

# The Expectations of a Leader

Defining Outstanding Leadership  
in our Education Fellowship

*Educational Excellence*



The  
Education™  
Fellowship

# Contents

<b>Introduction by Johnson Kane, CEO</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The Fellowship's values</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Defining outstanding leadership in our Education Fellowship</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Expectations of a leader</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The top 10 qualities that make a great leader</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>The expectations of a Fellowship Principal</b>	
- Values	6
- Behaviours	7
- Knowledge	8
- Skills	9
- Appearance	9
<b>Pathways to success</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Who these expectations apply to</b>	<b>10</b>



## Introduction by Johnson Kane, CEO

**Within the Fellowship we are surrounded with papers, policies, manuals and documents, many helpful, others crucial, some vital.**

This document ***The Expectations of a Leader*** is one of the most important documents the Fellowship has ever produced. It's about the future of the Fellowship - it's about the future of education.

It's a further step on our journey to deliver excellence, not just in our schools but in every corner of the Fellowship. It's a vital step for all of us in education as we make good the debt we owe to the children of this country who we are privileged to call our customers.

It is vital for us as leaders to challenge and enable our teams as we direct and motivate them to deliver excellence. It is vital for you.

It's important to us as leaders as it sets the bar on Leadership in the Fellowship. I know that I must grasp and live this document to step up to the bar - or face the challenge of stepping away in order not to fail our customers who increasingly challenge and seek, through our co-ownership forums, the education they demand as their right.

I hope you take this document and live it so it becomes a part of your life in your role as a Leader in the Fellowship. Use it within your leadership teams as both the bar and the sat nav to direct and show your teams the way.

I cannot simply hope that you will embrace this - my co-owners instruct that I must demand we do.

We do - because this document and the bar it sets must be echoed in every school classroom, corridor, office, every Executive meeting, Trustees meeting, Fellowship Forum. Everywhere - until the excellence we must create echoes back the same message.

This document marks us as different, as again we are breaking new ground, moving the boundaries. It's what we do because we are Fellows. It's what we must do because anything less means our co-owners will not see us worthy of the badge marked Leader and we will not be the deliverers of the education our customers demands.

We will train you, enable you, motivate you, celebrate with you, thank you - but I must demand.

Share my passion for the contents of this document and breathe new life into our academies.

This speaks of what The Fellowship is and inspires. Be proud, we are the owners.

**Johnson Kane**  
CEO

# The Fellowship's Values

Staff and students in all our academies are committed to the values held by the Fellowship.



- ✓ **Courage to stand up for what we believe in**
- ✓ **Respecting others**
- ✓ **Having fun and a good quality of life**
- ✓ **Honesty and integrity**
- ✓ **Humility, compassion and concern for others**
- ✓ **Tolerance and forgiveness**
- ✓ **Confidence to lead**
- ✓ **Kindness**

## Defining Outstanding Leadership in our Education Fellowship

There is an expectation that all Education Fellowship leaders will be outstanding and that Principals will embody excellence in everything they do and say. In order to be outstanding, all Fellowship leaders must be self-confident without being arrogant. Self-awareness must be one of their fundamental attributes, as it is the first step towards wisdom. They must be highly motivated to achieve excellence and to recognize it when they see it. They must remain focused on the Fellowship's outcomes, vision and purpose; but understand that they cannot create performance themselves. Rather, they must be enablers and champions of performance through their influence on others.

The key tool they have is not systems and processes (although it is essential that these are in place), but themselves and the ways in which they interact with, and impact on, those around them. This sense of self is not, however, selfish. It is to serve a goal, creating a combination of humility and self-confidence. This is why outstanding leaders watch themselves carefully and act consistently and relentlessly to achieve excellence through their interactions with others, through their embodiment of the leadership role, and by remembering that they hold children's futures in their hands.

## Expectations of a Leader in our Education Fellowship

Education Fellowship leaders are dealers in hope. They must be committed to delivering excellence without compromise, in all that our academies do, to provide outstanding service to our children and their families – our customers. Every Fellowship leader must aspire to a level of excellence that is beyond the expected and which defines the values and expectations of the Fellowship. We should be able to walk into each of our academies and recognise immediately a commonality of excellence. More important, all leaders will share the knowledge, skills and understanding of how excellence is being achieved in both words and deeds.

Excellence and the 'Fellowship Way' must be in the DNA of our academies, now and always, as all Fellows are co-owners of the Fellowship and its academies. With this unique model of co-ownership comes great responsibility for both establishing and maintaining this DNA. We are all leaders of this vision and must in turn grow the future leaders to carry our academies forward, to not just meet the standard of excellence, but to exceed it.



## The Top 10 Qualities That Make a Great Leader

1

### Honesty

Leaders must demonstrate honest and ethical behaviour as they set the tone that others will follow.

6

### Commitment

Lead by example in work and attitude, be relentlessly fair.

2

### Delegation

Leaders build and trust their team, identify strengths and capitalise on them. They remember “only do what only you can do”.

7

### Positive attitude

Leaders balance the mood, ensuring hard work and light-heartedness can co-exist. They generate the ‘can-do’ attitude and prevent the ‘can’t do’ dialogue.

3

### Communication

Leaders can paint a clear and inspiring picture with words and actions. They enable open and honest dialogue around this vision, creating trusting relationships.

8

### Creativity

Leaders can think on their feet, draw on their experience and they understand the wider systems and contexts when finding solutions. ‘Can’t’ is not an answer.

4

### Humour

Leaders must grow morale and instil an ability to laugh at mistakes and find humour in struggles.

9

### Intuition

Leaders get to recognise, understand, trust and act upon their instincts.

5

### Confidence

Leaders must demonstrate calmness and authority, focusing on the larger goals.

10

### Ability to inspire

Leaders connect with their vision and values enabling others to see their role in the bigger picture. All feel valued, all are recognised and successes are celebrated. Great leaders keep the bar high and never relent to the emotional tensions that would lower it.

# The Expectations of a Fellowship Principal



## 1 Values

Fellowship Principals must have values that live in their heart's core and are devoted to the inalienable right of every child, without exception, to a safe and happy childhood, a pathway to a secure and fulfilling future, and a world class education.

Our academies must nourish the hearts, minds and souls of our pupils and students as they develop both a love of learning and the skills, knowledge and attributes that will enable them to lead successful lives.

A Fellowship Principal must accept absolute accountability for the quality of schooling that their academy provides. There is no blaming or deflecting to others. Leadership is a great

responsibility and those who are not prepared to embrace such a commitment should not seek to undertake it.

A Fellowship Principal and all Fellowship Leaders must show absolute loyalty and integrity. We are co-owners of our academies. All Principals must be prepared to support and challenge others whilst standing united with all Fellowship leaders as we strive to ensure that every one of our academies achieves excellence. Co-ownership means that the Fellowship belongs to us all and is a shared responsibility. We can criticise and challenge through co-ownership but together we stand in our shared responsibility for the Fellowship.

## 2 Behaviours

### **i – A relentless optimism:**

**A Fellowship student: “People in authority don’t see barriers, they only see opportunities.”**

It is the role of a Principal to make transformational change non-negotiable and effectively manage risks and barriers. All excuses are invalidated by the relentless obligation to improve, which is inherent in the role of Principal. Reflective leaders learn from mistakes and forge a new direction which is well researched, planned and monitored. To not act upon failure is negligence on the part of the leader. Our students, staff and parents deserve and demand excellence. A leader who accepts less than excellence is undervaluing their customers.

### **ii – Passion and resilience:**

**Machiavelli (1469 – 1527), from *The Prince*: “A person of courage, undismayed in adversity, who does not fail in other qualifications, and who, by their resolution and energy, keeps the whole people encouraged – such a one will never find their self deceived in them, and it will be shown that they have laid their foundations well.”**

The Principal sets the tone for their academy. They must have a passion that burns deep within their heart to achieve amazing and sustainable success for the children and young people whom they serve and the staff whom they lead. If they show doubt and negativity, if they yield to accept poor performance, if they lower the bar through emotional tension in the school – then they will fall short of our values and fail our customers.

Principals must work tirelessly on the vision and values of their academy and collaboratively for all our academies, so that we have the resilience to deal with adversity and the strength to cope with change. If they show doubt and confusion, if they fail to be a decisive leader, they will fail their academy and the Fellowship.

An ability to make firm decisions and lead with a balance of authority (but never tyranny), and humility (but never weakness) - is the essence of real leadership.

Our **Pathways to Success** programme enables our leaders to deconstruct problems so that solutions can be found and doubts overcome. Our Principals will learn how to confront the ‘robber’ of self-doubt and gain great strength from life’s painful experiences. Above all, this programme recognises that to achieve great leadership you need support in developing great leadership behaviours and a well of inner

strength to cope with the inevitable challenges ahead.

### **iii – Courage:**

**Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice*; act 1, scene 4:**

**“Our doubts are traitors, and make us lose the good we oft might win, by failing to attempt.”**

Our Principals and leaders must be **Merchants of Change**. Visions without actions are merely dreams and a Fellowship Principal and leader is required to change every aspect of their academy that needs transforming. This has to be the case if leadership is to have credibility and integrity. To not do so is negligent. To make an excuse is dishonest. To fail to see the need for change is incompetent.

Great leaders are uncompromising deliverers of sustainable change for the better. When change is challenged they use their values and resilience to ensure that the bar is never lowered. They ensure compliance with the statutory frameworks, but never make excuses.

In contrast: “Bad leaders are concerned only with rules and regulations. They do not try to understand how these affect people. It is easy to use the law to cover an inability to understand and listen. We tend to impose rules when we are frightened of people.” (Jean Vanier, *Community and Growth*, p. 226).

In the words of Shakespeare’s *Lady Macbeth*: “We fail? But screw your courage to the sticking-place, and we’ll not fail.”

### **iv - Hard work and planning:**

**Muhammad Ali: “The fight is won or lost far away from witnesses, behind the lines, in the gym, and out there on the road, long before I dance under the lights.”**

To be an outstanding leader sacrifice is required. Detailed preparation and planning are essential to make a school great. Relentless effort on meeting the needs of students, staff and parents is non-negotiable. A leader must never micro-manage, but they must be obsessive about the standards of excellence that they demand and ensure they lead by example in the effort and commitment that excellence requires.

Yet this hard work must also be balanced with personal nourishment, rest and recuperation to ensure the mental and physical strength to lead outstandingly is there to be drawn upon. This can be achieved. Remember that a leader must only do what only the leader can do. It is vital to grow

and enable others, trusting them to lead too. It is important to create systems that have structural synergy and a golden thread of purpose. Everything that is done must be for the core purpose – not distracted by management tasks and meetings that please the agendas of others but fail to meet the needs of our students.

Metaphorically, a Principal steers the course of the ship that is their school; they must ensure that all is in place and clearly understood so that the vessel is fit to sail at dawn and be secure at sunset. And a great leader always eats last, when their team is fed.

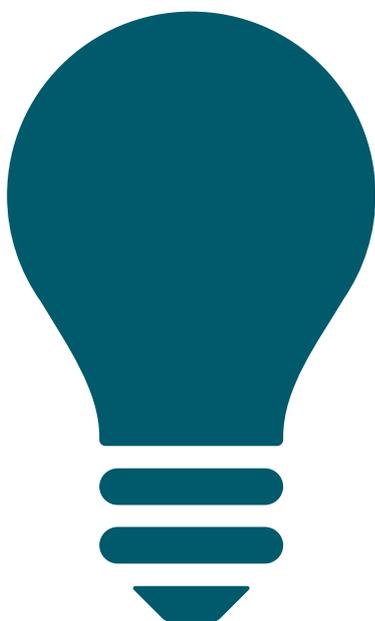
**v – A belief driven determination to transform and succeed: Frank Ghery, most celebrated living architect: “Why can’t I?”**

For an academy to be outstanding there has to be a culture of relentless optimism. The academy must see the potential in every child and regard lack of progress as failure on the part of the academy. Leaders who identify issues and concerns are little more than auditors compiling a report if they accept this list of ‘why we can’t’. A Fellowship Principal needs to see every challenge as an opportunity, ‘why can’t I’, and create new ways

of working so that success occurs. This is the leadership challenge that must be embraced. They must be self aware and solution focused.

The mind-set is the key thing. The way we care for children and young people is to make sure they achieve: this is our professional duty. For too long, school leaders and teachers have become expert analysts of what is wrong - the local estate, the parents, finances, teenage behaviour, politicians, OFSTED, the media; as if there is some magical place out there which is an educational nirvana where everything would be OK if only we worked there and these issues disappeared. The only way to succeed is to focus on achievement and what is to be done. Our academies are our reality and the places where we will achieve excellence without compromise. We can do this and the Fellowship will have roots that last long after us.

It comes down to values, self-confidence and belief: **“The people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do!”** (Steve Jobs, founder of Apple).



### 3 Knowledge

The Principal must be a continual learner. They must not be the ‘head of answers’, but they do need to know what has to be done and why. More importantly, they recognise who will be the best person to do it and both employ and empower them. Outstanding principals are constantly benchmarking against other schools, businesses and services. They study leadership wherever it occurs. Our Principals realise that outstanding schools have the following features: relentless optimism, great people and an obsession about doing the main things exceptionally and consistently well.

‘The 5th Discipline’ by Peter Senge (1990, 2006) identifies the effectiveness of leadership through these disciplines:

- Personal Mastery (the journey from conscious competency to unconscious competency)
- Mental models (as taught in our Pathways to Success programme)
- Team learning
- Building shared vision
- Systems thinking.

The last of these, systems thinking, is the essential ‘5th Discipline’ for a leader. A Principal must have knowledge of the systems at work as a whole: their community, the ideas and politics, the history, the economics, technology, the local, national and global influences. Knowledge and awareness of the factors affecting the present and future performance of the academy is essential. Where does the academy sit in the wider system? How can it best use that system to grow and thrive? A Principal must be leading into the future.

## 4 Skills

### *i – Attention to detail*

**Charles R Swindoll, American clergyman b. 1934: “The difference between something good and something great is attention to detail.”**

A Fellowship Principal must be a highly visible leader who is seen by the pupils, students and staff as much as possible. They build a great academy through their words, deeds, inspiration and presence. Charisma and gravitas are both vital. The Principal must recognise outstanding teaching and learning in all its forms and be able to manage performance with high efficiency and clarity.

The displays of the academy, the dress of the staff, the uniform of the students, the condition of the grounds, the consistency of administration, the quality of reception - every aspect of the academy’s work must burn with a relentless pursuit of excellence that is frighteningly consistent in its quality. The Principal must be the guardian of this standard and empower others to lead and manage all aspects with efficiency and clarity of purpose.

Outstanding schools are exceptionally good at the simple things: the core purpose of teaching and learning in a safe and happy environment so that every child makes amazing progress. There are no gimmicks. They focus on what matters. They keep the main thing the main thing and the bar is set ever higher, with a relentless attention to detail.

Kipp Schools, ‘Knowledge is Power’: “Sweat the small stuff.”

### *ii – An ability to build great teams and delegate with clarity and accountability.*

**Gandhi: “A sign of a good leader is not how many followers you have, but how many leaders you create.”**

Line management structures are essential if the Principal is to lead. All roles and responsibilities must have strategic clarity and

purpose that is joined like a golden thread to the core mission of the academy. There must be a true, clear and accurate narrative of performance from subject reports and Senior Leadership Team reviews, through to the presentations made by leaders to Academy Advisory Boards and the Fellowship Executive. In ‘reporting up’ and ‘reporting down’ there must be absolute transparency and honesty.

Once empowered to lead, people must be allowed to work in an atmosphere of trust and accountability. The Principal must create an atmosphere in which people can grow.

Self-evaluation must be efficient and rigorous, action and challenge must be robust, criticism must be clear, support must be precise and effective, praise must be deserved and sincere, success must always be celebrated, mediocrity must never be tolerated.

### *iii – Communication*

The most effective thing a leader can do is communicate their vision to inspire action. Principals must be in a continual mode of analysis and reflection regarding the understanding of vision, the depth of buy-in and the quality of delivery around them. They should be able to communicate the vision instantly and with clarity because it is what they are living and breathing.

Every word, action and reaction will be noted. The spotlight never goes out. Use this fact. Just get things done by making it really clear what needs to be done and why; over and over again until the halls of the academy echo to the sound of the vision from all who work and learn there.

W B Yeats: “Think like a wise man but communicate in the language of the people.”

## 5 Appearance

A Fellowship Principal is the leader of an organisation with the power to change lives. A job with such gravitas requires smartness of mind, smartness of posture, smartness of speech and smartness of dress. In 15 seconds parents, pupils and staff must know that they are in the presence of a leader who gets and respects the authority and responsibility they hold. Attention to detail in personal presentation equals attention to detail in work. This builds trust and respect appropriate to a school setting where the leader is the ultimate role model – all the while remembering that appearance without substance is worthless.

All Fellowship Principals must be exceptionally smart. They are required to present every working day in appropriate business attire, which shows pride in appearance and role. When they walk into a room they must be capable of ‘owning’ it with their presence.



# Pathways to Success

Outstanding leaders overcome their personal and operational barriers. This must happen rapidly within a targeted time-scale with challenging and accountable outcomes; it cannot be left to chance.

Personal Pathways is a training, coaching and mentoring programme delivered by The Education Fellowship.

Systemic insights must find their way into operating policies. We are overcoming the problem that often new insights fail to get put into practice because they come into conflict with deeply held

personal images, i.e. we follow practice because that is the way it has always been done – formulaic rather than innovative.

Our academies require the best leaders. We have structured personalised support to ensure our principals are enabled to reach the bar.

Having completed the programme for executives and principals, the programme will roll out to senior and middle leaders creating future, sustainable capacity within our Fellowship of academies.

## Who these expectations apply to

- The Board of Trustees
- The Executive
- Principals
- Chairs of Academy Advisory Boards
- All members of Senior Leadership Teams
- All Middle Leaders
- ...and anyone responsible and accountable for an area of practice within our schools.

**Every team, every action, must be in line with our demands for excellence.**





The Education Fellowship, The Old Dairy, Grange Road,  
Islip, Near Kettering, Northamptonshire NN14 4JB

01832 770512 | [info@educationfellowship.net](mailto:info@educationfellowship.net)  
[www.educationfellowship.net](http://www.educationfellowship.net)