these functions "well" or "very well".

Areas of SMT performance rated positively by teachers and SMT members



Staff development is rated more negatively than other areas of performance. The failure of schools to develop formal staff development plans is discussed in more detail in section 4.4.7.

It is worth commenting briefly on the decision-making approaches used in the schools. One of the characteristics noted by staff was that the principals were decisive and not afraid to take decisions. The researchers noted that there were occasions on which the principals took decisions immediately, without referring the matter to other members of staff. These decisions usually required a prompt or immediate response and were made with reference to the school's vision and an innate sense of fairness or justice. Other decision-making events were more inclusive and involved consultation between the principal and deputy principals or the whole SMT. In schools with the most effective leaders, there was a very strong and mutually supportive relationship between the principal and the deputy principals.

Promotion of teamwork in schools

Management by committee has become a common feature in South African schools. One of the principals noted that the GDE expects at least 32 committees to have been established to manage different aspects of the school. "Management by Committee" is a result of attempts to make decision-making and management more inclusive. Unfortunately there is a danger that teachers may become overwhelmed by their committee responsibilities and that this could detract from their teaching, or that extensive consultation could result in an abrogation of responsibility for the decisions taken.

The principal of **Barnato Park** indicated that the establishment of committees is kept to a minimum and that committees tend to be established to see to the core business of the school, dealing with subject or Learning Area matters, assessment or other issues pertaining to learning. Similarly at **Clapham High** the principal said that he prefers that

teachers collaborate informally and that as this has worked particularly effectively in the school, he is loathe to formalise these structures. A great deal of informal collaboration and meetings between different groups of teachers were observed during break time and after school.

Creation of new structures in the school

One of the most innovative examples of how a school had decided to re-organise its administrative and managerial structures was demonstrated by **Clapham High** school, which had taken a system typically used for organising sports and competitions and had used it as the primary organising system for the school. This was done in order to promote competitiveness within the school, to break down barriers between classes of learners and to create new opportunities for teachers to take on a variety of roles in the school.

The “house” system: the organising framework for the school

A few years ago teachers and managers at Clapham High had noted that the school was not functioning as effectively as it should and that there was a need to “turn the school around”. After investigating different approaches, the school decided to revitalise the “house” system and the houses as the basic administrative and managerial unit of the school. Each learner and teacher is allocated to a house. Within each house there is a grade head (two if the grade is particularly large) and all administrative tasks (including the preparation of reports or disciplinary processes) take place through the house. Twice a week “house assemblies” are held.

Interviewees indicated that the introduction of this system had resulted in the following benefits to the school:

- The administrative burden on teachers is shared, freeing teachers to focus on their core tasks.
- Learners are more competitive as they seek to gain “house points” for academic performance, sporting achievement and good behaviour.
- Friendships and social interaction is encouraged between learners – learners do not just mix with those in their register class.
- The system fosters a sense of belonging for both teachers and learners.
- Novice teachers or those who join the school are mentored by a senior teacher in their house.

While the school managers freely acknowledge that this system is not unique to their school they credit it for creating a very positive climate in the school. It has also received support as it is an effective innovation, but does require a great deal of money to operate (each house receives a small grant for activities during the year, but this is not a prerequisite for the system to operate).

4.6.3 Advance planning

Several schools identified good advance planning as being one of the factors that contributed to being an effective school. In several schools detailed activity plans for teachers, learners and parents were developed and circulated to all relevant parties. **Clapham High** took this one step further and produced an annual diary for teachers and learners. The learner diary was used as a means of communicating policies to parents and teachers and also noted dates of tests, submissions, cultural events and the like. The teachers’ diaries were similar, but contained specialised information required by teachers – such as dates for submission of work, meetings, parent-teacher conferences etc.

“We don’t get surprised when things happen”
Teacher at Clapham High.

In spite of advance planning, school managers always have to be prepared to deal with the unexpected. Those who showed that they plan activities well in advance and have a sound organisational plan said that they felt that crises were less unsettling. In these schools policies and procedures were generally well established, which meant that when a problem arose very little energy had to be put into maintaining the general equilibrium of the school. Conversely, in another school where there was less evidence of planning, the principal reported that the bulk of the day was spent on “crisis management” and that there was little time to attend to other tasks.

4.6.4 Communication

Good communication was another hallmark of well functioning schools. In three schools (Reitsumetse, Parktown Girls and Clapham) short meetings were held each morning with all staff. During these meetings the principal would address staff and speak about events that would take place that day and would then allow other staff members and SMT members to make announcements. These meetings were used to set the tone for the day.

4.6.5 Documentation of procedures and expectations

Several schools had developed “procedure manuals” for teachers which set out the school’s expectations of teachers, procedures for the completion of a range of administrative tasks (including applications for leave, photocopying etc), school policies and job descriptions for all members of staff. These manuals were used to induct new staff members and provided a common framework from which all staff could operate.

The documentation which had been produced by schools was clear, concise and meaningful.

4.6.6 Protection of teaching time

Teaching time was fiercely guarded in the participating schools. Classes started promptly and learners (and teachers) were expected to be in class at the start of lessons. The schools often used two warning bells to alert learners and teachers that the break time was coming to an end and that they should start moving back to class. This system was also used in one school to bring the morning meeting to a close.

Sometimes it is unavoidable that teachers are absent from school, however this does not mean that learners should be left unattended. The systems used to arrange teacher substitutions varied from school to school:

- At **Barnato Park** teachers must call in advance if they will be late or are ill. It is expected that the principal or deputy principal be notified before 07h30 each morning if a teacher will not be at school. This is then recorded on a large board outside the principal’s office and a substitution list is available in the staff room by the start of the day. Each teacher is expected to check this list before proceeding to his or her classroom.

- At **Reitsumetse** the principal regularly walked around the school to check that learners were not left unattended and investigated any cases where learners were being noisy or unruly when left in a classroom. A teacher was allocated to manage the allocation of teachers to substitution duties.
- **Clapham** has a computerised timetabling system which includes a sophisticated option for substitutions. Each learner is provided with a personalised timetable which includes the substitution options for each lesson (with a second option given in case the substitute teacher is also absent). This means that classes are split up and learners allocated to different teachers across the school. This system means that no class is left unattended due to teacher absence. Announcements are made each morning to inform the school of which teachers are absent.
- At **Nirvana** teachers are expected to use their free periods for substitutions. Substitution lists are developed each morning and are posted outside the staff room.

4.6.7 Resource management

The income levels in the participating schools varied dramatically. A feature of effective leadership is the ability to ensure that existing resources are used effectively and to maximal benefit. In section 4.5.6 the approaches used by schools to secure additional funding are outlined, however the schools also sought to make good use of their existing resources:

- At Reitsumetse the teachers and parents were concerned when an influx of learners (attracted by the school's results) meant that classrooms were over-crowded. The parents contributed additional funds and labour to ensure that two additional classrooms were built.
- Nirvana has built a school hall which will be used as an examinations venue and for school functions. When not in use it will be hired to the community to raise funds for the school.

Careful budgeting and good maintenance also helped schools to maintain their physical resources. Schools also budgeted for development activities that supported the realisation of the school's vision.

Section 5: CONCLUSIONS

Although the schools in the study were quite different in terms of resource levels and, the social backgrounds of the learners, there was a surprising level of commonality in the leadership and management approaches and styles displayed. A number of key lessons could be extracted from the data.

5.1 Key lessons learnt from the study

The principal was a strong leader in his or her own right

The principals in each of the schools played a central role in the life of the school and their strength of character was immediately evident on entering the school. This strength was often communicated subtly through actions, rather than through charismatic statements. Each of the principals shared the following personal characteristics:

- a sense of dedication to their work and to the learners attending their schools
- passion for education and for teaching
- a value-based approach to leadership and management
- personal integrity
- exemplary personal and professional conduct, which inspired the confidence of others
- self-sacrifice
- a pastoral vision that encompassed staff, learners and the broader educational community
- a reflective nature

Many of these are behaviours that can be cultivated or emulated. The fact that these five leaders shared these qualities is not to say that either one is born with these qualities or one is not – leadership can be learnt and developed.

A true distribution of leadership

What would happen to the schools if the principal left or was incapacitated suddenly? In most of the schools, the systems and procedures are well entrenched and leadership functions have been shared so that the school functions well in the principal's absence. This was seen when the departure of principals to attend GDE meetings did not have a negative effect on the operation of the school.

The principal as a conductor of an orchestra

In the schools visited, although some principals recognised that they struggled to delegate tasks, it was recognised that the principal must be a co-ordinator and director, rather than being responsible for carrying out each and every task him- or herself. Just as conductors guide individual performers whose instruments have distinct sounds, they also ensure the overall performance is seamless and different elements complement each other.

This analogy extends to the way in which the principal draws out the best performance from each staff member. This is done by identifying skills development opportunities, grooming leadership potential and recognising individual strengths and weaknesses – and allocating tasks based on this analysis and providing training and support where necessary.

Strategic thinking influenced all aspects of the school's operation

The leaders in the schools (and here leadership is not restricted to the role of the principal) were able to think strategically.

- The principals held a strong personal vision for the school and had promoted the adoption of a shared organisational vision. While the principals' personal visions often overlapped with those of the organisation, they were usually more far-reaching.
- The leadership teams in schools had ensured the development of a common vision in the school, which ensured that all stakeholders were working towards a common goal. These visions centred on academic excellence, but were not limited to it. The holistic development of learners, social improvement and preparation of learners for a life beyond school also featured prominently in the schools' vision.
- Visions were translated into living documents and strategies.
- Leaders shared a sense that 'things could be done better'. Even if a school was performing well, there was a belief that performance could be improved and enhanced. The schools shared a dynamic spirit and a desire to strive for something higher.
- Leaders shared a pro-active approach to tackling problems in schools. Solutions were sought to problems before they grew into serious challenges to the performance and functioning of the school.
- School leaders were able to strategically identify and nurture relationships that would support their visions and benefit the school.
- Strategic thinking was also applied to decisions about the instructional programme and activities of the school.

Good leaders are inward- and outward focussed

Effective leaders managed to maintain an inward focus on the school as an organisation, but were also able to see the school in a broader context – as part of a local community, as part of an educational community and as contributing to South Africa.

High expectations abound

High expectations of the principal, staff and learners existed in each of the schools. Many of the principals demanded very high standards of behaviour and excellence of themselves. Similarly staff felt that high expectations had been set of teacher behaviour and that it was expected that they rise to meet these expectations. High expectations of learner performance also existed. Learners were encouraged to strive for higher performance and to achieve to their potential. Social context was not an excuse for poor or mediocre performance.

The presence of high expectations also influenced the form and presence of:

- appraisal and accountability systems
- the spirit in which these systems were implemented
- sound supervisory processes

“Leading by example” is a powerful motivator

Teachers and other staff members noted that the fact that the principal “leads by example” is a powerful motivator¹⁷. When people recognised that they were not expected to do anything that the principal would not do him- or herself, this inspired greater dedication.

Teaching and learning is at the heart of the school

All five schools shared a core focus on teaching and learning. The teaching and learning programme of the school was paramount and all other systems and procedures had to support curriculum delivery.

Innovation and risk-taking was prized and encouraged

Innovation and risk-taking was encouraged in the school and found expression in the following ways:

- Teachers being encouraged to be innovative in the delivery of lessons.
- Experimenting with different structural arrangements in the school (e.g. ways of organising committees, management teams and “houses”).
- Introducing new programmes aimed at improving academic performance and social development.

A balance between being task-centred and people-centred

Effective leaders were able to find a balance between being “people-centred” and being “task-centred”. While the core function of the school was paramount, good leaders also showed a genuine concern for teachers and learners, which manifested itself as a form of pastoral care and the priority given to support services in the school. Leaders acknowledged the need for good relationships to exist between people and the need for a positive work environment, but did not allow this to detract from the tasks that had to be performed. Mutual respect and support ensured that concern for people was not taken advantage of.

Both the big picture and small details count

Although the principals held grand visions for the school that informed and infused different aspects of the schools’ operation, they also managed to maintain a focus on managerial and administrative aspects of their jobs. The SMTs could see how bureaucratic procedures contributed to the attainment of the vision and did not implement them outside of a vision of supporting teaching and learning.

5.2 Implications of the research for MGSLG’s work

One of the objectives of the research was to provide MGSLG with guidance on how the findings of the study could inform and refine their work with school principals, management teams and governing bodies. Based on the findings of the study, it is suggested that future training programmes developed and conducted by MGSLG focus on the following:

¹⁷ Interviewees made special reference to the role of the principal in this respect, however common sense indicates that this principle is easily extended to all those in leadership positions in the school.

Supporting schools in the creation of meaningful vision statements that inform actions taken in the school.

Schools could be assisted to create meaningful vision statements that inform the actions taken in the school.

Demonstrating the importance of “leadership of the self”

This idea is particularly important as it is one which resonates very strongly with principles of African leadership. In writing about interactive leadership (in an African context), Boon notes that “the first challenge for all human beings is to lead themselves” (1996:81). The values held by individuals can have a strong influence on the ethos of the school.

Emphasising the vocation of teaching and educational leadership

The excellence observed in these five schools often came down to the pride the individual took in his or her work, a strong desire to make their school the best and their love for children. Alan Paton referred to this as ‘the job that the State has, in not so many words, employed me to do’ (from the short story ‘*Ha’Penny*’ which recounts his days as the principal of Diepkloof Reformatory). Principals need to be encouraged to reflect on the job that they do, and what difference they are making in the lives of the youth entrusted to them. Assistance in maintaining personal journals where self-reflection is recorded can go a long way in assisting school management to adjust to their new roles and to regularly reflect on their actions.

Promoting good instructional leadership: Keeping teaching and learning at the core of all activities

Good instructional leadership permeates various aspects of school leadership and management and includes activities such as the quality assurance staff performance (curriculum planning, delivery and assessment), ensuring maximal use of teaching time and the use of time in line with the vision, and by modelling the kind of professional behaviour sought through maintaining a significant teaching load. A time-management course would assist principals, deputy principals and HoDs plan their time in order to both fulfil their management duties and teach.

Setting of high expectations

MGSLG should assist principals to set realistic, achievable and measurable goals for their own performance, staff performance and the performance of learners. These will provide schools with something that they can strive to attain. MGSLG can also assist schools to generate development plans based on these expectations.

Mentoring and monitoring

The implementation of the IQMS must be supported by MGSLG’s training programme and principals guided on how to identify and develop leadership potential. An area of performance that could be improved in most of the schools is the formalisation of a staff development plan that took into account individual aspirations and developmental needs, as identified through quality assurance procedures. MGSLG could assist school principals to develop school-based skills development plans. MGSLG could pilot approaches that encourage inter-school collaboration.

Improved communication and feedback

MGSLG could assist schools set up simple systems where the school community is kept informed at all times, or ensure that schools think of ways that would assist them in

communicating better. Early morning staff meetings, such those held at Reitumetse, are an excellent way to ensure that all staff know what is happening on a daily basis, feedback is given and taken at these meetings and what is needed by the learners is passed on immediately during the registration period.

Relationship management

Effective principals are able to manage a range of internal and external relationships. Principals should receive training in mediation and conflict management in order to promote the maintenance of good relations within the school and between school stakeholders.

Principals and SMTs should be assisted in establishing induction procedures for new staff.

Principals and management teams could benefit from assistance and guidance on identifying potential strategic partners (who will co-operate with the school in support of the school's vision and development plan). MGSLG could also provide advice and guidance on how to establish and maintain external relationships once strategic partners have been identified. Effective strategies for developing community relationships would also be beneficial to many schools as not all five schools in the study had successfully established sound relationships with the community that extended beyond parent-school relations.

Informing policy decisions on the criteria for the redeployment/ secondment of principals

One of the researchers had to conduct a second visit to Reitsumetse. At the time of this visit it was found that the principal had been transferred to another school in the area, which was under-performing – the thinking behind this decision clearly being that the principal had had a positive effect on her school and that she would be able to raise performance standards at a failing school. Unfortunately, the researcher found that the systems and culture which was evident in the school during the first visit, were no longer so evident. Based on this, it is suggested that MGSLG assist district officials to determine whether systems and processes (and organisational change) are really embedded in a school, are in the process of being embedded or are reliant on the presence and drive of a particular person. The sustainability of change (and improved performance and functionality) should be embedded in the organisation before a principal is asked to assist another school – or else performance may be raised in the second school, at the expense of improvements being maintained in the first school.

REFERENCE LIST

- Ansell, D. (2004) *Improving Schools Facing Challenging Circumstances: Perspectives From Leading Thinkers*. Nottingham: NCSL.
- Banhegyi, S. & Banhegyi, E. (2003) *The Spirit of African Leadership* No publication details available.
- Ben-Peretz, M., Brown, S. & Moon, B. (2000) *Routledge International Companion to Education*. London: Routledge.
- Blanchard, K., Zigarmi, P. & Zigarmi D. (1999) *Leadership and the One Minute Manager: Increasing effectiveness through situational leadership*. New York: Morrow.
- Boon, M. (1996) *The African way: The Power of Interactive Leadership*. Sandton: Zebra Press
- Bush T, & Glover, D. (2003) *School Leadership: Concepts and Evidence*. NCSL
- Cheng, Y. C. (1996) *School Effectiveness and School-based Management: A Mechanism for Development*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Craig, H. and Heneveld, W. (1996). *Schools Count: World Bank Project Designs and the Quality of Primary Education in Sub-Saharan Africa*. World Bank Technical Paper #303. Washington DC. World Bank
- Creff, K. (2004) *Exploring Ubuntu and the African Renaissance: A Conceptual Study of Servant Leadership from an African Perspective*. Presented at Servant Leadership Research Roundtable. Accessed at: http://www.regent.edu/acad/sls/publications/conference_proceedings/servant_leadership_roundtable/pdf2004/cefff_exploring_ubuntu.pdf
- Davidoff, S. & Lazarus, S. (1997). *The Learning School: An Organisational Development Approach*. Cape Town: Juta
- Davis, L. (1994) *Beyond Authoritarian School Management: The Challenge for Transparency*. Derbyshire: Education Now Books.
- Davis, W.E. & Bobic, M.P. (2003) *A Kind Word for Theory X: Or Why So Many Newfangled Management Techniques Quickly Fail*. <http://home.eclions.net/mbobic/Version17.htm>
- De Liefde, W.H.J (2003) *Lekgotla: The Art of Leadership Through Dialogue*. Houghton: Jacana Media
- Ediger, M. (2002) "Assessing the School Principal" *Education*. 123. (1): Project Innovation (Accessed via www.questia.com)
- Edmonds, R. (1979). "Effective schools for the urban poor" in *Educational Leadership*, Vol 37, pp15-24.
- English, F. W. (1994) *Theory in Educational Administration*. New York: Harper Collins College Publisher.
- Evers, C.W. & Wong, K. (2001) *Leadership for Quality Schooling: International Perspectives*. London: Routledge Falmer.
- Fullan, M. (2003) *The Moral Imperative of School Leadership*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

- Geddes & Gosset (2002) *Ancient Egypt: Myth and History*. Scotland: Gresham Publishing Company
- Gibson, C.B & Marcoulides, G.A. (1995) "The Invariance of Leadership Styles across Four Countries" in *Journal of Managerial Issues* 7 (2). (Accessed via www.questia.com)
- Hallinger P. & Leithwood, K. (1998) "Unseen Forces: the Impact of Social Culture on School Leadership" *Peabody Journal of Education*. 73 (2).
- Hargreaves, A., Lieberman A., Fullan, M. & Hopkins, D. (eds). (1998). *International Handbook of Educational Change*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Press.
- Harris, A. (2002) *Effective Leadership for School Improvement*. London: Routledge.
- Harris, A. & Chapman, C. (2002) *Effective Leadership in Schools Facing Challenging Circumstances*. Nottingham. NCSL www.ncsl.org.uk
- Hoke, F. A., Joekel, R.G & Wendel F.C (1996) *Outstanding School Administrators: Their Keys to Success*. Westport: Praeger. (Accessed via www.questia.com)
- Khoza, R. (1993) "The need for a more Afrocentric approach to management and within it a South Africa-based management approach" in Christie, P., Lessem, R., Mbigi, L. (1993) *African Management: Philosophies, Concepts and Applications*. Randburg. Knowledge Resources
- Khoza, R. (2004) Address at the launch of "The Power of Governance". Accessed at <http://www.businessinafrica.net/thoughtleadership/448481.htm>
- Lashway, L. (1995) *Facilitative Leadership*. Accessed at <http://www.vtaide.com/png/ERIC/Facilitative-Leadership.htm>
- Lashway, L. (1996) *Ethical Leadership*. Accessed at <http://www.vtaide.com/png/ERIC/Ethical-Leadership.htm>
- Lashway, L. (1997) *Visionary Leadership*. Accessed at <http://www.vtaide.com/png/ERIC/Visionary-Leadership.htm>
- Law, S & Glover, D. (2000) *Educational Leadership and Learning*. Buckingham, UK. Open University Press
- Levine, D.U. & Lezotte, L.W. (1990). *Unusually Effective Schools: A Review and Analysis of Research and Practice*. Madison: National Centre for Effective Schools Research and Development.
- Liontos, L.B. (1992) *Transformational Leadership*. Accessed at <http://www.vtaide.com/png/ERIC/Transformational-Leadership.htm>
- Mortimore, P., Sammons P., Stoll, L., Lewis, D. & Ecob, R. (1988). *School Matters: The Junior Years*. Wells: Open Books.
- Muller, J. & Roberts, J. (2000) "The Sound and Fury of International School Reform: a critical review" JET. Mimeo
- Musick, M. (2004) *Progress Being Made In Getting A Quality Leader In Every School*. Atlanta: Southern Regional Education Board.
- Nanus B. (1992). *Visionary Leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

- NCSL. (2004) *LDF Implications*. <http://www.ncsl.org.uk/>
- NCSL. (2004) *The Ten School Leadership Propositions*. <http://www.ncsl.org.uk/>
- Roberts, J. (1998) "Swimming upstream with sharks: Reflections on a school development model" Paper presented at the Kenton Kei River Mouth Conference, October 1998.
- Sammons, P., Thomas, S., Mortimore, P., Owen C., Pennell, H. & Hillman, J. (1994) *Assessing School Effectiveness: Developing Measures to Put School Performance in Context*. International School Effectiveness and Improvement Centre, Institute of Education: University of London.
- Sammons, P., Hillman, J. & Mortimore, P. (1995). *Key Characteristics of Effective Schools: A Review of School Effectiveness Research*. Office for Standards in Education, April 1995.
- Scheerens, J. (1998). "The school effectiveness knowledge base as a guide for school improvement" in Hargreaves, A. et al (eds). *International Handbook of Educational Change*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Press.
- Seashore Louis, K. & Riley, K. A. (eds) (2000) *Leadership for Change and School Reform: International Perspectives*. London: Routledge.
- Siegrist, G. (1999) "Educational Leadership Must Move beyond Management Training to Visionary and Moral Transformational Leaders" in *Education* 120(2). (Accessed via www.questia.com)
- Steyn, G.M (2003) "Cardinal Shifts in School Management in South Africa" in *Education*, 124, (2). Project Innovation.
- Stringfield, S.C. & Slavin, R. (1992). "A hierarchical longitudinal model for elementary school effects" in Creemers, B.P.M. and Reezight G.J. (eds). *Evaluation of Educational Effectiveness*. Gronigen: ICO.
- Taylor, N., Muller, J. & Vinjevd, P. (2003) *Getting Schools Working*. Cape Town: Pearson Educational.
- Taylor-Moore, P. (2004) *Leadership on the Frontline: Thriving and surviving in challenging circumstances*. Nottingham. NCSL. www.ncsl.org.uk
- Teddlie, C. & Stringfield, S. (1993). *Schools Do Make a Difference*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Van Der Linde, C.H. (2002) "The Role of Good Educational Management in a Changing South Africa". *Education* 122 (3). Project Innovation (Accessed via www.questia.com)
- Verspoor, A.M and Lockheed M.E. (1989). *Improving Primary Education in Developing Countries*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wits Education Policy Unit. (2001) *Research Study into The Departmental Interventions Regarding Scholastic Performance*. Johannesburg: Wits. EPU.



The photocopier works overtime, Reitsumetse

Teachers perform playground duty, Barnato Park



Principal briefs educators early in the morning, Clapham



Safe place for learners to wait after school, Parktown Girls



School secretary, Reitsumetse



SMT meeting, Nirvana

Entrance to the safe house, Barnato Park



House meeting, Clapham



Keeping the gardens neat, Reitsumetse



Learners busy in the computer room, Reitsumetse

Learners at break, Barnato Park

Learners create art projects, Parktown Girls



Learners take an active role in house assemblies, Clapham

Published by MGSLG

Without the financial support of two schools in this study, Parktown High School for Girls and Clapham High, this publication would not have been possible.

Research Series Editor: *Stephen Sadie*

Contact: stephens@mgsi.co.za or Tel: 011 830 2200

Postnet Suite 161, Private Bag X9, Melville 2109

The opinions in this publication do not necessarily represent the views of the MGSLG.

Printing: *The Bureau Johannesburg*