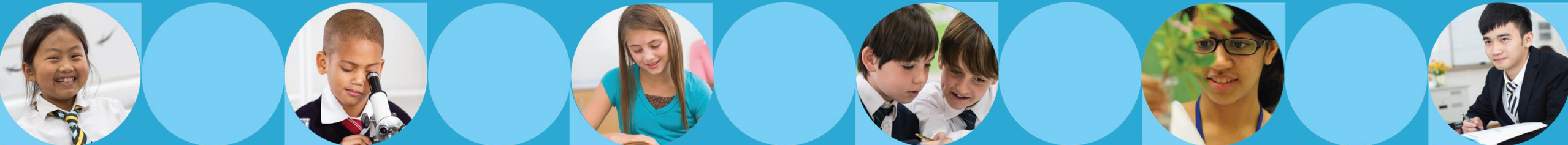




**Cambridge Assessment
International Education**

Welcome to the Cambridge Schools Conference



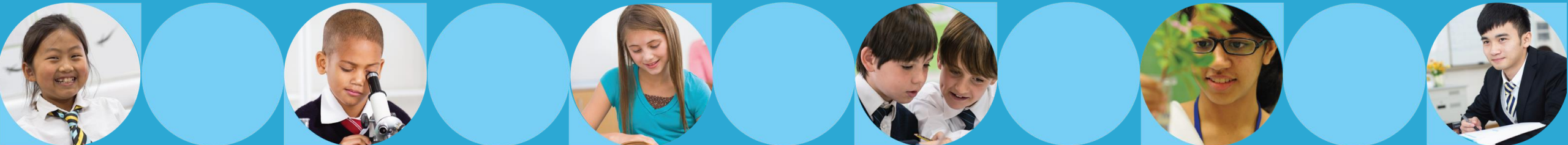


Promoting a collaborative staff culture

Together we stand, divided we fall
Come on now people, let's get on the ball and work together
(Canned Heat, Let's Work Together, 1970)

Simon Armitage
Deputy Head (international schools and projects),
The Perse School, Cambridge

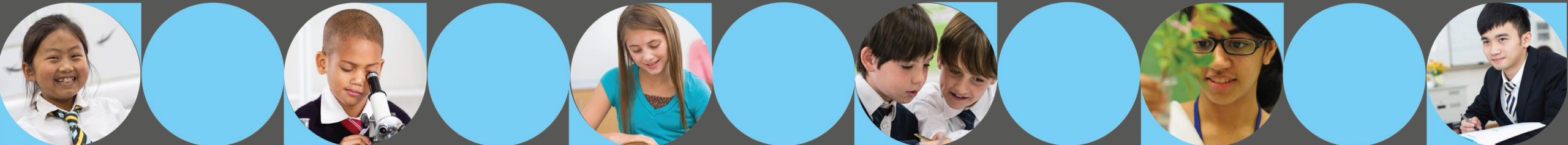
September 2022



Promoting a collaborative staff culture

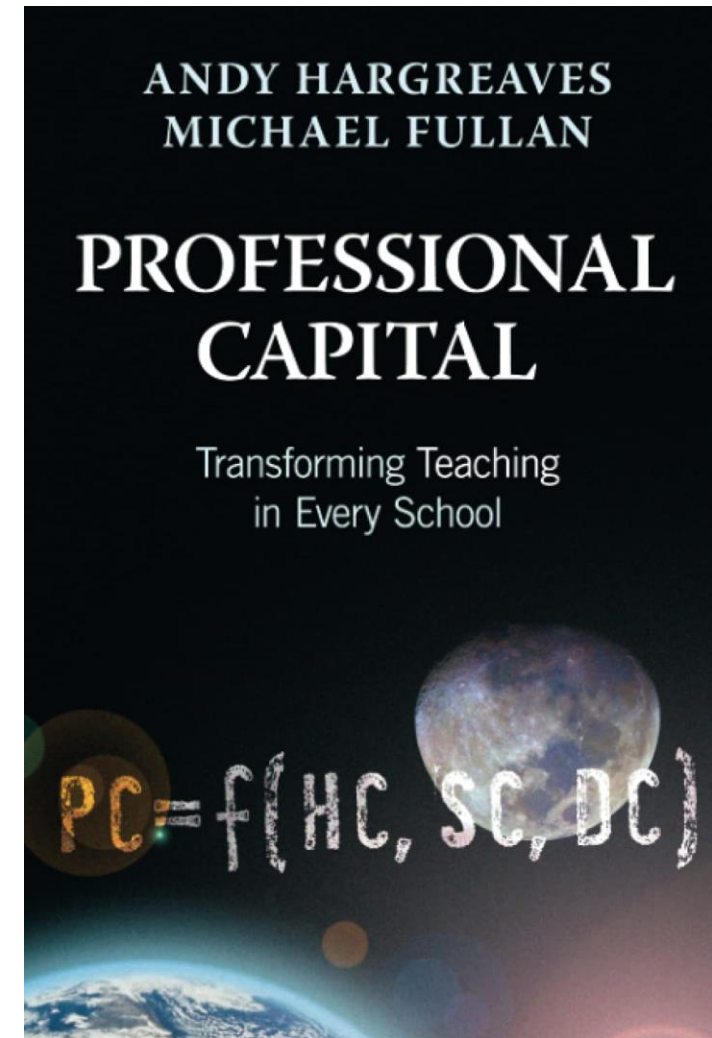
- ▶ Why don't teachers and managers within schools work together more?
- ▶ Why would students learn more, achieve more and thrive more in a more collaborative culture?
- ▶ How can you create a collaborative culture within *your* school?

Some starting points



Professional Capital

- ▶ The more we collaborate, the **more effective** we become both **individually** and **collectively**.



Professional capital has three elements:

- ▶ Human capital: the qualities of the individuals, their qualifications and competencies on paper
- ▶ Social capital: the extent to which teachers in schools work in a collaborative way to focus on learning / engagement and improvement of student achievement
- ▶ Decisional capital: the ability to make discretionary judgements.

Social capital (relationships / collaboration) is key

- ▶ Schools with high social capital showed positive achievement outcomes
- ▶ Schools with strong social and human capital together did even better
- ▶ **Most important, teachers with lower human capital, who happened to be working in a school with higher social capital, got better outcomes than those in schools with lower social capital.**



How this works in your school will vary: no one school is the same as another

- ▶ Individuals have different strengths – teachers and learners
- ▶ Government or national operating environments place different requirements or pressures on schools
- ▶ Different parental expectations
- ▶ Difficult histories and cultures



Collaboration takes time - beware contrived collegiality

- ▶ Professional capital is not an end in itself
- ▶ Collaboration is not an end in itself
- ▶ “collaborative cultures don’t evolve quickly, they can be unattractive for administrators seeking swift solutions” (Hargreaves & Fullan, page 117)

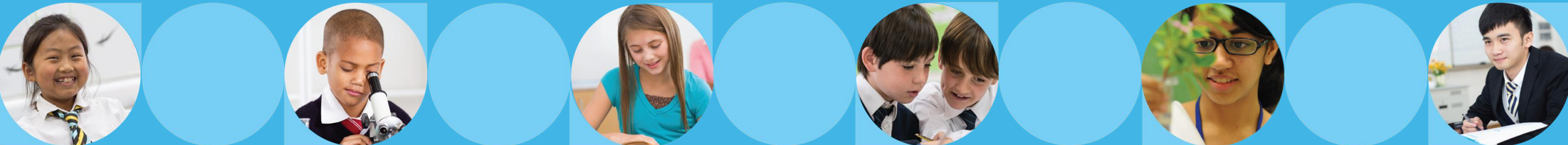


Collaborative cultures must be informal – you can't force relationships

- ▶ Collaborative cultures require investment in underlying **relationships**
- ▶ **We need to use the group to change the group.** And over time, the more you DO, the better you get
- ▶ **Growth is a function of relationship quality over time,** and the resultant individual professional capital.



Why don't teachers and managers within schools work together more?



Teaching is personal

- ▶ My subject
 - ▶ My class
 - ▶ My classroom
 - ▶ My students
 - ▶ My results
 - ▶ My resources
-
- ▶ My responsibility
 - ▶ My reputation



Teaching can be territorial

- ▶ Teachers might associate more with some colleagues than with others
 - ▶ Subject groups
 - ▶ Based around where their classrooms or workrooms are
 - ▶ Based around who is in the ‘innovative’ group – ‘education technology’ crowd

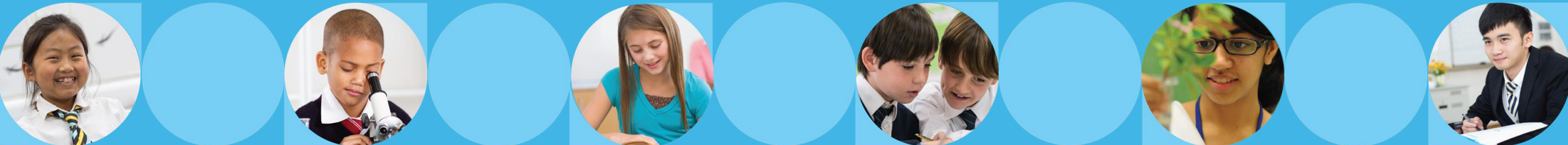


Disconnected leadership / administration

- ▶ Administrators who no longer teach
- ▶ Administrators who have never taught
- ▶ Administrators physical distant - in different buildings from the teachers and learners
- ▶ School that has generated an 'us' and 'them' culture
- ▶ Administrators who don't understand the education priorities and impact of financial decisions
- ▶ Unclear leadership structures



**Why would students learn more,
achieve more and thrive more in a
more collaborative culture?**

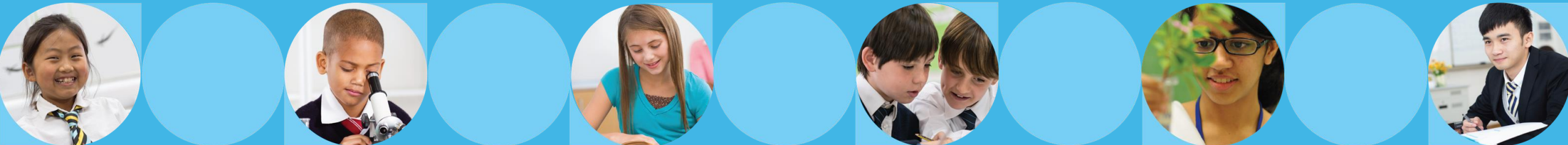


Benefits

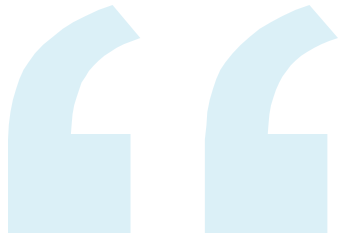
- ▶ Staff stability
 - ▶ Happy staff
 - ▶ Creates opportunities for professional development within the school
- ▶ Staff recruitment
 - ▶ Attractive schools are sought out by good applicants
- ▶ Common purpose
 - ▶ Alignment with the school's chosen priorities
- ▶ Students are known and pastorally supported because they are known across subjects / teachers



How to create a collaborative culture within *your* school?



Schools do better where there is a



clearer sense of common mission **and stronger relationships organised around it.**

Hargreaves & Fullan (2012; p.90)



School vision



Our Vision and Values

Our values are at the heart of everything we do.



We want every pupil to share a love of learning while developing a character of kindness and understanding towards one another.

We value **endeavour, intellectual curiosity and scholarship, breadth and balance** and **one another and the environment**.

We are a visionary school, always looking forward as we shape the exceptional education our pupils receive, knowing that the future belongs to them.

<https://www.perse.co.uk/about/values/>

School vision – an example from The Perse School, Cambridge

To help realise our vision we will:



Promote academic excellence through a challenging curriculum, outstanding teaching, intellectual curiosity and scholarship.



Provide high quality pastoral care to meet individual needs, and support the development of happy, balanced and considerate pupils.



Offer a rounded education, rich in rewarding extracurricular opportunities which develop life skills, character and perspective.



Maintain a safe, well ordered community in which pupils develop a strong moral framework, an understanding of the law, and an appreciation of the spiritual dimension to life.



Value one another through a commitment to kindness, consideration, inclusion, equality and diversity.



Value the environment by caring for our sites and acting sustainably.



Provide high quality professional development for all staff to ensure ongoing personal and institutional improvement.



Finance means-tested bursaries to ensure The Perse is accessible and help those outside the school through outreach and charitable work.



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School vision

- ▶ Is your vision clear?
- ▶ Do you staff share the vision?
 - ▶ Beware “my vision”, “my teachers’, “my school”
 - ▶ How do you know?
 - ▶ Are you sure? Do you know your people and their culture and their circumstance?



Staff recruitment

- ▶ What do you prioritise in your interview / selection process?
 - ▶ Human capital – expertise?
 - ▶ Social capital – collaboration?



Staff recruitment

- ▶ How would you rank the following characteristics when recruiting new staff?
 - ▶ Expertise (masters or higher degree / other qualifications)
 - ▶ Length of experience (years in teaching)
 - ▶ Range of experience (different types of schools)
 - ▶ Adaptability (willingness to take on different roles)
 - ▶ Flexibility (evidence of ability to adjust)
 - ▶ Team-work (evidence of working with different groups of people)
 - ▶ Commitment (time in different organisations / speed of move / any internal promotions)



Performance management

- ▶ What do you staff think is being measured or they are being measured against?
- ▶ How does this affect how see perceive the importance and value of collaboration?
 - ▶ Do you grade individual lessons that are observed?
 - ▶ How do you measure the 'success' of a subject teacher?
 - ▶ How do measure the success of a subject department of another area of the school?



Staff training

- ▶ Who do you select to go on training?
- ▶ How does this experience get shared?

- ▶ Who are you trying to influence in your school that they should become more collaborative?
 - ▶ Are you trying to influence the 'right' people?



Collaboration audit



Your school

▶ Score your score from 0 to 10 on the following:

1. Staff work together in a variety of contexts, not simply in teaching their subject
2. Staff share a common vision and purpose in the school which is aligned to the school's values
3. There is openness in communication between different staff including of different levels of seniority
4. There is stability in the leadership group staffing
5. Staff can easily make time to talk to each other face-to-face during the working day
6. Staff can easily find a place to work collaboratively with each other
7. The appraisal system prioritises collaboration and teamwork rather than individual performance
8. The lesson observation system encourages collaboration and collective responsibility rather than individual performance

Your school

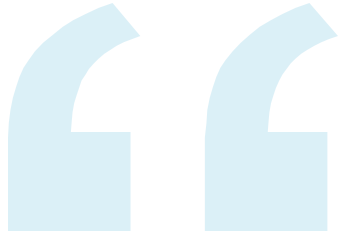
- ▶ Where is there most collaboration in your school?
- ▶ Is it:
 - ▶ Within subject departments? (which ones)
 - ▶ Between subject departments? (which ones)
 - ▶ In pastoral areas of work?
 - ▶ In extra-curricular areas of work?
- ▶ Why do you think this is?

Relational Proximity - are your staff relationally strong?

- ▶ **Two of the key measures are:**
 - ▶ **Multiplexity:** relationships are built through the sharing of information in different contexts
 - ▶ **Commonality:** building a sense of shared purpose, having common values and goals to work towards, brings us together in the very best of ways
- ▶ Are there areas to reconsider in the light of the relational proximity areas?



Stable and sustainable leadership ...

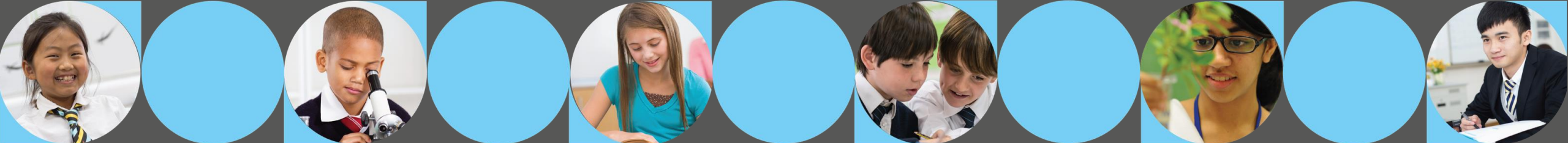


to build long-term professional capital across whole cohorts of teachers, develop social capital among them as communities, establish trust with the teachers and schools they know well, and guide teachers and learners through their careers as professionals and as people.

Hargreaves & Fullan (2012; p.167)



Scenarios



Case Study A

- ▶ Adrian has recently taken over leadership of the sixth form section of the school. He has a tutor team of 15 who see their tutees three times a week. Adrian is very conscious of the workload of his tutors and is, by nature, an extremely helpful individual. Almost always, he will offer to step in to talk to a student or their parents instead of the tutor, in order to help the tutor with their own busy schedule. Many of the tutors spend a lot of their teaching time on another school site so it isn't always easy for them to get to their tutees outside of the allocated times.
- ▶ Adrian is well liked and respected by the students and is known for going above and beyond to help them on pastoral and academic matters. Before he took this role, Adrian has always been the first to offer to contact parents to follow up concerns. In fact, he doesn't mind contacting them well into the evenings and at weekends as well.
- ▶ Adrian feels that he is under a lot of pressure from the Principal to improve the examination results and the parents expectations of results and universities are very high. Adrian himself is a very high achieving person with a very strong academic background. He has excellent attention to detail and some may say he is a perfectionist.

Case Study B

- ▶ Natalie is an experienced Head of School and has worked internationally before. Natalie is now working within a small group of schools which are privately owned and run for profit. The Board for the company is not experienced in running schools but they have an excellent background in running other businesses.
- ▶ Natalie has very frequent communication with the Chief Executive but few of these are 'formal meetings' and so very few meetings are documented.
- ▶ The Chief Executive is very conscious of the spending on administrative staff and prefers to employ people on an occasional basis for specific tasks because this is more efficient.
- ▶ Natalie's teaching staff are dedicated to their individual subjects and most have good relationships with the students. There has been a lot of turmoil over the covid pandemic and they are not sure when they can travel without barriers. Some of the teachers have not seen their families in over 18 months'.

Case Study C

- ▶ Hardeep works in an ambitious school and teaches geography which is optional at IGCSE. Student take up is good at around 60%.
- ▶ Ajay, a new Head of history has been appointed (also an optional subject). The history department has 3 classes in IGCSE but they are quite small. Ajay is concerned that unless his IGCSE recruitment increases there will be only 2 classes next year. This could mean that some of the other history teachers might have to teach more global perspectives lessons or take more enrichment classes in academic extension or in sport.
- ▶ Ajay has started to use the school reports to promote his subject and is telling parents that children studying history age 13 and 14 that they will achieve particularly high IGCSE results if they select this option.

Case Study D

- ▶ Nuovo School is wanting to make a big impression on the local parents. It is seeking as many student competitions to enter as possible. Students are expecting to be entered into these competitions regularly – may be three or four per term. The Principal is keen to support this but also knows that it is important that student mental health and wellbeing is looked after.
- ▶ Parents expect the school to provide a high level of support for the competitions. Some students are boarding so they can use some of their evening times. Day students start to stay at school later into the evening to maximise their time to get help from teachers.
- ▶ The Principal brings in a new initiative to make sure that every tutor has a one-to-one meeting with their tutee every month. These meetings can't be fully scheduled into the timetable as nothing else has been removed. Consequently, the meetings largely take place before school, in lunch times and after school.

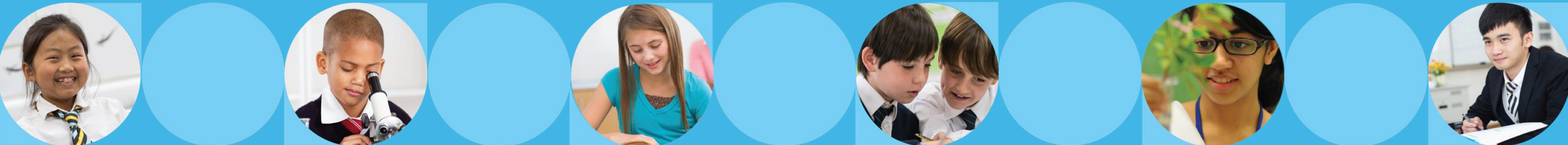
Case Study E

- ▶ Novello School needs to increase student numbers. The local market is challenging. The other local schools have a high standard and are most doing well.
- ▶ Novello School decides to re-position itself as *the school that listens to its students and designs pastoral and academic support around the individual students*.
- ▶ The school's vision statement now includes the phrase: *“we adapt to you – everything at Novello School is designed with the student at the centre”*.

Case Study F

- ▶ City High School has a successful English department with 10 teachers. Five of the teachers have over 10 years of experience. Five are more recent teachers and three have less than 2 years' experience. The Head of Department allows each teacher to choose their favourite books to teach within a given topic area because this allows each teacher to use their own expertise and particular enthusiasm.
- ▶ The results for English are good and the students appear to be happy within the subject.
- ▶ An independent school improvement inspection highlighted the strengths of the department's expertise whilst it also noted that students are not having identical learning experiences between classes because of the individual approaches of the teachers.

Next steps?



Next steps?

- ▶ Who could be in your core collaboration group?
- ▶ Do you need to review any school systems and processes to encourage collaboration and better relational proximity?
- ▶ Would an external review be helpful? School improvement consultancy?