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**A study of school headship in the context of inclusion of learning disabled students as perceived by
school staff in mainstream secondary schools in Israel**

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Abstract

The study aims to investigate staff perceptions of school headship in relation to the inclusion of learning-disabled students. The main question is whether headteachers perceived to be leaders develop an inclusive vision towards learning-disabled students more than those who are perceived to be managers. The study relies on the perceptions of headteachers, counsellors and teachers in five secondary schools in the Tel-Aviv area, Israel. The method of enquiry that was applied was the interpretive approach which allowed for an analysis via interviews, and elements of the survey approach and documentary analysis. The analysis and conclusion indicated that an inclusive headteacher possesses 'leadership' traits such as vision, inspiration and enthusiasm, but that he/she must also develop managerial skills to help communicate and sustain the change. In addition, the educational vision of inclusive headteachers includes elements of social involvement and emphasis on individual needs. The paper ends with suggestions for further research.

Introduction and aim of study

Researchers agree that the inclusion of students with disabilities is one of the major school reform movements of this century (Slavin, 1997). The international commitment to inclusion was made explicit in the Salamanca World Statement on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994) which recognised the diversity of needs but at the same time the need for accommodation within regular schools. The orientation towards inclusive schooling that emerged in the late 1960s was driven by the ideology of human and civil rights and by a desire to enhance school effectiveness (Sebba and Ainscow, 1996;

Mittler, 2000). More recently, the UN issued the 2000 Dakar Framework for Action which expresses commitment towards Education For All (EFA) for every citizen and society. Initially, provision had been offered through a segregated school system, and later this was followed by segregated classes in regular schools.

In an attempt to enhance understanding of the process of inclusion, the present study investigates the way schoolheads perceive themselves and are perceived by staff in terms of being leaders of change or managers, and the perceived vision and inclusive vision which pertain to these headteachers. The main question is whether headteachers who are perceived as leaders tend to develop an inclusive vision towards learning-disabled students (LDS) more than those perceived as managers. It is noteworthy that the issue of LDS inclusion is considered in this study to be an issue of change implementation which has not been completed yet.

The section below offers a review of the concepts of leadership and management, and later on on the concepts of vision, inclusion and inclusive vision.

Literature review

There is an increasing body of literature on the impact of leadership and management on education, focusing particularly on headteachers (Grace, 1995; Leithwood et al., 1998). Different attitudes have been expressed in the literature towards these concepts. The view which reflects the 1980s draws a distinction between the two concepts. Schon (1984) maintains that one can be an inspirational leader without carrying any burdens of management. Conversely, one can control organisational activities and make decisions, without fulfilling the inspirational functions of leadership. Fidler (1996: 21) defines leadership as *“those processes of bringing about change by inspiring others to follow”*, whereas management is *“processes for implementing the change”*.

Further, Stoll and Fink (1996) and West-Burnham (1997) argue that leadership is associated with spiritual aspects such as transformation, orientation towards people, vision, shared ownership, strategic

development, direction, inspiration, motivation, and a 'humanist' approach. Leadership involves developing a culture that encourages learning as well as communicating vision with clarity. Conversely, management is associated with structures and processes and is far more practical. It involves day-to-day problem-solving, development and implementation of policies, 'getting things done', systems, transaction, control, and a 'technocratic approach'.

Moreover, leadership has been identified as the most important aspect for successful schools, while management has been relegated to a secondary position (Millett, 1996). Indeed, Sergiovanni (1984b) sets a hierarchy in which management underpins the other forces, whereas the most advanced forces are aspects of leadership which embed values and culture.

Another attitude suggests that leadership and management are overlapping: Morrison (1998: 205) argues that *"management and leadership are not an either/or but rather complementary"*. Burnes (1996: 152) asserts that the difference between them is a matter of style. Similarly, Hodgkinson's (1991) maintains that leadership and management are inseparable, as leading a school or college involves translating philosophy into action.

Coleman (1994) indicates the perceived tension between the notion of headteacher as chief executive and as a leading professional. Bush (1995: 11) proceeds: *"(Headteachers) are often sandwiched uncomfortably between the conflicting pressures of bureaucracy and professionalism"*. Indeed, researchers believe that both leadership and management are equally important functions for educational effectiveness (Bush and Coleman, 2000; Glatter, 1997), and that effective headteachers should create synergy out of 'leading professional' roles, and 'chief executive' responsibilities (Ribbins 1995; Hall 1996; Law 1999).

Current views associate the notion of leaders with being managers of change (Morrison, 1998). Middlewood (in Middlewood and Lumby, 1998) and Hall et al. (1997) refer to the need of headteachers

to combine strategic thinking for the future with a capacity for operational management towards improvement. Indeed, in the past headteachers' concern about change was limited:

“Not so long ago those interested in reform used to figure out ways of bypassing the principal in an attempt to get changes implemented directly in the classroom. The assumption was that the principal was more of an obstacle than a help, and that anything that would neutralise his or her role would be a good thing... Principals were incorrigible blockers of progress” (Fullan, 1991: 169)

However, headteachers began to understand that school improvement is dependent upon an active role of the head in leading this process. Since the 1980s, heads' role has shifted from implementing specific innovations to changing the culture of the school (Fullan, 1991). Leading change in education is associated with 'transformational leadership', which encompasses heads' ability to manage value-driven, vision-based changes through commitment, empowerment, ownership, and by enthusing others (Senge, 1993).

Since schools are expected to improve constantly, it has been argued that *“without some sense of direction which captures both minds and hearts, teachers will indeed be working in a vacuum”* (Foreman, in Middlewood and Lumby, 1998: 29). Researchers see vision as the ability to organise meaning for all those involved in school work (e.g. West-Burnham) as well as *“to bring together knowledge and experience to produce new insights”* (Kouzes and Posner, 1996: 104-5). Vision is defined metaphorically by Murgatroyd and Morgan (1993: 84) as *“the primary vehicle for creating alignment of energies within an organisation”*.

Although in reality most mission statements *fail to “grab people in the gut and motivate them to work toward a common end”* (Collins and Porras, 1991: 30), there seems to be a consensus that visionary leadership is a top factor in successful inclusion.(Lipsky and Gartner, 1998; Rouse and Florian, 1996), particularly in creating and promoting an inclusive ethos at school (Stanovich and Jordan, 1998; Sommefeldt, 2001), and providing support (Smith, 1996).

Researchers agree that an inclusive school is a school that has been subject to change and improvement (Sebba and Ainscow, 1996). The inclusive approach is an international movement that advocates educating all students in ordinary classroom settings irrespective of their differences in intellectual, physical, sensory or other characteristics (Ballard, 1992). Current literature appears to differentiate between the terms 'inclusion' and 'integration' on the grounds of the level of effectiveness (Farrell, 2001). For example, Tod (1999: 186) differentiates between being '*locationally integrated but not effectively included*'. Florian (in Tilstone et al., 1998) claims that whereas integration is associated with the physical learning environment, inclusion is seen in terms of the quality of the learning experience, which ensures that no student is denied access to educational opportunities.

According to research an inclusive leader is likely to have specific traits such as open-mindedness (Adair, 1983), altruism (Starratt, 1988), vision, sensitivity and subsidiarity (West-Burnham, 1997), and an inspiring and supportive personality (Kouzes and Posner, 1996).

On the basis of existing literature it seems that nowadays, when a focus is placed on school improvement, school headteachers should possess the ability to create a sense of direction as well as an operational capacity of managing this change. This is also true for headteachers in the process of inclusion, where vision, problem-solving and the implementation of change are essential skills.

Methodology

Research approach

As the study relies on staff perceptions, the main research approach used are interpretive approach within the qualitative paradigm. However, the analysis did not rely only on participants' subjective understanding, but also on the researcher's subjective interpretation and the way she interpreted staff perceptions. This means that the 'reality' of school management and inclusion was elaborated on two levels of subjective interpretations, that of participants and that of the researcher on the basis of staff perceptions. This stance is supported by Miles and Huberman (1994) who argue that interpretivists have

their own understandings, convictions, and conceptual orientations. This idea gains further support by LeCompte and Preissle (1993: 45) who introduce two terms: 'emic', '*where the concern is to catch the subjective meanings placed on situations by participants*' and 'etic', '*where the intention is to identify and understand the objective or researcher's meaning and constructions of a situation*'.

The conceptual framework

The exploration of existing literature indicated lack of uniformity regarding attempts to define whether headteachers are managers or leaders of change. At the same time it has been argued that schoolheads contribute to school improvement and change and to the process of inclusion by providing school staff with a sense of direction and developing a vision. Consequently, two main aspects from the literature have been highlighted as part of the conceptual framework of the present study.

The exploration of how headteachers perceive themselves and how they are perceived by school staff in terms of whether they are leaders or managers was accompanied by an exploration of school vision, because the latter was believed to reinforce understanding of the former, and to shed light on headteachers' work by demonstrating whether the headteacher is attempting to create a shared vision which will recruit staff and enhance the motivation regarding the change process, or whether he/she is a chief executive who wants to 'get things done' efficiently .

The second issue under investigation is inclusive vision, which is one aspect of inclusive leadership. It focused more specifically on whether headteachers had any inclusive vision which underpins the process of inclusion of LDS in the respective schools, according to their perceptions and to staff perceptions. It is hoped that the investigation of these issues will enhance understanding of the relationship between school headship and the inclusion of LDS.

Schools background

The five schools that participated in this study were chosen from all the secondary schools that belong to the Department of Education of Tel-aviv Municipality. This means that the same educational

policy is applied in all schools. The schools were codified by the letters A, B, C, D,E. The three research populations were codified by their initial letters: H for headteachers, C for counsellors and T for teachers; each teacher and counselor was then codified by a cardinal number. For example, the third teacher that was interviewed in the second school was codified as B. T.3 and so forth. In school E, both the headteacher (EH1) and his deputy (EH2) participated in the study. An attempt has been made to choose schools that would differ from one another in a variety of factors related to school management and inclusion, and to focus on the unique features of each of the 5 schools.

School A is an academically-oriented school in the north part of the city with 1200 students from an average to high socio-economic background. It was founded in 1975. This school focusses on a close cooperation with the community (the Scouts, volunteer work) and has adopted a student-centred orientation. The headteacher of school A has been in his position for 18 years.

School B is partly an academic and partly a vocational school located in the north part of the city, with 1352 students from an average to high socio-economic background. It was founded in 1972. The headteacher in the past 3 years has a highly developed inclusive vision and practically integrates students with special needs (even autism) in school life. The other interesting point about this school is that it had had 7 headteachers in 10 years before the current headteacher took the lead.

School C has a long educational tradition (founded in 1937) and is located in the centre of the city. Its new headteacher had previously been a teacher in the same school. It has 1520 students who come from mixed backgrounds (27% come from the south of the city). This school is known for the open climate and informal relationships between teachers and students.

School D is a vocational school which offers a 'second chance' to students who dropped out of other schools. Actually, most of its students are learning-disabled and under-achievers. This school was founded in 1935 and comprises 404 students. School population includes students from Tel-Aviv (60%) and from the periphery (40%). The socio-economic background of the students is mixed. Lately school

has undergone drastic organisational as well as conceptual changes in an attempt to make a shift from a vocational school to an academic school. This has led to structural changes because the vocational departments were canceled and new subjects were introduced. The whole process was conducted by exterior consultants and was characterised by staff resistance to these changes. A year later school was closed down.

School E is a vocational school located in the south part of the city. It was founded in 1949 and comprises 1450 students. The socio-economic background of most of its students is low. School's headteacher has been in his position for 3 decades. Eight years ago school changed its vocation from being an elective technological school to a comprehensive school with a heterogeneous population, in an attempt to attract a larger number of students. It offers advanced technological tracks as well as easier tracks for low-achievers.

Research population

All 5 headteachers answered the questionnaires and also participated in the interviews. The counsellors and teachers that were interviewed have voluntarily put their names on a list that was introduced in the teachers' room. Their total number was 23. They were contacted later on the phone and dates for the interviews were set. On the one hand, it can be argued that the sampling of the participants was randomly done. However, the researcher was well aware of the fact that those who volunteered could be more open to changes, more influential or involved in school life, more motivated towards changes or inclusion or more insightful.

Research tools

Data in the present study was accumulated and triangulated via 3 research tools: questionnaires, in-depth interviews and documentary analysis. The exploration of the concept of 'Inclusive vision' was done via a questionnaire that was 'tailored' for headteachers. It comprised 15 questions that were

accumulated into one score (appendix 2). The questions were constructed according to Likert scale (1932) in which 1 represents 'to a very small extent' and 5 represents 'to a large extent'.

The investigation of 'inclusive vision' and 'perceptions of headship' were also carried out via personal interviews. The interviews were 'semi-closed' and allowed the interviewee to deviate from the direct question. The questions regarding 'headship' focused on staff perceptions of the emphasis in the headteacher's work (leader for change or manager) and its impact on school work. The interview regarding 'inclusive vision' focused on staff perceptions of the existence of guidelines regarding the implementation of inclusion, and whether they feel they are being recruited towards this change in their respective schools.

The main purpose of the documentary analysis was to explore to what extent the issue of LD is made explicit in the process of marketing the school to potential students and parents. The fact that these documents were not written deliberately on LD matters but were used by the researcher for her own purpose made them 'inadvertent sources' rather than 'deliberate' sources (Bell, 1987). Thus they could be used as unbiased material for analysis. Further, school documentation was studied as a means of triangulation on the issue of inclusion.

Research design

The introductory stage included an initial conversation with the headteacher in which access to school was formally granted, the research aim was clarified, and the headteacher was given his/her questionnaire. Only in school E were two questionnaires administered to the headteacher (EH1) and his deputy (EH2) upon the headteacher's request. In all five schools the researcher had the feeling that the importance of the study was acknowledged by headteachers and staff alike.

During the second stage the six questionnaires were collected and headteachers, counsellors and teachers were interviewed. It was a lot less complicated to gain access to counsellors than to teachers because counsellors do not teach and so are more available. In addition, they usually have their own

room. Teachers, on the other hand, had to allocate time within their free periods which were sometimes not at all free. Often there was no room available, and teachers felt unwilling to conduct talks in the teachers' room. The overall number of interviewees was twenty eight (five headteachers, eleven counsellors and twelve teachers). In some cases it took one meeting to complete the interview (which usually lasted about two-three hours) and in others there was a need for a 'joining' session or for a follow-up in order to complete some missing information.

The last stage of data collection was the study of written documents. Schools' marketing brochures were examined in an attempt to study school's attitudes and policy towards LDS. The whole process of the research was fully documented and referenced.

Findings

Perceptions of headship: 'manager' versus 'leader'

Staff perceptions of headship were collected in 28 in-depth interviews. Each headteacher was asked how he/she perceives himself - as a leader of educational change or as a school manager. Staff members were presented with the same questions and were asked to provide examples of the activities the headteacher is mainly involved in.

Three headteachers perceive themselves as 'leaders'. AH contends that *"a headteacher should be more of a leader and less of a manager"*. Yet, he claims: *"I'm not enough of a leader due to time deficiency"*. An examination of AH's performance indicates that he perceives himself as a manager too: *"Schoolheads should be perceived as general managers of hi-tech companies and take part in the same training programme"*.

BH perceives school headship as leadership depending on the headteacher's charisma rather than as management. Her perceptions are supported by school staff. BT.2 agrees that BH is a leader: *"Before she came, 20% of the teachers worked and the remaining 80% didn't. Now the picture has reversed. She can*

make people do their utmost". However, BH's educational doing shows that she is equally involved in managerial issues such as the tiniest details of teachers' functioning.

CH's perception is that *"a headteacher must have vision and commitment towards society. He/she must know where he/she leads school. He/she must be able to push the organisation forward but at the same time make sure that no one is left behind. Schoolhead should also be a manager and surround him/herself with management people of high quality"*.

DH argues that *"a headteacher should be a leader more than a manager and develop a vision for school rather than fulfill missions"*. He adds that *"a headteacher is isolated in the tree-top but he/she must not forget that there is a whole tree beneath them"*. Yet, DH is not perceived as a leader by school staff. DT3: *"Now that this change has failed, I'm afraid DH will go back to managing the left-overs of his attempts for change rather than lead school. He might finally understand that a change process should rely on vision rather than on power"*.

EH1 contends that leadership and management are equally needed for successful school headship: *"Leadership is required at critical intersections before a change is made and the headmaster needs to take the lead. This is sometimes done at the cost of sympathy because as a leader you cannot always listen to people. However, a headteacher should be a manager too because he/she is holding the budgets and making the decisions"*. EC.2 perceives EH1 as *"the Minister of foreign Affairs' who is mainly interested in his job as a lecturer at a university, whereas school is actually run by EH2 who carries out EH1's policy"*.

The findings of the present study indicate that although some headteachers (AH, BH and DH) assert that school headship is about leadership, the data show that headship always involves management elements, whether this is perceived by headteachers (as in the case of CH and EH1), by staff (in school D), or by the examination of their own work (AH and BH).

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School vision

Staff perceptions of school vision were collected via an analysis of school documents and staff interviews. The findings yielded a similarity between schools A, B, and C as one group, and between schools D and E as another group.

The first group seemed to focus on the individual student's welfare, response to individual needs, and on social involvement. School A's marketing brochure reflect *"equal opportunities for all"*, and the provision of *"a listening ear"*. BT.2 says: *"We'll bring down the sun for each students, but he/she has to reach a hand for it"*. CT.3 advocates: *"This school is open and inclusive to all learners"*. School C's documents advocate *"social involvement and contribution to the Israeli society"*. School B stands out in its emphasis on social awareness. It has developed a 'Coaching' project for the SEN students in which all mainstream students participate. It also encourages rapport with the community and the Scouts.

On the other hand, the vision of schools D and E is related to a changing society and to the future hi-tech world. As part of the recent changes, school D which was previously a vocational school and admits students who dropped out of academically-oriented schools, changed its name to 'The Interdisciplinary Campus for the 'Languages' of the New Era'. It refers to subjects as 'languages' and presents a vision which seems to be remote from school everyday reality: *"School is a centre where the learner practices 'languages' in combination of new fields of interest which have been adapted to the changing and renewing life environment. The central values which feature the campus are: innovation, achievement, dynamism, and quality"*.

School E's documents are presented as *"a Passport to Success in a Hi-Tech World"*. School attempts to *"encourage independent, creative and critical thinking"*. The marketing brochure demonstrates an indirect approach towards the students. They are not addressed as 'our students' or 'students of this school' but rather to 'learners'.

Inclusive vision

The findings regarding 'inclusive vision' were collected from the questionnaires, interviews and school documents.

All fifteen questions concerning inclusive vision in the questionnaires were combined into one variable to represent headteachers' perceptions of their inclusive vision (Appendix 1, Table 1). On a scale of 1 to 5, figure 1 seems to represent a policy which encourages excellence whereas 5 represents a policy which encourages the provision of educational needs for weaker populations.

(Table 1 near here)

The findings indicate that AH and BH have the highest score in their perceptions of inclusive vision whereas school D and E have the lowest means. However, all headteachers are presented at the positive end of the scale of inclusive vision.

The documentary analysis proves that school B stands out as it is the only school that stresses the issue of inclusion in its documents. This is done explicitly and to a very large extent: *"The enhancement of weak learners has become a top priority for us as part of the support system"*. Further, *"We are truly trying to address the individual needs of each and every student"*. Indeed, an inclusive vision is expressed clearly in school documents: *"School opens its gates for every student and offers him/her a variety of teaching styles to fit his/her special needs"*. Moreover, *"the need to teach mainstream students to practice daily support for SEN (Special Educational Needs) students is part of school vision and not merely a slogan"*.

BH's inclusive vision accords with school documents: *"SEN and LDS are very close to my heart. In every age group we have at least one SEN class whose students are partly integrated in mainstream classes"*. The rest of the staff supports BH's perception. For example, BC.1 feels that *"the issue of SEN students and SEN classes was given a push by BH. It has been made part of school vision"*.

On the other hand school E stands out in its non-inclusive vision. Firstly, EH1 expressed his non-involvement regarding the 'field matters' of LDS: *"You should talk to the people 'down there'"*.

Furthermore, EH1 objects to the Ministry's policy of inclusion in secondary schools: *"I think we are over-preoccupied with weak students. Indeed, we've crossed all borderlines. The educational system should determine where each student studies according to his/her abilities even if this reduces the number of students in that school. I strongly object to the policy of Non-Exclusion of the Ministry. The educational liberalism has turned into educational anarchy"*. The mismatch between the statistical score which favours inclusion (3.83) and the impression from the interview can be explained by the fact that this score has been combined from EH1 and EH2's responses.

However, inclusive vision can also be explained as related to other school interests. One such interest is headteachers' wish to increase the percentage of students entitled to matriculation diplomas, as part of the competition between schools. AH attested: *"We wouldn't have reached the high level of entitlement for matriculation diplomas had it not been for the 25% assessed as LDS who get special test accommodations"*. Indeed, AC.1, AC.2 and AT.1 agreed that AH's vision towards LDS inclusion results from his wish to improve school image. AT.2: *"School vision provides responses on a day-to-day basis for LDS rather than reflect a deep educational philosophy"*. The mismatch between these perceptions and AH's high score on inclusive vision (4.83) could be explained by the fact that AH perceives himself as highly aware of LDS needs, and wishes to help them materialise their potential by granting them with test accommodations.

DH acknowledged that he fears a stigma attached to his school as a second-chance school where all LDS are being sent. Such a statement certainly does not provide support for an inclusive vision on his part. This view is supported by DT.1 who maintains that *"teachers do not really understand what LD means"*.

The findings indicate that except for the two headteachers who are located at the two ends of the scale (BH with a very inclusive approach and EH1 with a non-inclusive approach), other headteachers may have other interests that interfere with their inclusive approach, such as AH and DH. All the 5

schools, including those which demonstrated inclusive vision, focus on excellence too. For example, AH claims: *"We have to cater for excellent students as well as for potential dropouts"*.

Discussion

The main goal of this paper was to examine whether staff perceptions of headteachers and headteachers' perceptions of themselves as managers or as leaders of change are related to their propensity towards developing school vision and inclusive vision.

Most headteachers (except EH1) considered themselves as leaders of change rather than managers although they carry out management roles as well. These findings accord with current literature which sees leadership and management as a complex gestalt (Ribbins, 1995; Hall, 1996; Law, 1999; Morrison, 1998; Glatter, 1997), and as including equally important functions for educational effectiveness (Bush and Coleman, 2000). An investigation of the headteachers' traits supported the interviews. For example, BH was perceived by staff as having traits that were observed in the literature as 'leadership' traits, such as perseverance, curiosity, ambition, idealism, enthusiasm, decision-making ability, open-mindedness (Adair, 1983) and effective communication skills (Rosener, 1990). However, her success in leading changes resulted from her ability to sustain change via her managerial skills, such as monitoring teachers' performance and initiating communication channels (e.g. individual end-of-year-talks). Conversely, CH was also perceived as possessing a sense of openness to new ideas, sensitivity and subsidiarity (West-Burnham, 1997) but failed to sustain change perhaps as a result of a deficit in managerial competences, such as monitoring teachers' performance.

Further, the importance of 'transformational leadership' for headteachers (Sergiovanni, 1990; Senge, 1993) was confirmed in the present study. This could be seen in school D where staff did not perceive these changes as resulting from the visionary leadership of DH, but rather as artificial changes that were imposed on him. Consequently, they did not develop a shared vision towards the process of change, which eventually failed. The exploration of EH1's leadership helped in drawing the conclusion that

'transformational leadership' must be combined with 'people-orientation' to become effective. Indeed, EH1 appeared to be a leader with vision and clear educational ideas who failed to motivate school staff when a change was about to take place because of his lack of people-orientation. The result of this communication deficit was staff resistance.

On the other hand, BH proved to be an inspirational and visionary leader (Mitchell and Tucker, 1992) who was focusing on the enhancement of teachers' welfare and on 'getting things done' (Caldwell and Spinks, 1992). It might be concluded that BH succeeded in 'getting things done' because she focused on teachers' welfare. The result of the combination of people-orientation and transformational leadership enabled BH to focus on the transactional elements and achieve school improvement. These findings are consistent with Bass and Avolio (1994) who advocate that an optimal leadership profile exhibits both transformational and transactional elements of leadership. Indeed, BH's transformational elements serve as the basis for her ability to carry out transactional elements.

Indeed, the investigation of visionary leadership in this study clearly supports the literature in that headteachers such as BH manage value-driven, vision-based changes through commitment, empowerment, ownership, and by enthusing others (Senge, 1993). On the other hand, headteachers such as DH who hardly provide the staff with some sense of direction (Foreman, in Middlewood and Lumby, 1998), cannot complete a process of change and sustain it.

Another issue of importance is the relationship that was found between vision and inclusive vision. Headteachers who focus on social involvement and care for individual needs of students as part of their vision (AH, BH, CH) demonstrated a propensity towards developing an inclusive vision, whereas headteachers who focus on values such as success, future careers and excellence (DH, EH1) tend not to become inclusive.

Conclusion

The present study investigated a possible relationship between headteachers' perceptions of themselves and the way they are perceived by school staff in terms of being leaders of change or managers, and their propensity to develop school vision in general and inclusive vision in particular.

Despite the fact that most headteachers perceive themselves as being leaders more than managers, the study demonstrated that schoolheads who combine leadership elements as well as administrative or managerial elements carry out and sustain changes more efficiently than those who lack either visionary elements or managerial skills in their headship.

This means that the 'optimal recipe' for a schoolhead who can enthuse staff towards changes comprises high input in people as well as 'leadership' traits, such as being inspirational, enthusiastic, visionary, and idealist. However, schoolheads must also possess the ability to 'get things done', such as be able to evaluate the readiness of the environment towards the change, sustain it once it has been introduced, and monitor staff performance and welfare along the process.

The 5 schoolheads that participated in the present research have demonstrated a school vision that underpins their work. It appeared that headteachers who adopted the values of social involvement and care for the individual needs of students demonstrate a higher level of inclusive vision than headteachers who have adopted the values of success, hi-tech careers and excellence. However, although most headteachers have developed some sense of inclusive vision, it appears that vision in itself is an insufficient element in change-making processes in general and in the inclusion of LDS in particular. Indeed, headteachers need to develop an ability to recruit and enthuse people, communicate the change and monitor it.

It is recommended that further research be conducted in the area of school headship and the inclusion of LDS and focus on other related issues, such as the influence of leadership styles on inclusion.

It is also recommended that this research be repeated after the provision of a long-term training for school staff in order to examine the influence of training on inclusion.

Appendix 1

Table 1
Perceptions
of inclusive
vision of
headteacher

	<i>School A</i> <i>(N=1)</i>	<i>School B</i> <i>(N=1)</i>	<i>School C</i> <i>(N=1)</i>	<i>School D</i> <i>(N=1)</i>	<i>School E</i> <i>(N=2)</i>	<i>Overall</i>
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	
<i>Inclusive vision</i>	4.83	4.16	4.36	3.58	3.83	4.10

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Appendix 2 (head teachers' questionnaire on inclusive vision)

1. All students should be offered an equal chance to realize their abilities.
2. Meeting the needs of every individual student should be a top priority.
3. School policy towards LDS has improved over the past years.
4. Educational objectives in our era should focus on excellence.
5. Educational in our era should focus on quality of service to students.
6. It is essential to train teachers not to mistake LDS for lazy students.
7. School marketing does not stand in contradiction to values and care for individual students.
8. Nowadays schools must be aware of the opinion of parents of mainstream students on the topic of inclusion.
9. School efforts regarding LDS inclusion might have a negative effect on registration.
10. Special resources should be allocated to enhance LDS inclusion.
11. School should allocate budgets to purchase special audio-visual aids for LDS.
12. Head teachers should dismiss any complaints of parents of mainstream students who advocate against inclusion of LDS.
13. I consider establishing an in-service assessment unit for LDS.
14. We should set performance indicators to supervise the process of inclusion.
15. I'm planning to offer staff more in-service training on learning disabilities.

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