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# The “McKie Mastery™ Change Management Model”: a lifeline or a cumbersome weight in aiding UK schools improving standards?

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## ■ Abstract

The UK schooling system is under the watchful eye of the Government, Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OFSTED) and various other stakeholders including parents. To seek higher pupil attainment, schools are under pressure demonstrate continuous improvement, via a change model, of which there are many. This paper measured the change process of the "McKie Mastery Leadership Change Management" model within two UK-primary-schools. Data was sourced via semi structured interviews and questionnaires. The findings were significant in terms of senior management as a key catalyst for change in empowering the schools' hierarchy to recalibrate, their approach to classroom teaching pedagogies in the tangible student learning enhancement and pupil performance. Validating the McKie Model provides a valuable and impactful change management model to support sustained pupil attainment.

■ **Keywords:** *business model, organisational change, leadership, McKie Mastery, teaching and learning programme, education.*

## ■ Résumé

Le système scolaire britannique est sous le monitoring du gouvernement, du Bureau des normes en matière d'éducation, de services et de compétences pour les enfants (OFSTED) et de diverses autres parties prenantes, dont les parents. Afin d'obtenir de meilleurs résultats pour les élèves, les écoles doivent faire la preuve de leur amélioration continue, par le biais d'un modèle de changement dont il existe de nombreux modèles. Cette contribution évalue les effets du modèle McKie Mastery Leadership Change Management dans deux écoles primaires du Royaume-Uni. Les données ont été obtenues grâce à des entretiens semi-directifs et des questionnaires. Les résultats soulignent le rôle de la Direction en tant que catalyseur du changement, en donnant à l'école les moyens de redéfinir son approche pédagogique pour améliorer concrètement l'apprentissage des élèves et leurs performances. Cette validation montre que le modèle de gestion du changement est précieux et efficace pour soutenir la réussite durable des élèves.

■ **Mots-clés:** *business model, changement organisationnel, leadership, McKie Mastery, programme d'enseignement et d'apprentissage, education.*

## INTRODUCTION

Today, schools find themselves in an impulsive situation by which the need to change has become a competitive need (Burner, 2018) to enhance overall competitive performance. Nevertheless, “*change remains difficult to pull off*” (Beer & Nohria, 2000, p. 1). Mintzberg and Westley (1992) define change as a complex and multifaceted phenomenon. All these changes have had a fundamental influence on school dynamics, business models (BMs) and the leadership involved. This research conducted qualitative research examining the dynamic process of change (McGuire & Hutchings, 2006) in the organisational hierarchy (Avolio *et al.*, 2004). Two primary schools in England were chosen to examine their organisational capacity (Fullan, 2007) and capture the organisational change perceptions *via* McKie Mastery™ (MM) adoption. MM is a Department of Education (2022) validated set of programs and teaching approaches which improve the quality of English and Mathematics teaching and outcomes. MM is a licensed set of tools, schedules, strategies, and training. Multi-Academy-Trust (MATs) or individual schools obtain a license to use the programme and can renew every year if their implementation is as required throughout the year. School visits are carried out to monitor the leadership of implementation. Leadership Teams, whom do not meet the implementation requirements are not able to renew their license. The license is a legally crafted document and prohibits the unlicensed use of any aspects of the MM programme.

Thus, the research papers aim is to answer the question ‘Is the MM model a lifeline or a cumbersome weight in aiding UK schools’ improvement standards. The data presented and explored in this study is derived from the following objectives: Why do the schools want/or need to change? What the leadership role plays in the change process? What were people experiences of new BM (Leadership Change Management Tool Kit) during the change process? Hence the study is focusing on the school, the dynamic process of change during the adoption of new model by using Machiavelli’s centralised form of the power structure (McGuire & Hutchings, 2006) in the organisational hierarchy (Avolio *et al.*, 2004) and the critical role of schools’ leadership. The research follows four interventions within the framework of McGuire and Hutchings (2006): enablers and drivers (Stakeholders), changes inhibitors, and finally factors that influence acceptance or rejection of change (the new model).

## Literature review: school dynamic change *via* adoption of new business model

School improvement is a journey, and the strategies schools need is resolute by their position in this journey (Bellei *et al.*, 2016). There are significant forces for the implementation of school change, including supportive and distributed school leadership (Bryk *et al.*, 2010), supportive teacher community (Coburn *et al.*,

2012), organizational redesign (Spillane, Parise, & Sherer, 2011), quality external support (Correnti & Rowan, 2007), and inter-school networks (Katz & Earl, 2010). Whilst not fully understood, the dynamics of these factors do however contribute to enhanced reform (Li, 2017).

A common issue within schools is that the need for change is often driven by legislation and regulation which links in with the motivation and capability sources of behaviour (Michie, Van Stralen, & West, 2011). This often can be initiated by a negative or positive OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) report. A drop in OFSTED rating can result in reputational damage and eventual takeover or closure (Von Stumm *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, the OFSTED process is often perceived as stressful for the Head Teachers (Keddie, 2017). There is, however, a positive relationship between the Head Teachers' instructional leadership behaviours and teachers' attitudes towards change (Kursunoglu & Tanriogen, 2009). The mutually beneficial relationship between support from the necessary element of leadership from below where Head Teachers courageously believed in and valued their teachers' opinions is paramount (King & Stevenson, 2017).

Educational change is not only a change in student learning (Hargreaves & Goodson, 2006), but also, the organisational capacity (Fullan, 2007) by teachers' professional development (Postholm, 2012). Alvesson and Sveningsson (2015) view the change process through four key dimensions include a scale of change, source of change, the political aspect, and content. Burner (2018) suggests education is for school improvement. This can be illustrated by changing the culture; where four change layers exist, namely: the first layer dealing with levels of change, the second layer looking at change process, the third layer is stages of change, and the last layer is encompassing patterns of change, (Mintzberg & Westley, 1992, p. 41).

There are important reasons which set out the need for change in education. Burner (2018, p. 125) includes increased globalization, advancements in technology and developments in teaching and learning approaches. Alternatively, successful change requires a coalition (Sedrine, Bouderbala, & Nasraoui, 2020). Hall (2013) stated this guiding coalition should have the following characteristics: first, it is a need to have enough key players on board so those left out cannot block progress (position power). Secondly, all relevant viewpoints should be represented so informed intelligent decisions can be made (expertise). Thirdly, the group should be seen and respected by those in the school. Finally, the group should have enough proven leaders to be able to drive the change process (Leadership).

Leadership plays a crucial factor within change and defined as "*a relationship of social influence*" (Spillane & Coldren, 2011, p. 76). Instructional leaders exhibit hands-on principles, strongly directing the curriculum and fearless collaboration with teachers on the teaching and learning improvement (Hallinger, 2003). Identifying sharing power reality is essential to leader's power maintenance in organisational change (McGuire & Hutchings, 2006) in respect to the acceptance of change by an individual (driven by self-interest)

versus significant role (Power status). Therefore, allowing the time, space, and activities to develop psychological capital (PsyCap), would encourage teachers' readiness for change and foster a greater tendency to adapt successfully to the change demands (Kirrane *et al.*, 2017).

Moreover, teachers are the main players in the change initiative (Dudar, Scott, & Scott, 2017). Hall (2013) emphasises the significance of an executed strong vision and the importance of communication (Carnall, & By, 2014). Dolphin (2005, p. 185) stated *"sound relationships can only be developed based on trust and reliable information"*. The focus of quality leadership here is to provide adequate support to enable teachers to take an alternative approach. The support is *via* practical ways of doing things differently, rather than attempting to challenge teachers' underlying beliefs (Bradbury, 2019). There are also individual and contextual factors that are important predictors of attitudes towards change that influence a teacher's personal action choice towards school change. Tai and Kareem (2019) summarised them as self-esteem, need for achievement, risk tolerance, defence mechanisms, locus of control, and reluctance to lose control were found to influence individuals. McKie Mastery™ (MM) implementation seeks to utilise such individual (staff) and contextual (school) factors. MM as an innovative education change management model has been made available to schools as a Leadership Change Management Tool Kit. MM sets out to change the standard leadership and teaching model and has already brought significant improvements across a diverse set of primary schools. MM was first assessed in 2014 by Claire, (MM founder), at a primary school serving a deprived socio-economic area in an urban city in the Northeast. At the time of this research, 14 schools (see appendix-1) are already demonstrating that the model established remarkably high – standards of achievement, behaviour, and pupils' engagement in learning. OFSTED inspections in all licensed schools have shown radical improvements in a brief period. As HM Chief Inspector Education (n.d.,) wrote to a MM Licensed School congratulating leaders for introducing this innovative approach which she describes as *"A better, more logically sequenced way of learning."* Claire explained: *"There is a need for Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to show an elevated level of commitment to all MM stages, training, and implementation if full success is to be achieved."*

The MM programme seeks to implement a "sustainable" BM (Dentoni *et al.*, 2021) within schools by providing top-down and bottom-up processes in reshaping school approaches to learning and teaching as well as dynamic shift within their leadership model to meet stakeholder expectations (Freudenreich *et al.*, 2020; Juntunen *et al.*, 2019). The MM programme *"focuses on behaviour change and acceptance of responsibilities' by both leadership team and teachers in school... 'in a process of goal setting, decision-making, and evaluation'"* (Nikel & Lowe, 2010, p. 599).

We asked Claire how she measure effectiveness and quality of the MM programme, and she noted: *"Sustainability in education means minimizing cost, reducing teacher workload, and raising outcomes in English and*

*Mathematics. therefore, Mathematics are subject to National tests and are therefore school performance indicators which are published annually. After implementation, 95% of school leaders have reported reduced costs in terms of additional support required (staff and resources), reduced workload for all staff and improved results in English and Mathematics National Testing. In the U.K, reduced costs and reduced staff workload, are seldom achieved at the same time as better National Test Results. The 5% of school leaders whom do not report such benefits are typically unable to implement the program with fidelity and struggle with the leadership demands successful implementation requires."*

The programme re-trains (six days in total) leaders to manage teaching and learning differently, using tools and innovations new to education. Leaders go through an on-site intensive training process supported via a thorough evaluation system in place via continued active feedback between schools and MM founder. In addition, there is leadership and classroom practice monitoring system (audits: during the first 4-6 weeks following full implementation, then a further minimum of six to a maximum of eight visits per annum). The audit system provides an overall report and feedback to leadership and teachers' performance against the MM criteria. So, Claire noted:

*"The programme does not suit every school and it typically is less effective when the programme has been 'forced' onto leaders. As the success of implementation is completely dependent on leadership capability and commitment, the positive outcomes are not guaranteed."*

## **Research approach**

The study examines the change process perceptions, experiences, and attitude of schools towards sustainable business/ leadership model, and organisational practice via the MM programme implementation. Utilising the framework in Figure 1, the research objectives were integrated to provide a clear structure to pursue the data collection process and in its analysis.

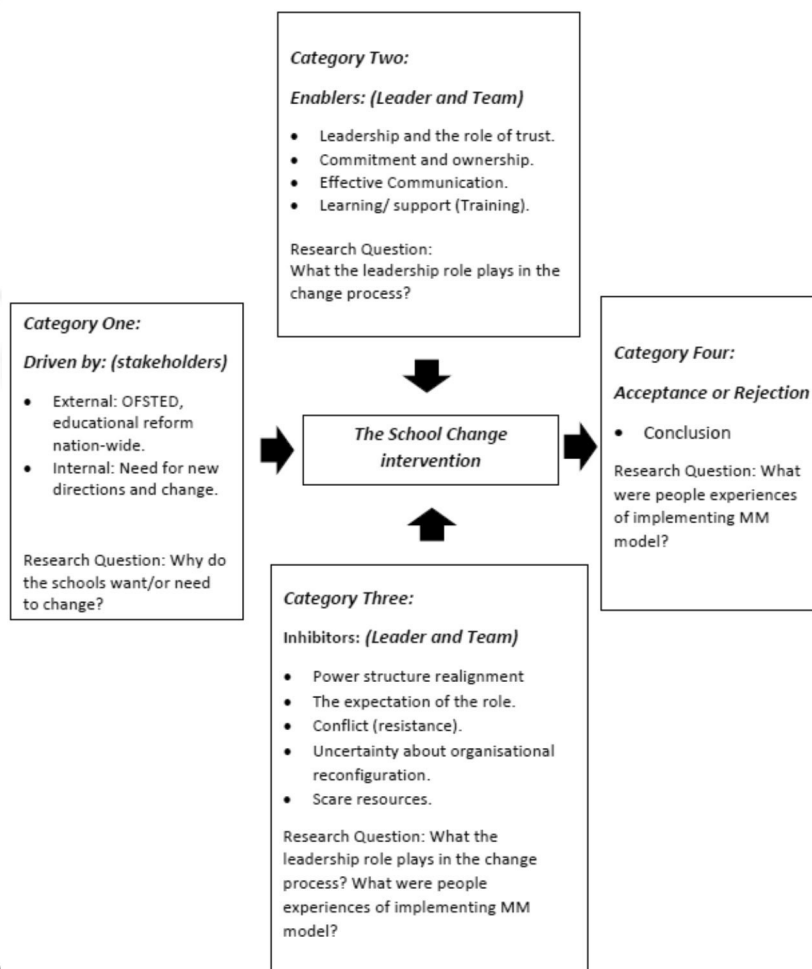


Figure 1: Research framework according to McGuire and Hutchings (2006) change model

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with Claire. to gain an understanding of the history (schools' engagement with the MM) and her experience with them. The two schools were identified through purposive sampling against the following criteria: both schools had participated in implementing MM at the same time during Summer-2018 and they needed improvement in their OFSTED rating. School "1" had previously received an OFSTED "Requires Improvement" whilst school "2" had been classified as "Good". The data was analysed from the initial engagement with the MM (pre-phase-introduction), the implementation (transition-phase), post-phase (audit-evaluation), and follow-up phase to evaluate the change through the schools' experience and reflection using an action research approach as a way of knowing (Reason, 2006).

Four-sets of qualitative questionnaires (Charlotte and Hagström, 2017) (Pre – Senior Leadership Team (SLT)-Training, Post-SLT-Training, Post – Teacher-Training and Implementation, and School- Post-

Implementation-Follow-up) followed by inter-views (Head Teachers and 10 teachers from both schools and follow up email interview) acknowledging leadership team and teachers' viewpoints were included during the schools' journey of change.

Questionnaires were designed at the pre-phase to formulate the interview questions. The semi structured interview questions (transition phase) were the basis for the follow-up phase interview questions during 2021. Questionnaires and interview questions focusing on the change concerning the framework (Figure 1). The research follows four interventions within the McGuire and Hutchings (2006) framework: a contemporary organisational change model that include organisational change drivers, the factors which enable or inhibit the organisational change process and finally factors influence change acceptance or rejection. This model provides clarity to understand what the contributing factors are within the schools and managerial change initiatives within the MM programme implementation perspective.

The interviews for Schools' transition-phase were conducted between March-2018 and May-2019 (n=12: 25-40 minutes) to explore participants' experiences *via* the MM introduction and implementation as new business/leadership model within the change management context. There was also a follow-up email-Interview (n=8) between January to March 2021, to reflect schools' experience with the Covid-19 Pandemic impact. There were a preliminary ethical assessment and ethical agreement between the researchers, University, and participants. Also, confidentiality was maintained through various measures. All interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and later coded.

Interviews were coded by NVivo, based on "*a streamlined codes-to-theory model for qualitative inquiry*" (Saldaña, 2015, p. 14). The point here was to carefully consider which category may generate the types of answers we need, based on our research objectives and categories within McGuire and Hutchings, (2006) Change framework. Later, focused coding was used to "focus" the codes and to develop themes (Saldaña, 2015) based on four categories.

## Findings

### Category one: drivers (stakeholders)

One of the fundamental issues found in literature relates to the driver for change in schools. This is often legislation and regulation, such as poor OFSTED gradings. These also link to behaviour, motivation, and capability (Michie, Van Stralen & West, 2011) that create a necessity, rather than a choice (Von Stumm *et al.*, 2020) which can have a positive effect on issues surrounding the support of the process by the leadership

of the project (Keddie, 2017).

The Head Teacher at school-1, in response to the question “how did you recognise the need for change?” noted:

*“In July 2017, the school only attained 10% for Reading, Writing and Math’s combined. This was the lowest score in the area. It was decided the teaching and learning and the whole school’s ethos needed to change, and I started at the school in January 2018.”*

As it is clear from the interview transcripts, external factors such as OFSTED, government, parents, and educational forums are most concerned by the SLT team. SLT member at school-2 expressed her view on external drivers this way:

*“...the school was under special-measures there was a need for fundamental changes.”*

SLT member at school-1 mentioned:

*“... the previous OFSTED report had given a ‘Requires Improvement’ status... regarding planning the school knew this new system needed to be implemented with speed as the results were poor and an OFSTED visit was impending.”* Likewise, the internal drive factors (i.e., resources issue, and need for new direction and change) discussed by all 12 participants (see Figure 2). Although these choices may still have an indirect influence from external drivers, we found they are happening because of leadership style within the circumstances, i.e., Claire. noted:

*“In some cases, there are no failing school issues and quite the opposite with high OFSTED out-comes. The need is only about maintaining the satisfactory results already being experienced.”* Internal factors discussed within the question “What does MM programme (change) mean to you? And why this project?” The response was clearly showing the high-level knowledge of the situation and awareness of urgency are also considered as the major variables impacting upon a change communication strategy: The type of change? The degree of urgency? The speed of change? And the reaction to the change? (Quirke, 2008).

| No. | School | Position- within MM programme | Professional and educational background   | Title  | Number of years at current school | Gender | Work Experience    |
|-----|--------|-------------------------------|---|--|-----------------------------------|--------|--------------------|
| 1   | 1      | SLT                           | BSc (Hons) Statistics and Operational Research, and PGCE, and NPQH (National Professional Qualification for Headship) | Principle  | 1 year                            | M      | 18 years           |
| 2   | 1      | SLT                           | BA in Education-PQSL (National Professional Qualification for Senior Leadership)                                      | Vice Principal   | 10 years                          | F      | 10 years           |
| 3   | 1      | SLT                           | BA in Education-and QTS (qualified primary teacher early years status)  | Year 4 Maths Lead Teacher and SENCO (Special Needs Co-ordinator) | 13 years                          | F      | 13 years           |
| 4   | 1      | Teacher                       | BSc in Pharmacology-PGCE and NPQSL (National Professional Qualification for Senior Leadership)                        | Year 6 Teacher   | 18 years                          | F      | 18 years           |
| 5   | 1      | Teacher                       | BA in Education-PGCE for 5-year to 11-year-olds (Primary School)  | Key stage 2, Year 5 Teacher                                      | 6 months                          | M      | 1 year             |
| 6   | 1      | Teacher                       | BA in Education-(1st Class Hons in Primary Education)   | Year 3 Teacher-NQT-as a newly qualified teacher                  | 6 months                          | F      | 1 year             |
| 7   | 2      | SLT                           | BA (Hons) in Education in Technology and History and NPQH (National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH))   | Principle  | 1 year                            | F      | More than 10 years |
| 8   | 2      | SLT                           | BA in Education (Teaching)  | Early years foundation stage (EYFS) Key Stage 1 Lead             | 10 years                          | F      | 20 years           |
| 9   | 2      | SLT                           | BA in Education-QTS (qualified teacher status)  | Vice Principal   | 7 years                           | F      | 8 years            |
| 10  | 2      | Teacher                       | BA (Hons) in integrated working with children and families  | An HLTA (higher level teaching assistant)                        | 6 years                           | F      | 6 years            |
| 11  | 2      | Teacher                       | BSc in Speech and Language Therapy  | Year 4 Teacher and Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO).           | 4 years                           | F      | 4 years            |
| 12  | 2      | Teacher                       | Newly qualified teacher (NQT)   | Teacher  | 3 years                           | M      | 3 years            |

Figure 2: Participant's breakdown of individual participants by role

SLT at school-2 mentioned: the school priority is to improve pupils learning experience and bring consistency across the school:

*"The MM would suit our pupils and help them be- come more engaged in the learning process. We had been through a series of minor changes, and none provided any real impact. Something more drastic and far-reaching was needed... Many of the staff agreed there was this need for a wider form of progression that MM would bring... and having a consistent approach from the SLT made this an easier process."*

Motivation factors at school-2 were explained by Head Teacher in this way:

*"I wanted a change in culture across the school. The report had noted inconsistencies. The two SLT members were not having an impact on the teaching nor engaging with other teachers in between, so there was a gulf. I wanted to start something based on pedagogy. I wanted a fundamental change that provides a vehicle for consistency across the school."*

## Category two: enablers

Internal and external enablers need to exist for an organisation for the theory of change to work. Internal enablers are mostly within an organisation's control and define how they deliver their work e.g., the quality of

services, relationships, and the staff values and attitudes. External enablers, however, are often beyond an organisation of direct control. External enablers define the setting in which an organisation work including social, cultural, economic, and political factors, laws, regulations, and working with other organisations (Dunne & Roberts, 2019). In this category we explored the leadership role and trust, communication, and training (learning and support) plays in the introduction, implementation and evaluation of change and change management.

**The role of leadership and trust** Identifying internal enablers such as leadership role, culture, and communication alongside external factors such as economic and political factors help to understand the dynamics between organisation- al change reality and the people who work in the organisation.

To enhance leadership, MM provide robust management team (Head Teachers / Senior Leadership Teams) training (Power Leadership Training) to those school wishing to adopt the model. So, the leadership team have more time to secure the power leadership skills needed to implement the entire program. This brings the awareness of the role the leader (usually Head Teacher) must play in becoming (if not already) the leader in the change initiative in his/her school and not being just a manager. This is crucial for success, as *“in times of change managerial work is increasingly a leadership task”* (Hayes, 2018, p. 167). As the need for good leadership is vital to achieving success (Crosthwaite, 2020), Claire will determine if the required communication skills are evident before agreeing to go ahead with the programme for the school in question. As she mentioned:

*“Head Teacher are key contributors to the MM success. They were prepared to take a risk and implement change. The SLT role in these schools is also the cause champion, someone who does not waver from the promotion of the change initiative.”* From the schools’ responses to “How would you describe the leadership conducted?” The study identified there were commitment, motivation, and a will to succeed demonstrated from the leadership coming from the SLT. The teachers’ interview evidenced the SLT had shown they were all very committed to the change (King & Stevenson, 2017). This can be explained with a sense of urgency as defined by Kotter (2008, p. 5-7) as *“the desire of discovering the real solution and understanding something significant”*.

SLTs in both schools felt they had shown pro-active responsibility, strongly directing the change and courage of collaborating with teachers on teaching and learning improvement (Nedelcu, 2013), which in both schools an open-door policy adopted to help all staff. Head Teacher in school-2 reinforced this message by stating:

*“We were all going on this journey together and it did not matter where we were starting from. Past problems were to be put to one side and this new approach was going to be embraced to deliver what we needed. The idea was to achieve good teaching and learning together.”*

A teacher in School-1, highlighted:

*"...open approach had been outlined by the SLT from the very beginning of the implementation phase."*

A SLT at school-1 also emphasises she intends to develop her skills and at the same time encourage other teachers to do likewise given this innovative approach. To make this system work they all collaborate by getting into the finer detail of all aspects of the MM programme. STL comments at school-2 reflect this matter:

*"My responsibility was to learn fully and understand in depth about MM, so this was a challenge in the initial stages. I did rise to this challenge and put in a significant effort and engagement to contribute to what was achieved."*

After expressing the need for change, building a team is the next major step (Kotter, 2012), because no individual can implement a major change successfully alone. Head Teacher at school – 2 leadership strategy was to sell the change plan to the two SLT members first (Aas and Brandmo, 2016) by providing full knowledge of every aspect of the new programme (Head Teacher interview, school-2) as change initiators (SLTs) played a significant role in the change process (Dudar *et al.*, 2017), they are the most important change contributors and influential within the change agenda. A teacher in school-1, noted:

*"The commitment from the SLTs had been evident from the beginning."*

It was found transformational leadership is being highly desirable for the change initiative:

*"I have nothing but praise for the SLT leading by example and being supportive. The support has always been there. The SLT commitment was extremely high. The Head Teacher had sold the idea at the start, and he was confident the MM programme would work."* (Teacher, School-1) Commitment and ownership (empowerment) evidenced via the schools' leadership design were top-down and bottom-up. So, to encourage and support all teachers regular staff meetings arranged to unpack the key elements and issues went into the MM. SLT member at school-1 described their school's approach:

*"All SLTs members had shown commitment to the MM programme. A major change was needed to be effective, and it would raise standards. The change proved to be incredibly challenging in time and effort though equally worthwhile. The SLTs all felt they needed to see this through despite the challenges it would and did bring."*

This provided insight into the considerations of the whole school and their respective expected commitment to the change processes. The feeling was a proficient level of collaboration between teachers and SLTs was achieved where teachers' state of readiness for change was influenced by the nature and quality of leadership (NCCA, 2010). There has been a coaching approach via team-teach lessons and planning sessions. It has been visionary as all staff strive for excellence in teaching and learning supported by each other:

*“The SLT wanted this implementation to succeed by being sure no areas were neglected... any obstacles or difficulties may have experienced by teachers in the classrooms under the MM programme were responded to immediately.”*  
(SLT, School-2)

**The role of communication** The leader role would be a vital one in conveying the important messages that need to take place if the change processes are to succeed. This involves all drivers (stakeholders). So, we looked at the expected SLT role in the communication of change and how change initiatives are being implemented in their school as Yue, Men, and Ferguson, (2019) claim the leader must have effective communication skills to create a desired sense of direction. This also reflects the ability of the leader to articulate the vision and motivates a powerful sense of purpose.

The Head Teacher at school-2 sent out a letter to parents explaining the innovative approach to teaching *via* the MM in before the teachers being trained. Information was also added to the school website. She also communicated with governors and make sure they received regular updates. Staff briefing happened before the summer holidays and before training to start in September 2018. She wanted to make staff aware of the changes that would be made and to prepare them for training (Head Teacher interview, School-2) to alleviate any resistance from staff:

*“The new head had heard about this system... and was quite enthusiastic about the benefits it would bring to the school.”* (Teacher, School-2) Comments from SLT members from school-2 support a similar viewpoint as she explained:

*“Initially a brief overview of MM was discussed in a staff meeting where the three SLTs and all the teachers at the school attended.”*

SLT member from school-1 also noted:

*“There was a series of staff meetings and SLT meetings held to discuss this before and after the visits to a MM licensed school. All the teachers were made aware of the need for taking responsibility for their progress in the successful MM implementation.”*

Despite the different communication approaches from two leadership teams, all teachers in both schools believed in transparency and effective communication during the change process. Most communications were made verbally as group discussions. There were slide shows *via* PowerPoint- presentations and various visual resources also used to explain the MM (Teachers interviews). Mishra, Boynton, and Mishra, (2014) emphasise “transparent communication and employee engagement” bring a sense of belonging and a shared mission with the organisation and the employee, which leads to employee engagement:

*"... The way the management team provided the instructions were well communicated." (Teacher, School-2)*

The first-hand observation and visit to a MM licensed school to see how the MM works in classroom situations (practice) was beneficial for both schools. This can identify as the key to providing the leader confidence that change process will need. This can be communicated to the employees/ teachers with certainty; once convinced for themselves (SLTs) they need also to convince their teachers (Hayes, 2018):

*"I was impressed with the enthusiasm the Head Teacher demonstrated having been to a MM licensed school. Head Teacher had been incredibly positive that the school could achieve by implementing the MM. I thought MM would be a major change and could see the benefits as guaranteed by Head Teacher that it would bring with consistency across the school and better pupils' engagement in the learning process." (SLT, School-2)* Claire discovered thought must be given to customize the message in terms of the audience and their reaction. Claire McKie's experience as a former Senior Teacher is useful as the appropriate tone can be set, sound communication established, building in the opportunity for effective dialogue. Set the example (if asking others to respond to the communication, ensure as the leader you have done as requested) timeliness is acknowledged to be important (Paton & McCalman, 2015):

*"The communication was highly effective and clear. The Head had seen this proposal at conferences and had provided a broad outline of what the MM would mean for the school... In September the staff then gained in-depth information from the SLT in two full in-set days, it was well communicated." (Teacher, School-1)*

**The role of training (learning and support)** Teacher's training improves effectiveness and develops a systematic way of learning and performing in teaching. Training effectiveness evaluation (Hayes, 2018) is the measurement of development in the teacher's "knowledge, skill and behavioural pattern" within the school because of the training programme (Parthasarathy *et al.*, 2017).

The result from Pre-SLT-Training Questionnaire indicated in both school training routines before the MM introduction was outside of the classroom during staff directed time, however, they believe a more effective way is "in the classroom by a demonstration involving pupil" that make a training relevant, stimulating, and challenging. Yet all of them feel they do not have enough time to monitor and train other staff due to limited time i.e., *"Training can be difficult around over limited time."* *"Other role commitments can sometimes make it difficult."* *"As a teacher it is very difficult to monitor and train other staff effectively as you are limited to after school"* *"Due to operational task within the school."* *"Due to everyday operational issues happening in the school."*

After SLT formal training, the Post-SLT-Training

Questionnaire result had shown all SLT are aware of the new role as an SLT. They also recognised that the SLT role is different from their previous roles, and they need time to become confident to train other teachers.

During the teachers training, most teachers agreed that they were a useful initiative by the SLT team and responded favourably in their initial comments, agreeing with the underpinning rationale:

*"... The approach made it much easier to accept. During the first sessions, the teachers were asked to use post-it notes and then to place them on board so they could be answered as the training progressed. This gave us reassurance that any questions we raised would be dealt with swiftly and thoroughly." (Teacher, School-2)*

Before the full implementation, there were number of trial runs with groups of pupils. Meanwhile, the Head Teacher in school-1 was doing learning walks where he would drop into classes and feedback to teachers if necessary. The SLTs agreed a drip-feed approach was preferred to gain the teachers' confidence with a surely but slowly way of implementing the MM:

*"SLT was not expected to run with the MM until we had the benefit of all the information we needed. Initially, the progress was slow. Then as time went on the pace of the lessons and the flow of the learning improved. I could then see this was going to make a major improvement and I could contribute in the way I wanted to." (Teacher, School-2)* Both schools used role-play as the SLT were the teachers and the teachers were the pupil. They would encourage questions and repeat the techniques when needed. In school-2, the teachers were also given extra time for planning weekly (30 minutes). The teachers would also not have to do any after school clubs, giving the teachers more time for preparation and planning regarding the

MM. The SLT also arranged drop-in sessions for teachers to encourage any questions or issues they felt may arise. Alternatively, school-1 implemented the "buddying approach." An experienced teacher in school-1 explained in detail how the buddying approach worked. She noted:

*"Teachers are nominated to partner with each other to swap over to demonstrate the MM in the classroom... This has been a constant process... continually adjusting the system as we go along via weekly CPD, staff meetings and casual discussions between all teaching staff."*

The training process should include the need for feedback as a shared interpretation can be gained, and a consensus achieved going forward (Patan & McCalman, 2008). Following full implementation (first 4-6 weeks), the first monitoring (audit) visit takes place by Claire or her associate and continue between 6 to 8 visits per annum, depending on the schools' size and progression. The change and change management evident within both schools proves the positive change required time, effective leadership, trust, buy-in from change contributors, and engagement via effective communication and training:

*"The leadership were supportive... There was a*

*high degree of transparency with support every step of the way and they stayed with the teachers. Nothing was*

*hidden everything was out in the open and there were high-levels of commitment from the top.” (Teacher, School-1)*

### **Category three: Inhibitors**

In category one (drivers/ Stakeholders) one of the main reasons for taking up the change was due to failing schools were OFSTED reporting. Poor OFSTED reporting affect schools’ reputation, student enrolments and ultimate takeover or closure (Von Stumm *et al.*, 2020; Keddie, 2017). In this regard there is also a risk associated with school organisational culture (Tai & Kareem, 2019) where they are being unprepared to change even when confronted with the need to change due to a lack of quality leadership (Bradbury, 2019). Claire mentioned:

*“The changes required to use the MM programme are fundamental and unapologetic. The education’s national state requires fundamental change, not tinkering around the edges... Not all leaders/ teachers are currently equipped to make those changes as now they are swimming against the tide. Until that tide pivots, MM will only be for those who can swim against the tide.”*

According to Senior and Swailes, (2016), there is a dangerous side of leadership culture that it can be deep-seated and is likely to be quite resistant to change and in the extreme, it is liable to self-destruct. As Claire states:

*“The MM programme demands sound, dynamic and relentless leadership in any school. Experience has shown in some cases if the leadership in the school is not satisfactory or not suitable the project is likely to fail and therefore it is best to forego the opportunity.”*

We also, asked Claire “Why MM ‘doesn’t work’ in some schools”:

*“Teachers are asked to look at their teaching in a way they have not before. Every aspect of their practice is profoundly changed when they begin to embed MM tools and protocols. Most teachers embrace the changes though a few teachers do not get to this point and decide MM is not for them. Schools must deal with this and constantly push forwards to refine implementation.”*

Those people who lead the change process (Leaders) will need to win the support of the change recipients (Teachers). The change benefit as outlined earlier about the expectation of improved work-life balance should be cascaded down to the teachers who will see the improvements relating to their situations, (Hayes, 2018):

*“The workload seems to have reduced comparing the new MM programme to the old traditional teaching system. This has the added benefit of making me more ready to tackle further teaching by being less fatigued and*

*able to keep higher energy levels.” (Teacher, School-2)*

There is also the need to encourage sharing power (McGuire & Hutchings, 2006) between teachers and the SLT. So, any resistance to change is being valuable to both parties. On the positive side, the teachers would be expected to show full cooperation when there are good employee-employer relationships in existence. This state of good relations can be termed the psychological capital (PsyCap) as outlined in Kirrane *et al.* (2017). Head Teacher at school – 2 states:

*“Factors that delayed change were due to staff training sessions and time constraints processes. Staff well-being needed to be considered in time to implement changes.”*

In this regard, one of the areas that promote change acceptance is linked to the “unfreezing” theory by allowing teachers to gain perspective of the change (Hayes, 2018) and this can be achieved by promoting dissatisfaction with the status quo. This can be found by highlighting the benefits that will flow from the change initiative in comparison with the current state. This is including communication and employees training requirement (instructors and teachers) which is designed within the existing MM change process (Claire, interview). For example, the Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) at school-2 mentioned in her interview:

*“I was slightly sceptical and unsure at first in my role as SENCO though once I started to implement the system the engagement with the pupil was much improved. I became more confident in the system and my teaching for the benefit of the pupil.”*

We found all interviewees were concerned at the teachers’ training initial stages, which reflect on using words such as “uncertainty” and “scarce resources,” comments like:

*“Before the training, I had concern over how the pupil would react to learning alongside younger or older pupil. Then in the actual reality the new groupage system did not present any such issues.” (Teacher, School-1)*

This also supports both schools’ responses to “Post-Teachers-Training and Implementation Questionnaires” analysis that 95% (19 out of 20 participants) claimed: they gain extra challenges with the new implementation. A teacher at the school-1 felt:

*“At the beginning teaching under the new way (ability groups rather than age/year groups) was a challenge due to my traditional teaching model.”* Another teacher (school-1) found the new system quite challenging for the first English lesson. She felt; in the initial stages she had invested a significant amount of time to make this new system work. As she explains:

*“This one lesson had taken an entire day on a Sunday to plan, and I thought this could be a major timing issue in*

*the future. This involved reading all the selected books and working out the learning objectives.”*

| Implementation Phase & Reported % saved from Intervention Spending (associated staffing, training and materials) |           |           |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| Year 1   | Year 2    | Year 3+   |
| 30%  | 40%       | 50%       |
| Reduction  | Reduction | Reduction |

**Table 1:** Average Reported Cost Benefits among Member (licence) Schools (2015-2023)

As SLT at school-1 mentioned:

*“Learning so much so quickly and so in-depth has been the biggest challenge, with many new elements to the implementation. The need for embedding a new way of working is the major challenge though recognising the rewards are worthwhile (as proved by OFSTED).”*

At school-1, SLT member states: she has learned so much in the entire MM adoption process. She feels she has pushed herself (in her teacher leadership perspective) further in the MM process and at the same time this has improved her teaching: *“The English subject is being gone into at greater depth which links with the writing and being more ambitious under the new system which has been both challenging and rewarding.”*

The MM programme improves efficiency and better use of limited resources with schools (Claire, n.d.). She highlights the feedback sent by a former Head Teacher (MM licensed schools) to her regarding the improvements MM brings to the licensed schools as follows:

*“The longer we used MM, the better and more sustained the outcomes because this is an in-depth way for pupil to learn.”* The head goes onto comment: *“the fast pace solved off-task behaviour.”* Further the head states *“This is what makes MM not only fully inclusive but also significantly reduces costs, there being no need in MM lessons for any in-class support (Former head, MM licensed schools).”*

Claire also emphasises that:

*“As staff workload is vastly increased by the typical interventions or ‘catch-up’ sessions including in planning, marking, data gathering and management, then staff are generally positive about the reductions set out below as it coincides with significant reduction in their workload. Moreover, in the UK budgets are set by School Funding Formulae – reducing costs as set out below does not mean the schools receive less funding. Instead, schools have more*

*of their budget to spend. Nevertheless, after implementation of the MM model, 95% of leaders report reduced costs. Such reduction increases in subsequent years as less support staff and interventions are needed to 'catch up' students in English and Mathematics."*

She also provided following table 1:

The Head Teacher at school-2 believes, having been through the implementation phase the benefits will be shown but it could be next year before the outcomes could be more measurable. Yet, she stated:

*"The culture goal can now be seen to be being reached through ongoing improvements (already)." She also went on to state that she can see how the staff behaviour has also improved. They had a PMR (performance management review) meeting, and staff are now communicating with each other on a much more regular and useful basis. She also measured this using a staff wellbeing questionnaire where she found the staff are saying now, they know what is expected of them.*

*"The staff wellbeing has notably improved between the first one 12-months ago (before MM process) and now (after the MM implementation); (Head Teacher, School-2)".*

As the previous OFSTED inspection was graded as Requires Improvement, the Head Teacher feels without MM there would have been zero chance of such a positive change in less than 2 terms (noting internal judgements graded the school as Inadequate in December 2017). HT noted:

*"The OFSTED report (2019) vindicated all the challenging work school had been put in to achieve the good outcome".*

Post staff (Teachers) training (see Table 2), we asked them to review the list within Post – Teacher- Training and Implementation questionnaire and indicate whether they feel that the change will produce a gain (✓), no changes (?) or a loss (X) for each anticipated outcome of the implementation and explain why. Then, they needed to review the content of the full table and rank them based on their think on each item value in their position and "Rank" them from 1 (the most valued outcome) and then, 2 for the second most valued and so on. Then during the follow-up phases, we asked them to do the same review again. The top seven categories ranking for both post-implementation (2018) and follow up (2021) stayed the same.

| Categories:                                  | Initial analysis (2018) |                          | Follow-up analysis (2021) |                          |
|--|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
|  | Rank                    | Gain/ No change/<br>Loss | Rank                      | Gain/ No change/<br>Loss |
| Challenge                                    | 1                       | 19/1/0                   | 3                         | 7/1/0                    |
| Achievement                                  | 2                       | 17/3/0                   | 1                         | 7/1/0                    |
| Openness_ Sharing                            | 3                       | 17/3/0                   | 6                         | 6/2/0                    |
| Meaningful work- Interesting                 | 4                       | 15/2/3                   | 4                         | 7/0/1                    |
| Opportunity for competition or collaboration | 5                       | 15/5/0                   | 7                         | 6/2/0                    |
| Opportunity to use knowledge and skills      | 6                       | 15/4/1                   | 5                         | 7/1/0                    |
| Belonging - Involvement                      | 7                       | 14/5/1                   | 2                         | 7/1/0                    |

Table 2: Responses in Post-Teachers-Training & Implementation (2018 & follow-up 2021) Questionnaires

Although the order was slightly different, which might have been due to the smaller follow-up cohort and the Covid-19 pandemic impact. The follow-up responses in 2021 is insightful in comparison to initial analysis result in 2018. A positive experience reflected in Teacher's feedback "Post-Teachers- Training and Implementation Questionnaires." They "gain" achievement and feel more openness/ sharing in their practices (85%), i.e.:

*"The MM programme suits our pupils. I have also more time to prepare for the lessons due to the quicker progression achieved. The impact on the pupil progress has been significant. The benefit of the new system has made my work more enjoyable as I feel more prepared for my work than before."* (Teacher, School-2)

Despite all the challenges during the last two years due to the Covid-19 pandemic, there is a strong agreement among teachers (follow-up) that they have gained achievement due to the MM implementation (88%) and the sense of "belonging -involvement" and "Meaningful work – Interesting" (increased from 75% post-training and implementation to 88% in follow up responses). The response to "challenges" is still high, but this may need more interpretation outside the scope of this paper as this may reflect on the overall challenges due to the situation of the education system during the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact upon working practices within the schools. There were challenges identified through follow up email interviews i.e., staff turnover and lack of succession planning (training fresh staff) as well as lack of CPD (Continuing Professional development) all due to Covid-19 re- strictions. C.M, highlights:

*"To change the education experience and outcomes for our students, we had to change everything radically. The students had to 'do' more, we had to 'do' less. We had to learn to direct learning not 'do it for them.' I had to create tools and strategies which could be easily adopted by teachers and students anywhere at any time without taking away teachers' responsibility to decide what content was needed to engage and motivate their pupils."*

In support, Gerald Swaine (2017), former Director of the English programme Secondary National Strategy, acknowledged the MM approach transforms pupil's achievement, reduces teachers' work-load, and could enable schools to be world-beaters. He defined the MM programme as: McKie Mastery™ is not a programme, nor a quick fix, nor a scheme, nor a prehistoric throwback to "positive discipline." It is a whole-school approach which integrates strong drivers of progress and achievement in very innovative ways based on the "apprenticeship and mastery" model (Swain, 2017). The structured approach accommodates teacher creativity across the curriculum. Teachers design the curriculum to suit their pupils. They choose content, resources, and order of coverage, as well as wider curricular links. The detailed design work up-front is compensated with a manageable workload. Teachers in both schools have agreed the MM innovative approach had a positive impact on their teaching, and pupil progress:

*"...the MM has made my work more enjoyable as I feel more prepared for my work than before."* (Teacher, School-2)

## **CONCLUSION: ACCEPT OR REJECT?**

There is an abundance of change models circulating the educational community of practice. However, the data presented in this study and supporting historical data spanning 8 years of trials, validates the McKie Mastery™, Teaching and Learning programme as an effective tool to drive change in terms of a performance enhancement strategy. The two case study schools referenced in the paper demonstrate exceptional progress in terms of high standards of achievement, enhanced behaviour, and pupil engagement in learning. The MM model specifically focuses on behavioural change and acceptance of responsibilities and emphasises key catalyst of improved change in terms of leadership and trust, communications, and in-class training. Whilst 95% of schools reported such positive impacts, it is the intention of the authors to revisit all schools who have embraced the MM model within three years to further validate the MM models sustained impact against the current economic pressures, high exit levels from the teaching profession, increased teachers tension over pay structures within UK schools.

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**Appendix 1:** List of Schools Adopting MM – Current Status – (Note detail relates to the current form of license only)

| <b>School /Academy</b> | <b>Rating of OFSTED before adoption of MM</b>              | <b>Date of MM adoption</b> | <b>Current OFSTED Rating Accessed June 2020</b>  |
|------------------------|--|----------------------------|--|
| 1                      | Outstanding  | Jan-14                     | Outstanding  |
| 2                      | Requires Improvement                                       | Oct-16                     | Good   |
| 3                      | Good   | Dec-16                     | No Report Yet-Academy Conversion   |
| 4                      | Requires Improvement                                       | Mar-17                     | Good- license ceased January 2019- Requires Improvement March 2019                       |
| 5                      | New Identity School (through name change)<br>No Report Yet | May-17                     | Good   |
| 6                      | New Identity School (through name change)<br>No Report Yet | May-17                     | Good   |
| 7                      | Good   | Aug-18                     | Good   |
| 8                      | Requires Improvement                                       | Aug-18                     | Good   |
| 9                      | No Report Yet  | Jan-19                     | No Report Yet- New school  |
| 10                     | New Identity School (through name change)<br>No Report Yet | Jan-19                     | Requires Improvement- Though significant leadership endorsement from HMI Chief Inspector |
| 11                     | Good   | Jan-19                     | Good   |
| 12                     | Requires Improvement                                       | Jun-19                     | No Report yet  |
| 13                     | Good   | Jan-20                     | No Report Yet  |
| 14                     | Good   | Jun-20                     | No Report Yet  |

Notes:

- #There are currently three levels of the MM programme implementation-Operational-Advanced-Lead School.
- \*Full OFSTED reports are available online-there are four Levels 1) Outstanding and 2) Good are the acceptable levels that would generally, not require a further visit unless there is a dip in future Key stage 1 and 2 outcomes. Level 3) Requires Improvement and Level 4) Inadequate would initiate regular visits by OFSED inspectors.
- For primary schools every December Key Stage result are published if there is a 2 – or 3-year dip (“Trend”) this triggers an OFSTED visit.
- For secondary schools every January Key stage result are published that can trigger an OFSTED visit.
- Other triggers for an OFSTED visit could be (though not always) if a new head teacher is appointed or a new school is formed often in transition to an Academy.
- When a school joins a MAT (Multi Academy Trust) this often stems from poor OFSTED outcomes.
- The local authority has no direct responsibility or authority over MAT schools only the traditional (local authority) ones.
- The reasons for no OFSTED report being available in addition to those given also include:
  - An inspection has taken place recently but, but the report hasn’t been published yet.
  - An “outstanding school” that has become an academy may be exempt from routine inspection.