



Enabling Flourishing

Effective leaders set up systems, policies, budgets and structures to enable the flourishing of the children in their care. However, there will be few contexts where there are flourishing children without flourishing adults – and especially those in the senior staff team. The pursuit of human flourishing, in adults as in children, is multi-dimensional, including the interwoven domains of the academic, spiritual, moral, social and cultural. This is life in all its fullness, and a thirst for it is at the heart of our vision for education.

The biblical narrative highlights leaders who create the conditions for flourishing, being planted in the right place or conditions: “They will be like a tree planted by the water, that sends its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.” (Jeremiah 17:8, see also Psalm 1:1-6, Ezekiel 17:22-24, 47:12). These leaders also know that plants are not always in flower and when necessary, are patient for the long-term. They recognise the challenges and limitations of short-term, one-shot measurement in

examinations and pursue a broader vision of flourishing for their teams, through creating the right conditions, clearing the paths and allowing people to fulfil their roles. They help each adult to understand their unique contribution to the institution and enable them to bring their best each day.

Effective teams flourish because of their diversity and quality of relationships. Jesus built a team of disciples through his ministry nourishing individual talents, creating high trust/high challenge situations, celebrating variety and giving away authority and encouraging autonomy. Adults and children flourish at different times and speeds, and there is patience for growth. Within the constant clamour of the new, leaders learn that we flourish when we stop doing things, when the gardener prunes the vine: “...every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.” (John 15:2). We flourish not for our own sake, but so that we can look outwards and give. Leaders and their teams are themselves called to exemplify something of the abundant life to which they point.

1. To what extent does the flourishing of children depend on the flourishing of adults in flourishing teams?
2. What kinds of decisions do you make as a leadership team that directly help the flourishing of adults and children in your care?
3. How can we develop our patience in relation to flourishing – to what extent do we recognise that ‘that plants are not always in flower’?
4. What are you choosing to stop doing this term, this year? How could stopping and pruning things actually lead to flourishing?