

Making School Work by Andy Buck, Greenwich Exchange, £11.99

Andy Buck writes this book with the help of his senior team at the Jo Richardson Community School in Barking and Dagenham. He has the right credentials: this is his second headship and he sits on the board of the Training and Development Agency. He says that the book provides “some concrete solutions to common challenges”, especially for those working in urban schools.

It is certainly a practical book. The epigraph – “faire words butter no parsnips” (J Clarke, 1639) – hints at an author impatient with philosophy and keen to see action. Thus the book provides guidance on sharing a vision, delegating responsibility, monitoring teaching, reviewing reward systems and performance management.

Much of it this is helpful and written in a no-nonsense style which, as a starting-point for reflection on our own practice, works well. There are also lots of extracts from policies at the author’s own school. These suggest that Andy Buck and his team run a tight ship with guidance on everything from developing your staff team to how manage your diary.

If at times there's something just a bit too prescriptive in the tone, and a feeling that the densely-packed presentation could have been more appealing, it remains a good value source of approaches and ideas.

Geoff Barton is headteacher at King Edward VI School, Suffolk