

**Aspiring to Senior Leadership Development Programme 2024/2025**

Detail

* Our target audience – Junior and Senior School Middle Leaders looking to make the step-up to all types of Senior Leadership role (academic/pastoral/co-curricular/…)
* Our format – a seven month supportive continuum of learning – 2 x “live” Away Days, 4 x 2-hours digital units and preparation/reflective exercises, 30-minute optional “wash-ups” in between digital modules for informal support from the GRJ team
* Our GRJ team – I am joined by school Senior Leaders, Heads and Rectors representing a range of independent schools spread throughout England and Scotland, all at the cutting edge of their roles
* Our framework – specifically designed for the Scottish context with effective use of HIGOS 4, GIRFEC and the National Model of Professional Learning
* Our modus operandi – everything is real, situational, practical – with scenarios designed by our GRJ team based on their actual in-school tough experiences for us to solve in a safe & supportive space
* Our opportunities – we offer the chance for colleagues to “step-up” and join our GRJ team from Oct 2024 onwards – with extensive support in preparation, delivery and follow-up – always very popular and it’s a fantastic way to actually lead, rather than sit back and be told how to lead
* Links to our GRJ/SCIS “Aspiring to Leadership” programme – themes throughout are almost identical for all obvious reasons, but ramped up significantly here in terms of complexity, scope and accountability. We also have an extra 30 minutes per digital unit in order to devote extra time to our work.

Away Day 1 (Thursday Sept 26th 2024 10.00-16.00 The Glasgow Academy)

“Making the step-up – Middle Leader to Senior Leader…”

Day one sets the reference points ready for our next seven months of professional learning – everything we do between September 2024 and March 2025 refers back to

the takeaways from this day’s work, summarised as follows:

Morning (whole group):

* Getting the fundamentals right – personal Core Values as a new Senior Leader
* From Middle Leader to Senior Leader – getting it right and not getting it wrong
* Keeping it straight-forward – the three pillars of excellent Senior Leadership

Afternoon (workshops x 3):

* W1: walking the talk – making our GRJ/SCIS model fit
* W2: learning your team – introduction to the A’s, B’s, C’s
* W3: being a willing owner – “Welcome to your worst nightmare from GRJ!”

W3 is also our first opportunity to introduce The GRJ Academy, a fictional 3-18 co-educational day and boarding SCIS school in need of some high impact, motivational leadership.

Feedback from colleagues is that they really enjoy and gain significant value from this very “real” aspect of our work, and so The GRJ Academy forms the basis for all our situational work which follows on from day one and which features throughout the whole programme.

Digital unit 1 (Tuesday October 22nd 2024 19.00-21.00)

Making the right first impression

We consider the first day, days and weeks in post – identifying priorities, challenges and tactics with a range of situational exercises based at The GRJ Academy including leading that all important first Middle Leadership meeting with purpose.

Digital unit 2 (Tuesday November 26th 2024 19.00-21.00)

Colleague underperformance and challenging 1-1 conversations

Our introduction to Mr Fred Mercury – the long-standing underperforming Head of Mathematics at The GRJ Academy. With a very specific situational brief, colleagues are expected to prepare for, lead and follow-up a challenging 1-1 conversation with Mr Mercury – always high impact in terms of future preparation and takeaways.

Digital unit 3 (Monday January 20th 2025 19.00-21.00)

Ownership of accountability, Professional Learning & sustainability

Following on from unit 2, we simply ask the question “What next for poor old Fred…?” at The GRJ Academy – we set the challenge of establishing the longer-term support structure for Fred, as well as thinking “ante-mortem” – a great tool to identify worst case scenario and tactics to mitigate it. We also introduce the role of Human Resources into this unit, plus a taste of UK Employment Law.

Digital unit 4 (Monday February 10th 2025 19.00-21.00)

Introduction to whole school Values, Vision, Strategy (VVS)

Here we first consider the link between Values, Vision and Strategy as a part of preparation for Away Day 2, always keeping it straight-forward – then we fast-forward to the concept of whole school “strategic thinking”, as well as a couple of tough GRJ Academy situational Senior Leadership interview scenarios covering alignment/non-alignment with new school Values, Vision and Strategy.

Away Day 2 (Friday March 21st 2025 10.00-16.00 Fettes College Edinburgh)

“From strategy to reality…”

For Day two we take everything we have learned in the programme and apply it in a strategic context – as always keeping it practical, real and achievable.

Morning (whole group):

* Theme of the day – what does “From strategy to reality…” really mean…?
* Leading strategy – getting it right and not getting it wrong
* Strategic blockers, and how to mitigate them

Afternoon (workshops x 3):

* W1: Strategic & development plans – defining good and differentiating the excellent
* W2: Starting from scratch – the first 12 months of strategic planning
* W3: Full 360 – programme reflections and next steps

Extra notes – 1-1 support and the social element

* Colleague support – this is one of the most important aspects of what we do, and I or one of our GRJ team is readily available to support colleagues for a short 1-1 in whatever context – from confidential chats about tricky situations through to promotion applications
* Social element – this is also important for us, and each of the two Away Days is followed by an offsite local pub social to share a few drinks, network with colleagues and bond properly as a group. Since Covid this has proven hugely popular with colleagues, so much so that in March 2024 (the end of our 2023/2024 programmes at Fettes), we had to reserve an entire section of our chosen venue in Edinburgh!