

Deciding on whether or not to apply

- Question your motives. Why do you want to do it? How will you manage in that capacity
- Does the place and space align with my own values and identity?

Learning and getting experience

- Work out what working at that level looks like, feels like and smells like and use this to drive your PDP (whether that be your 'school one' or your 'real one').
- Look for opportunities to be involved in projects beyond your role. If you find you don't have time or aren't enjoying the experience, leadership might not be for you right now.
- Never be afraid to question things, especially if it is an area of particular interest. That way, you will expand your understanding and also alert others to your interests.
- Find your niche and exploit it

Getting support

- Don't try to fly solo in your career, including times when you are looking to change position
- Find a mentor that works for you. It might not be your line manager and it might not be the first person you try. Keep going until you find someone who can really be of help.
- Networks are critically important. Make time and put energy into forming these. Associations such as SASPA are perfect for this.
- Get clear honest feedback so that when you move forwards, you all are working towards the same goal

Getting your application right

- Research the position – if it doesn't 'float your boat', then don't apply
- Make sure you do your homework right – know about the school and check that you really want to be there
- Actually read **all** the pages of the job and person specification. The work level definitions are critically important – required knowledge and experience, autonomy, responsibility, accountability, working relationships, role diversity, complexity in the role, resource management and strategic outcomes required are the categories and the level you are expected to operate at depends on the level of the role. If you don't know what they mean, ask someone.
- Your CV should be updated regularly; don't leave it to the last minute
- Use the application process to your advantage. Don't repeat information in your written application and your CV
- Use the evidence of leadership in your application. You are not applying to be World's Best Teacher
- Address all parts of the person specification. I like the Sinek model of Why, How, What and use this as a framework when writing.
- Always talk with the contact person if you are serious about applying– you are asking questions and getting information back, too. Don't waste their time if you're not sure!!
- Your application and CV need to be EO – all about Evidence and Outcomes
- Think leadership, not teaching
- Let referees know what you are applying for
- ALWAYS have your first draft done early and use a 'critical friend' or mentor who you trust to give you feedback. Make sure you give them time to do this and yourself time to make changes

Personal qualities

- Know yourself well – warts and all
- Be able to articulate your educational philosophy and values – these will come through in how and what you lead. Do these align with the role and school you're applying for?
- As a leader, you need to be resilient and roll with the punches. You also need to be passionate about what you're doing
- The 'higher up' you go, the more comfortable you need to be with operating within ambiguity. Nothing is binary!

Getting your application right

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Your personal qualities