

MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIPS

This leaflet aims to provide governors and educational professionals with information about how Management Partnerships work in practice. It also highlights a number of issues that will need to be considered when setting up leadership collaborations between schools. Babcock LDP offers support and specialist expertise to help schools manage the process and implementation of different partnership models.

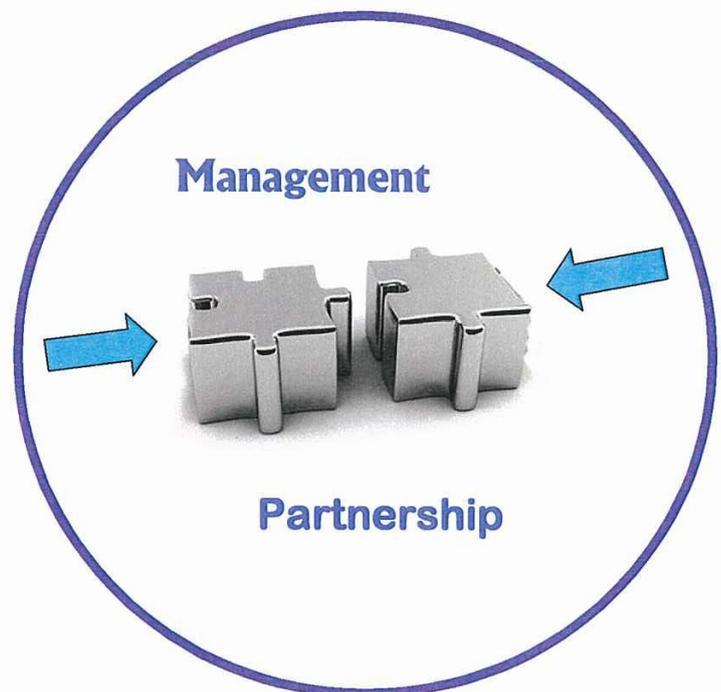
WHAT IS A MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP?

A Management Partnership is when two schools share one headteacher who has the responsibility for the strategic leadership of both schools. Both schools remain completely separate and retain their own individual governing bodies. A distinct advantage of a Management Partnership is that the distance between the two schools need not be a barrier if travelling and work life balance matters are managed sensibly.

The partnership is formalised through a contract which lays out the terms and remit of that partnership. A joint committee of governors would oversee the arrangement and regularly assess and report on the workings of the Management Partnership arrangement.

Management Partnerships are usually short term or temporary interventions. A number of contractual issues may need to be resolved if shared leadership becomes a long term arrangement.

Management Partnership is not the same as a Federation. A federation has one governing body and is set up following a formal consultation process with key interested partners.



WHY ENTER INTO A MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP?

Management Partnerships often attract experienced headteachers to schools which might not recruit experienced leaders if advertising the post as an individual school.

Where schools have any difficulty recruiting or have experienced a very high turnover in headteachers, a well chosen local partnership arrangement (usually with a highly regarded local headteacher) can bring stability and confidence back to a school and its local community.

Skilled and experienced headteachers who enjoy working in small schools can, through a Management Partnership arrangement, access leadership challenges and opportunities currently unavailable to them without moving on to a much larger school.

Management Partnerships release the headteacher from a class teaching responsibility bringing more continuity to the teaching and leadership time.

WHO DECIDES ON A MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP?

There will be a number of different reasons why a Management Partnership will be considered as an appropriate arrangement for two schools. The Local Authority might suggest a Management Partnership if a school has been unable to recruit or needs experienced leadership to address challenging school improvement issues.

Governors can also drive the process themselves and may approach another governing body with a formal proposal. What matters most is that there is an agreement between the governors and the Local Authority that a Management Partnership is the most suitable option for the school at that time and will bring clear benefits for the pupils in those schools.

Finance and recruitment will play their part but the benefits of securing strong and experienced leadership and its impact raising standards must drive the decision making process.

Where applicable the Diocese will be involved, particularly if schools wish to work in Church school pairings.

BENEFITS OF A MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP

- Recruitment and retention of experienced headteachers
- Successful headteachers apply their leadership skills and experience across schools
- Leadership opportunities for staff in small schools through backfilling arrangements
- Can expand roles of other staff, e.g. bursar
- Opportunities to share and exchange staff expertise and practice
- Retains the individual character of the schools
- Removes the teaching responsibility of the headteacher and can provide better continuity of teaching in those classes

ISSUES THAT WILL NEED TO BE ADDRESSED

- Contractual implications and on-costs for any staff changing or extending their role
- Roles and responsibilities of all staff
- The real cost of a Management Partnership will not be the same for both schools
- Capacity for backfilling and equality of arrangement for those staff who take up leadership roles
- Timeframes and detailed operational issues have to be contractually agreed
- Work life balance of the headteacher and alignment of Performance Management arrangements
- Setting up a joint committee of governors to oversee the partnership.

SETTING UP A MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP

The 10 most important things to do:

- Set up a joint committee of governors using the governance collaboration regulations with formal terms of reference to work out the detail for the contract and oversee the operational arrangements and strategic impact (model contract and terms of references are available from Human Resources and Babcock LDP Governance Consultancy)
- Work out the total cost of the partnership for both schools (on-costs beyond headteacher time) and agree levels and timings of payment
- Draw up and formally agree an exit strategy with potential triggers and timeframe for withdrawal
- Synchronise school calendars and events to avoid clashes of dates
- Keep travelling time and work life balance issues under review

- Make sure that roles and responsibilities for all staff are clear for when the headteacher is, or isn't, on site
- Agree the headteacher's salary point so that it reflects levels of responsibility (may need to reconsider the ISR). Performance Management arrangements will reflect both shared and separate targets
- Align and share key external partners and support services e.g. Finance and HR
- Ensure positive parental communication and seek their perception of the arrangements
- Invite external support and evaluation to develop the partnership

ROLES AND KEY TASKS

The headteacher should...

- Be absolutely clear about their own role and the roles of others
- Sort out processes and procedures for any potential major incidents or issues.
- Expect good leadership from others
- Set up systems for clear communication between the schools, all staff, governors, the parents, Diocese
- Draw upon support structures through HR, Finance and Babcock LDP School Effectiveness Team
- Get to know the schools equally well and retain an overview of each
- Know when to join up issues, streamline systems and when to maintain complete independence
- Look for creative solutions such as using ICT in different ways
- Practise good diary keeping and time management

Be mindful of their worklife balance

Governors should....

- Be clear about the benefits and shortfalls of such an arrangement
- Be realistic about your expectations of the headteacher in this new arrangement
- Set up a clear and detailed contract of engagement. Always consider the worst case scenarios
- Work out the real cost of such an arrangement for both schools
- Agree timeframes and consider the implications of these different timeframes
- Take a leading role with communicating and explaining the arrangement to parents
- Sort out and agree protocols and procedures for the partnership and how the joint committee will maintain an overview
- Discuss any concerns openly and honestly and involve representatives of the Local Authority if necessary
- Grow future leaders by using the partnership as an opportunity for succession planning
- Ensure the headteacher's worklife balance and dedicated headship time
- Be clear that a management partnership is a short-term arrangement, plan for what will follow

The Local Authority† can offer...

- Information and support through model contracts and individualised support and input
- The same support officers working with both schools even if not in the same learning community
- On-site support to aid the development and ongoing evaluation of the Management Partnership
- Close working with the Anglican and Catholic Dioceses when supporting Church school partnerships

- The overview of the quality of leadership and the school's capacity to raise standards
- The Local Authority will raise concerns should they arise at any stage of the process
- Appropriate budget systems for transfer of payments
- Governor support, advice and model documentation
- Leadership training for leading more than one school
- Signposting of where best practice can be found both inside and outside the county
- Press and publicity management

† LA support is provided by Babcock LDP. Please note that some aspects of LA support will fall within usual purchased arrangements

CONTACTS

If headteachers or governors wish to follow up on any aspect of this leaflet or want more information about Management Partnerships please contact one of the following as the first point of contact:

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