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## MODULE TWO

### UNIT THREE

#### The Functions of School Management

##### Introduction

In this unit, we will look at some of the management functions which you have as a school head, building on concepts introduced in Unit 1.

We look first at a case study on School Mismanagement Fever. We differentiate between the functions of planning, organising, directing, supervising and evaluating in a school, and we see how they relate to each other and how together they describe the role of the school manager, or head. Lastly, we consider some indicators of effective school management.

Individual study time: 3 hours

##### Learning outcomes

After working through this unit you should be able to:

- differentiate between the main functions of the head of a school and identify some of the tasks associated with each function
- describe some of the inter-relationships between these functions
- identify the key indicators of effective school heads.

##### Case study

##### School mismanagement fever

In Fig 3 a cartoonist is suggesting that a head of a disorganised school is requesting help, because she's seeking a cure for a School Mismanagement Fever.



Fig 3 S.M. Fever is school mismanagement fever

In this school we may imagine that the governing board has expired; it has an inadequate number of teachers; the pupil drop-out rate is high; the results in public examinations are poor; the buildings, equipment and materials are inadequate and poorly maintained; the grounds are untidy and the morale of those connected with the school is not high.

But the main lessons from the case study which the cartoonist is emphasising is that if as a head you are ASKing for help either to prevent or to cure your School Mismanagement Fever, you are miles ahead of those who do not recognise that they have a problem at all! Clearly, you appreciate your role as manager of an organisation, which exists to provide the pupils with useful knowledge, skills and attitudes for responsible and successful living. To be a successful head you will need to acquire managerial Attitudes = A, Skills = S and Knowledge = K for running your school. Thus school managers who are seeking to find a cure for School Mismanagement Fever must recognise the need to ASK, that is, to involve others in developing solutions, but must also recognise the three key components: Attitudes, Skills and Knowledge, which they need to acquire. May be your S.M. Fever can be traced to a specific managerial issue which interferes with the processes of instruction and learning in the school, but, more likely, there are very many issues about which you are concerned. The successful school head is someone who is able to handle a range of problems or issues, at one time.

### **A school management diagnosis**

Let us examine or diagnose, by means of a checklist, how well you are doing as a school manager.

### **Activity 3.1**

Complete the school management diagnosis checklist in Fig 4 by ticking 'yes' or 'no'.

30 minutes

Fig 4 School management diagnosis checklist

Indicate which of the following you have worked on, within the last school year, in your school.

Note: in each case you should be able to explain to someone what has been done.

# PLANNING

- 1 Translating national education policies into school-based teaching and learning objectives and targets.
- 2 Planning both the long-term acquisition of relevant teaching and learning resources (including finances).
- 3 Preparing school syllabuses, schemes of work, timetables and schedules of activities.
- 4 Preparing schedules for meetings of the governing board, Parents' Associations, staff, etc.

YES

NO

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

ORGANISING	YES	NO
1 Preparing up-to-date job descriptions for all employed staff, and assigning roles, responsibilities and duties to staff and pupils.	_____	_____
2 Arranging for the appointment of new staff and the selection and appointment of all staff and students holding responsibility posts.	_____	_____
DIRECTING		
1 Inducting new teachers, pupils and parents.	_____	_____
2 Communicating regularly and fully, by the most appropriate means, to all those with an interest in the school about school programmes.	_____	_____
3 Holding formal and informal discussions with individuals and groups, including staff and students, and those outside the school, about all aspects of school life.	_____	_____
SUPERVISING		
1 Ensuring that classes are held, and that pupils' work is marked and checked.	_____	_____
2 Checking the schemes of work and lesson plans of the teachers.	_____	_____
3 Ensuring presence and punctuality of both staff and pupils.	_____	_____
4 Conducting a full and fair appraisal of all staff, including observations, discussions and in written reports.	_____	_____
5 Taking stock and physically checking the stores and equipment of the school.	_____	_____
EVALUATING		
1 Preparing the Annual Report of the school.	_____	_____
2 Analysing examinations results.	_____	_____
3 Reviewing the performance of the school in all in-class and out-of-class activities.	_____	_____
4 Setting new targets for individuals, departments and the school.	_____	_____
5 Making new requests for better qualified teachers.	_____	_____
6 Presenting financial statements and reports to the board of governors.	_____	_____

**Comments**

If your 'Yes' scores exceed 15/20, then your School Mismanagement Fever is not life threatening! However, if your 'No' scores exceed 10/20, then your School Mismanagement Fever requires your serious attention.

The list indicates the five main management functions of school heads: planning, organising, directing, supervising and evaluating all aspects of school life. Although they occur in sequence, in fact each function continues all the time. As the list shows each may be broken down into several tasks. Thus the work of a head is both complex and never complete!

The modules presented in this series for the training and support of school heads should guide you to reduce your School Mismanagement Fever.

**Relating management functions**

The functions and tasks identified in the checklist may be put in the form of a flow chart.

***Activity 3.2***

Take one of the main areas of life in your school, such as the curriculum. Use the diagram from Unit 1 in which we presented the five main functions or processes of school heads within a management cycle, and demonstrate through specific examples, how you, in your school, undertake tasks within each function in relation to the curriculum.

20 minutes

**Comments**

This is not an easy activity to undertake as the range of tasks you have identified is probably quite large, but you should have gained a clearer idea as to how every task which you undertake as a school head in the various areas of operation may be analysed and described in terms of the broad functions which make up the management cycle. Moreover as noted in Unit 1, although presented cyclically, management processes inter-relate. The flow chart depicted in Fig 5 highlights these relations. It is important that you become analytical about your job, so that you can make sure you are doing the right things, for the right reason, in the right way, and at the right time.

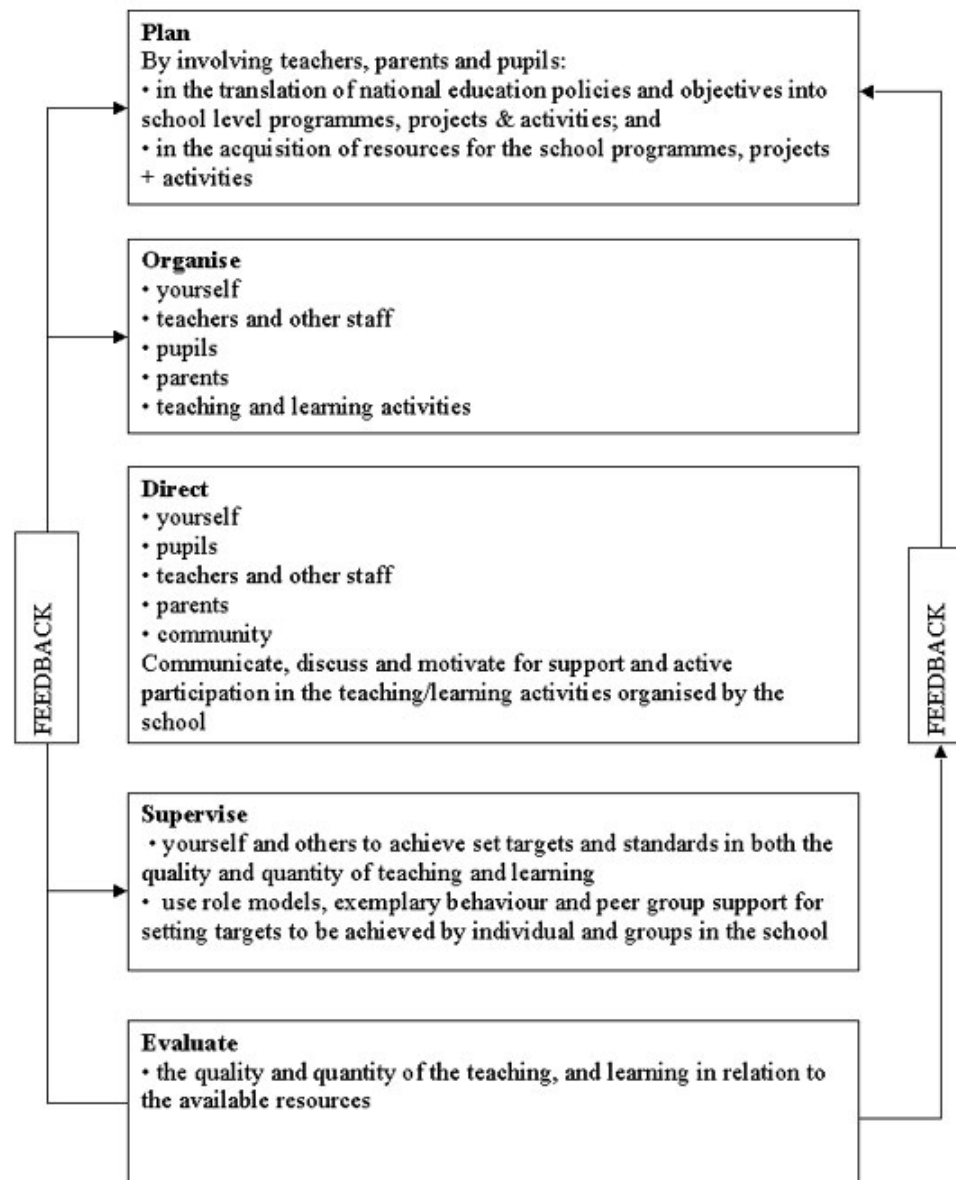


Fig 5 Managing your school

In examining the flow chart you probably thought 'How can I, as a school head, manage to plan, organise, direct, supervise, and evaluate programmes, projects and activities in my school?' The answer to this question lies in the application of the principles of:

- physical, programme, project and financial (budgeting) planning
- human and public relations

- communication and negotiation techniques
- delegation of authority, functions, responsibilities, duties and tasks
- decision-making and problem-solving
- management of change in relation to the operations in a school, through action planning.

All of these aspects are discussed in subsequent units and in other modules of this series.

### **School heads: Chief Executives or Lead Professionals?**

Most people recognise the fact that the central role of the school head should be in managing the teaching and learning which determine the quality of education. Your attention is therefore drawn to current concerns for building the capacity in educational management at three levels:

- in the delivery of education in schools
- in policy implementation through district and regional education offices
- in strategic policy development within the Ministry of Education, the entire government, non-governmental organisations and international agencies.

These concerns focus on the school as a social institution - an agency through which the educational needs of the youth can be met. A school therefore is a means to an end and not the end in itself. This is reflected in the various roles the head performs. We introduced a number of these in Unit 1, for example, administrative, leadership, supervisory and managerial roles. Some people make a useful distinction between the head as the Chief Executive (CE) and the head as the Lead Professional (LP).

### **Chief Executive role examples**

Examples of activities which illustrate the role of the head as Chief Executive are given below.

- setting out the mission and objectives of the school
- allocating duties to staff
- co-ordinating and supervising staff activities
- evaluating school performance
- establishing working relationships between the governing board and the staff and employers
- ex officio member of the governing board.

### ***Activity 3.3***

Make a list of some of the activities which you undertake as a school head in your Lead Professional role.

15 minutes

### **Comments**

You probably found this task quite easy if you usually think of yourself as a head

teacher.

### **Lead Professional role examples**

Check which of the following items you listed:

- personal teaching
- professional guidance to teachers as individuals and in the development of school programmes
- counselling pupils and parents on ethics, norms and values of the school
- spokesperson for the whole school on all educational matters
- participation in subject panels, curriculum development and other external professional activities
- member of School Heads' Association.

Most jobs, not just that of a school head, involve different, maybe conflicting roles. Achieving a balance between them is very important. The school head who does not, or perhaps can not, provide professional leadership will not be a credible person in the eyes of his staff. Yet a school head who fails in the role of Chief Executive perhaps should have stayed in the classroom.

### **Activity 3.4**

Make a list of all the tasks you carry out as head of your school in a typical week. Beside each task indicate whether it is your Chief Executive Role with CE in brackets or whether it is your Leading Professional Role with LP in the brackets. Which role, CE or LP, has the largest number of tasks in your week?

30 minutes

### **Comments**

In your list of CE tasks you might have included 'signing purchase orders at 3.20'. In the LP the tasks might have included 'teaching Mathematics in Grade 4 on Mondays from 08.30 - 09.30'. You may have found separating some tasks between these roles quite difficult. For example, when you are chairing meetings, such as a staff meeting, you have both a Chief Executive and a Lead Professional role. The two roles both support and conflict with each other. Achieving a balance is important, and yet is quite difficult. What is important is that you realise their existence and work to improve your skills at carrying them out effectively.

### **Indicators of an effective school head**

In [Module 6, Monitoring School Effectiveness](#), we will be considering how we may evaluate the effectiveness of a school. Here let us consider how we might determine whether or not a school head is an effective manager.

### **Activity 3.5**

The list of items in Fig 6 might be used to help determine whether or not a school head is an effective manager.

(1) Do you agree with the three items included here? Would you include anything else?

(2) These items have been written to describe an effective school head. Now rewrite them for a head who is definitely weak in his or her job. Notice that they are written in an abbreviated form, without wasting words.

15 minutes

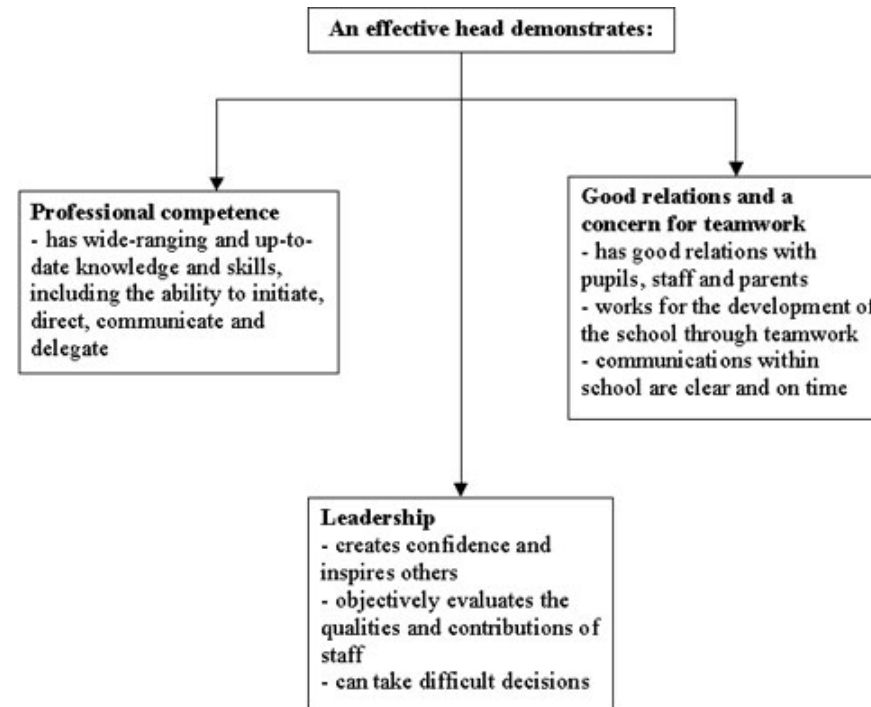


Fig 6 Indicators of an effective school head

### Comments

The three items included here provide some essential characteristics of effectiveness with regards to the work done by a school head. Notice that the list is not about an effective school, nor is it concerned with describing the detailed tasks of a school manager, such as planning the curriculum. We will come back to these again in [Module 6](#). Not only do we need to explain what effectiveness is, but also what effectiveness is not. In the same way as we apply grades to the work done by pupils, so we should be able to describe the work of the school head as excellent, good, fair or below expectation, as appropriate, by using descriptive criteria such as you have just attempted to write.

### Summary

In this unit we have looked at the main elements in school management. This has

involved identifying the five main functions of a school head: planning, organising, directing, supervising and evaluating, and some of the tasks associated with each function. We have drawn distinctions between school heads as Chief Executives and as Lead Professionals. Lastly we have identified how indicators may be written up to produce criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of a school head. One item concerned human relations, which is the focus of our [next unit](#).

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