

Helping secure a brighter future for
our children – ISBL's blueprint for
school business leadership practice

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Policy backdrop

- Highly politicised environment, a mixed economy
- System continues to evolve
- SoS push for all schools to be part of a trust
- ISBL is not advocating in favour of a particular system
- However, evidence suggests that groups of schools working together are operationally more resilient
- ISBL believes one of most important considerations regarding structure is how the management of resources is optimised to improve the life chances of children

Professional confidence

- We need to be unapologetic about the expectations we set of the profession
- We need to ensure employers understand what strong business leadership looks like (ideally using professional standards as the reference point)
- We need to ensure qualifications are fit for purpose and well understood by the entire sector
- We need to invest in the ongoing development of this critical workforce
- We need to develop the capacity and imagination to respond to unexpected crises



The continuous cycle of sector-led self-improvement



Sector bodies

- Professional bodies play a crucial role in making sure members seize opportunity but also confront challenges
- The role of a professional body, whilst complementary, is very different to the role of a representative body
- Professional bodies are dedicated to the advancement of the knowledge and practice of professions
- The principal role of representative bodies or unions is to protect and further workers' rights and interests



ISBL's four priority focus areas and associated aims

1. Professional competency and sector assurance

- **develop** appropriately qualified, skilled and experienced practitioners
- **encourage** all practitioners to be well informed and fully engaged
- **enable** our members to stand up to scrutiny, be highly accountable and work within a strict code of conduct



ISBL's four priority focus areas and associated aims

2. Professional recognition

- **promote** the role amongst all key stakeholder groups
- **champion** school business professionals (SBPs) as credible and highly effective senior education leaders
- **facilitate** professional growth and career opportunity



ISBL's four priority focus areas and associated aims

3. Professional development

- **oversee** a portfolio of high-quality qualifications linked to ISBL professional standards
- **curate** courses, training and academic programmes of study that help improve practice
- **deliver** high-quality and relevant events, conferences and workshops, both virtual and face to face



ISBL's four priority focus areas and associated aims

4. Professional voice (conduit between policy and practice)

- **review** relevant education policy, sector guidance and legislation
- **consult** with key stakeholders (including government) and practitioners on the implications of new policy, guidance and legislation
- **advise** key stakeholders (including government) on the both the impact and implementation of new policy, guidance and legislation

Effective resource management

What we mean

Resources are everything we touch:

- Funding
- People
- Skills
- Buildings and facilities
- Technology
- Teaching material

Compliance is just a response to the appropriate use of resources
– accounting regulations, health & safety, HR law,
building regulations, etc.



Effective resource management

What are the ingredients?

- The right structures and people
- Relationships
- Money and oversight
- Robust decision-making



Seven characteristics of efficient schools

01

Has a **strong governing body and leadership team** that challenges spending

02

Deploys the workforce effectively, with a focus on **developing high-quality teachers**

03

Uses evidence to determine the **right mix of teaching and education support** staff

04

Has a **skilled school business professional** who takes on a leadership role

05

Good use of **financial benchmarking information** to inform spending decisions

06

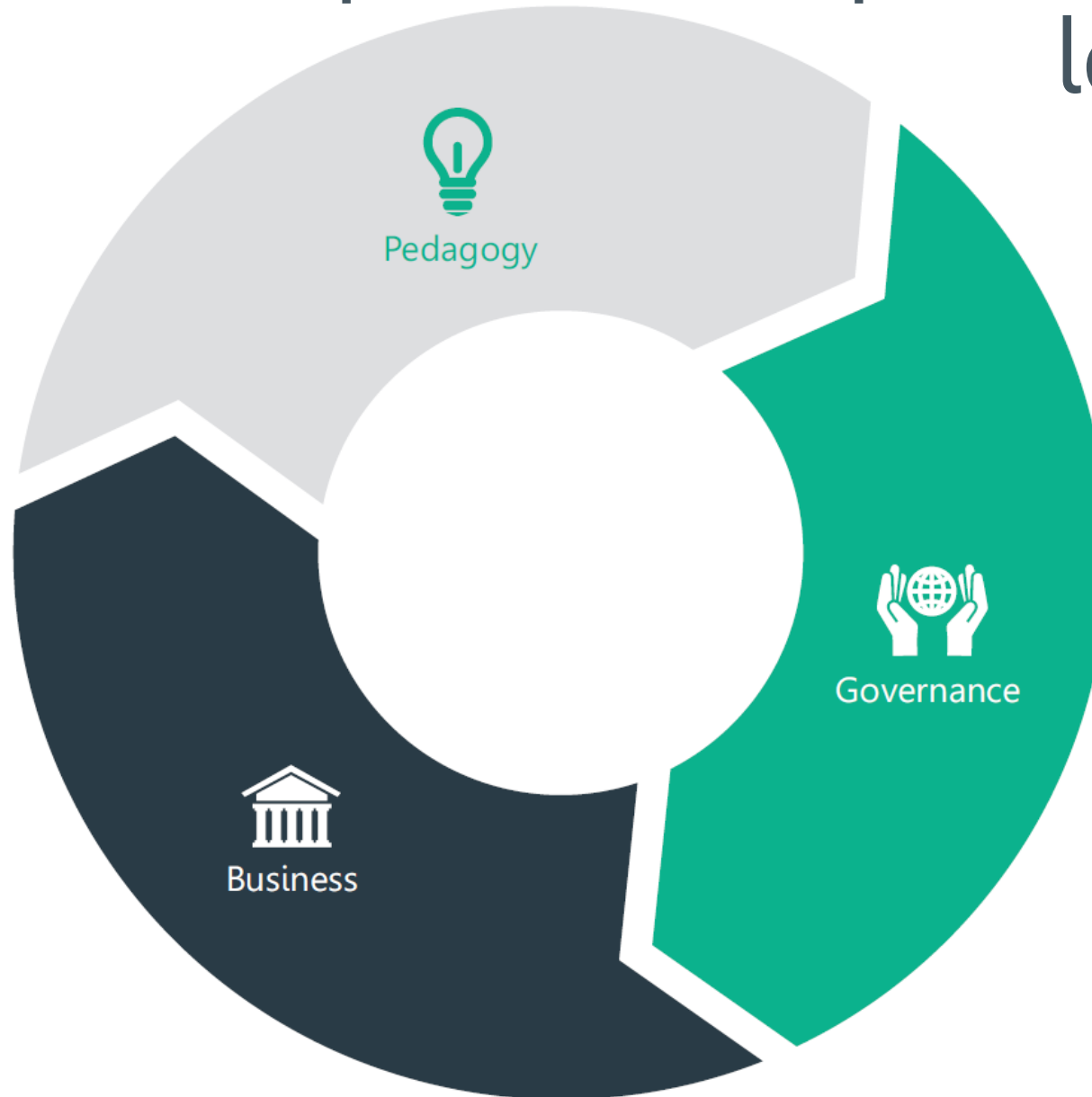
Part of a **school cluster** to share expertise, experience and data, and access economies of scale when making shared purchases

07

Manages down back-office and running costs through better procurement



Joined-up leadership: the pillars of leadership



Joined-up leadership: ICFP

- Linking curriculum ambition with available resources
- Using nationally recognised benchmarks
- Ensuring sustainability



Relevant research

ISBL supports sector-led research. We want to encourage more practitioners to develop the knowledge base.

- MiE Special Edition – School Business Leadership
- ISBL School Business Professional Workforce Survey Report 2020
- ISBL Exploring Ethnicity: School Business Leadership in England Report 2020
- Paul Armstrong – School-to-school support within a competitive education system: views from the inside
- OEE – Guidance for Improving School Financial Outcomes
- Kreston Reeves – 2021 Academies Benchmark Report



Diversity and inclusivity

