

Associate

GILL KELLY

“It is the complexity in a multicultural, multifaceted world that makes that world so wonderful”

When you are making changes to an organisation, the changes you want to make are only part of the picture. In the same way, when you are building a new school, the new school building is, in many ways, the least of your concerns.

It is wisdom such as this – and a commitment to ‘walk the talk’ when it comes to leadership - that has helped Gill Kelly become an innovative leader in her own right

Back in the days when the UK government felt that children and teachers deserved better schools than the crumbling, leaking piles that many were working in, Gill Kelly was a deputy head at a school that won a Building Schools for the Future bid. Her role was to use the opportunity provided by the BSF process to help the school make a change not just to its buildings but to the very nature of the way it went about teaching and learning in the 21st century.

Of the many things she learned from the process (much of which she has set down in her book for the Independent Thinking Series, *Where Will I Do My Pineapples?*) are:

- How a school communicates within its four walls will more accurately convey the values of that institution than the ‘Our Values’ plaque in reception
- Redesigning the system without understanding the context you are

- working in is a hollow act and will have no lasting impact whatsoever
- Without engaging the community (no, really engaging the community and an equally open heart) you will not sustain the improvements you make
- Brave leadership requires strength of resolve, an open mind and a genuine moral integrity
- Respectful but honest relationships sustain you through troubled times (whereas respect without honesty means you don’t rock the boat but the boat is actually sinking)
- Modern leadership is about supporting networks and partnerships as much - if not more - than it is about vision and bravery working
- Saying those three magic words ‘I don’t know’ is not only fine, it should be a requirement of any headteacher’s performance management!

Gill was the principal of an Academy situated in the 14th most deprived ward in the country.

At a time of great change in education, the insights that Gill has gleaned from her experiences in school leadership, and in particular implementing major changes without losing sight of the people at the heart of a school, mean that she has a great deal to offer school leaders.



“We need a complex personalised curriculum that serves the needs of individuals as well as the economic needs of a nation” - Where Will I Do My Pineapples?

Feedback from recent events include:

“Thank you again for your presentations at the CSH Conference last Friday. Over dinner, the Heads commented on the hope and warmth of your message and how you had made them think – just what I had hoped! Thank you for being so inspiring!”

“Thank you so much for working with us this afternoon. Simply having the time to think as a team was worthwhile and something I know we need to do more often. A half-termly session like the one we had this afternoon is now firmly on the agenda!”

Books written by Gill Kelly:

- *Where Will I Do My Pineapples?*
- *There is Another Way* (contributor)
- *The Working Class* (contributor)

Gill has been with Independent Thinking since 2011.

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