

## How to use the ‘Monitoring School Leadership’ tool

The tool has two key features: a) the categories listed under the headings of – ‘Spheres of leadership action’ and ‘Purposes’ - and b) the intersections between the two sets of categories.

The point of the exercise is to find out about, and stimulate a discussion about, the ways in which schools are building capacity for continuous improvement. When visiting a school we might speak to a range of different members of the school community including the school principal, deputy principals, others in positions of responsibility, teachers, students, parents and so on, asking questions about leadership practice.

The matrix can be used to help frame questions by starting with the Purposes. For example, if we look at ‘To build social capital’, we might want to ask questions such as: *How does the practice of leadership build trust between members of the school community?*

Supposing the answer is: *‘We have a staff conference every summer which gives us a chance to get to know each other better.’* This could be noted in the cell where ‘To build social capital’ intersects with ‘Programmes’.

The next question could be: *‘Are there any organisational structures that help to promote trust?’*, which relates to the ‘Organisational structures’ column, or *‘Does the school principal talk to individuals to try to resolve disagreements and help colleagues to see each other’s view point?’*, which relates to the ‘Transactional interventions’ column.

Using such an approach requires creativity on the part of the questioner since those being questioned will not necessarily be familiar with some of the concepts and assumptions explained in the attached paper. It may be necessary to try many different types of questions to enable respondents to identify relevant experiences.

It is quite possible that some questions receive very negative answers. For example, supposing the question is: *‘How does the school support the sharing of professional knowledge?’* and the answer is: *‘Not at all’*, this presents an opportunity to stimulate reflection by asking *‘How do you think the school could facilitate knowledge sharing?’*.

For those who seek to standardise inspectors’ findings, the tool offered here may be seen to be too exploratory and therefore not a reliable enough measure for grading and comparing schools. However, it may be seen to be useful by those who are more interested in helping schools to improve the practice of leadership.