

Does Education = Achievement/Standards?

[Driving Improvement]

Leaders who **see the adults and children in their care through God's eyes** recognise how precious each one is, and how important the opportunity that individual has been given is. To such a leader, these **individuals appear as the pearl of great price, the lost sheep or lost coin**, a child with just one shot, and one chance at education. They hold the highest aspirations, and treat each one with the utmost dignity, regardless of their starting point. These leaders pursue the very best for each pupil, and regard high standards as a norm, consistently living out ambitious expectations for their children's development at each stage of the journey. **That which leaders choose to improve communicates much about their values.** While academic success stands at the heart of great education, character development and wider flourishing stands as fundamental to any sustainable academic success.

Therefore, the pursuit of the **very best and broadest outcomes** for all young people defines education driven by a Christian vision – this is life in all its fulness. Thus leaders pursue and drive improvement; they are **impatient with mediocrity, and passionate about improvement.** They critically analyse the meta-narratives to which they are subject, and challenge the perception that whatever you are doing, it is not yet good enough. They seek to go beyond narrow measures of performance success and recognise the futility of zero-sum data processes that mean there will always be winners and losers. Leaders who love their pupils recognise the transference of fear that can ensue from macro to school to teacher to pupil, and care deeply for the mental health and wellbeing of their pupils, taking great care with them, particularly at pressure points of examinations.

In seeking to serve the most vulnerable, leaders recognise the need to **design and implement curriculum and pedagogy that redresses inequality** and offers opportunity for broad-ranging activities for all pupils. It takes care not to pigeon-hole children by narrow assessment of ability through static groupings, and spurs children on to greater knowledge and wisdom through creative and inspirational teaching, which draws out the very best and broadest outcomes. Leaders consistently demonstrate that their ethos enhances outcomes.

Leaders live with the same passion that Paul writes to Philippi about, **dealing with the past and pursuing the future:** *“Not that I have already obtained all this, or have arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me...Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”* (Philippians 3.13-14). Driving improvement is about recognising that **each child has one shot**, and thus pursuing the very best for each one as result.