



Academi Genedlaethol ar gyfer
Arweinyddiaeth Addysgol Cymru
National Academy for
Educational Leadership Wales

Inspiring New Leaders



Like many of my fellow Associates there wasn't just one reason why I applied to be an associate of the Leadership Academy. However, when asked to put my thoughts down for this blog about how my work with the Leadership Academy is impacting on my practice back at school a single theme immediately stood out above all the others... collaboration.

The loneliness of leadership

This is my first headship and my sixth year as headteacher for a federation of two small rural schools in Denbighshire, North Wales. Before assuming the role, my main concern was the old adage *'headship is a lonely job.'* However, the Leadership Academy is testament to what little truth lies in this myth. The opportunity to have honest conversations with other school leaders on topics ranging from staff well-being to implementing new policy is a happy consequence of gathering headteachers from across Wales together. The collaborative culture of the Leadership Academy has in turn impacted on my own leadership style back at school. Debunking the stereotypical view of the headteacher who holds all the

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answers and makes all the decisions to one that being open and transparent leads to a truly collaborative ethos. Traits I endeavour to promote not only in my schools but also when working with schools in my cluster.

From facilitating to coaching

Sticking to the theme of collaboration I can't understate the impact developing my facilitation and coaching skill set with the Leadership Academy has had back at school. These were tools that I was aware of and to some extent was already putting into practice but after studying these in much greater depth through a series of Leadership Academy learning experiences and workshops I have truly started to appreciate the power behind each of these tools. We work in a profession which celebrates problem solving and to give staff the tools to recognise and solve problems through open dialogue and collaboration as opposed to seeking an answer from others has been a valuable skill I have been able to transfer back to my own team. Which in turn, I hope, is inspiring a new set of school leaders.

Every day is different

To borrow another adage, we like to say that a career in education means *'every day is different, there's no day that is the same'* but in reality it is easy to become trapped in school routine, to know how to solve a problem and to stop looking for different solutions and to slowly start to become more inward facing. Being an Associate for the Leadership Academy is my way of making sure I avoid these pitfalls and engaging with inspiring professionals reminds me I am very much still learning!

Full guidance and application forms can be found at
www.nael.cymru