

## ***Flexible Route to Headship***

**Standard  
for  
Headship**

### FRH Model

### Design Principles

FRH is a leadership development programme for aspiring headteachers. FRH provides an alternative route to achieving the Standard for Headship.

The FRH programme will:

- offer choice and flexibility for individual participants
- capitalise on experiential learning opportunities
- be predominantly practice-based with a strong focus on impact on learners
- take account of individual lifestyles and professional commitments
- take account of different learning styles and of relevant prior learning
- take account of local school or service improvement plans
- focus on promoting personal and potentially transformational professional development in a leadership context
- allow each participant to develop, implement and reflect upon a Professional Learning Plan
- recognise and explore the prime importance of personal qualities and interpersonal capabilities and skills in successful leadership
- acknowledge and utilise, as a key methodology, the power of coaching relationships in the development of self and of professional confidence, competence and expertise
- promote substantial reflection on and analysis of aspects of leadership through situational analyses and critical reading of relevant literature
- be subject to rigorous assessment through a framework of on-going formative and summative assessment which gives parity to each aspect of the Standard for Headship



## FRH Learning Model

The key aspects of the learning model adopted for the programme are:

- self-audit against the Standard for Headship, self-evaluation and individual analysis, planning, professional development activity and reflection on impact on learning
- on-going confidential support of an allocated leadership development coach acting primarily as individual coach to the participant and meeting on a regular basis, but also at times assuming the role of tutor, mentor and facilitator as the programme requires
- on-going formative feedback by the coach with regard to the participant's progress within the programme
- participation at two interactive national residential conferences focussing on leadership development
- attendance at local (or consortium) 'networking' or CPD meetings along with cohort colleagues
- individual critical reading of relevant literature
- maintenance of a personal learning journal as an aid to reflection and professional development
- consideration and analysis of 'critical incidents' as a catalyst of learning
- support from headteacher and/or other relevant colleagues in role of mentor/supporter

### Conceptual view of leadership

While the Standard for Headship provides a detailed framework which endeavours to offer a definition of "the leadership and management capabilities of headteachers", more importantly it offers a template against which aspiring headteachers "can match their experiences and skills to determine their strengths and areas for development."

The latter statement emphasises the all-important roles of self-determination, self-evaluation and individual critical thinking espoused by the Flexible Route to Headship.

The Standard for Headship states in general terms that leadership "develops shared vision, inspires and creates commitment and embraces risk and innovation", adding that complementary management skills develop systems which help to deliver the required service. It proposes that there are three essential elements that underpin the professional actions of the headteacher: strategic vision, values and aims; knowledge and understanding; and personal qualities and interpersonal skills. It outlines the main areas of professional actions as: leading and managing teaching and learning; leading and developing people; leading change and improvement; leading the effective management of resources; and leading the building of community.

FRH participants will be committed to critical exploration of the effectiveness of different styles of leadership and to critical self-evaluation leading them in determining what works best for them, their leadership teams, their school and the learners for whom they are responsible.

A first feature of the FRH concept of leadership is the recognition of the importance for leaders of personal qualities and interpersonal skills. This focus is illustrated early in the programme through the emotional competence audit completed by participants in which they reflect on their own behaviour and attitude as leaders and on their awareness of their own emotions and the emotions of others. Knowledge and understanding of emotional competence is emphasised as significantly important in FRH and leadership development of participants as aspiring headteachers.

A second feature is the potential for personal transformation of participants as a consequence of support and challenge through working with the leadership development coach. Evidence indicates that the coaching relationship is instrumental in influencing the behaviour and attitude of participants and how the aspiring headteacher then interrelates with colleagues at school.

A third feature is how the coaching process empowers FRH participants to be more influential in the critically important leadership responsibility of leading and developing others in school.

A fourth feature of the FRH concept of leadership is the recognition that the combination of experiences for the participants on this programme will lead to transformational development, will improve skill levels and expertise in leadership and importantly prepare participants for the role of headship.

### **The uniqueness of the FRH programme**

Certain aspects of FRH contribute to its uniqueness:

- coaching
- coaching model
- impact of coaching
- extension of the coaching culture and capacity
- on-going formative feedback by the coach
- interactive nature of the residential conferences
- power of the 'networking' arrangements
- experientially-based development at school level
- potential for personal transformation
- flexibility of individualisation of PLPs, CPD opportunities, duration of programme and alternative modes of submission

The full uniqueness of the FRH programme, however, lies not only in the above aspects, but in the judicious and dynamic combination of these aspects with acknowledged best practice of other leadership development programmes.