

New! Leadership & Pedagogy Seminars



Achieving Excellence, Striving for Exceptional

in ALL Schools

Two interconnected seminars facilitated by experienced, serving school leaders to explore the **definition, delivery & sustainability** of 'excellence' in schools and MATs.

22nd June 2022 & 11th July 2022

"Excellence is a central part of human fulfilment, and character - working hard, doing our best, and persevering - is essential for realising excellence. Excellence matters, and character matters in our pursuit of excellence" (Davidson & Lickona, 2008)

Recent feedback from school and MAT leaders has highlighted an increasing focus on developing 'excellence' and 'exceptional' practices to help support and foster high levels of achievement, expectation and aspiration amongst pupils, staff and institutions alike. More broadly, it has also been referenced as an important factor in encouraging curiosity, developing character and promoting wider civic contributions. However, as a concept, 'excellence' can be difficult to define, articulate and therefore disseminate. Thus, over the coming months and into next academic year, Learners First will be facilitating a range of authentic and high quality networks and professional development opportunities to fully support these important ambitions and endeavours.

To commence, we are excited to offer these interconnected seminars designed to explore what 'excellence' really is, how it manifests and can be articulated within a school and MAT context (beyond Ofsted judgements), and examples of exceptional achievement in practice. The seminars will include inputs from serving trust and school leaders (both primary and secondary) with proven success in promoting, achieving and sustaining excellence in a range of settings and contexts (including those serving communities facing disproportionate disadvantage and challenge, schools which have required rapid improvement/intervention, and schools which have consistently achieved high outcomes against different accountability frameworks).

To lead the overall facilitation, Learners First is delighted to welcome **Christabel Shepherd**, Executive Head Teacher of [Cophthorne Primary](#) and [Holybrook Primary](#) in Bradford. For the first seminar, Christabel will be joined by **Sandy Paley**, Executive Head Teacher [Toot Hill School](#) and [Sixth Form College, Melton Vale Sixth Form College](#) and [Kirk Hallam Community Academy](#). Both facilitators apply the NACE Challenge Schools National Association of Able Children in Education) and will share how they have used the NACE framework and the principles of cognitive challenge for all to both sustain excellence and support the achievement of Ofsted. For the second seminars, Christabel will be joined by **Cathryn Smith**, School Improvement Director at the [Nova Education Trust](#).

The first seminar is specifically designed for school/MAT Strategic Leaders (CEOs, Executive Leaders, Headteachers, Chairs of Trust Boards/LGBs) and will consider how a culture of organisational excellence can be created through high cognitive challenge, including developing resilience and high levels of curiosity and aspiration. To ensure the content, pitch and examples are pertinent, representative and relevant to the different challenges and context of schools, the seminar will deliberately consider both **extending, sustaining and sharing excellence** (with examples and case studies particularly relevant for consistently high performing schools looking to move to their next level of success) as well as **defining and delivering excellence** (aimed at supporting schools looking to achieve rapid and sustainable improvement and those requiring improvement). This will be followed by a choice of two subsequent seminars aimed at senior leaders and/or curriculum leads where the application of excellence through curriculum design and classroom practice can be explored more thoroughly (including practical teaching and learning approaches, inclusion and intervention strategies for excellence). The two seminars will be differentiated to reflect the different challenges of schools so delegates will only be required to attend the seminar that is most relevant to their school context.

Further information including dates, times and booking links can be found overleaf.

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Seminar Details

Through the seminars outlined below Learners First aims to provide an authentic and impactful opportunity for leaders to engage with high quality, lively and exciting professional dialogue and debate to fully explore the concept of 'excellence' in schools and MATs. Following the first seminar for school and trust strategic leaders, the second seminars have been organised into two groups in an attempt to ensure the content, pitch and good practice examples are as relevant and pertinent to the different challenges and context of schools and leaders as possible (please see details below).

Seminar 1: Strategic Leadership (Part 1)

Defining, Embedding and Sustaining Excellence

22nd June (09.00-12.45) at Aston Hall Hotel (S26 2EE)

Audience: CEOs, Executive Leaders, Headteachers, Chairs of Trust Board, LGB Chair of Governors

(Pertinent to both Primary & Secondary)

Key Areas to be Covered

A thought-provoking, interactive discussion to explore and define what we mean as excellence beyond the Ofsted framework. Based on research and real case studies, the seminar aims to address the following key questions with relevant context to your school/trusts current level of development:

- ◇ What is Excellence? What questions do leaders (including trustees/governors) need to ask, explore and articulate regarding excellence across all areas of provision?
- ◇ How does a culture of excellence manifest within and beyond the organisation as a foundation or springboard for school, trust and community transformation?
- ◇ How can securing and sustaining 'challenge for all' within and beyond the curriculum inspire resilient, curious, responsible, aspirational and articulate children and young people?

Keynote inputs will be provided by **Christabel Shepherd**, Executive Head Teacher of [Copthorne Primary](#) and [Holybrook Primary](#) in Bradford and **Sandy Paley**, Executive Head Teacher [Toot Hill School](#) and [Sixth Form College](#), [Melton Vale Sixth Form College](#) and [Kirk Hallam Community Academy](#). Leaders will have the opportunity to network and debate these key questions and consider where next for their organisation either as a single school/academy or MAT. We will explore how leaders have transformed school culture through a variety of approaches from strategy, people, curriculum and much more.

Seminar 2: School Implementation - Curriculum, Teaching & Learning (Part 2)

Group 1

Sustaining & Sharing Excellence in Schools

11th July 2022 (09.00 - 11.30) at Aston Hall Hotel (S26 2EE)

This seminar (group 1) is designed for leaders from schools or academies which are consistently high performing, have strong data/outcomes profiles and/or are securely judged to be outstanding on the previous or current Ofsted framework looking to further sustain excellence, encourage a wider focus on cognitive challenge, character development and curiosity to move to the next level.

Audience: Heads of School, Senior Leaders, Curriculum Leads, Able & Talented Co-ordinators and/or Pupil Premium Leads

(Pertinent to both Primary & Secondary)

Key Areas to be Covered:

- ◇ How do you define excellence in your school? Where next?
- ◇ What does a curriculum for challenge, teaching to the top and challenge for all look like and how can each be achieved to further develop and sustain excellence?
- ◇ How highly successful school leaders and practitioners have used a focus on curriculum to teach to the top and challenge for all to further develop, embed and sustain excellence beyond it.
- ◇ Practical whole school and classroom 'teaching to the top/challenge for all' leadership approaches to further develop and sustain excellence and get the most from resilient, curious, responsible, aspirational and articulate learners.
- ◇ Key research and further reading to be shared
- ◇ Explore opportunities for 'Challenge Partnerships' beyond own school.

Group 2

Defining & Delivering Excellence in Schools

11th July 2022 (13.00 - 15.30) at Aston Hall Hotel (S26 2EE)

This seminar (group 2) is tailored for leaders from schools or academies looking to embed excellence as a vehicle through which rapid and sustainable improvement can be achieved and/or looking to challenge prevailing orthodoxies relating to excellence and elitism. The content of this seminar will be particularly relevant to leaders from schools/academies judged to be requiring improvement and/or with outcomes that are not yet secure.

Audience: Heads of School, Senior Leaders, Curriculum Leads, Able & Talented Co-ordinators and/or Pupil Premium Leads

(Pertinent to both Primary & Secondary)

Key Areas to be Covered:

- ◇ What is excellence and why is it important?
- ◇ Case studies of how a drive for excellence has been used to rapidly improve schools and classrooms and impact positively on the quality of education, pupils' personal development, and behaviour and attitudes.
- ◇ How can excellence be achieved through a focus on 'teaching to the top/challenge for all' as a non-negotiable of curriculum design and classroom practice?
- ◇ Practical whole school curriculum and classroom 'teaching to the top/challenge for all' approaches to support schools and practitioners in developing excellence. This will include practical approaches to:
 - support learners in understanding the importance of excellence.
 - develop resilient, curious, responsible, aspirational and articulate learners.
- ◇ Explore opportunities for 'Challenge Partnerships' beyond own school.

- **Attendance:** Schools engaging with these seminar opportunities are strongly encouraged to ensure they are appropriately represented at both Seminar 1 and 2
- **Bookings:** Please [CLICK HERE](#) to be directed to the booking forms (all seminars)
- **Cost:** The seminars are fully funded for all delegates from schools/MATs subscribing to Learners First. For non-subscribing schools, the cost is £100 for two places (one per seminar) and any subsequent places are chargeable at £30 per person.