

## **Editorial**

### **Leadership in non-mainstream education: the case of complementary and supplementary schools.**

Anthony Thorpe

*University of Roehampton, London, UK*

Linet Arthur

*Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, UK*

Ana Souza

*Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, UK*

This themed issue focuses on the leadership of complementary and supplementary schools. Little is known about how these schools are led and managed, despite their importance to many children in UK mainstream schools. In England, for example, the number of complementary and supplementary schools was recently estimated at between 3,000 and 5,000 (Evans and Gillan-Thomas, 2015). Many mainstream schools allow supplementary and complementary schools to use their classrooms outside normal school hours (Maylor et al, 2010). Supplementary and complementary schools, which are also known as 'heritage', 'community language' (Kagan, Carreira and Hitchins Chik, 2017; Trifonas and Aravossitas, 2018) and 'mother-tongue' schools (Walters, 2011) are largely operated on a part-time, voluntary basis to support the cultural, religious or linguistic education of migrant groups (Li Wei, 2006).

The range of terms used for these schools reflects the different interests of researchers and policy makers about the nature and purpose of such schools, rather than the titles that the

organisations themselves might use (Thorpe et al., 2018). In research focusing on perceived benefits to the learning and identity formation of pupils, the term 'complementary' tends to be used for schools focusing on linguistic and/or cultural maintenance of a specific minority ethnic community (Lytra and Martin, 2010). These schools are presented as 'complementing' mainstream schools (Francis et al., 2008).

Schools established in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by parents and community groups for young Black people have tended to use the term 'supplementary' because the schools are seen as supplementing the deficiencies in mainstream state schooling (Gerrard, 2013). The term 'supplementary' is often used in UK national government and local authority documentation to refer to all complementary and supplementary schools (Bristol, 2007; Maylor et al., 2010).

As readers will see, we have not sought to stipulate the use of a specific title in this themed issue but left this as a matter for the contributors to decide and so both terms feature. The themed issue partially emerges from a BELMAS-funded project exploring issues related to the leadership of complementary and supplementary schools, specifically Brazilian schools in the south-east of England. This research study focused on understanding how individuals become leaders in this context and the challenges they face in effectively fulfilling their roles (Arthur and Souza, 2017).

Some of the issues and challenges confronting leaders in complementary and supplementary schools are also of concern to mainstream school leaders. Yet there are significant differences in the context for complementary and supplementary schools: they tend to be financially fragile due to a lack of resources in an education system which affords little recognition to their work and contribution to society (Thorpe et al., 2018). Many are staffed by volunteers, usually parents, some of whom do not have educational qualifications

(Nwulu, 2015). The schools are vulnerable in terms of staffing as well as financially: some do not survive the departure of the school leader (Thorpe et al, 2018). The UK Government has indicated an intention to introduce inspections of out-of-school education, which would include complementary and supplementary schools (Souza, 2016). There are worries that the imposition of regulations on complementary and supplementary schools may affect their freedom and negatively impact on educational diversity (Sneddon, 2017).

The four research articles in this special issue explore issues of leadership in non-mainstream education at different organizational levels in a variety of complementary and supplementary school contexts. In the first article by Maylor, the focus is at the institutional level, exploring community leadership strategies used by leaders in Black supplementary schools in the UK. Utilising Yosso's (2005) perspective on community cultural wealth, Maylor seeks to understand Black school leaders' perceptions of educational leadership and supplementary school success, which are rooted in notions of community and serving, along with the strategies they employ in creating successful schools.

Moving to discussions of human resource management, Souza and Arthur's article investigates the impact of leadership on the professional development of teachers in complementary schools. Their article, which focuses on a London-based complementary school for children of Brazilian heritage, contends that the contextual constraints in which the school operates lead to high levels of collaboration between leaders, teachers and teaching assistants. Consequently, a Community of Practice had developed which, the authors suggest, other schools could consciously encourage.

The next article by Melnikova examines leadership of complementary schools as non-profit, social entrepreneurship. Focusing on how these schools have developed as social enterprises in the Baltic state of Lithuania, she identifies and discusses the entrepreneurial competencies that complementary school heads believe they must possess to enable them

to establish and run successful non-profit schools. This novel way of approaching the topic has implications for leadership development in the sector.

The final research article by Thorpe explores the contentious issue of supplementary schools with connections to religious organisations and argues that the exclusion of supplementary schools from future research and school partnerships needs to be avoided. He offers a heuristic device for school leaders and researchers to use to support leadership practice in supplementary and mainstream schools, and to encourage further research.

An opinion piece by Schulze and Siegfried-Brookes, who are respectively chair and vice chair of the Association of German Saturday Schools UK, outlines the challenges of leading and managing German Saturday schools. They share their opinion that despite all their contributions to society and the wealth of resources they could offer to mainstream schools, German Saturday schools in the UK face very real challenges related to their sustainability, due to a lack of recognition and support.

Our interview is with Luljeta Nuzi, director and co-founder of *Shpresa* ('Hope' in Albanian), a UK-based organisation that runs several complementary schools for Albanian speaking children from refugee, asylum and migrant backgrounds. Here Luljeta talks about her motivations and the challenges that have shaped her approach to establishing *Shpresa*, and her view of leadership as a practitioner and social entrepreneur.

This themed issue can only seek to cover some aspects of leading in complementary and supplementary schools. We make no claim to be providing a comprehensive overview of the sector but we hope this issue will lead to an increase in the engagement by researchers, educators and policy-makers alike in matters related to these schools and their leadership. Our thanks to all those who have kindly undertaken reviews of the contributions, particularly in these difficult times, as well as to all the contributors.

## References

- Arthur L and Souza A (2017) Leadership development and challenges in complementary schools. *BELMAS Annual Conference*, Stratford-upon-Avon, UK, 7-9th July.
- Evans D and Gillan-Thomas K (2015) *Complementary Schools - Descriptive analysis of complementary school pupils' characteristics and attainment in seven local authorities in England 2007/08—2011/12*. London: Paul Hamlyn Foundation.
- Francis B, Archer L and Mau A (2008) *British Chinese Pupils' Identities, Achievement and Complementary Schooling* (executive report). London: University of London/Kings College.
- Gerrard J (2013) Self help and protest: the emergence of black supplementary schooling in England. *Race Ethnicity and Education* 16(1): 32-58.
- Kagan OE, Carreira, MM and Hitchins Chik C (eds) (2017) *The Routledge Handbook of Heritage Language Education: From innovation to program building*. London: Routledge.
- Li Wei (2006) Complementary Schools, Past, Present and Future. *Language and Education* 20(1): 76-83.
- Lytra V and Martin P (eds) (2010) *Sites of Multilingualism – complementary schools in Britain today*. Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books.
- Maylor U, Glass K, Tozun Issa T, Kuyok KA, Minty S, Rose A, Ross A, Tanner E, Finch S, Low N, Taylor E, Tipping S and Purdon S (2010) *The impact of supplementary schools on pupils' attainment: An investigation into what factors contribute to educational improvements*. London: Department for Children, Schools and Families. Available at: <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/4150856.pdf>
- Nwulu S (2015) *Beyond the school gates: developing the roles and connections of supplementary schools*. London: Royal Society of Arts.
- Sneddon R (2017) Sustainable approaches to complementary education in England, in O.E. Kagan, M.M. Carreira, and C. Hitchins chik (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of Heritage*

*Language Education: From innovation to program building* (London, UK: Routledge), pp. 85-99

Souza A (2016) Is Brazilian Portuguese being taught as a community or heritage language? *Language Issues* 27(1): 21-28.

Thorpe A, Arthur L and Souza A (2018) Leadership succession as an aspect of organisational sustainability in complementary schools in England. *Leading & Managing* 24(2), 61-73.

Trifonas, PP and Aravossitas T (eds) (2018) *Handbook of Research and Practice in Heritage Language Education*. Cham: Springer International.

Yosso TJ (2005) Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race Ethnicity and Education* 8(1): 69-91.