

DELEGATION'S *what we need*

If you want a job done properly... give it to the person most likely to do it best, says Educating Essex's Vic Goddard

I clearly remember that first session on my NPQH, when the tutor said that in order to succeed as a head you have to delegate, and also accept that they won't ever do it quite how you want it. He was partially right – you do have to delegate – but in my experience the people I entrust do it better than me and come up with wonderful improvements!

I love the educational work of Sir Tim Brighouse, ex-chief education officer in Birmingham amongst other high-powered posts, and have used his pragmatic and common sense thinking on many occasions. Sir Tim talks about levels of delegation and I try to draw on these in my work at school. As you can see below he describes 9 levels:

- 1 Look into this problem. Give me all the facts. I will decide what to do.
- 2 Let me know the options available with the pros and cons of each. I will decide what to select.
- 3 Let me know the criteria for your recommendation, which alternatives you have identified and which one appears best to you with any risk identified. I will make the decision.
- 4 Recommend a course of action for my approval.
- 5 Let me know what you intend to do. Delay action until I approve.
- 6 Let me know what you intend to do. Do it unless I say not to.
- 7 Take action. Let me know what you did. Let me know how it turns out.
- 8 Take action. Communicate with me only if action is unsuccessful.
- 9 Take action. No further communication with me is necessary.

It is great to be able to operate as close to level nine as possible, but this can leave you very isolated as a head. I am a huge advocate of distributed leadership and there are times when it is appropriate that staff at different levels, teaching and non teaching, are given the chance to lead. Just as happens with the students that we serve, when people are given opportunities to shine they really step up.

The decision on *what* to delegate is quite easy in my mind – you select the things that someone else can do better. I know that is probably over-simplistic but, apart from the things that can only sit with the head teacher, why would anyone do something that someone else can do more effectively; how could that possibly serve the young people in our care well?

I guess the most obvious delegation that lots of heads have to do is the very thing that we went into the profession for – teaching young people. I admit that I have really struggled with not being in the classroom much, as I miss the buzz that children give you, especially when compared to the fifth draft of the latest policy that I have to wrestle with instead. However, I have had to rationalise that me simply missing lessons because I have to deal with something else is really letting the students down, and resign myself to grabbing teaching opportunities when I can. It's great fun when I

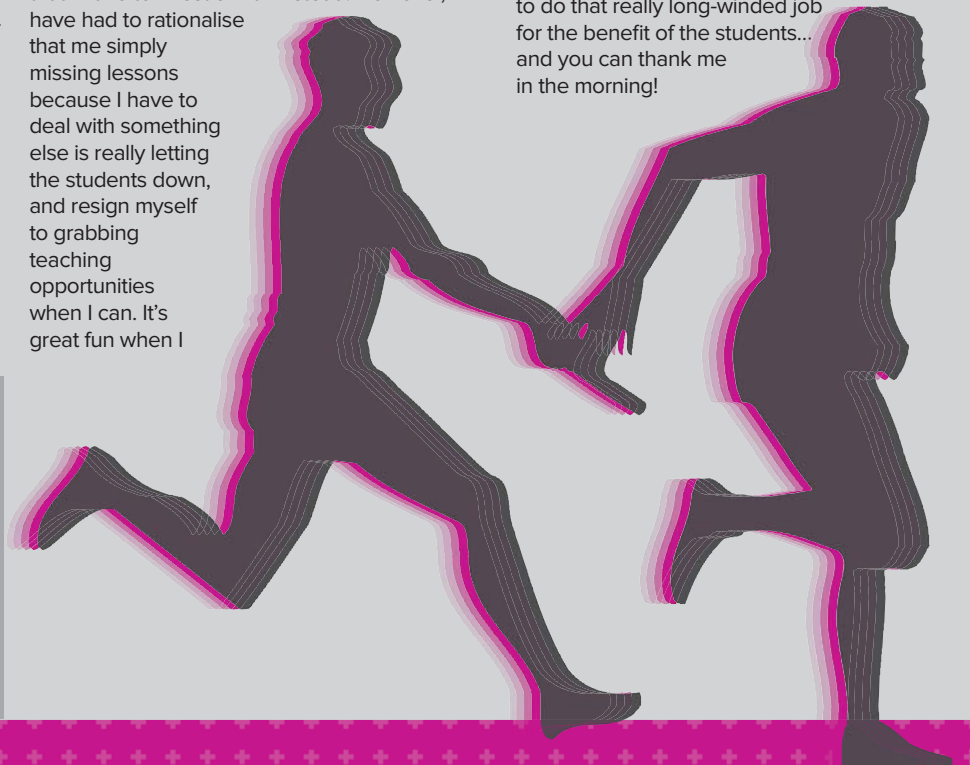
VIC GODDARD IS HEAD TEACHER AT PASSMORES ACADEMY – AS SEEN ON CHANNEL 4'S 'EDUCATING ESSEX' SERIES



do get the chance – and I hope the year 8 class that allowed me to turn back the clock and teach them PE towards the end of last term would agree!

The current (at least this week's version) Ofsted framework increases the importance of head teachers really knowing their school and so the SEF and strategic overview of teaching still sit firmly with me and I don't think that is likely to change.

Delegation can be seen as simply getting someone else to do the work but actually, as long as it's done well, it is vital in order for us to serve our young people fully. So for any of my SLT reading this – I am asking you to do that really long-winded job for the benefit of the students... and you can thank me in the morning!



“WHY WOULD ANYONE DO SOMETHING THAT SOMEONE ELSE CAN DO MORE EFFECTIVELY; HOW COULD THAT POSSIBLY SERVE THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN OUR CARE WELL?”