

# The development of area-based education partnerships

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# Successful area wide collaboration for improvement: common factors



# The opportunities

- ❖ The glue in a diverse and potentially fragmented system
- ❖ A force to drive improvement by energising teachers, leaders and schools to build expertise
- ❖ A focus for involving the local community and business in education
- ❖ An opportunity for efficiencies of scale
- ❖ A space to build children's social, emotional and cultural capital

# The role of the local authority

*'.....there is a clear role for the local authority to not only support the formation of partnerships but to use its current powers and influence to ensure sustainability for the future- to act as the midwife and to prevent schools being left as isolated islands.'*

**Claire Kershaw, Director for Education, Essex 2016**

### MODEL 1

Statutory school improvement  
Traded school improvement  
Traded business and support services  
e.g. Herts for Learning, Octavo (Croydon)

### MODEL 2

Statutory school improvement  
Traded school improvement  
e.g. Birmingham Education Partnership,  
Learn Sheffield

## The range of partnerships

### MODEL 3

Traded school improvement  
e.g. Brent School Partnership  
Traded business and support services  
e.g. Newham Partnership Working

### MODEL 4

Various collaborative partnerships  
e.g. between schools and LA in Wigan  
e.g. SCHOOLS NorthEast, a school- led  
regional network

# A legal entity?

- ❖ Hardwires partnership working into a formal structure
- ❖ Signals a new venture with schools themselves taking ownership and demonstrating commitment
- ❖ Promises greater stability as it is not so reliant on one or two keen individuals
- ❖ Credibility with schools and external partners
- ❖ Creates an entity to employ staff
- ❖ Can trade and enter into contracts
- ❖ Transparency with members (schools)

# Core work

- ❖ Making connections
- ❖ Intelligence gathering
- ❖ Support, including challenge
- ❖ Brokerage
- ❖ Using local practitioners
- ❖ Development and improvement activities
- ❖ Monitoring and evaluation: evidencing progress and impact

# Collective commitment & expectations

## E.g. Lincolnshire Learning

<b>COMMIT AND CONTRIBUTE</b>	<b>SHARE</b>
<i>to supporting each other's improvement</i>	<i>and act upon evidence to improve learning</i>
<b>BUILD NETWORKS</b>	<b>WELCOME CHALLENGE</b>
and work together to serve children and their communities	from each other to ensure no school fails

# The key challenges

- ❖ Danger of distraction from core purpose
- ❖ Developing new skills and finding capacity
- ❖ Going beyond the 'land of nice'
- ❖ Shifting the current accountability mindset
- ❖ Resourcing the partnership
- ❖ Securing recognition

# Successful area partnerships

- ❖ Collective moral purpose and vision linked to place and community
- ❖ A clear model of change, using professional power and skills, and aligned with evidence
- ❖ An inclusive culture of openness, trust and mutual accountability
- ❖ Attention paid to developing networks
- ❖ Good planning, quality assurance and business development
- ❖ Capacity building to develop a self-improving system

# Optimism of the will

*'I am a pessimist because of intelligence but an optimist because of will.'*

Antonio Gramsci