

# Establishing the Current State of School Leadership In England

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Institute of Education  
University of London

**Research Report  
No 336**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Research brief

The research was commissioned by the DfES and was carried out by a team from the Institute of Education University of London, between January and December 2001. Data-gathering methods included:

- a series of face-to-face and on-line focus group discussions (with heads and trainers)
- three sets of telephone interviews (with middle managers, training providers and LEA personnel)
- case studies of ten exceptionally well-led schools
- six questionnaire surveys (of headteachers, deputy/assistant heads, NPQH candidates, middle managers/team leaders, chairs of governing bodies and LEAs). (Respective survey response rates were 47%; 49%; 60%; 38%; 40% and 66%.)

The data were collected in May-July and in October. The (first) headteacher, NPQH candidate and LEA questionnaire surveys took place in the early Summer, while the surveys of deputy headteachers, middle managers, governors and the second headteacher survey were undertaken in the autumn.

*The main research questions were:*

- How appealing is school leadership both to serving and prospective leaders and to those from currently under-represented groups?
- How do different leaders perceive their leadership roles and what value do they place on them?
- How prepared are teachers for leadership positions?
- How far do headteachers regard themselves as belonging to an evidence-based profession?
- What sources of ideas and inspiration do headteachers and other school leaders turn to in the course of undertaking their work?
- To what degree do school leaders use ICT and the world wide web to both access and contribute to best practice evidence?
- What is the level of school leaders' awareness of the remit and role of the NCSL?
- What are school leaders' perceptions of how they might become involved in the work of NCSL?

### Main findings of the research

*A school leadership baseline and the appeal of leadership*

- Slightly more female headteachers (52.5%) responded to the survey than did men (47.5%) with the majority of primary respondents being female (65%), and secondary respondents, male (67%). The majority of NPQH candidates were female (65%), which reflects current national trends in applications. Most headteachers (63%) were in the 46-55 age bracket, compared to 44 per cent of deputy heads in this age group. Some 80 per cent of middle managers were 50 years old or younger, as were 92 per cent of NPQH candidates.
- The overwhelming majority of heads, deputies and middle managers in our sample were of White ethnic origin. However, there were more NPQH candidates and middle managers than heads and deputies from other ethnic backgrounds, indicating that there is a cohort of potential school leaders from the non-white community.

- Six out of ten of the headteachers in our sample were planning to remain in their present post and four-in-ten were considering early retirement/retirement. Three out of ten included 'moving to another school' as a possible future work preference.
- Nearly two-thirds (63%) of NPQH candidates and over a quarter (27%) of the deputy/assistant head sample definitely wished to become headteachers. However, four out of ten deputy/assistant heads stated that they had no plans to become a head.
- Most of those wanting to become headteachers, or to move on to another headship, would prefer to go to a school which was not in a challenging situation. However, there was still a number of headteachers and NPQH candidates who would be likely to choose such a post.

#### *Perceptions of school leadership*

- Headteachers, and others in leadership positions in schools, tend to think of their roles in terms of 'leading with a clear vision' and 'setting high expectations'. They make a distinction between 'leadership' and 'management' conceptually, if not always in practice.
- Teachers want to become leaders in order to 'have a say' and 'make a difference'.
- The majority of headteachers still spend some of their working week in the classroom, either teaching, observing or coaching.
- Leaders in schools are de-motivated by the bureaucracy and excessive paperwork which they associate with the role and also by 'constant change' in the education system.
- Respondents were of the view that recruitment and retention of school leaders is likely to become increasingly problematic.
- Headteachers, deputy headteachers and middle managers in schools are perceived by LEA respondents and training providers to be of varying quality. There is much concern among both that middle managers are not sufficiently aware of and trained for their role as leaders.
- The governing body, as opposed to one or two key influential governors, was not generally seen as playing a leadership role in strategic planning.

#### *Developing leadership capability*

- About one-in-six headteachers (17%) thought they were 'very prepared' for headship, with nearly one-in-ten (9%) stating that they were 'not prepared at all'. Only about one-in-eight headteachers were prepared to say that, on actually taking up their first headship, they regarded themselves as well equipped to take it on.
- Secondary headteachers reported higher levels of preparedness for headship than either their primary or special school counterparts.
- Over one-fifth (21%) of NPQH candidates believed they were 'very prepared' for headship with very few (3%) stating that they were 'not prepared at all'.

- Deputy and assistant heads recorded the highest levels at both ends of the scale of preparedness for headship, with three out of ten (29%) seeing themselves as 'very prepared' and one-in-ten (11%) 'not prepared at all'. About 30 per cent of the sample had completed or were studying for the NPQH, and of this group, a much higher proportion - two-thirds (64%) - regarded themselves as 'very prepared' to take up headship.
- Over one-fifth (22%) of middle managers/team leaders reported being 'very prepared' professionally prior to taking up their current posts, whilst one-tenth regarded themselves as 'not prepared at all'.
- About one-fifth (21%) of LEA respondents perceived headteachers as being 'very prepared' for their positions. (This figure was much higher than that for other categories of school leader.)
- Training and development would be most welcomed in those areas (of the *National Standards for Headteachers*) which 'promote and secure good teaching, effective learning and high standards of achievement' (58% of headteachers and 49% of deputies) and, 'manage time, finance, accommodation and resources and ensure value for money' (66% of NPQH respondents).
- Primary heads (49%) much more than their secondary colleagues (30%) identified the standard 'lead, support and co-ordinate high quality professional development for all staff, including your own personal and professional development' as an area where they would welcome further training.
- About one-half of the sample of middle managers (and a greater proportion of those from primary than secondary schools) would welcome further training and development opportunities in virtually all of the areas specified in the *National Standards for Subject Leaders*.
- Implicit in the data collected is a call for a coherent school leadership professional development framework which begins shortly after qualification as a teacher and continues through to and beyond headship.
- There was also a need to consider team-building programmes for the leadership group in order to develop a more distributed and holistic approach to school leadership.
- Respondents noted there was much of value in the national leadership programmes which they said needed to be retained. However, there was a consensus that both HEADLAMP and LPSH were in urgent need of review. It was too early to be sure about the effectiveness of the revised NPQH programme.

#### *Inquiry-minded school leadership*

- School leaders tend not to use directly the results of educational (academic) research to inform their decision-making, although they may draw on research findings mediated through newspaper articles, books, conferences and courses.

- Over half the schools surveyed are carrying out their own research and enquiries to inform policy and practice, and, in some cases, sharing their findings with other schools.
- School leaders are beginning to make better use of the wealth of comparative data they receive through government sources.
- The use of ICT for leadership and management is currently under-developed.
- School leaders look chiefly to their peers, both within and outside school, for ideas and inspiration.
- Governors and the business sector are not regarded by many school leaders as significant sources of ideas and inspiration.

*Knowledge and expectations of the National College for School Leadership*

- While most school leaders were aware of the College's focus and aims, over one-in-eight headteachers (12%), three-in-ten deputy/assistant heads (29%), seven out of ten middle managers/team leaders (71%) and one half of governors (49%) claimed to be '*not aware at all*' of its focus and aims.
- A significant number of NPQH candidates and LEAs saw the College as being 'very significant' in either developing the school improvement agenda (26% and 34% respectively) or promoting leadership development (45% and 55% respectively). Percentages were slightly lower for headteachers (20% and 28%) and lowest for deputy heads (12% and 20%).
- Secondary school headteachers were generally more positive about the College and their involvement in it than were their primary counterparts.
- When asked about the contribution the College could make to school improvement and leadership development, respondents often made reference to its role in analysing better the headteachers' job and styles of headship, drawing on best practice.
- A challenge for NCSL was seen to be meeting the training and development needs of existing and prospective school leaders in ways that met individuals' preferences and learning styles.
- Many respondents drew attention to the need for the College to be independent of Government and to offer a wide range of models of leadership and excellence.
- LEAs expressed a strong desire to work in partnership with the College, to want to support its work, and to provide further opportunities for leadership development. However, there was a concern that the College is currently failing to draw sufficiently on their local knowledge and experience of leadership training.

*Main themes from the case studies of exceptionally well-led schools*

- The headteachers were problem-solvers and 'solution-driven'.
- The headteachers were highly visible during the working day.

- They had developed strong senior management or leadership teams, which in all cases were evaluated as effective by the rest of the staff group.
- They had clear and high expectations of staff and students.
- Middle managers within their schools were regarded by heads as ‘the experts’, and enjoyed considerable professional efficacy as a result.
- Within each school there was a strong emphasis on continuing professional development.
- The headteachers mediated change, negotiating it effectively, and adapting it to fit existing values and ethos.
- All had strong and involved governing bodies, or at least chairs of governors.

### **Practical and policy implications of the research: Recommendations**

The research findings and our reflections on them suggest that the following areas warrant a policy or practical response by either or both the NCSL and the DfES. For each area or issue a set of recommendations are offered for both policy makers and those responsible for professional/leadership development. (Further discussion of each is offered in Section 11 of the report.)

#### **1. School leadership profile**

- *Policy recommendations*

More work is needed on making school leadership an attractive and ‘do-able’ task for all those who hold or aspire to such positions, including looking at the workload implications. Policy makers need to disseminate examples of good practice in managing workload and models of school structures and processes that make effective use of administrative and other staff, using appropriate task delegation.

- *Leadership development recommendations*

School leadership programmes need to pay more attention to encouraging participants to develop strategies for balancing work and other aspects of their lives. It is also necessary to work with selection panels (and as an important aspect of governor training – see later) on equal opportunities aspects of recruitment and retention of teachers and school leaders.

#### **2. The appeal of leadership**

- *Policy recommendations*

Both the NCSL and the DfES need to consider what each can do to help the education service hold on to its better headteachers and ensure that the majority of its talented deputy and assistant heads move into headship positions.

- *Leadership development recommendations*

School leadership programmes need to find more space for examples of leadership values in action – how to articulate those values, how to prioritise them, how to develop strategies around them, and how to measure all leadership activities against them. In addition, leadership programmes should include strategies for achieving an appropriate

balance between working and other lives, as well as disseminating examples of good practice.

### **3. Leadership teams and teamwork**

- *Policy recommendations*

Policy makers need to take account of the potentially divisive consequences of particular aspects of performance management. Factors which help or hinder moves to distribute or devolve leadership more evenly in schools also need to be considered.

- *Leadership development recommendations*

The College should consider the provision currently available for school leadership teams and, if necessary, encourage or create more opportunities for team members to experience professional development as a team.

### **4. Middle managers**

- *Policy recommendations*

Greater clarity about the role and expectations of middle managers in primary, secondary and special schools would be welcome.

- *Leadership development recommendations*

Leadership development for middle managers should become as automatic as other professional development, and part of a whole career plan. Training programmes should take account of aspects of the *National Standards for Subject Leaders*.

### **5. School governing bodies**

- *Policy recommendations*

There should be further exploration about ways of articulating and then disseminating greater realism and clarity about the role of the governing body.

- *Training and development recommendations*

Headteachers' and governors' training should focus more clearly on the governors' role in strategic leadership. There should be more joint training in this area for headteachers, school leadership teams and governors, particularly chairs of governing bodies.

### **Other leadership development recommendations**

- Leadership development programmes need to ensure they are paying sufficient attention to the management of interpersonal relations, and that they are linking the more strategic implications to the management of staff and the management of vision.
- Professional development programmes need to include internal communications as an important part of school leadership. Models of good practice in ways of keeping staff informed could be introduced as well as an exploration of different aspects of internal communication.
- A whole career framework for leadership development should encourage preparedness further, and allow participants to think and plan ahead as well as reflect on their present leadership activities.

- Further ways need to be explored of developing ease with ICT for school leaders and the fact that relatively few of them are regularly on-line is an important issue for those who are developing web-based leadership and management development programmes.
- A key component of leadership programmes should include managing professional development for others, as well as theoretical frameworks which underpin professionals as learners. Programmes should also note that the National Standard 'promote and secure good teaching, effective learning and high standards of achievement' was the area most frequently mentioned by heads and deputies where they would welcome further training.
- There is a need to give further thought to how best to disseminate this good practice in ways that foster new learning throughout the system about leadership capacity and capability. The College's commitment to 'network learning communities' is an attempt to address this issue of 'learning better from each other'.

### **Other training-related issues**

Other leadership development or training-related issues which may require a DfES/NCSL response, of which the most important are, the fact that:

- some headteachers appear to have an inadequate appreciation of the demands of their role before taking up their posts, and feel inadequately prepared once in post;
- many school leaders derive great professional development benefit from undertaking acting headship or shared headship roles, opportunities which currently are not available to all or even most of those aspiring to such positions;
- many respondents value the contribution currently being made by the HEADLAMP and LPSH national programmes to their professional development, though a number suggested it would be better to offer a more coherent set of national qualifications and development opportunities which address leadership issues both in general and specific to particular roles;
- most school leaders fail effectively to access and make appropriate use of relevant educational research on different aspects of their role.

### **The need for further research**

This investigation and the recommendations that follow from it highlight a number of areas that may warrant being researched by the NCSL and/or the DfES. These include the following:

- the role of the governing body in the appointment of senior school leaders;
- the career patterns of long-standing headteachers whose high professional commitment is undiminished by their length of service;
- the factors which inhibit some successful school leaders from seeking employment in challenging contexts;

- the attractiveness or otherwise of contracts of employment that allow some headteachers to be appointed for fixed periods and for others periodic time away from the school context to undertake research sabbaticals or purposeful secondments;
- the ways in which well led schools create enabling internal bureaucracies and structures and, relatedly, effective ways of managing the heavy external paper-work demands that are made upon them;
- the way in which individuals manage their workload effectively, with a view to producing illuminative and exemplary case studies to inform others;
- the role of on-line communities of school leaders in furthering their professional development and associated learning;
- how leadership capability is best developed;
- the work cultures and career aspirations of middle managers.

### **The College's future role**

The investigation has unearthed four issues that have direct relevance to the future public role and function of the NCSL and its capacity to deliver fully on its objectives. We recommend strongly that these are kept at the forefront of the College's thinking as it moves into the next phase of its development.

- The first is to do with the apparent lack of desire on the part of some headteachers, and primary ones in particular, to be involved in the work of the College;
- The second concerns the view expressed by this same group of school leaders that the College will have limited impact on promoting leadership capacity;
- The third relates to the concern presently being aired among some school leaders and training providers that the College's future work may become over-directed/influenced by the imperatives of current government policy;
- The fourth derives from the concern expressed by some LEAs that the College is presently failing to draw sufficiently on their local knowledge and leadership training experience.

In broad terms, the research findings outlined in this report suggest that the NCSL's consultation papers, including its ten 'leadership propositions', are moving the professional debate in the right direction. Certainly, the main findings of the research are generally consistent with current developments as proposed by the College.

## INTRODUCTION

### Origins

This report, written for the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the National College for School Leadership (NCSL), addresses aspects of the debate presently underway in this country and in other parts of the world about the concept, scope and purposes of school leadership. The research upon which it is based was commissioned and funded by the DfES and specifically designed to gather information from a variety of sources and stakeholders about the current state of school leadership development and practice in England.

Gathering this information required the co-operation of a large number of individuals working in different parts of the English education service, including over 750 headteachers, nearly 230 deputy and assistant heads, just over 150 National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) candidates, nearly 240 middle managers and senior teachers, 200 school governors, and 100 local education authority (LEA) chief and/or senior advisers, all of whom participated in a series of national questionnaire surveys. In addition, various other school leaders, including a sample of 29 middle-managers, and 30 school leadership consultants and training providers, contributed by agreeing to be interviewed by telephone, and three groups of 4-8 headteachers and training providers participated in focus group discussions. Two further computer-generated on-line 'hot-seat' discussions, utilising the 'Talking Heads' and 'Virtual Heads' virtual environments, facilitated the involvement of an extra 300 school leaders. Finally, ten schools gave assistance by allowing themselves to be the subject of a case study of leadership in action.

### Structure of the report

The report is written in 11 sections.

**Section 1** (*Background and Context*) summarises the findings of empirical research that has sought to investigate the relationship between leadership capability and the capacity of schools to improve. This opening section also outlines the policy context within which moves are presently taking place to strengthen further the leadership capability of headteachers and other school leaders.

**Section 2** (*Meeting the Research Specification*) outlines the research questions that first prompted the investigation, drawing attention to the way in which they link with the brief established by the DfES in its original 'invitation to tender' and the policy context described in Section 1. Section 2 also describes the project's research design, focussing in particular on how the different data sub-sets were collected and what guided the writing of the case studies. Finally, this section briefly states how the investigation's data sets were analysed.

**Section 3** (*'Touching Base' on School Leadership*) provides baseline statistical information about the school-based samples of school leaders that were surveyed by questionnaire. Specific matters outlined in this section include the backgrounds of these school leaders (age, gender, current and previous experience, training and professional development, etc) and their career aspirations.

**Section 4** (*Perceptions of School Leadership*) reviews the conceptions of school leadership held by different kinds of school leader and those who offer them training and professional development opportunities. Issues touched upon include the nature of school leadership itself, its appeal, the stresses and strains of undertaking it, the problems of attracting and retaining people for leadership roles, and the quality of different school leaders.

**Section 5** (*Developing the Leadership Capability of School Leaders*) examines the professional development needs of particular school leaders, as these are interpreted and understood by leaders themselves and leadership training providers. It also outlines the sources of professional development for leadership previously and currently being drawn upon by different schools leaders and the perceptions they have of their value. Finally, there is a discussion of the changing nature and sources of training provision, including the potential role of the private sector in providing school leadership development opportunities.

**Section 6** (*Inquiry-Minded School Leadership*) explores the resources and evidence which current school leaders draw upon and especially value in the course of exercising their leadership responsibilities. The main issues engaged with in this section are the current nature of school leaders' knowledge-utilisation, the degree to which they undertake research and evaluation themselves, adopt a systemic approach to analysing data collected in the course of their on-going work, and access e-learning opportunities and the academic evidence offered by university-based researchers.

**Section 7** (*Knowledge and Expectations of the NCSL*) outlines the knowledge which different schools leaders and leadership training providers, including LEAs, have of the remit of the NCSL and what their expectations are of the role it should perform, and the approaches it should adopt.

**Section 8** (*Dimensions of School Leadership*) provides a theoretical lens through which to view the case studies of school leadership in action that are contained in Section 10.

**Section 9** (*Reflections on the Case Studies*) surveys a number of themes arising out of the case studies contained in Section 10.

**Section 10** (*Leadership in Action: Ten Case Studies*) presents ten case studies of school leadership in action in contrasting settings and in different kinds of school.

**Section 11** (*Practical and Policy Implications of the Research: Some Reflections*) reviews the practical and policy implications of the research for the NCSL in particular and the DfES in general.

## SECTION 1

### BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

#### 1.1 Research on school leadership

Over the recent past, a succession of research studies has consistently pointed to the importance of leadership – in particular, the manner in which headteachers, deputies, middle managers and other leaders interpret and perform their leadership roles – for achieving greater effectiveness and improvement in schools. Indeed, it is against this background that one should interpret the concern of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools that too many schools in England – he estimates, about one in ten – suffer from 'weak leadership' (OfSTED, 2001).

Whilst there is agreement about the importance of school leadership, and the need to further increase its quality, and even though there is greater clarity and precision today about what that might entail, there remains some confusion about the manner in which leadership contributes to overall effectiveness and continuing improvement in schools.

It is not clear empirically for example what counts as either 'effective' or 'positive' leadership in the range of contexts in which it is practised. For the truths about school leadership are complex, and the settings for their enactment always distinctive, sometimes unique. Thus, rather than there being an identikit school leadership style, it seems that certain leadership approaches and ways of working (and not always in the same mix) are more likely than not to be *associated* with initiating and maintaining improvement in schools and getting things done generally.

The implication of this fluidity is rendered all the more ambiguous by the knowledge that constructing a particular blend of leadership capability is often context-driven. The better school leaders are those who engage with the central tasks entailed in their roles in ways that interact sensitively with the circumstances of the places within which they work, the people with whom they work, and the communities their schools serve. To complicate matters further, there is evidence to suggest that styles of school leadership are strongly calibrated with the personal character traits of the individuals concerned, some of whom, in being good/positive, are more or less modest and restrained, with others more or less flamboyant and charismatic. What all of this points up is that there is no school leadership 'magic bullet', either in existence or to be found. Certainly, there is no final word on what counts as either good or positive leadership. As one commentator recently put it: 'We are simply trying to hit a moving target; maybe even get a little ahead of it' (Leithwood, *et al*, 1999, p.4).

Even so, there is general consensus among researchers that effective school leaders all have in common the capacity to envision dynamically a set of coherent and communicable objectives and an associated ability to formulate and implement a clear map of how to reach them. This consensus also suggests that the best school leaders successfully articulate their personal, moral and educational values with total conviction, creating a clear sense of institutional purpose and direction (see, for example, Day *et al*, 2000; MacBeath, 1998; Ribbins, 1997, and Southworth, 1998). In doing so, they set high expectations for staff and pupils, successfully monitor performance, and motivate everyone to give of their best. This is achieved through such leaders projecting a high profile on issues to do with teaching and learning generally, and 'walking and talking' this role during frequent movement about the school. Good school leaders also share their

leadership responsibility with other members of staff, in whom they place considerable trust, and, in doing so, seek to foster a work culture that is mutually supportive and collaborative (e.g. Stoll and Fink, 1996; Southworth, 2000). The same researchers also show that these people are at least as good at leadership as the most effective leaders in any other sector (see Ford *et al*, 2000).

Other research has highlighted the various ways in which school leadership, and headship, in particular, has undergone significant changes in the last 15 or more years, especially in the wake of increased devolved responsibility to the site of the school (on this theme, see Weindling, 1999). Schools are now more complex organisations to manage than previously, notably with regard to budgets, human resources, professional development and administration generally. Consequently, there is today much more to manage and to take a lead on, with the result that modern headteachers and their deputies, and other school leaders, work for long hours, (School Teachers' Review Body, 2001; PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2001) probably longer than their predecessors.

However, the above research does not tell us very much about school leaders' perceptions of either the attractiveness of their positions or the quality of their own leadership training and their expectations of it. More sociologically-informed studies, on the other hand, do point out the various ways in which the creation of education markets in recent years has impacted, sometimes negatively, on the occupational cultures of school leaders in this country and elsewhere in the world, leading nearly always to an intensification in their work that is arguably inimical to an increase in their capacity to initiate and manage change at the local level (see especially Whitty, *et al*, 1998 and Grace, 1995). Indeed, one sometimes gets the impression, certainly in this country, that leadership for many school leaders too often requires them to take the lead on certain things about which they feel uncomfortable professionally – for example, performance-related pay, aspects of target setting and competitive external marketing. Also, some school leaders more than others probably feel considerably up against external events as they struggle to manage staff shortages and accommodate the cumulative social and economic deprivation of the localities within which their schools are set. It may seem to them that, no matter how the language of school leadership is reinvented, this will not of itself alter for the better the limitations of their work settings, though clearly it may help them to think about them differently.

## **1.2 The policy context**

It is essential to consider the broad policy context within which moves are presently taking place to strengthen further the leadership capability of existing and aspiring headteachers and other school leaders. Apart from the considerable number of changes that have been put in place by Governments over the past 15 years, that context today includes a number of Department-initiated professional development initiatives, the chief of which is the creation of a National College for School Leadership (NCSL). Described by the present Government in its Green Paper, *Schools\* Building on Success* (DfEE, 2001b), as 'a world class institution providing inspiration and support to all school leaders and potential leaders' (p.71), the NCSL has been set up to offer a single national focus for school leadership, development and research.

Its aims anticipate an ambitious and comprehensive programme of work. These include becoming a prominent 'provider and promoter of excellence; a major resource for schools; and a catalyst for innovation'. Acting as 'an exemplar of good practice for school leaders', by using the most innovative and advanced teaching and learning

methods (both face-to-face and online, or 'blended' learning - see NCSL, 2001), the College will also take full responsibility for the existing national training programmes for headship. In undertaking these duties, the College will become a significant pace- and tone-setter for school leadership thinking in this country, eclipsing the role previously enjoyed in this area by local education authorities and institutions of higher education.

The role of the NCSL is complemented by other related policy directives, such as the Government's new framework for continuing professional development (CPD), *Learning and Teaching: A Strategy for Professional Development* (DfEE, 2001a). Backed by £90 million over three years, this will make provision for a series of development initiatives, including opportunities for experienced teachers to take sabbaticals and increased CPD for those in the second and third year of teaching. While these initiatives will not always or necessarily directly engage with issues strictly to do with leadership, they will provide opportunities for them to be explored by teachers thinking along such lines. Either way, these reforms are contributing to a new sense of urgency in the development of further quality professional development opportunities for school leaders. This approach has been significantly re-engineered through the establishment of national benchmarks and standards for not only headteachers, but also newly qualified teachers, subject leaders and special educational needs co-ordinators (TTA, 1998), as well as moves to 'fast track' exceptional new entrants to teaching so that they progress speedily from NQT status to headship.

This change in approach has been strengthened further by the recent publication of the College's consultation document, *A Leadership Development Framework for Schools* (NCSL, 2001). This gives prominence to a particular vision for and way of speaking about school leadership in which high priority is given to the capacity of schools to manage change in the pursuit of pupil learning and achievement. This represents a refinement of what elsewhere is more familiarly known as 'instructional leadership' – a model of school leadership that emphasises the role of school leaders in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms and the need for headteachers in particular to become lead-learners of learning communities geared to providing a challenging education for pupils as well as co-ordinated CPD opportunities for teachers and other staff (for example see Hopkins and Reynolds, 2001; and Hopkins, 2001).

Inquiry- and open-mindedness are the hallmarks of this model of school leadership. So, too, is a willingness to express doubt and to be expectant of surprise and to ground policy and practice in the best available evidence. Expressed thus, this model for school leadership is profoundly educational and transformational, but likely to be difficult to realise quickly and uniformly, particularly among leaders who consider such an approach to be beside the point as they confront daily particular material shortages and other crises.

## SECTION 2

### MEETING THE RESEARCH SPECIFICATION

#### 2.1 Summary

The investigation, which was carried out over 12 months, beginning in January 2001, was designed to elicit sufficient base-line data from a comprehensive list of respondents (including serving and aspiring headteachers, deputy and assistant heads, middle-managers, training providers, school governors and LEA senior officers) to provide insight into key aspects of current school leadership practice and development. The data were gathered using a mixture of quantitative and qualitative research techniques, specifically postal questionnaire surveys of school leaders, governors and LEAs, a series of focus group and associated on-line 'hot seat' discussions, case studies and telephone interviews.

#### 2.2 The research brief

A number of general themes, which were initially identified by the DfES (formerly the DfEE), guided the development of the research design. Chief among these were: how different leaders understand their leadership roles and the value they place on them; the general attractiveness of particular school leadership positions, both to serving and to prospective leaders and to those from currently under-represented groups; the quality of people's preparedness for leadership positions; the degree to which school leaders regard themselves as belonging to an evidence-based profession; the sources of ideas and inspiration that headteachers and other school leaders turn to in the course of undertaking their work; the degree to which school leaders use ICT and the world wide web to both access and contribute to best practice evidence; and, the level of school leaders' awareness of the remit and role of the NCSL, and their perceptions of how they might become involved in its work.

#### 2.3 Research questions

These themes were subsequently translated into the following sets of research questions:

- How do different kinds of school leader - headteachers and their deputies and middle managers and school governors - interpret their respective roles and what value do they place on different aspects of school leadership generally?
- What motivates different kinds of school leader to undertake the work they do, and what limits do they place upon the type of educational setting within which they ideally would like to exercise leadership?
- How attractive are different kinds of school leadership positions to currently under-represented groups, and what factors, if any, inhibit members of these groups from putting themselves forward for such work?
- What knowledge do existing and aspiring school leaders have of the training opportunities available to assist them better to do their work? What are their perceptions of the coherence and value of this training? What professional development activities add significant value to the work of different kinds of school

leader at various stages in their careers? What knowledge do different school leaders and governors have of the remit and likely activities of the newly established NCSL?

- What specific knowledge sources about best practice in leadership do existing and aspiring school leaders identify as ones from which they feel they might learn new ways to improve their own work?
- What value do different kinds of school leader place on the application of ICT to various aspects of their work?
- How research conscious are different kinds of school leader and how far do they subscribe to the idea that their work should be evidence-based, and that they have a part to play in generating research of their own and disseminating its findings to others within the system?

These questions focus chiefly on aspects of the leadership *capability* and perceptions of *individual* school leaders, rather than on the leadership *capacity* of the schools within which they work, though the case studies provide some insight into the relationship between these different aspects. The questions also link with elements of the policy context described earlier. In particular, they address issues that connect with how best to make provision for school leadership development – a key theme of the Government’s strategy for school improvement – and the role that the NCSL will play in spearheading this effort.

## **2.4 Methods of enquiry**

The research design comprised four elements:

- *six questionnaire surveys* using separate stratified random samples of existing headteachers (Survey 1); aspiring headteachers (made up entirely of candidates following the new NPQH) (Survey 2); deputy and assistant headteachers (Survey 3); middle managers/team leaders (Survey 4); chairs of school governing bodies (Survey 5); and all the local education authorities (LEAs) in England (Survey 6);
- *a series of face-to-face and on-line focus group discussions* with groups of different kinds of school leader;
- *three sets of telephone interviews* conducted, respectively, with a sample of training (school leadership) providers, a sample of school middle managers, and LEA patch or link advisers for the ten case study schools;
- *case studies* of ten well led schools.

Each of these data-collection efforts were undertaken in order to obtain a wide range of opinions and perceptions about those aspects of leadership development and the practice of leadership highlighted in the research questions. The school visits were made chiefly to examine and report on the specific ways in which outstanding leaders operate within particular contexts.

## 2.5 Achieved sources of data and their analysis

The questionnaire surveys were conducted in the Summer and Autumn terms, 2001. The NPQH and LEA surveys and the first headteacher survey were carried out in May 2001, whilst a second headteacher survey and surveys of deputy headteachers, middle managers and chairs of governing bodies were conducted in October, 2001.

The Summer and Autumn term samples of headteachers have been combined for this analysis, but since there was an over-representation of urban schools in the Summer term survey, the combined headteacher sample has been weighted for the purposes of most statistical analyses. The different timings of the two headteacher surveys did not result in any significant differences between the two samples. Statistical tests were undertaken on certain questions e.g. awareness and knowledge of NCSL, and no differences were found between the May and October samples. (See the Appendix for further details.) The questionnaire to chairs of governors was sent to a different sample from that of the headteacher surveys.

The middle manager/team leader survey involved 500 schools with the secondary schools in the sample receiving two separately addressed questionnaires, one of which was directed to a named academic middle manager (e.g. head of science, head of ICT) and the other to a pastoral middle manager (e.g. head of Year 7). Special needs co-ordinators were also included in the secondary but not the primary school sample. Primary school middle manager questionnaires were sent to subject co-ordinators (of PE and ICT) and those with curriculum responsibility for literacy, numeracy and science.

The composition of each of the school samples and the response rate for each of the questionnaire surveys is shown below. These response rates were achieved with one reminder letter and, for some of the middle managers and primary deputy headteachers, follow up telephone calls.

### **Survey 1: Headteacher Sample**

<i>Questionnaires sent out = 1630</i>		<i>Questionnaires returned = 758 (47%)</i>	
Primary	1050	Primary	492 (47%)
Secondary	460	Secondary	218 (47%)
Special	120	Special	48 (40%)

### **Survey 2: NPQH Candidates Sample**

<i>Questionnaires sent out = 250</i>		<i>Questionnaires returned = 151 (60%)</i>	
Primary	150	Primary	86 (57%)
Secondary	75	Secondary	41 (55%)
Special	25	Special	24 (96%)

### **Survey 3: Deputy/Assistant Heads Sample**

<i>Questionnaires sent out = 500</i>		<i>Questionnaires returned = 227 (49%*)</i>	
Primary	300*	Primary	116 (39% or 45%*)
Secondary	150	Secondary	85 (57%)
Special	50	Special	24 (48%)
		(Missing data = 2)	

\* As a result of follow up telephone calls, 40 primary schools stated that they did not have a deputy head post (due to their size). They can therefore legitimately be withdrawn from the primary school sample reducing its size to 260.

#### **Survey 4: Middle Managers/Team Leaders Sample**

<b>Questionnaires sent out = 650</b>	<b>Questionnaires returned = 239 (37%*)</b>
Primary 300*	Primary 91 (31%)
Secondary 300	Secondary 132 (44%)
Special 50	Special 14 (28%)
	(Missing data = 2)

\* 4 primary school heads completed the MM questionnaires as they were the relevant subject co-ordinator. They have been excluded from analysis, reducing the primary school sample size to 296.

#### **Survey 5: Chair of Governors Sample**

<b>Questionnaires sent out = 500</b>	<b>Questionnaires returned = 200 (40%)</b>
Primary 300	Primary 110 (37%)
Secondary 150	Secondary 68 (45%)
Special 50	Special 21 (42%)
	(Missing data = 1)

#### **Survey 6: LEA Sample**

<b>Questionnaires sent out = 150</b>	<b>Questionnaires returned = 100 (66%)</b>
Non Metropolitan County 36	Non Metropolitan County 22 (61%)
Metropolitan District 37	Metropolitan District 19 (51%)
Unitary Authority 44	Unitary Authority 34 (77%)
London Borough (outer) 20	London Borough (outer) 12 (60%)
London Borough (inner) 13	London Borough (inner) 12 (92%)
	(Missing data = 1)

Five focus group discussions were convened. Three were conducted face-face and audio-recorded; the remaining two took place 'on-line' (the 'Hotseat'). The face-to-face discussions involved separate groups of school leadership trainers, headteachers and other school leaders. The target audience for the on-line discussions was in each case headteachers and NPQH candidates who were members of the 'Talking Heads' or 'Virtual Heads' learning environment.

Note-book recorded telephone interviews were conducted with 21 school leadership trainers, including regional co-ordinators of NPQH, a selection of providers of LPSH, a representative of the National Education Assessment Centre (NEAC) and a small selection of providers of leadership training operating outside education in both the public and private sectors. The views of the six headteacher/teacher associations and the association of inspectors, advisers and consultants (NAEIC) were also sought and obtained. A similar type of interview was conducted with an opportunist sample of 29 middle managers drawn from primary and secondary schools.

The quantitative data collected from the questionnaire surveys of headteachers, other school leaders, governors and the LEAs were coded, entered and analysed using the software package SPSS. Frequency analyses were carried out and, in some cases,

cross-tabulations and tests of statistical significance were conducted. The qualitative data derived from the telephone interviews and focus group discussions were coded using a simple cut and paste process that enabled the research team to assign labels to specific key ideas and issues.

*The case studies* consisted of visits to four primary, four secondary and two special schools, located in contrasting settings, chosen on the basis of recent OfSTED inspections in which their leadership and management were highly rated. Their excellence in this regard was confirmed by telephone calls to local LEA advisers. Undertaking the case studies involved site visits on average lasting up to two days per school, during which interviews were conducted with key informants including the headteacher, the chair of governors, members of the senior management team (or leadership team), middle managers and classroom teachers. Opportunities were also found to elicit informally the views of pupils. In addition, information was gathered from various documentary sources (e.g. school inspection reports and action plans, development and improvement plans, governor reports to parents, etc) and opportunities taken to observe leadership team meetings. Finally, perceptions of and views about each school were sought from its link or patch LEA adviser, who was subjected to a detailed note-book recorded telephone interview.

The data from each school were written up under a number of themes, intended to give a vivid description of leadership in action, and these are presented in Section 10.

Having outlined in Sections 1 and 2 the background to and context for the research, and the various ways in which data were collected, the sections that follow will review the findings of the investigation, beginning with a review, in Section 3, of what is known about the different school leaders who responded to the questionnaire surveys.

## SECTION 3

### 'TOUCHING BASE' ON SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

#### 3.1 Summary

- Slightly more female headteachers (52.5%) responded to the survey than did men (47.5%) with the majority of primary respondents being female (65%), and secondary respondents, male (67%). The majority (65%) of NPQH candidates were female, which reflects current national trends in applications. Most headteachers (63%) were in the 46-55 age bracket, compared to 44 per cent of deputy heads in this age group. Some 80 per cent of middle managers were 50 years old or younger, as were 92 per cent of NPQH candidates.
- The overwhelming majority of heads, deputies and middle managers in the sample were of White ethnic origin. However, there were more NPQH candidates and middle managers than heads and deputies from other ethnic backgrounds, indicating that there is a cohort of potential school leaders from the non-white community.
- Six out of ten of the headteachers in our sample were planning to remain in their present post and four-in-ten were considering retirement. Three out of ten included 'moving to another school' as a possible future work preference.
- Nearly two-thirds (63%) of NPQH candidates and over a quarter (27%) of the deputy/assistant head sample definitely wished to become headteachers. However, four out of ten deputy/assistant heads stated that they had no plans to become a head.
- Most of those wanting to become headteachers, or to move on to another headship, would prefer to go to a school which was not in a challenging situation. However, there was still a number of headteachers and NPQH candidates who would be likely to choose such a post.

#### 3.2 Introduction

This section provides statistical information derived from the four school-based samples: headteachers (Survey 1), aspiring headteachers (made up entirely of candidates following the new NPQH) (Survey 2), deputy and assistant headteachers (Survey 3), and middle managers (Survey 4).

Specific matters outlined in this section include the backgrounds of different school leaders (age, gender, current and previous experience, etc) and their career aspirations and future work preferences.

#### 3.3 The headteacher survey – background factors

*Gender:* The sample of primary, secondary and special school headteachers was identical to the national breakdown for gender – 47.5 per cent of the sample were male and 52.5 per cent were female. When the sample was sub-divided by school phase, 65 per cent of the primary heads were female and 35 per cent were male, compared with the 59:41 female to male ratio for primary schools nationally. For secondary heads, the

sample ratio was 67:33 male to female, compared to 71:29 nationally for secondary schools.

*Disability:* Just over four per cent of headteachers identified themselves as having a disability. Further details as to the nature of that disability were not collected.

*Ethnicity:* The majority of the sample (98%) was White. Those of Asian ethnic origin made up 0.1 per cent of the sample. Those describing themselves as 'Black' or 'Black British' made up 0.5 per cent; 'Chinese', 0.3 per cent and 'mixed', 0.3 per cent. Some 0.7 per cent described themselves as 'other'.

*Age group:* The age groups of the total weighted sample of headteachers are shown (in percentages) in Table 3.1.

Age group	30 and under	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-55	56-60	Over 60
(%)	0	1.5	7.1	17.2	28.4	34.3	9.7	1.5

Table 3.1: Age groupings of headteacher weighted sample (n=612)

The female headteachers tended to be slightly younger than males. Exactly one-half of male heads were over 50, compared to 40 per cent of female heads. The most common age range for male and female heads was 51-55, but there were significantly more female than male heads in the 46-50 age bracket (almost one third of females compared to one quarter of males were in this age bracket). About one-in-nine headteachers of primary and special schools, compared to one-in-25 of secondaries, was 40 years of age or under. At the other end of the age spectrum, 15 per cent of secondary heads, but only nine per cent of primary and 12.5 per cent of special school heads, were over 55.

*Career patterns:* The headteachers in the sample had been in their present post for an average of 6.6 years, although again the range was wide (from less than one to 29 years) with the median or mid-point figure being five years. Over 50 per cent of the sample had been in post for less than six years. (See Table 3.2.)

Time in post	Less than 1 year	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	More than 20 years
Percentage	5.3	46.1	24.4	17.9	5.3	1.1

Table 3.2. Headteachers: time in post (weighted n = 612)

Over three-quarters (78%) of the sample had held the post of deputy headteacher *immediately before* becoming a headteacher, with one-in-ten serving as an acting head. Prior to taking up headship in their current schools, the headteachers had served varying periods of time in different positions.

Average numbers of years served is shown in Table 3.3 which also shows the proportion of the sample who had at some stage filled senior positions (e.g. over one-quarter had served as acting headteachers). The majority (78%) had not been appointed internally to their current headship and over a quarter had served as headteachers in other schools (these were no more likely to be primary than secondary heads). Very few had worked outside of the school sector and none outside of education.

<i>Post held</i>	<i>Average no. of yrs</i>	<i>% of sample</i>
Headteacher in another school	6.3	27
Acting headteacher	1.0	29
Deputy headteacher/Deputy principal	5.4	86
Assistant Head/Senior Teacher	4.0	11
SMT/Leadership team member	2.9	26.5
Senior role in education outside of school sector	2.6	0.5
Senior role outside of education	-	-

*Table 3.3: Average number of years served in senior posts – headteachers (weighted n = 612)*

### **3.4 Career aspirations – headteachers**

Headteachers were asked about their future work or career preferences. They were offered a number of options and asked to select which ones corresponded most closely with their preferences for the future. As can be seen from Table 3.4, the headteachers' preferred options were to remain at their present school (60% of the sample) or to seek retirement (40%). Three out of ten included 'moving to another school' as a possible future work preference and one-in-five included amongst their options becoming a consultant or trainer. Some 14 per cent were considering leaving the education sector altogether.

<i>Preference</i>	<i>%</i>
Remain at present school	60
Retirement/early retirement	40
Move to a different school	30
Become a Consultant/Trainer	20
Leave the education system for employment elsewhere	14
Take up an LEA post	10
Become an HMI/Inspector	9
Become a University lecturer	4
Other	5

(Percentages do not add up to 100 as more than one response could be made).

*Table 3.4: Future work preferences of serving headteachers (weighted n = 612)*

Further analysis showed that, although there were some differences between the future work preferences of primary, secondary and special school headteachers, each group was equally likely to want to stay at their current school or to retire. However, of those considering moves, primary school heads were more likely to be considering leaving education altogether. They were also more likely to be considering a move to another school or other options not specified. Secondary school heads were more likely to consider consultancy work or becoming an HMI or inspector.

There were no significant differences found between the proportions of men and women who preferred to 'remain at (their) present school' or who were prepared 'to move to another school'. A greater proportion of those considering retirement was male (53%) than female (47%), although it should be noted that the average age of male respondents was higher than that of females (40% of women compared to 50% of men

were over 50 years old). A larger proportion of those considering leaving education altogether were male heads.

The analysis showed approximately an equal proportion of headteachers over and under 50 years of age preferring to remain in their present schools, while three quarters of those who were prepared to move to another school were 50 years of age or under. As might be expected, the older respondents were more likely to express a future preference to seek retirement or early retirement; however, nearly a third (30%) of those headteachers citing this preference were 50 years of age or under. In addition, 63 per cent of those considering leaving education altogether were 50 years or under.

Respondents were asked, using a four-point scale from 'most likely' to 'least likely', if they were to seek another post would they have a particular preference of school. Nearly three quarters (74%) responding to this question indicated that they would have a preference for a particular type of school. Table 3.5 shows, for those who answered, the type of school in which they would be most or least likely to seek an appointment. It appears that the most sought-after type of school was a 'coasting' school or one in the country-side. Schools which might be seen as challenging – 'inner city', 'failing', 'Fresh Start', 'Beacon' or 'Excellence in Cities' schools were the least appealing to potential heads. The most attractive of all appeared to be the 'coasting' school which was positively rated by 66 per cent of the headteachers responding. There was no gender difference in the heads' preferred option – a 'coasting school' – however, women were more likely than men to consider headships in challenging schools such as 'failing' or 'inner city' schools and those in an EAZ. Men were more likely than women to express a preference for a 'successful' school, one in the countryside or a specialist school (the latter are only available at secondary level, so this might account for the gender difference here, since more secondary heads are men).

	<i>Most likely</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Least likely</i>	
A 'failing' school	17	28	22	33
A 'successful' school	20	42	25	13
A 'coasting' school	23	43	17	16
An inner city school	17	23	19	41
A 'fresh start' school	11	21	25	42
A school situated in the 'leafy' suburbs	11	35	29	25
A school in the countryside	23	33	22	21
A school in an EAZ	7	33	29	32
A specialist school	12	25	24	38
A Beacon school	10	26	28	35
A school receiving Excellence in Cities grant	8	24	30	38

*Table 3.5: Future posts and school preferences of serving headteachers (n=350)*

Other phase differences emerged from further analysis of the data. Secondary school heads were more likely than others to be attracted to a 'successful' school, a Beacon school or an Excellence in Cities school. Special school heads were more likely to be attracted to a school in an EAZ, perhaps because of the opportunities for cross-school collaboration offered in such arrangements.

### 3.5 Deputy head and NPQH candidates surveys – background factors

Findings from these two surveys are presented together to enable some comparisons to be made between the two samples. However, it should be noted that 32 per cent of the deputy/assistant heads sample had taken NPQH or were currently studying for it. This will be accounted for in the analysis. The response rates for the samples were: NPQH candidates – 60 per cent (n=151), and deputy heads (DHs) – 49 per cent (n=227).

*Gender:* The sample of NPQH candidates consisted of significantly more women (65%) than men (35%), which reflects the gender balance of those currently applying to join the NPQH programme. However, the sample of deputy heads more nearly reflected the headteacher sample, with 42 per cent being male and 58 per cent being female.

*Disability:* Nearly four per cent of the NPQH sample and two per cent of the deputy head sample identified themselves as having a disability. Further details as to the nature of that disability were not collected.

*Ethnicity:* Both samples were predominantly White, although a slightly higher percentage of NPQH candidates (5%) than deputy heads (2%) was of an ethnic minority background. Nearly three per cent of the NPQH candidates were Black and 1.5 per cent Asian compared to less than one-half a per cent of the deputy heads in these two ethnic groups.

*Age group:* The NPQH sample contained more teachers from younger age groups – 40 per cent of the NPQH sample was aged 40 or younger, compared with 28 per cent of the deputy heads. None of the NPQH sample was over 55, compared to almost seven per cent of the deputy heads sample. However, of those in the deputy heads sample taking or having completed NPQH, none was over 55.

In primary schools about three-in-ten NPQH candidates (28%) and deputy headteachers (30%) were 40 years of age or under, compared to a much smaller number in secondary schools (8% for NPQH and 15% for deputy heads). As noted above, none of the NPQH sample was over 55 but this was the case for 12 per cent of secondary deputy heads and four per cent of primary deputies.

The age groups of the respective samples are shown (in percentages) in Table 3.6.

Age group (%)	30 and under	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-55	56-60	Over 60
DHs n=227	4	10	14	21	22	22	6.2	0.4
NPQH n=151	6	13	21	27	25	8	0	0

Table 3.6: Age groups of deputy head and NPQH samples

*Current post:* The majority of NPQH candidates, as might be expected, reported that they were currently in deputy headteacher positions, with a further 14 per cent working as assistant heads and ten per cent as senior teachers. Just over a fifth of the sample (21%) were in 'other' positions, of which some were 'middle managers'. Nearly one-half of the NPQH sample (46%) were appointed internally to their current position and had been in post for an average of 3.5 years. (The range was wide, with NPQH candidates serving periods in their current posts from 0 – 18 years. However, the mid-point was two

years, and the most common length of time that respondents had been in post - the modal figure - was only one year.)

Of the deputy heads, 60 per cent had been in post for four years or less. Twenty per cent had been in post for more than ten years. The mean or average length of time in post was 5.5 years, and the median was 3.5 years. Over one-third of the deputy heads (36%) had been appointed internally to their post.

### **3.6 Career aspirations – NPQH candidates and deputy heads**

Two-thirds (63%) of the NPQH sample and just over a quarter (27%) of the deputy head sample stated that they wished to become a headteacher, with around one-third (35% of NPQH and 33% of deputy heads) stating that they 'possibly' might do so. Forty per cent of the deputy head sample stated that they did not wish to become a headteacher (for further detail on this, see later). Within the deputy head sample, however, over 50 per cent of those who had completed or were studying for NPQH wished to become a headteacher. (There was no difference in this response between primary and secondary school candidates for the NPQH sample. However for the deputy heads, those in secondary schools were more likely to have decided they definitely did not want to become a head, whereas primary deputy heads were more likely to say that they possibly might do so.)

Both sets of respondents – deputy heads and NPQH candidates – were asked if they were to seek another post would they have a particular preference of school. About the same proportion in each sample – just over 70% – indicated that they would have a preference of school and Tables 3.7 and 3.8 show, for those who answered, the type of school in which they would be most or least likely to seek an appointment.

There were no statistically significant differences between male and female NPQH candidates for particular types of school preference, although, as noted for serving heads, female NPQH candidates were more willing than males to consider a 'failing' school. For all other types of school preference, the proportions of men and women willing to consider applying to them for headships were very similar.

There were however one or two gender differences among this group. Men, for example, were found to be more likely than women to favour a school in the countryside. They were also more likely to consider a specialist school, although this might reflect the fact that such schools are only found in the secondary sector.

While it is not easy to interpret the differences between the samples, the data do suggest that NPQH candidates have a higher preference than serving heads for 'challenging' schools – 'fresh start' and inner city schools and those involved in 'Excellence in Cities' initiatives. Conversely, the deputy headteachers showed a preference for posts in 'successful' schools and those in the countryside. All groups – heads, deputy heads and NPQH candidates showed a preference for taking on a 'coasting' school. (The small numbers indicating that they would be interested in working in specialist schools reflect the fact that these schools only operate in the secondary sector.)

	Most likely (%)		Least likely	
A 'failing' school	8	39	29	23
A 'successful' school	17	42	31	10
A 'coasting' school	27	44	18	11
An inner city school	17	35	24	24
A 'fresh start' school	8	41	24	27
A school situated in the 'leafy' suburbs	9	28	41	22
A school in the countryside	13	41	24	22
A school in an EAZ	14	46	21	20
A specialist school	9	18	33	40
A Beacon school	8	33	32	27
A school receiving Excellence in Cities grant	17	29	28	26

Table 3.7: Future posts and school preferences of NPQH candidates (n = 90)

	Most likely (%)		Least likely	
	9	25	37	30
A 'successful' school	20	48	24	8
A 'coasting' school	20	47	19	14
An inner city school	15	25	17	42
A 'fresh start' school	10	30	28	32
A school situated in the 'leafy' suburbs	11	44	27	18
A school in the countryside	20	35	29	16
A school in an EAZ	5	35	33	2
A specialist school	14	28	20	37
A Beacon school	7	45	33	15
A school receiving Excellence in Cities grant	12	37	27	24

Table 3.8: Future posts and school preferences of deputy heads (n = 147)

### 3.7 Middle manager survey – background factors

The survey of middle managers was targeted at those with posts of responsibility in primary and secondary schools, such as: heads of year, SENCOs, and heads and co-ordinators of curriculum areas. There were a total of 238 responses, 14 (6%) from special schools, 91 (38%) from primary schools and 132 (55%) from secondary schools. The gender balance in the sample was 34 per cent male and 66 per cent female. Two per cent of the sample identified themselves as having a disability. A larger proportion than in the sample of heads and deputy heads were from ethnic minorities – 2.6 per cent describing themselves as 'Black' or 'Black British' and just under one per cent as 'Asian'.

Respondents tended to be more evenly spread across the age ranges, although a quarter of middle managers were in the 46-50 age group. None were over 60 (see Table 3.9).

Age group (%)	30 and under	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-55	56-60	Over 60
	12	11	15	19	25	15	3.4	0

Table 3.9. Age groups of middle managers (n =233)

Proportionately more of the younger middle managers were female and conversely proportionately more of those in the older age groups were men. Fourteen per cent of female middle managers were under 30, compared with eight per cent of male middle managers. Over half (53%) of male middle managers were 46 years old or over, compared to over a third (38%) of female middle managers.

This difference is also reflected in the phase of schooling. Some 17 per cent of middle managers in the primary schools were under 30, compared to nine per cent in the secondary schools in the sample. Proportionately almost twice as many secondary middle managers (30%) were in the 46-50 age bracket as were primary middle managers (17%).

### 3.8 Career aspirations – middle managers

Over half the sample, (51%) did not envisage becoming a deputy head in the near future. This was more likely to be the case, the older the respondent. None of the respondents over 50 envisaged becoming a deputy in the near future or in the medium to long term. The younger respondents were more likely to envisage being a deputy in the near future. This was the case for 17 per cent of those under 35, one quarter of those aged 36-40 and one-fifth of those aged 41-50. Over a quarter of those under 35 envisaged becoming a deputy in the medium to long term, as did almost one third of 36-40 year-olds. Those in the older age groups were more likely to report that they had no plans at all to become a deputy head. This was the case for one fifth of 41-45 year-olds, a third of 46-50 year-olds and a quarter of 51-55 year-olds. Only very small proportions of the younger age groups had no plans to become a deputy head (around 5%).

	<i>Most likely (%)</i>		<i>Least likely</i>	
A 'failing' school	3	13	29	55
A 'successful' school	39	50	6	4
A 'coasting' school	4	37	36	22
An inner city school	11	20	28	41
A 'fresh start' school	8	28	33	31
A school situated in the 'leafy' suburbs	20	49	20	12
A school in the countryside	29	39	16	16
A school in an EAZ	5	28	36	31
A specialist school	8	37	23	31
A Beacon school	10	40	30	20
A school receiving Excellence in Cities grant	4	36	40	20

Table 3.10: Future posts and school preferences of middle managers (n = 137)

Over 60 per cent of middle managers reported that they would have a preference for a particular type of school, if they were to become a deputy head. When asked which type of school they would prefer, they were most likely to choose a 'successful' school (39% were 'most likely' to choose such a school), a school in the countryside, or a school in the 'leafy suburbs'. They were least likely to choose a 'failing school' (55%), or an inner city school. The middle managers in the sample tended to be less likely than the deputy heads or headteachers to choose a challenging situation when looking for promotion.

### 3.9 Reflections on the findings

- Headteachers in the sample had spent an average of 6.6 years in their current posts and, although most had been appointed from outside the school, there was still a significant number – nearly one-fifth – appointed internally. What is not known, and may be worth further enquiry, is the role played by the governing body in the appointment process. This would be worth investigating not only to explore governors' views of the merits or otherwise of internal candidates, but also to test out some anecdotal evidence about how appointment panels tended to opt for 'safe' white, middle class, male candidates. Although there is other evidence of a rising proportion (albeit a gradual increase) of female headteachers (Coleman, 2001), there does not appear to be similar growth in the number of headteachers from ethnic minority backgrounds (Mansell, 2001). Of course, it may not just be governing bodies that are constraining some candidates from being appointed to posts of responsibility, but their role in the process is worth further investigation.
- A significant proportion of headteachers in the sample expressed a preference for either remaining at their present school (60%) or for taking retirement or early retirement (40%)<sup>1</sup>. Although 30 per cent were also interested in moving to another headship, overall this presents a static picture of career development. It is particularly significant that of those indicating a preference for retirement, one third were under 50 years old. More male than female heads were likely to be considering retirement or leaving education for employment elsewhere.
- It is interesting to note as well the number of headteachers (about one-quarter) who have held more than one headship, and that very few had worked outside of the school sector. None had worked outside of education although it is noteworthy that 14 per cent of the sample noted 'leave the education system for employment elsewhere' as a possible future work preference. The degree to which headteachers are encouraged to take on second and subsequent headships, particularly of schools facing challenging circumstances, is worth further consideration. Length of tenure is also an issue. Should headteachers be appointed, like many of their counterparts in business and commerce, on short-term contracts (say of five year's duration) as is the case in other parts of the world? Do school leaders have a 'shelf life', or is it more likely to be the case that the constantly changing educational environment in which they now work means that few get the chance to 'plateau out'? The manner in which some long serving headteachers are able to maintain their earlier levels of energy and enthusiasm warrants investigation, as does the potential role of sabbaticals and secondments in rejuvenating school leaders. Certainly the case studies of well lead schools undertaken as part of this research included examples of individuals who had, despite experiences elsewhere, spent considerable periods of time at the one institution.
- Respondents' choices of future work preferences raises further interesting questions. For example, one-fifth of headteachers (who responded) mentioned becoming a consultant or trainer and about one tenth to becoming an inspector or HMI. To what extent is the current system sufficiently flexible to allow, indeed encourage, school leaders to become involved in these activities, particularly on a part-time basis? It is not known, for example, what proportion of those individuals undertaking activities such as external advisers (to governing bodies); OfSTED inspectors, threshold

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<sup>1</sup> More than one response could be ticked, therefore percentages could add up to more than 100.

verifiers and performance management consultants are serving headteachers. There is already some evidence (e.g. OfSTED, 1999) that such 'extra curricular' activities can be powerful learning opportunities that bring benefits to both the individuals performing them and their host institutions. Providing assistance to those schools in special measures can also be an important source of professional development and growth (OfSTED, 1998). Participation in such a range of activity not only promotes a broader perspective on the part of the individual, but also, most importantly, allows for developmental opportunities to be embraced back at school for those having to take on new responsibilities. Again, what is the role of governing bodies in encouraging or inhibiting school leaders from participating in this diverse and growing range of opportunities?

- It was interesting that 40 per cent of current deputies had no plans to take on a headship. However, among those in the deputy heads sample who had taken, or were taking, NPQH, over 80 per cent said they definitely or possibly wanted to become a headteacher. So there remains a group of deputies (sometimes termed 'career deputies') who have no plans to become headteachers and for whom NPQH is not appropriate, but who may need further training and development for their senior leadership role.
- The majority of all those (heads, deputies and NPQH candidates) who ranked their preferences for a particular types of school, avoided schools in challenging circumstances – inner city schools, those in an EAZ, failing schools and so on. However, many expressed a preference for taking on a 'coasting' school, which, in itself, is a challenge and would provide an opportunity for a new head to make his or her mark. The schools which were not preferred were those where energy and effort to make a difference may be undermined by circumstances largely outside a head's control, such as social deprivation and serious weaknesses in the school staff or management systems. In order to make such challenges seem more 'do-able', it may be necessary to provide additional support and training for potential heads of such schools.

## SECTION 4

### PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

#### 4.1 Summary

- Headteachers, and others in leadership positions in schools, tend to think of their roles in terms of 'leading with a clear vision' and 'setting high expectations'. They make a distinction between 'leadership' and 'management' conceptually, if not always in practice.
- Teachers want to become leaders in order to 'have a say' and 'make a difference'.
- The majority of headteachers still spend some of their working week in the classroom, either teaching, observing or coaching.
- Leaders in schools are de-motivated by the bureaucracy and excessive paperwork which they associate with the role and also by 'constant change' in the education system.
- Respondents were of the view that recruitment and retention of school leaders is likely to become increasingly problematic.
- Headteachers, deputy headteachers and middle managers in schools are perceived by LEA respondents and training providers to be of varying quality. There is much concern among both that middle managers are not sufficiently aware of and trained for their role as leaders.
- The governing body, as opposed to one or two key influential governors, was not generally seen as playing a leadership role in strategic planning.

#### 4.2 Introduction

This section addresses the perceptions of school leadership held by leaders in various leadership roles in schools – headteachers, assistant and deputy heads, middle managers and chairs of governors – and by those who offer them professional development and training. It draws on data gathered through questionnaire surveys, focus group interviews, telephone interviews with training providers and middle managers, and case studies of individual schools.

#### 4.3 The nature of school leadership

Although the postal survey of headteachers, deputy/assistant heads and NPQH candidates did not directly address the issue of how they conceive of leadership, there were many comments about the nature of headship in their questionnaire responses to the more directly factual and 'open-ended' questions.

When asked, for example, to provide reasons for wanting to become a headteacher, typical responses from NPQH candidates included:

*To create a school community where everyone is respected and valued  
and where the pupils have the opportunity to excel in a variety of areas*

*I feel passionate about the role of a school and being a headteacher would allow me to implement and take forward my vision.*

*To become fully involved in community regeneration through accessing resources, sharing vision, offering enthusiasm and commitment and developing multi-agency links. To inspire and strive for high achievement for all stakeholders.*

These aspiring heads clearly perceived headship in terms of 'making a difference', 'having an influence' or 'implementing their own vision'.

The vast majority of headteachers (96%) still spent some time each week in the classroom. One-in-ten spent more than 50 per cent of their time in the classroom, but for most (80%), it was a smaller part of their working week – up to 25 per cent of their time. The kinds of activities undertaken by headteachers were: teaching (cited by 60%), covering for absence (66%), observation (85%) and coaching other teachers (31%). Thus, the majority of headteachers were still very much involved in the teaching and learning which goes on in their schools.

The 'Hotseat' on-line participants also wrote of the importance of vision and teamwork. As one noted:

*My first task was to share my vision with all the staff and ask them did they feel they could work with this vision? Could they come with me?*

Several of them also wrote about leadership and children, and the importance of 'keeping the child at the centre':

*My head and I constantly talk about what is really important for our school, our children and the future of the school.*

The focus groups were composed of people who had thought a great deal about leadership. Some members spoke about shared leadership, but also about autonomy:

*I think autonomy is the key. Seeing clear vision and direction of your school and taking your staff with you.*

The case studies too offered many examples of how headteachers and other school leaders interpret and enact leadership. Leadership style, vision and values were investigated in all ten case studies and some interesting observations made (see for example, case studies A, B and C).

The sample of 29 middle managers interviewed had their own conceptions of leadership. They frequently made reference to headteachers who paid attention to 'strategic direction' and 'vision' and 'facilitating and leading teams'. They also appreciated headteachers who 'lead with a clear vision of development across the school'.

In discussing the nature of leadership, middle managers also placed emphasis upon consultation: that they were consulted by those who lead them and that they in turn consult those they led. No one method of consultation was suggested, however, though

holding effective staff meetings, involving people in decision-making, or having whole-staff discussions were highlighted.

Middle managers also valued team building and advising and supporting colleagues as a major part of their leadership task. As one of them remarked:

*Setting high expectations and leading forward as a team. I see leadership as building a foundation which one polishes up through experience.*

They also made reference to providing and monitoring resources, including information, and many of them highlighted their responsibilities for developing staff with whom they worked by 'providing INSET', arranging for staff induction, or by 'leading by example'.

A more cautious note, however, was struck by some of the providers of leadership development and training. They suggested that some headteachers had still not developed an appropriate synergy between their leadership and management roles and needed to be more 'future-orientated' and capable of 'thinking outside of the box'.

#### **4.4 Governors and school leadership**

There was a view expressed by some training providers that many governing bodies were ineffective as 'strategic leaders' and became over-involved in the detailed running of individual schools. LEA respondents generally did not consider governors to be effective in terms of their role in helping to raise standards or improve schools – only about one-in-eight rated them as effective.

Headteachers, also, seemed to have a limited concept of the role of governing bodies. Although 22 per cent agreed that they *should* play a major role in the strategic leadership of schools – and significantly more male heads than female - far fewer (only 13%) judged that their governing body actually did so (see Tables 4.1 and 4.2). Over one-third of headteachers (35%) thought that their governing body actually played a 'minor role' or 'no role at all' in the strategic leadership of their school. Of those one-in-eight heads who thought their governing body did play a strategic leadership role, most were secondary (15%) or primary (13%) with special school heads (4%) being much less positive about their governors' strategic role in practice.

Of those headteacher respondents who provided further comments about how the work of the governing body relates to the leadership role of the headteacher (n = 505), around one-quarter made reference to the governing body giving support and encouragement, with a further quarter mentioning the governors' role as a 'critical friend' or a 'sounding board'. About a tenth of headteachers providing comments to this open-ended question made a negative remark about governors such as their lack of time and knowledge and/or inadequate skills.

The questionnaire to chairs of governors (which was sent to a different sample from that of the headteachers) asked a similar set of questions about the strategic leadership role of the governing body. The results, shown in Tables 4.1 and 4.2, present a far more positive picture than that for headteachers, with no governor respondent prepared to agree that their governing body plays no role at all, although 15 per cent were of the view that their actual role in strategic leadership was 'minor'. Secondary school governors were more likely than their primary counterparts to see the governing body as having a 'major role' to play. Respondents were also asked to indicate (on a four-point

scale) how significant they thought the governing body's role in school leadership was and just under one-third (32%) regarded its leadership role to be 'very significant'.

	<i>Major role - 1</i> %	<i>Moderate – 2</i> %	<i>Minor – 3</i> %	<i>No role at all– 4</i> %
Headteachers (n = 606)	22	58	18	2.5
Chairs of GB (n = 197)	57	39	4	0

*Table 4.1: Degree governing body should play in strategic leadership*

	<i>Major role - 1</i> %	<i>Moderate – 2</i> %	<i>Minor – 3</i> %	<i>No role at all– 4</i> %
Headteachers (n = 608)	13	52	31	4
Chairs of GB (n = 197)	29	59	15	0

*Table 4.2: Extent of governing body's actual role in strategic leadership*

In response to an open-ended question asking about the governing body's main leadership role, about one-fifth of chairs of governors pointed to the importance of providing support and encouragement; a further fifth to planning, decision-making processes and providing strategic direction; one-in-six mentioned the governing body's monitoring role and one-in-ten to its role as critical friend/sounding board or as a test bed for new ideas.

The role of the governing body and leadership and governance were considered in each of the case study schools and provide examples of how headteachers and governors were working closely and effectively together (see Section 10). Some governors in the case study schools – in particular the chair of the governing body – appeared to have a strong influence and to be able to act as a mentor or a 'critical friend' to the leadership team. Important and strategic decisions, such as whether to apply for Beacon status or to become a specialist college, were fully discussed with the governors and they were actively involved in decision-making. However, it was not clear whether the role of the governing body, as opposed to the role of one or two key influential governors, was generally one of strategic leadership.

#### **4.5 The appeal of leadership – why do teachers want to become leaders?**

Some of the motivating factors which inspire teachers to want to lead a school have been discussed above. It gives the opportunity for those who feel passionate about the job to 'implement their own vision', to 'make a difference', 'to give themselves a challenge'. When the detail of responses about the appeal of headship is analysed, several themes emerge.

The key aspects of leadership which headteachers find motivating centre chiefly on people management – interacting with staff, and with staff and pupils. Almost two-thirds of the weighted sample of heads responding to an open-ended question about motivation mentioned interacting with pupils and almost a similar proportion mentioned dealing with staff. Planning was mentioned by almost four out of every ten headteachers,

and decision-making or challenge mentioned by just under one-third. Perhaps surprisingly, given the current headline stories about violent parents, about one-in-six said liaising with parents and the community was a motivating factor.

Chairs of governing bodies were also asked for their views on the main factors that encourage teachers to apply for leadership positions. Analysis of this open-ended question found that there were three commonly mentioned factors regarded as important. Over a quarter of respondents made reference to either financial and other benefits of promotion; or to career development and the desire for greater responsibility and challenge or job satisfaction. About a fifth wrote of the desire to lead or to 'run your own show', to want to 'make a difference' or improve the school and children's educational experiences.

However, and as noted in Section 3, when asked about future work preferences, a large proportion of the headteachers who responded to the questionnaires were thinking of moving out of headship, either for retirement (40%) or for jobs as consultants, in LEAs, the inspectorate, HEIs or outside education (see Table 3.4). A further 60 per cent were not considering further moves and only 30 per cent perceived 'move to a different school' as a possible future work preference.

As reported in Section 3, 90 per cent of the NPQH sample and 60 per cent of the sample of deputy/assistant heads were considering the possibility of becoming a headteacher. The main reasons given for wanting to take on the headteacher role were to 'have influence, make a difference or to implement one's own vision'. For the 40 per cent of deputy heads who had no plans to become a headteacher, the main reasons for rejecting this option were that it involved 'too much stress' and that they preferred to remain a class teacher to maintain contact with children.

In the case study schools, there was evidence of leaders working with colleagues in the LEA and in other schools in a variety of roles. Many of these schools were involved in specific linking projects, such as the Beacon Schools Initiative (e.g. case study schools A and E), an EAZ or Excellence in Cities (e.g. case study C). One small rural primary school (case study J) was part of the Excellent Schools SCITT and had links with schools all over its region. Part of the appeal of headship for leaders in these schools was the opportunity to share their expertise and to learn from others at the same time.

Those taking part in the 'Hotseat' on-line discussion were very enthusiastic about articulating the appeal of leadership. For example:

*I am excited about the challenges to us leading learning in all its forms - especially the development of emotional intelligence to enable students to learn to change behaviour... and as 'lead learner' creating the climate for staff to change and for successful learning for all is the real challenge....the real agenda for enablement, empowerment and change.*

Participants in the focus groups often used emotionally charged language to describe the appeal of leadership. For example:

*The joy you get from internal pressures because you're in control of that. And see children grow.*

*For example, winning with a kid.*

*I love the job. I love children. I never stop being fascinated by them, entertained by them, amused by them, irritated by them. Never stops ever. That never changes. Everything else changes around you.*

*The really important pressures are the ones I feel in myself. Things that I want to do and be and enable other people to be. So that when I go they've got the rock that I feel now I can hang on to, that won't let me down whatever the outside pressures are.*

#### **4.6 Stresses and strains – what de-motivates headteachers?**

The most de-motivating aspect of headship mentioned by the survey respondents was 'bureaucracy and paperwork', which were seen as overbearing and not always necessary. Over one-half of those headteachers answering this open-ended question gave these as the aspects of the job that they did not enjoy. Constant change was also seen in a negative light by a quarter of those responding. Other key aspects which headteachers mentioned as de-motivating were: budget and resources issues (noted by just over one-in-five); the low status and negative media image of the profession (noted by around one-in-six); more generalised comments about stress and the demands of the job (about a fifth); and, problems with recruitment (noted by just over a fifth).

These issues were also present for the headteachers in the case study schools, but, significantly, they had strategies for dealing with them. For example, change and innovation were seen as manageable by the headteachers in these schools because they used new initiatives as a means of fulfilling the aims and objectives they had already set for themselves. Thus, they took control of change and had the confidence 'to say 'no'' if they felt that a particular initiative was not timely or relevant to the needs of their school.

The case study schools, although not in the 'leafy suburbs', had no significant recruitment problems, because their good leadership had, seemingly, set up a 'virtuous circle', resulting in relatively low staff turnover. They had all managed to get access to adequate resources, either through an LEA which had recognised the needs of their pupils, or through sponsorship and involvement in initiatives which brought in resources, such as an EAZ or a having Beacon School or specialist college status (e.g. case study schools D and E). These schools had a positive image of themselves as high performing schools and communicated this to the outside world both locally and nationally.

Nevertheless, in several of the case study schools, those in leadership roles were looking to retire or to move on to advisory work. Partly, this was in reaction to the pressures and extremely long hours which most of them were working, or from a desire to extend their range and to take up a new challenge.

(Further examples of how headteachers are dealing successfully with bureaucracy, paperwork and managing constant change are found in the case studies under the heading 'Leadership and multiple innovations' - see Section 10.)

#### **4.7 Recruitment and retention – attracting and keeping leaders**

As reported earlier, among the 151 NPQH respondents to the questionnaire, just under two-thirds (63%) reported that they definitely wanted to become a headteacher. (The

remainder ticked the 'possibly' box, with one respondent saying 'no'.) Among the deputy heads sample, 40 per cent reported that they definitely were not considering becoming a headteacher. LEA questionnaire respondents reported that some of the major challenges to recruitment and retention of school leaders were: inadequate salaries; issues such as league tables/accountability/workload and pressure put applicants off; there were particular problems in recruiting leaders for small schools, challenging schools and in London; and thus there was a lack of good quality applicants in some LEAs.

In order to ascertain whether there was a particular problem in recruiting leaders for some types of school or some areas, headteachers, deputy heads and NPQH candidates were asked whether they had a particular preference for the type of school or area in which they would like to work. As noted in Section 3, NPQH candidates and deputy heads were more likely to choose a 'successful' or a 'coasting' school, and least likely to choose a specialist or a Beacon school. They were also more likely to choose a school in the countryside or the inner-city than one in the 'leafy suburbs'. Many made comments to the effect that they would choose a school similar to the one they were already teaching in. For example:

*I feel that my experience, my leadership qualities and my personality are best suited to an inner city school*

*I have always been employed in schools in urban environments which have had high SEN, EAL and traveler children. My experience would therefore equip me to lead a school of this type. Or one which was coasting or failing.*

*Being realistic, I expect to work in a small coasting or worse school in the inner city. This best matches my experience.*

There was a tendency, in all cases, for women to be more likely than men to consider taking on a headship in a school in a challenging situation – either a 'failing' school, or one in an EAZ or an Excellence in Cities school. This difference was only statistically significant in the case of 'failing' schools, where 54 per cent of female compared to 38 per cent of male NPQH candidates, would be 'likely' or 'very likely' to consider the headship of such a school.

Serving headteachers were also most likely to express a preference for a 'successful' or a 'coasting' school and also for a 'school in the countryside'. They were less likely to want to work in an inner-city or 'Fresh Start' school than were NPQH candidates, and also less likely to want to work in an Excellence in Cities or an EAZ school. This may be because they were older than other school leaders and potential headteachers and thus thought they would not have enough energy for such challenges. There were no significant gender differences in the responses of serving heads.

Some of the comments made by headteachers when asked for their reasons for their choices were:

*My school is an inner-city school whose intake is economically and socially deprived. Staffing the school is an on-going task because of the turn-over. I would envisage running a school in the leafy suburbs where one would not encounter the above problems and would free up more*

*time for getting involved in the curriculum through teaching.*

*Having been the head of a 'failing' school for 5 years and of a 'coasting' school for a further 5 years, and having turned both round, a third headship is unlikely. I'm too tired.*

However, there were still some headteachers who relished a fresh challenge:

*I like the challenge/buzz of inner-city schools with multi-cultural aspects and difficulties and deprivations.*

*I would enjoy shaking a coasting school into success – a challenge. But I'm less attracted to one already at the peak of success.*

Thus, the picture for recruitment and retention is complex. Although there is an overall preference for taking on leadership of schools in more favourable circumstances, there is a minority of respondents who are attracted to more difficult schools and locations.

Of the 29 middle managers interviewed by phone, 14 reported that they would like to seek promotion to senior management, 12 would definitely not, and three thought they were not ready yet. Those who did not want to apply for more senior posts reported that they were happy with their current role, several of them citing their families as a reason for remaining as middle managers. They wished to 'have a life' and devote at least some time to matters outside of school.

#### **4.8 Recruitment of school leaders from minority groups**

The proportion of ethnic minority headteachers in the sample was very small (just 2%). The training providers saw this mainly as a problem relating to the initial recruitment of ethnic minority teachers into the profession. As so few actually choose to be teachers, there is a very small pool from which to recruit school leaders.

The issue of disability was also not salient for most respondents. Although around four per cent of heads and aspiring heads reported that they had a disability, none of the training providers had any direct knowledge of headteachers or aspiring headteachers with disabilities, thus indicating recruitment and retention of school leaders from this group may be a hidden problem.

#### **4.9 The quality of school leaders – what are they like?**

The general view of the training providers and the LEA respondents was that the quality of school leaders, in terms of their ability to raise standards and transform schools, is extremely variable. There was not a consistent view. In some LEAs, primary headteachers were thought to be of higher quality than secondary, and in others, the opposite was the view. Overall, just over a third of LEA respondents thought that headteachers in their education authority were good and effective, with a further third noting that the picture was variable. About one-in-eight stated that secondary headteachers in the LEA were more effective than primary. Far fewer (about one-in-25) noted that primary headteachers were more effective than their secondary colleagues.

The picture as far as deputy headteachers is concerned was less favourably perceived, with only about one fifth of LEA respondents considering that deputies in their LEA were

good and effective and just over a third judging them to be variable in quality. Again, more thought that secondary deputy headteachers were more effective than those in primary schools.

The leadership capabilities of middle managers gave even more cause for concern amongst the LEA respondents. Less than one-in-ten thought that these teachers were good and effective and just under one-half considered them to be variable in quality. For this group, slightly more respondents stated that primary middle managers were more effective than those in secondary schools.

Governors, also, were not seen as particularly effective. Only one-in-eight of the LEA respondents judged them to be so and under half noted that they were variable in their capability to raise standards and transform schools.

Training providers were also unsure of the overall capability and effectiveness of school leaders.

*It's pretty variable, both within and across phases, but less so, however, in the secondary phase.*

There was also a particular concern about the lack of awareness of middle managers of their role as leaders:

*They are variable in quality. Many working in the secondary sector do not see their role in leadership terms at all.*

*Middle managers have a false sense of their competence, which, as far as leadership is concerned, is highly variable.*

*I'm not so happy about middle managers. It's a problem for heads to get middle managers to see that they need management training – heads of departments, year heads and co-ordinators.*

Furthermore, training providers noted that there seemed to be a view in schools that middle managers did not require management training until they were moving on to deputy headship. Thus middle managers saw their development needs in terms of being up-to-date with their subject and being task-focused rather than people-focused.

#### **4.10 Reflections on the findings**

- 'Vision' and 'high expectations' are key concepts for school leaders. The extent to which they can achieve their vision and respond to the expectations of parents, the general public and government, is dependent on external as well as internal factors. Being unable to live up to their own and others' expectations may be a key factor which leads to de-motivation and stress.
- A significant proportion of headteachers either wish to retire or to move out of headship, and another large proportion envisage remaining in their present school. This creates a static and rather disheartening picture in terms of current heads using their experience and expertise across a number of schools during their careers. This suggests that attention needs to be given to finding ways in which the

experience and expertise of serving heads may be used more creatively and flexibly.

- Bureaucracy and excessive paperwork are seen as negative aspects of the leadership role and they tend to inhibit potential leaders from taking on more senior roles. However, in some schools this problem is well managed and systems are in place to enable this aspect of the role to be coped with. A key feature of preparation for leadership roles should include working on strategies to support staff with systems that make the paperwork 'do-able'. It was noticeable that in the case study schools, middle managers did not seem to be so overwhelmed by bureaucracy. These schools were well managed. It may well be that in such schools middle managers were helped to manage paper work by senior managers and that much thought was given to its volume and individuals' workload.
- Many headteachers and potential headteachers are attracted to less challenging schools. In order to recruit the best candidates to more challenging environments, there needs to be more attention given to the particular demands of leadership of such schools and the support which leaders in those schools need – both material and emotional/psychological. It is interesting that women are more likely than men to be attracted to these schools and this phenomenon would bear further exploration.
- There is much concern expressed about the broad leadership capacity of middle managers, in terms of leading teams and focusing on the affective aspects of their role. There appears to be a lack of targeted training for this group. There is a clear need for such training to be made available and for senior management to acknowledge the need for their middle managers to receive development opportunities in this area, and not just in their curriculum area.
- The extent to which governors can be said to have a strategic role appears to be limited. Even in well led schools, it appears that one or two governors exercise a leadership role, rather than the governing body as a whole. The leadership capacity of the governing body although welcomed by most headteachers, is circumscribed by the extent to which it depends on the head and leadership team for information; the restricted time governors can spend in the school; and their lack of 'professional' knowledge.

## SECTION 5

### DEVELOPING THE LEADERSHIP CAPABILITY OF SCHOOL LEADERS

#### 5.1 Summary

- About one-in-six headteachers (17%) thought they were 'very prepared' for headship, with nearly one-in-ten (9%) stating that they were 'not prepared at all'. Only about one-in-eight headteachers were prepared to say that, on actually taking up their first headship, they regarded themselves as well equipped to take it on.
- Secondary headteachers reported higher levels of preparedness for headship than either their primary or special school counterparts.
- Over one-fifth (21%) of NPQH candidates believed they were 'very prepared' for headship with very few (3%) stating that they were 'not prepared at all'.
- Deputy and assistant heads recorded the highest levels at both ends of the scale of preparedness for headship, with three out of ten (29%) seeing themselves as 'very prepared' and one-in-ten (11%) 'not prepared at all'. About 30 per cent of the sample had completed or were studying for the NPQH, and of this group, a much higher proportion - two-thirds (64%) - regarded themselves as 'very prepared' to take up headship.
- Over one-fifth (22%) of middle managers/team leaders reported being 'very prepared' professionally prior to taking up their current posts, whilst one-tenth regarded themselves as 'not prepared at all'.
- About one-fifth (21%) of LEA respondents perceived headteachers as being 'very prepared' for their positions. (This figure was much higher than that for other categories of school leader.)
- Training and development would be most welcomed in those areas (of the *National Standards for Headteachers*) which 'promote and secure good teaching, effective learning and high standards of achievement' (58% of headteachers and 49% of deputies) and, 'manage time, finance, accommodation and resources and ensure value for money' (66% of NPQH respondents).
- Primary heads (49%) much more than their secondary colleagues (30%) identified the standard 'lead, support and co-ordinate high quality professional development for all staff, including your own personal and professional development' as an area where they would welcome further training.
- About one-half of the sample of middle managers would welcome further training and development opportunities in virtually all of the areas specified in the *National Standards for Subject Leaders*.
- Implicit in the data collected is a call for a coherent school leadership professional development framework which begins shortly after qualification as a teacher and continues through to and beyond headship.

- There was also a need to consider team-building programmes for the leadership group in order to develop a more distributed and holistic approach to school leadership.
- Respondents noted there was much of value in the national leadership programmes which they said needed to be retained. However, there was a consensus that both HEADLAMP and LPSH were in urgent need of review. It was too early to be sure about the effectiveness of the revised NPQH programme.

## 5.2 Introduction

This section is divided into two parts. Part A examines the professional development needs of school leaders, as these are interpreted and understood by leaders themselves and leadership training providers. It also records perceptions of preparedness and outlines the sources of professional development for leadership previously and currently being drawn upon by school leaders. Part B examines the national leadership programmes and the perceptions school leaders have of their value. A discussion of the main providers of school leadership training and development is also given consideration.

### Part A

## 5.3 Preparation for headship

Headteachers were asked how well they thought they were prepared for their role *prior* to taking up their first headship, and how well they thought they were prepared once they had *actually* taken up the role. As can be seen from Table 5.1, 17 per cent of headteachers thought they were 'very prepared', with nearly one-in-ten (9%) stating that they were 'not prepared at all'. The percentage reporting lack of preparedness remained exactly the same (9%) once the heads had actually taken up the post, but those who saw themselves as 'very prepared' decreased from 17 to 12 per cent. In other words only about one-in-eight headteachers were prepared to say that, on actually taking up their first headship, they regarded themselves as well equipped to take it on.

Further analysis revealed that there were no statistically significant differences between male and female respondents concerning perceptions of preparation for headship. This was the case for both parts of the question (i.e. perceptions of preparation before taking up the post, and once the position was actually taken up). There was, however, a statistically significant difference for school phase with secondary headteachers reporting higher levels of preparedness both before *and* after headship than either their primary or special school counterparts. Neither the age category of the headteacher, nor whether or not they had been an internal appointment to the post, was found to be related to respondents' perception of adequacy of preparation.

More detailed analysis of the 12 per cent of headteachers (n = 70) who perceived that they were 'very prepared' (post headship) revealed no differences between males and females nor between those appointed internally (or not) to their present posts. However, school phase was again significant (10% of primary saw themselves as 'very prepared', compared to 15% of special and secondary heads) as was participation in NPQH (16% of heads compared to 10% of those who had not participated in NPQH). Involvement in LPSH was not found to be closely co-related with perceptions of adequacy of preparation.

	<i>Very prepared</i> (1) (%)	(2) (%)	(3) (%)	<i>Not prepared</i> <i>at all</i> (4) (%)
Headteachers (pre-headship) (n = 608)	17	50	25	9
Headteachers (post- headship) (n = 597)	12	45	35	9

*Table 5.1: Perceptions of preparation for headship*

The question about preparation for headship was also put to the samples of deputy headteachers and NPQH candidates (the majority of the latter were enrolled on the new NPQH model launched in January 2001). Middle managers were asked how well prepared professionally they were prior to taking up their current position. The responses of the three sets of respondents are shown in Table 5.2.

	<i>Very prepared</i> (1) (%)	(2) (%)	(3) (%)	<i>Not prepared</i> <i>at all</i> (4) (%)
NPQH candidates (n = 147)	21	59	17	3
Deputy heads (n = 218)	29	41	19	11
Middle managers (n = 229)	22 (15*)	47 (26)	21 (39)	10 (20)

\* Figures in brackets (for MMs) refer to sufficiency of training

*Table 5.2: Perceptions of preparation for headship or (for middle managers) current position*

Over one-fifth (21%) of NPQH candidates, some of whom have been or are acting headteachers, believed they were 'very prepared' and only three per cent stated that they were 'not prepared at all'. There were no statistically significant gender differences. However, phase of school, whilst statistically significant for headteachers, was not found to be the case for NPQH candidates.

Compared with the other respondents, the sample of deputy heads (about 30% of whom had completed or were studying for the NPQH) recorded the highest levels at both ends of the scale of preparedness, with 29 percent seeing themselves as 'very prepared' and one-in-ten (11%) 'not prepared at all'. There were no statistically significant differences found for level of preparation and either gender or phase of school. Although this was also true for those deputies who had completed NPQH (n = 33), a large proportion of this group – two-thirds (64%) – regarded themselves as 'very prepared' to take up headship.

Middle managers were asked to state, in general terms, how well prepared professionally they were prior to taking up their current position. Although over one-fifth

(22%) reported being 'very prepared', one-in-ten regarded themselves as 'not prepared at all'. (As was the case for the samples of NPQH candidates and deputy heads, no gender or phase differences were found.) This group of respondents was also asked – using a four-point scale - whether they had received a sufficient amount of leadership and management training before taking on their current middle management role. Fifteen per cent of the sample perceived that training as 'quite sufficient' whilst 20 per cent regarded it as 'not at all sufficient' (see figures in brackets in Table 5.2). (No differences between school phase were found.) One-in-ten of the sample of middle managers intended to undertake the NPQH (with a further 18% stating that it was a possibility).

LEA respondents were also asked to indicate how well they thought the majority of school leaders within their LEA were professionally prepared *prior* to taking up their leadership positions. As can be seen from Table 5.3, the percentage reporting adequate levels of preparedness was highest for headteachers (93% noted the first two levels on the four point scale) and lowest for governors (32%). Over one-fifth (21%) of LEA respondents perceived headteachers as being 'very prepared' with much lower proportions reporting this to be the case for other school leaders. One-in-20 saw middle managers as 'not prepared at all' with over one-quarter (26%) perceiving this to be the case for school governors.

(n = 100 LEAs)	Very prepared (1) (%)	(2) (%)	(3) (%)	Not prepared at all (4) (%)
Headteachers	21	72	6	0
Deputy headteachers	3	60	36	1
Leadership group/SMT members	1	48	50	1
Middle managers/team leaders/curric co-ordinators	2	39	54	5
School governors	5	27	42	26

*Table 5.3: LEA perceptions of preparedness for role*

During the telephone interviews with leadership training providers comments were sought about preparation for headship and other leadership positions. Some interviewees considered that middle managers did not need an overly prescriptive training and development framework, but rather one which invited the providers to respond with programmes that helped build a scaffold for future development. Several felt it would be important to accredit such training and development, perhaps in partnership with a higher education institution, as part of a post-graduate qualification.

On more than one occasion, training providers proposed that one way forward would be to develop a spiral curriculum framework in which similar concepts were introduced, but

at different levels, and developed to different degrees of complexity and depth. Providers also expressed concern that there needed to be some way of ensuring that people who become headteachers are able to undertake the role effectively. There was a concern expressed that too often this was not the case. It was suggested that people should be identified early on in their careers and nurtured for the role in a 'fast track' kind of way.

There was a long debate during the online 'hotseat' discussion about the role of qualifications for school leaders. No clear view emerged about their necessity, however. There was consensus even so that the process of working through any qualification was considerably more important than the qualification itself.

An over-riding theme emerging from the training provider interviews was the urgent need to see put in place a map of leadership development ensuring coherence, continuity, some common themes, and some choice at different stages. There was strong support for regional provision and a modular approach, beginning from early in the teacher's career. Middle managers, subject leaders and deputy headteachers, it was felt, would all benefit from this approach with those who aspired to headship being better prepared for the position.

#### **5.4 Training and the 'National Standards for Headteachers'**

Headteachers, deputy heads and NPQH candidates were asked about their perceived development needs matched to the *National Standards for Headteachers*. Table 5.4 shows the findings for the three groups of respondents. The numbers in brackets represent the top five priorities in each case where respondents noted they would welcome further or new training and development opportunities.

The data show that none of the groups placed a particularly high priority on 'working with governors to recruit, induct, develop and retain staff of the highest quality' (although the sample of deputies and NPQH candidates ranked this standard more highly than did headteachers) nor on 'agreeing, developing and implementing positive equal opportunities strategies'. Only 16 per cent of headteachers gave 'developing an educational vision and the strategic direction of the school' a high priority, but this may be because they felt generally confident and comfortable with this aspect of their role compared with NPQH candidates (24%) and deputy heads (27%).

The standards most commonly referred to, where further or new training and development opportunities would be welcomed, were to 'promote and secure good teaching, effective learning and high standards of achievement' (58% of headteachers and 49% of deputies) and to 'manage time, finance, accommodation and resources and ensure value for money' (66% of NPQH respondents). The latter standard was also ranked highly by deputy heads, but not by headteachers, with less than a quarter (24%) noting it as a priority area. Headteachers perceived the standard 'agree, develop and implement systems to meet the learning needs of all pupils' as a key developmental area. This was not the case for either NPQH candidates or deputies. On the other hand, 'ensure that the curriculum, management, finance, organisation and administration of the school support its vision, aims and values' was given a high priority by the samples of deputies and NPQH candidates but not by the headteachers.

Further analysis by school phase found that the only standard where there was considerable difference between secondary and primary headteachers was 'lead,

support and co-ordinate high quality professional development for all staff, including your own personal and professional development'. Primary heads (49%) much more than their secondary colleagues (30%) identified this as a priority area and as one in which they would welcome further or new training opportunities.

<i>Element of the National Standards</i>	<i>Headteachers (n = 612)  (%)</i>	<i>NPQH candidates (n = 151)  (%)</i>	<i>Deputy Heads (n = 226)  (%)</i>
Develop an educational vision and the strategic direction for your school.	15	24	27
Secure the commitment of others to the vision.	23	26	19
Implement the vision through strategic planning, operational planning and target setting.	25	33 (4)	31
Keep the work of the school under review and account for its improvement.	44 (3)	28	32 (5)
Promote and secure good teaching, effective learning and high standards of achievement.	58 (1)	28	49 (1)
Monitor, evaluate and review the quality of teaching and learning.	41 (4=)	32 (5)	37 (4)
Agree, develop and implement positive equal opportunities strategies.	10	10	10
Agree, develop and implement systems to meet the learning needs of all pupils.	47 (2)	30	32
Develop and maintain the trust and support of all members of the school community.	25	29	24
Plan, allocate, support and evaluate work undertaken by teams, groups and individuals.	25	29	19
Lead, support and co-ordinate high quality professional development for all staff, including your own personal and professional development.	41 (4=)	21	30
Determine, implement and sustain effective systems for managing performance of all staff.	41 (4=)	26	24
Ensure that the curriculum, management, finance, organisation and administration of the school support its vision, aims and values.	26	51 (2)	43 (3)
Work with governors to recruit, induct, develop and retain staff of the highest quality.	11	17	19
Manage time, finance, accommodation and resources and ensure value for money.	24	66 (1)	44 (2)
Lead and enable innovations and changes to take place appropriately and effectively, including ICT.	27	35 (3)	27

*(The numbers in brackets represent the top five priorities for further training)*

*Table 5.4: Further training opportunities with reference to the National Standards*

Another phase difference worth noting was in relation to 'promote and secure good teaching, effective learning and high standards of achievement' but on this occasion more secondary (66%) than primary (54%) heads were requesting development. When asked about *other* training and development requirements, headteachers identified time management, personnel issues and conflict management. Deputy heads and NPQH

candidates also identified personnel matters and time management but added financial planning to their lists.

### 5.5 Training and the ‘National Standards for Subject Leaders’

The *National Standards for Subject Leaders* (1998) define the role of middle managers in relation to four *key areas* and in terms of the *skills* and *attributes* applied to each of the areas. The sample of middle managers was asked to note in which of these they would welcome further or new training and development opportunities. The results, shown in Table 5.5, indicate that with the exception of ‘decision-making’ and ‘communication’ skills, approximately one-half of the middle managers sample would welcome further training and development opportunities in all of the specified areas.

<i>Key Area</i>	<i>% of sample</i>
<i>Strategic direction and development of the subject</i> (within the context of the school’s aims and policies, subject leaders develop and implement subject policies, plans, targets and practices)	48
<i>Teaching and learning</i> (subject leaders secure and sustain effective teaching of the subject, evaluate the quality of teaching and standards of pupils’ achievements and set targets for improvement)	51
<i>Leading and managing staff</i> (subject leaders provide to all those with involvement in the teaching or support of the subject, the support, challenge, information and development necessary to sustain motivation and secure improvement in teaching)	59
<i>Efficient and effective deployment of staff and resources</i> (subject leaders identify appropriate resources for the subject and ensure that they are used efficiently, effectively and safely)	45

<i>Key Skills and Attributes</i>	<i>% of sample</i>
<i>Leadership skills</i> – the ability to lead and manage people to work towards common goals	55
<i>Decision-making skills</i> – the ability to solve problems and make decisions	39
<i>Communication skills</i> – the ability to make points clearly and understand the views of others	33
<i>Self-management</i> – the ability to plan time effectively and to organise oneself well	55

Table 5.5: *Further training opportunities with reference to the National Standards for Subject Leaders (n = 233)*

Further analysis by phase showed that for each of the four key areas and the four skills, a higher percentage of primary than secondary school respondents stated that they would welcome further or new training and development opportunities. The phase differences were small however except for two areas: the second key area ‘Teaching and Learning’ (64% of primary respondents compared with only 43% of secondary respondents), and the third key skill ‘Communication Skills’ (38% of primary respondents compared to 27% of secondary respondents).

## **5.6 Training providers' views about the development needs of headteachers**

During the telephone interviews with the 21 providers of leadership training, they were asked what they considered to be the most significant training and development needs of headteachers. The most commonly cited needs were: ICT development; performance management; increased opportunities for leadership development that stresses instructional leadership; and personal and interpersonal development. Providers stated that mentoring, coaching and shadowing schemes should be more widely available and systematic and that there should be more international opportunities for development.

Several training providers raised the issue of an entitlement to a sabbatical for headteachers every five years. How this sabbatical period might be used was a matter of debate, though one provider suggested that headteachers could be encouraged to undertake research and related activities. If this sabbatical were to be salaried, then there would be a need for support, supervision and quality assurance. This suggestion arose from a concern that many headteachers would be in post for ten to 15 years or more. In such a demanding job, there was a definite need for space for rejuvenation and professional refreshment.

Several telephone interviewees and focus group participants recommended that there should be a programme available which followed on from LPSH and involved the whole leadership group with the headteacher, with the idea of helping to foster distributive leadership and team working.

Providers in particular felt it was important that there was a menu of training and development opportunities available and, relatedly, were keen on the principle of leadership development credits. While providers were confident that people were able to identify and demand quality, they accepted that there would need to be a quality assurance role.

Although the areas of priority identified by the providers did not directly correlate with those identified by the headteachers, the deputies and the NPQH candidates, they broadly covered 'teaching and learning opportunities' and 'managing the performance of others'.

The focus group participants were concerned to learn more about ways to enable and empower school leaders to have the courage to be creative and flexible. They felt that it was important for individual schools to create their own shared vision, rather than feeling that it had been prescribed for them by others. Another theme emerging from these discussions was the impression that deputies and assistant heads concentrated too much on developing skills for particular tasks and were unable to see how their role relates to others in the school. In their view there was a need to develop dynamic leadership teams which complement and support each other and have a high degree of mutual respect and trust. Team-working was regarded by focus group participants as crucially important for the future.

This observation contrasted with the responses of the deputies and NPQH candidates who tended to prioritise learning opportunities which were more task-focussed and required the development of specific skills. However, they echoed concerns for a more shared leadership role, beginning early in a teacher's career.

## 5.7 Key development opportunities

An open-ended question asked all school-based survey respondents what they perceived to be the *single* most powerful development opportunity of their career, both 'on the job' and 'off the job' in helping to forge their understanding of school leadership. The responses from the various categories of respondents are examined in turn – headteachers; deputies and NPQH candidates; and middle managers.

Of those headteachers providing responses (about 80% of the sample) approximately one third made reference to 'on the job' activities such as working with others, especially an effective headteacher. Everyday work experience or working in a good school was also mentioned (by about one-in-six), whilst one tenth of those providing responses made reference to being an acting headteacher.

A slightly higher number of respondents identified 'off the job' opportunities, with about one fifth identifying postgraduate study or study at a Higher Education Institution as being the single most powerful 'off the job' development opportunity. Just under a fifth identified involvement in the national programmes, such as NPQH and LPSH, whilst about one-in-eight referred to CPD or INSET courses in general. Slightly fewer respondents cited visiting other schools, networking (which involves a range of activities, both informal and formal) and working with other headteachers. Being a parent and 'general life experience' was also noted (by about one-in-ten), with working on specialist tasks (such as for the LEA or professional association) and meetings/contacts with non-educationists cited by about one-in-12 respectively.

NPQH candidates and deputy heads made reference to working with others, including a good head; and of being an acting headteacher or standing in for the headteacher in their absence. These experiences were cited more or less in equal numbers - by about one-in-five respondents – with slightly fewer making reference to working on whole school issues. Working with others generally meant working with others in the leadership group/senior management team. About one-in-ten made specific reference to working in an effective leadership or management team (SMT).

As far as the 'off the job' development was concerned, about one-in-five NPQH candidates and one-in-six deputy heads, found management courses or post-graduate study the single most powerful developmental opportunity in helping shape their understanding of leadership. About one-in-seven identified mentoring/advice and support from other senior managers. Attendance on national programmes, in this case NPQH, was important for about one-in-eight, whilst the same proportion of NPQH candidates, but far fewer deputies, made reference to being a parent or talking with friends about what they want for their children.

Significant 'on the job' or in-school experiences for middle managers were similar to the other respondents with many making reference to working with others (good and bad), including a good head (about two fifths); promotion or taking up a management role (about three-in-ten); and working in a good school/everyday work experience and school development planning/ whole school initiatives (noted by about one-in-15 respectively).

Learning on the job, undertaking a leadership role as an acting headteacher and leading a major school improvement initiative or working with others were highly regarded as developmental opportunities by online contributors. There was an acknowledgement that

the skills for the job however had to be learned, and that both NPQH and LPSH were rated highly as vehicles for this.

LEAs were asked to indicate which professional development opportunities were made available to school leaders and to state which of these were considered to be the most effective. Involvement in LEA initiatives (noted by 21% of LEA respondents), mentoring by educationists (19%), LEA training and development (17%) and support groups (15%) were considered to be the most effective from their provision. It is interesting to note that 'Action Learning Sets' were only available in 14 per cent of LEAs and 'business mentoring' in just over a third (36%).

One of the key concerns arising from the research is how best to deal with the professional development needs of experienced headteachers in a coherent and cohesive manner. There was support for developing the role of experienced headteachers as mentors/coaches for those new to the role, or as trainers and tutors on national programmes. Self-help groups, such as action learning sets, in which people in similar positions and experience work together, were also thought to be helpful.

One focus group contributor, an experienced headteacher, for example, suggested:

*I decided that I needed counselling skills and did a 3-year counselling course and I have never regretted it. I would say to any headteacher if you really want to serve your professional development well do that because you will find out more about yourself and you will increase your inter-personal skills. This will be something you can relate to every single situation you ever face in school.*

Another experienced headteacher commented:

*It's a major jump from deputy headteacher to headteacher, no matter how good you are – it's important to find some reflective time to think about all the messages that have been coming through to you.*

## **Part B**

### **5.8 Training and development – the national programmes**

One-quarter of the headteacher respondents to the questionnaire had participated in NPQH (although none in the revised programme), and over four-out-of ten in HEADLAMP (43%) and LPSH (42%). In all three of the national training programmes, contact with others and the learning of specific skills were seen as valuable aspects. Having reflection time was cited as the most valuable aspect of LPSH, and receiving feedback on performance was also rated highly. Opportunities to meet, with headteachers from other schools, other than scheduled meetings (for example, organised by the LEA), was a regular feature of the working life of over two-thirds of respondents. Nearly one-in-three said they sometimes networked through 'chat rooms' and conferences, and one-in-fifty said they used the internet a great deal for this purpose.

Both the interviews with training providers and the focus groups spent some time discussing the national programmes. Survey respondents were also asked to comment

on what they felt were the strengths and weaknesses of each of the three national programmes.

### **NPQH**

The revised NPQH programme was generally welcomed as an improvement on the earlier programme, although there were concerns expressed about its more limited face-to-face training opportunities. Some respondents noted that the ICT element was as yet untried but welcomed its introduction. Others were more enthusiastic about the new ICT element, while accepting that the experience of some candidates to date was variable. The focus on a contract visit, school-based activities and school-based assessment was welcomed. It provided a 'national threshold', something that masters degrees did not always do. Even so, several participants suggested that there was insufficient theoretical content and therefore it was not a replacement but a complement to a post-graduate qualification. Some participants were highly enthusiastic about the new NPQH, while others felt 'the jury was still out'. One participant suggested that the revised programme had made the link between NPQH and LPSH more coherent.

LEAs' views regarding NPQH were wide ranging, but the strengths most commonly cited were the programme structure, the school-based school improvement project and the sense that it was a good grounding for headship. About a tenth of those providing responses lamented the lack of LEA involvement and several commented on the difficulties there had been with the ICT element.

A number of LEAs commented on the new structure of the programme, viewing it as an interesting development, but there was a general feeling that it was too soon to comment on its effectiveness. Recommendations for development included making the qualification mandatory, including a '360 degree appraisal', and linking it to a professional development portfolio with subject leader qualifications, HEADLAMP and LPSH.

'Hotseat' contributions tended to be more enthusiastic about almost every element of the new NPQH, although concern was expressed about the limited amount of face-to-face training. The ICT element appeared to receive almost universal praise, with the quality of the materials, availability of advice from colleagues and the availability of an online mentor (tutor) being noted as strengths. This reaction is, perhaps, to be anticipated, since those contributing online are likely to be amongst those benefiting most from the ICT element. One contributor suggested that NPQH needs to have an intermediate level for middle managers to give the leadership development programme a more coherent, longer term approach. Another saw the combination of the qualification, mentor support and common sense as leading to success in headship.

### **HEADLAMP**

Many of the participants in the focus group discussions and telephone interviews stated that they did not know enough about HEADLAMP to make informed comment. Those who did provide comments were often providers or were linked to providers. Reactions were very mixed. Some liked the flexibility in how the funds were used and regarded this as a real strength of the programme. Others saw it as too loose, and that the funds were sometimes badly used by headteachers. A quarter of the LEAs who responded identified the tailoring to individual needs as a real strength, while about a fifth saw its flexibility and freedom of choice as positive aspects. Perhaps, surprisingly, about a sixth of LEAs identified their lack of involvement as a strength of the programme.

The lack of structure, quality control and national coherence were viewed as weaknesses and omissions of the programme. Progression was seen as an issue, and there were requests, echoing those from some providers, for a closer link between HEADLAMP and NPQH. There were also calls for an urgent review. Some LEAs wondered how NPQH might be used and adapted for those who have not followed the course but were now in acting or substantive headship positions.

Many of the issues identified by providers were similar to those brought out by the LEA questionnaire. Neither group presented a uniform view, but generally speaking there was agreement that it was time for a review. Any major review would require a consultation period, perhaps on a similar level to that undertaken for the revised NPQH programme.

### **LPSH**

The focus groups and the training providers were enthusiastic about the strengths of the LPSH programme. For them, its great strength was its ability to help leaders to reflect on their own performance, qualities and achievements and to provide an evidence-base for improvement. Another strength they identified was its insistence on the use of high quality trainers. Despite the plaudits, it was accepted that there were some serious weaknesses in the programme. To date, they considered the ICT element had failed to work satisfactorily, though it was accepted that the move to *think.com*<sup>2</sup> could provide a means for improvement. They believed the 'Partners in Leadership' (PIL)<sup>3</sup> had not been completely successful either. As earlier noted, the use of business mentors had not been rated highly by headteachers and this may partly explain the comparative failure of the PIL aspect of the programme. This failure was compounded in their view by the biggest weakness of LPSH – a lack of follow-up. They therefore gauged that this lack of follow-through made it difficult either to assess the impact the programme was having on the school, or whether participants had accrued any long-term benefits. The general view then was that it was a major programme which needed an urgent review in order to realise its full potential.

The LEA responses were equally enthusiastic about LPSH's potential, citing as strengths the '360 degree appraisal', the time it made available for individual reflection, the quality of the four day workshop, the provision of networking opportunities, its coherence and its research base. Even so, concern was expressed that LEAs relied on feedback from their headteachers (about the programme) and there was no systematic follow through which LEAs could develop in order to provide support. The LEAs, like the providers, noted that both the ICT element and the PIL scheme had been less successful. These respondents also were concerned about the lack of coherence and progression with other professional development opportunities for headteachers.

Those contributing to the 'hotseat' were also positive about LPSH, commenting that it was stimulating and thought-provoking, though concerns were expressed that, like the other national programmes, it insufficiently addresses the inclusion agenda and what that means for schools.

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<sup>2</sup> Think.com is an internet environment, developed by Oracle, where pupils, teachers and headteachers have the opportunity to interact online. Talking Heads (Headteachers), Go-A-Head (Headteachers who are part of the LPSH community) and Virtual Heads (NPQH candidates) are online communities existing within think.com and managed by the NCSL.

<sup>3</sup> The Partners in Leadership scheme offers all headteachers participating in LPSH the opportunity to meet regularly with a senior manager from the local business community. This is part of the follow-up to the LPSH programme, and helps the headteacher with her/his action plan. The scheme is managed on behalf of NCSL by Business in the Community (BITC).

## 5.9 Diversity and partnership: the changing spectrum of provision

This sub-section considers some of the sources school leaders use currently for training and development opportunities and some of the issues faced by providers.

Approximately eight-out-of-ten headteachers (83%), NPQH candidates (80%) and deputy heads (77%) reported that they had undertaken professional development specific to their leadership role (other than participation in the national programmes) over the last three years. Unlike the other school-based respondents, middle managers were not asked a specific question about this, yet over one-quarter (26%), in response to an open ended question about training and development, claimed that they had undertaken *no* professional development specific to their leadership/management role in the past three years.

Headteachers, NPQH candidates and deputies were asked to indicate the range of professional development opportunities (formal and informal) in which they had participated over the last three years. The main sources of professional development opportunities and activities are shown in Table 5.6. Respondents were also requested to rank the three activities or opportunities which had been most effective in their own development as school leaders. The top three for each group are shown in brackets in the table. There was general agreement about the most effective activities across all three groups of respondents. Opportunities provided by LEAs, conversations with other education professionals, and mentoring from other headteachers and colleagues were ranked as most effective.

Table 5.6 also shows that the services of education consultants were frequently called upon. Professional associations were prominent in the case of headteachers, but less so for NPQH candidates, though it is not clear from the survey if heads were including seeking advice when they responded. Over the last three years, there had generally been a low take-up of the opportunities provided by higher education institutions. Less than one-in-15 headteachers noted HEIs as one of the three most effective opportunities in their own development as a school leader. However, the figure was higher – about one-in-ten - for both NPQH candidates (11%) and deputy heads (9%).

Further statistical analyses highlighted some significant differences within the headteacher sample, but not within those of deputies or NPQH candidates. Although all phases made extensive use of LEAs for professional development, primary and special school headteachers were found to be more likely to make use of this provision than their secondary school colleagues. Perhaps, unsurprisingly, the professional development opportunities provided by 'Investors in People' was viewed as more significant by secondary and special school headteachers than by those in primary schools. Mentoring from other colleagues was more commonly used by primary heads, although its take up was high amongst heads in all school phases.

Taking gender into consideration, male headteachers were less likely to turn to either education mentors or education consultants for developmental opportunities than their female counterparts, although the use of both was high for men and women.

Middle managers were asked to indicate which external providers they had personally used to access professional development opportunities in relation to their leadership role. The findings, as shown in Table 5.7, point to the significant role of the LEA.

Individual consultants and HEIs have also been important providers. Middle managers were also requested to state what professional development activity (in relation to leadership and management) they had undertaken over the past three years. Nearly one-fifth of those providing comments made reference to LEA courses and programmes, one-in-eight to school-based INSET and about one-in-ten to HEIs where they were undertaking higher degrees.

<i>Opportunities provided by:</i>	<i>Headteachers (% of sample) (n = 613)</i>	<i>NPQH (% of sample) (n = 151)</i>	<i>Deputy heads (% of sample) (n = 226)</i>
Mentoring from other headteachers/colleagues	39 (3)	54 (1=)	48 (2)
Business and other mentors	22	8	13
Conversations with other educationists	70 (1)	58 (1=)	63 (3)
Higher education institutions	26	37	30
Local education authorities	61 (2)	66 (3)	67 (1)
Education consultants	48	38	48
Professional Associations	36	17	22
Private sector organisations	17	9	16
Public sector organisations	12	10	12
Involvement in 'Investors in People'	34	30	35
Any other opportunities	19	15	13

*(The numbers in brackets represent views of the 3 most effective activities)*

*Table 5.6: Professional development opportunities participated in over the last 3 years*

Training providers interviewees noted that the 'traditional providers' – the LEAs and higher education – were seen as variable in quality, though for different reasons. There was concern expressed that the 'denuding' of the LEAs had limited their influence, credibility and ability to deliver the necessary development opportunities. This was more likely to occur in the small LEAs, including the new unitary authorities where, it was said, the capacity no longer existed. The responses from the LEA survey were more positive, pointing out that they in a position to broker delivery from other sources. Individual consultants and higher education institutions were the most used by LEAs to provide training and development. Organisations in the private sector were used by 60 percent of those LEAs which responded. LEAs also made use of other education authorities, professional associations and other organisations in the public sector.

<i>n = 233</i>	<i>% of sample</i>
Local Education Authorities	63
Professional associations	25
Individual consultants	29
Higher education institutions	22
Organisations in the private sector with industrial connections	9
Organisations in the private sector without industrial connections	0
NPQH providers	6
Other	7

*Table 5.7: External providers used by middle managers to access professional development opportunities in relation to leadership role*

Higher education institutions were viewed as better at 'pushing back the frontiers of knowledge' rather than providing training and development which focused on the needs of school leaders. It was noted that in recent years enrolments on MAs which dealt with management and leadership issues had begun to suffer when compared to the growing market in MBAs and the impact of a 'paid for' NPQH.

The professional associations were not considered by respondents as major players in the field of leadership development and training, though programmes offered by some of them were held in high regard. There is an increasing involvement of private sector organisations and individual consultants in the provision of leadership training and development for school leaders. Although it was accepted that there were lots of opportunities and useful links to be made in this regard, there were several reservations raised. One contributor noted it was a 'mixed bag, and if there was to be more involvement on a national scale, this needed to be carefully thought through'. The NCSL was seen as having a vital role to play in ensuring its quality. Cost-effectiveness and value for money were a concern, particularly where programmes were not tailored to need, but simply 'taken from the shelf'. It was said that there was room for partnership, but it needed to be recognised that this was a two-way process and, if the partnerships were going to work, it was important that the education sector did not view itself as second best.

#### **5.10 Reflections on the findings**

- *Readiness for headship.* Secondary headteachers saw themselves as more adequately prepared for headship than did those from primary schools. While there may be a temptation to suggest that the heads and others who had participated in NPQH were more confident partly because of the programme itself, most of those in the NPQH sample had just started the programme when the survey was done. This confidence is likely to be due to a range of circumstances. Given that half as many headteachers felt very prepared once they were in post, compared to before taking up a headship, this might suggest some lack of understanding amongst school leadership groups of the full scale of the headteacher's role until they take up post. On the other hand, it may be a sign that the training and development has improved.
- *ICT as a learning tool.* No specific question in the survey asked about the value of either *Talking Heads* or *Virtual Heads* as a learning tool. Overall, use of ICT as a training aid was generally low, with only two per cent of the headteachers saying they used the internet regularly. It may be an area where significant development work still needs to be undertaken, particularly since most schools in the country now have internet connections. However, when using online 'chat rooms' care needs to be taken with interpretation. Little is yet understood about the significance of 'hot seats' as a learning or research tool. Yet it is clearly a powerful mechanism for gathering information. The efficacy of online 'chat rooms' as learning and research tools is an area warranting further research. An important further development is the introduction of think.com, which has potential as yet not fully understood. There is an urgent need to evaluate its use, with a view to developing its potential and examining its efficacy as both a training and development and a research tool.
- *Training and development and the National Standards.* When questioned about training and development requirements, the headteachers focussed on issues related to teacher and learning. While it may be gratifying that a high percentage of

headteachers were focussing on teaching and learning, there may also be reason for concern that this is such a high percentage, given the core purpose of the school. It may be that headteachers lack confidence in their own knowledge of what makes good teaching and learning, or have little experience of observing good teaching and learning. However, there is a clear message that teaching and learning and a focus on improved performance is seen as a high priority. The NPQH candidates and deputies, on the other hand, when addressing the National Standards, tended to focus more on what might be identified as day-to-day management tasks. Whether this reflects lack of experience in the management areas identified, more confidence with the key teaching and learning issues, or a lack of understanding of the priority role of the headteacher was not clear from the survey. What was clear, however, was the need to give middle management training a high priority.

- *Working with governors and equal opportunities.* None of the groups gave a high priority to working with governors or to equal opportunities. This may mean that respondents are generally confident in these areas. On the other hand, it could mean they do not place either issue high on their priority list. In the light of the inclusion agenda and the issues raised in the Government White Paper *Schools Achieving Success* (2001), this could be an area of concern if the latter hypothesis more accurately reflects the position. With regard to governors, the new NPQH programme does place a strong emphasis on working with stakeholders, and in particular governors, in both the materials and the face-to-face training.
- *Gaining experience in the role.* Standing in for a headteacher or being an acting headteacher was for many respondents one of the best learning opportunities they had ever had in preparation for headship. However, currently such opportunities depend on circumstances. There is no planned strategy or automatic opportunity for deputy headteachers to undertake an acting headship or shared headship role. In the light of the teaching reforms agenda, thought needs to be given as to how such opportunities could be extended for aspiring headteachers.
- *The national programmes.* Each of the national headship programmes was seen as valuable, but a number of issues emerged which require consideration. There emerged a general consensus that courses which focussed on leadership were required earlier in a teacher's career. The vast majority of middle managers' courses currently available tended to focus on subject and people management rather than leadership *per se*. There was a clear call for more of a shared team approach to school leadership. At present the national programmes focussed on the individual. The leadership group does have more of a shared role. The review of both HEADLAMP and LPSH, recently published by the College, is to be welcomed. The majority of respondents felt there was an urgent need for this review, though the general consensus was that both programmes were valuable and needed to be retained in some form or another. Most LEAs would like to have more involvement with follow-up with regard to the national programmes. Currently, there are a number of LEA advisers trained to tutor or mentor on each of the programmes. The College might wish to consider how this could be exploited in a more systematic, planned way, perhaps through the use of regional co-ordinators.
- *Diversity and partnership.* Traditionally, provision of training and development for school teachers and school leaders rested with LEAs, higher education institutions and professional associations. At times, courses and development opportunities have been excellent and well-appreciated, at other times haphazard, inequitable and

often dependent on the good-will or learning ambitions of participants. Generally speaking, even at its best, it has often lacked cohesion and coherence. Although change had already started, the publication of the Green Paper, *Teachers Meeting the Challenge of Change* (DfEE, 1998), heralded a new dawn with a commitment 'to giving teachers the training and support they need to do their jobs well and to progress in their careers' (p 43). In the light of the Government's partnership agenda, there is likely to be a growing number of public/private partnerships developing and delivering a range of learning opportunities to school leaders. What emerged from the research was a consensus that diversity in the system is good and that it was 'what worked best' that was most important. There was a general feeling that education had things to learn in the fields of human resource management, finance and strategic management. It was clear from the evidence collected that there is diversity in the system and a much wider range of options than was hitherto the case. The key themes and issues remain those of quality, coherence and value for money. The launch of the College, and the creation of the GTC, should provide the wherewithal for bringing coherence and a framework to teacher and school leadership education.

## SECTION 6

### INQUIRY-MINDED SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

#### 6.1 Summary

- School leaders tend not to use directly the results of educational (academic) research to inform their decision-making, although they may draw on research findings mediated through newspaper articles, books, conferences and courses.
- Over half the schools surveyed are carrying out their own research and enquiries to inform policy and practice, and, in some cases, sharing their findings with other schools.
- School leaders are beginning to make better use of the wealth of comparative data they receive through government sources.
- The use of ICT for leadership and management is currently under-developed.
- School leaders look chiefly to their peers, both within and outside school, for ideas and inspiration.
- Governors and the business sector are not regarded by many school leaders as significant sources of ideas and inspiration.

#### 6.2 Introduction

This section explores the resources and evidence which current school leaders draw upon and value in the course of undertaking their leadership responsibilities. The main issues discussed are the current nature of school leaders' knowledge-utilisation, the degree to which they undertake research and evaluation themselves, adopt a systemic approach to analysing data collected in the course of their on-going work, and access e-learning opportunities and research findings offered by university-based researchers.

#### 6.3 Use of educational theory and research

The samples of headteachers, NPQH candidates, deputy/assistant heads and middle managers were asked how important it was for school leaders to draw on the findings of educational theory and research to support the work they do. This was judged to be important or very important for their work by 87 per cent of heads, 88 per cent of deputies and 92 per cent of NPQH candidates. Only one head thought it 'of no importance' at all, but 12.5 per cent of heads and eight per cent of NPQH candidates did not rate it as particularly important. Middle managers were less positive about the use of educational theory and research. Only one quarter rated it as 'very important' compared with one third of heads and deputies. Almost one-in-five thought it of little importance and three per cent 'of no importance' at all. All the LEA respondents in the survey considered drawing on the findings of educational theory and research to support school leaders' work to be important.

In the case study schools, there was evidence that educational research was used in a systematic way to inform policy and practice. Thus, in one school, a member of staff had been appointed in charge of research (case study J) while in another, the headteacher

regularly gave staff information about the findings of relevant research, by giving them articles to read (case study H). In case study D, a deputy headteacher had conducted her own review of research about pupil disaffection, which led to the setting up in the school of a special programme for younger disaffected pupils, leading to their rapid reintegration into the life of the school. Most made time every week to read the educational press in order to be up-to-date with recent research.

This type of endeavour was also backed up by some LEAs. For example, one LEA was currently funding a number of teachers undertaking doctoral research whose theses were related to aspects of the authority's Education Development Plan. Other LEAs also supported research projects by school leaders and had links with higher education institutions (HEIs) for research (e.g. best practice teacher research projects) and for supporting teachers undertaking masters degrees and doctorates.

The samples of headteachers, NPQH candidates, deputy/assistant heads and middle managers were also asked how important it was for school leaders to undertake periodic and systematic self-assessment of their own leadership role. As can be seen from Table 6.1, about three-quarters of headteachers, eight out of ten deputies, and nearly nine out of ten NPQH candidates regarded it as 'very important' but this was the case for less than half (46%) of middle manager respondents. Virtually all of the LEA survey respondents (96%) considered systematic self-assessment to be 'very important'.

<i>Self-assessment</i>	<i>Very important (1) %</i>	<i>(2) %</i>	<i>(3) %</i>	<i>Of no importance (4) %</i>
Headteachers (n = 611)	74.5	24	1.5	0
Deputy/Assistant heads (n = 224)	80	19	2	0
NPQH (n = 150)	87	13	0	0
Middle managers (n = 234)	46	42	12.5	0.5

*Table 6.1: Importance of self-assessment of own leadership role as important*

#### **6.4 Research carried out by schools**

Over half of the headteachers (54%), deputy heads (52%) and NPQH candidates (63%) had carried out some form of research-based enquiry in their school in the last three years. Of these, virtually all had used the findings of this research to inform policy and practice in their schools. Some 37 per cent of headteachers had shared their findings with other schools; this was the case for 41 per cent of NPQH candidates and 32 per cent of deputy heads. Middle managers were less likely to have been involved in such exercises. Some 45 per cent had been involved in some form of research, 96 per cent had used the findings to inform policy or practice and 22 per cent had disseminated the findings to other schools.

The majority of case study interviewees, when asked about the extent to which they used research data to inform their decisions, made reference mainly to statistics and other data produced by the DfES, OfSTED or the Audit Commission. This enabled them to make comparisons between their school and others. It also helped them to build up a data-base of information about individual pupils for the purposes of whole-school target-setting (see for example, case study schools A, C, H, I).

## 6.5 Use of ICT for leading and managing schools

Currently, the use of ICT appears to be under-developed. E-mail communication with staff or parents is a rarity. Only 12 per cent of headteachers and less than ten per cent of senior managers reported they used this medium 'a great deal'. Forty two per cent of the NPQH candidates and 52 per cent of headteachers and deputy heads never used it to communicate with staff. (This may be more a function of school size or number of staff – see later.)

The most common use of ICT by headteachers, deputies and NPQH candidates entailed accessing the DfES web-site. Only one per cent of NPQH candidates and seven per cent of heads and deputies reported that they never used it. Other popular web-sites were those of OfSTED (used 'a great deal' or 'sometimes' by 83% of NPQH candidates, 82% of deputies and 84% of headteachers), and other Government-resourced web-sites (90% of NPQH candidates, 82% of deputies and 77% of headteachers). NPQH candidates were much more likely than serving headteachers or deputies to have accessed the NCSL web-site (three-quarters of the former, compared to under one-half of headteachers or deputy head-teachers had accessed it), and they were also more likely to access educational 'chat rooms' and web-based conferences (68% as compared to 28% of headteachers and 24% of deputies). Serving headteachers were more likely than NPQH candidates to have used management information systems. However, a quarter of headteachers, over a third of NPQH candidates (38%) and one third of deputies reported that they had never used them.

Those at middle management level were less likely than the other groups to make use of ICT. The most common use by this group was 'surfing the net for ideas', which one third did 'a great deal' and a further 50 per cent did 'sometimes'. The next most common uses for middle managers were: 'accessing other web-sites' and 'accessing the DfES's web-site', although 15 per cent of middle managers never used this web-site. Likewise, one third had never accessed the OfSTED web-site and 87 per cent had never looked at the NCSL web-site. One third had used management information systems, although only 12 per cent used them 'a great deal'. Less than ten per cent used e-mail 'a great deal' for communicating with staff, parents or other educational institutions. Over 50 per cent had 'surfing the net for best buys'. On the whole, this group seemed to use ICT for managing their own curricular area, and not more broadly across the school or outside to other educational data-bases. Table 6.2 illustrates the extent to which the four sample groups used ICT 'a great deal'.

There were no significant differences between men and women in the extent to which they made use of ICT, apart from in two areas. One was its use to create a web-site, where men were twice as likely as women (21% of men compared to 10% of women) to use ICT 'a great deal' for this purpose. However, as this only applied to 16 per cent of the total sample, it is only a minority pursuit for either sex. The other area was in the use of management information systems, where 36 per cent of male headteachers compared to 21 per cent of female headteachers reported using such systems 'a great deal'.

On the whole, there were no significant age differences in the use of ICT. One exception to this was that younger headteachers were more likely than older ones to access the NCSL website and to search the web for ideas. Among middle managers and deputy heads, those in the younger age groups were more likely to surf the net for ideas and to access the DfES website.

As far as phase of education was concerned, there were few differences between them in their use of ICT. Secondary heads were more likely than primary or special school to use email to contact staff. This may be more to do with the size of their buildings or site or number of staff than their views of the usefulness of the technology. Nearly four out of ten special school heads (39%) reported using ICT 'a great deal' to create their own web-site, compared to 14 per cent of primary and 12 per cent of secondary school heads. But again the number of special school heads involved was small (nine out of 23 who responded to the question), so this finding cannot be taken to be indicative of a trend.

<i>Use of ICT 'a great deal'</i>	<i>Heads (%)</i>	<i>Deputies (%)</i>	<i>NPQH (%)</i>	<i>Middle Mgrs (%)</i>
e-mail staff	12	9	13	6
e-mail parents	1.5	8	2	6
e-mail educational establishments	31	16	26.5	6
Surf net for 'best buys'	8	15.5	15	11
Create own website	17	7.5	8	6
Surf net for ideas	19	28	36	25
Chatrooms/conferences	2	3	18	2
DfES website	29	30	40	19
NCSL website	5	6	37	1
OfSTED website	13	14	18	7
Other govt. websites	8	13	15	7
Other educational websites	12	23	24	20
Management info. systems	32	23	17	8

*Table 6.2: Respondents' use of ICT 'a great deal'.*

Overall, these findings indicate that the use of ICT by school leaders to access information or to manage data is currently under-developed in the majority of schools. This lack of importance attached to ICT was also evident in many of our case study schools, although a number were beginning to realise its potential and had schemes in place to make information available to all staff in the near future. All were also involved in relevant staff training in the use of ICT in classrooms. Nevertheless, in the case study schools, paper-based systems and pre-school staff briefings appeared to be the most common forms of day-to-day communication between senior management and staff.

How ICT was being used for leadership and management purposes was explored in the ten case studies and some interesting examples can be found in schools A, H and I (see the sub-heading 'ICT as a leadership tool' in Section 10).

## 6.6 Sources of ideas and inspiration

When looking for ideas and inspiration about their work as school leaders, the majority of headteachers (83%), deputy heads (72%) and NPQH candidates (78%) in our samples looked to 'other school leaders' as their main source (see Table 6.3). The second most popular source of ideas and inspiration was 'books, newspapers and other publications' (76% of NPQH candidates, 71% of deputies and 72% of headteachers). Another key source was the school's 'senior management or leadership team' (nominated by 66% of NPQH candidates and 62% of heads and deputies). Some 68 per cent of deputy heads drew inspiration from their headteacher. LEAs were mentioned by around half of each group as an important source of inspiration and ideas about school leadership. Middle managers relied most heavily on other leaders and managers in the school (76%) and on the headteacher (52%). There were less likely than the other groups to use publications (49%), the LEA (40%) or the SMT (44%).

Source of ideas	Headteachers (n = 758) %	Deputy heads (n = 227) %	NPQH (n = 151) %	Middle managers (n = 239) %
Universities	24	13	17	8
Headteacher(s)	-	68	68	52
Other school leaders	83	72	78	76
Local education authorities	54	48	50	40
Government departments	20	18	23	10
Books/publications (ed, business, govt)	72	71	76	49
Ideas from other countries	26	19	19	12
Business sector	13	11	4	9
Mentors (business)	8	5	4	3
Mentors (education)	22	24	29	13
Senior management or SMT	62	62	66	44
Governing bodies	16	9	11	5
Internet, Intranet & CD Rom	29	23	46	28
No particular source	3	3	1	8

Table 6.3: Respondents' sources of ideas and inspiration.

Only a minority of respondents mentioned universities (with headteachers more likely to mention them than other categories) or Government departments (mentioned most by NPQH candidates). Between 11 and 16 per cent of senior managers made reference to 'governing bodies' as sources of ideas and inspiration, compared to five per cent of middle managers.

<i>Main source</i>	<i>Chairs of Governors</i>	
	<i>(n = 200)</i>	<i>%</i>
Other governors from school		68
Other governing bodies		24
Government departments		26
Local education authorities		70
Mentors or 'buddy'		3
The headteacher		81
Senior management or school leadership teams (SMTs)		47
Books, newspapers and other publications (education, business, government)		54
Ideas from governor magazines, etc		39
Internet, Intranet and CD Rom		21
No particular source		5
Other		26

*Table 6.4: Chairs of governors' sources of ideas and inspiration*

Chairs of governors were also asked to indicate the main sources to which they looked for inspiration and ideas about their work and practice as school governors (see Table 6.4). Sources mentioned by over one half of these respondents included the headteacher (81%), LEAs (70%), other governors from the school (68%), and books, newspapers and other publications (54%). Ideas derived from the school's leadership or management team (47%) and from governor magazines (39%) were also noted. About a quarter made reference to government departments, other governing bodies, the internet and other sources.

## **6.7 Reflections on the findings**

- The fact that the headteachers, deputies and NPQH candidates responding to the questionnaire did not normally access directly the findings of research, but received them mediated through articles in the press, on the internet or at conferences highlights the importance for researchers and funders of research of developing effective strategies for the dissemination of research findings. Too often, this phase of the research effort is under-funded and under-estimated. Effective strategies for dissemination, in the most user-friendly formats, is a key issue for enabling school leaders to remain up-to-date and motivated to develop their thinking and practice.
- There appears to be a lot of data-gathering activity undertaken in schools, but the status of much of this effort is not clear. It is not obvious, for example, to what extent schools utilise rigorous and methodologically sound techniques to gather data. Nor is it clear how they interpret and use the data presented to them by DfES and related bodies, such as OfSTED and the Audit Commission, or to what extent the data located in schools are well-disseminated to all staff to inform their practice.
- Although the use of ICT applications appears to be limited, there are signs that headteachers and other school leaders are beginning to develop their expertise. It is interesting that more male than female headteachers were using management information systems 'a great deal'. This may reflect the greater use of such systems in secondary schools, since more secondary heads are men, and it was the case

that 40 per cent of secondary, compared to 22 per cent of primary headteachers used management information systems 'a great deal'. Secondary schools are also, on average, larger establishments employing more staff than do primaries. But these differences were not statistically significant overall. However, this, and the greater use of e-mail by male headteachers, may reflect differences in management style between men and women (women perhaps preferring face-to-face contact) rather than a female aversion to technology.

- The fact that school leaders look mainly to their peers for ideas and inspiration is an important finding and has implications for the approaches taken by those offering leadership development. Traditionally, much knowledge in teaching is 'craft knowledge', developed through practice and disseminated through collegial networks. Professional credibility is a key factor for those working in schools. That is, they are more likely to be impressed by practitioners who can demonstrate 'what works' than by the more distanced reports of research, which may be presented in a more academic and abstract format, or ideas that come from the business sector or governors. This may be one reason why universities are not particularly highly-rated as sources of inspiration and ideas.
- The issue of whether the teaching profession can be more 'evidence-based' in its approach to innovation and change is currently a high profile policy area. The DfES has funded a centre<sup>4</sup> to review and collate research findings in education. However, the current preference of headteachers and other school leaders, for giving more status to their professional colleagues as sources of ideas and inspiration, indicates that more work will have to be done to raise the profile of academic research as a guide to policy and practice in schools. It also points to the potential role of 'action' and 'practitioner-based' research and the importance of disseminating findings beyond the schools in which they are practised.

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<sup>4</sup> The Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre (EPPI-Centre), funded by the DfES, is located at the Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London.

## SECTION 7

### KNOWLEDGE AND EXPECTATIONS OF THE NATIONAL COLLEGE FOR SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

#### 7.1 Summary

- While most school leaders were aware of the College's focus and aims, over one-in-eight headteachers (12%), three-in-ten deputy/assistant heads (29%), seven out of ten middle managers/team leaders (71%) and one half of governors (49%) claimed to be '*not aware at all*' of its focus and aims.
- A significant number of NPQH candidates and LEAs saw the College as being 'very significant' in either developing the school improvement agenda (26% and 34% respectively) or promoting leadership development (45% and 55% respectively). Percentages were slightly lower for headteachers (20% and 28%) and lowest for deputy heads (12% and 20%).
- Secondary school headteachers were generally more positive about the College and their involvement in it than were their primary counterparts.
- When asked about the contribution the College could make to school improvement and leadership development, respondents often made reference to its role in analysing better the headteachers' job and styles of headship, drawing on best practice.
- A challenge for NCSL was seen to be meeting the training and development needs of existing and prospective school leaders in ways that met individuals' preferences and learning styles.
- All respondents drew attention to the need for the College to be independent of Government and to offer a wide range of models of leadership and excellence.
- LEAs expressed a strong desire to work in partnership with the College, to want to support its work, and to provide further opportunities for leadership development. However, there was a concern that the College is currently failing to draw sufficiently on their local knowledge and experience of leadership training.

#### 7.2 Introduction

This section outlines the knowledge and awareness which different respondents – headteachers, aspiring heads (NPQH candidates), deputy and assistant heads, middle managers, chairs of governing bodies, training providers and LEA senior personnel – have of the remit of the National College for School Leadership (NCSL). It also reviews their expectations of its role and summarises their suggestions for its future conduct.

#### 7.3 Knowledge and awareness of the remit of the NCSL

As part of the questionnaire surveys, school-based respondents, chairs of governing bodies and LEAs were asked to indicate on a four-point scale how aware they were of the focus and aims of the newly established National College for School Leadership. Headteachers were surveyed at two points in time (May and October) but no significant

differences were found in their responses to questions about the College and its role. Table 7.1 summarises the responses of each group.

LEAs generally showed higher levels of awareness than did school-based respondents. Shire counties were most likely and London boroughs (inner and outer) least likely to be aware of the College but the differences were small and not significantly different. NPQH candidates were more aware of the College's focus and aims than any other school group. Perhaps of most concern to the College is the very large proportion of middle managers/team leaders (71%) who claimed to be 'not aware at all' of its focus and aims. This was also the case for 12 per cent of headteachers and 29 per cent of deputy heads. (Of the latter group, those who had completed or were studying for NPQH had a slightly better awareness of the College than those who were not.) For headteachers there was a statistically significant difference between awareness of the College and phase of school; more primary and special school headteachers were unaware of the College's focus and aims than were their secondary colleagues. (There were no differences between male and female headteachers.) Such phase differences were not found for the NPQH sample, but did exist for the sample of deputy/assistant heads. Again, it was respondents from secondary schools who were more aware of the College and its focus and aims. As might perhaps be expected, chairs of governors level of awareness was not high, with nearly one-half (49%) claiming they were 'not aware at all' of the College's focus and aims.

	<i>Very aware (%)</i>	<i>2 (%)</i>	<i>3 (%)</i>	<i>Not aware at all (%)</i>
Headteachers (n = 604)	11	42	35	12
NPQH (n = 151)	18	44	36	3
Deputy heads (n = 222)	10	27	34	29
Middle managers (n = 233)	1	4	24	71
Governors (n = 198)	8	15	29	49
LEAs (n = 97)	39	52	8	1

*Table 7.1: Awareness of NCSL's focus and aims*

#### **7.4 Expectations of the role of the NCSL**

Headteachers, NPQH candidates, deputy heads and LEAs were asked how significant a part they anticipated the College playing in developing the school improvement agenda and promoting leadership development in schools. Tables 7.2 and 7.3 summarise their responses.

LEAs were more likely to see the College's role as significant in relation to its part in both developing the school improvement agenda and in promoting leadership development (see Tables 7.2 and 7.3). (No significant differences were found between the different types of LEAs.) One-fifth of headteachers saw the College's role as 'very significant' in developing the school improvement agenda and over a quarter (28%) for promoting

leadership development. Only a very small number of respondents perceived the College as having 'no significance' in these areas, although the percentage of such responses was much higher for school-based than for LEA-based respondents. A significant minority of headteachers (28% and 22% respectively) and deputy heads (36% and 27% respectively) saw the College as having limited significance in either of the areas they were asked to comment on. However, there were no statistically significant differences between male and female headteachers nor between phase of education in relation to the College's significance in developing the school improvement agenda or in promoting leadership development. Similarly, no phase or gender differences were found for the NPQH or deputy/assistant head samples.

	<i>Very significant (%)</i>	2(%)	3(%)	<i>No significance (%)</i>
Headteachers (n = 566)	20	52	25	3
NPQH (n = 145)	26	48	26	1
Deputy heads (n = 192)	12	53	31	5
LEAs (n = 95)	34	52	15	0

*Table 7.2: Significance of NCSL in developing the school improvement agenda*

	<i>Very significant (%)</i>	2 (%)	3 (%)	<i>No significance (%)</i>
Headteachers (n = 567)	28	50	19	3
NPQH (n = 144)	45	43	12	0
Deputy heads (n = 192)	20	53	22	5
LEAs (n = 97)	55	39	6	0

*Table 7.3: Significance of NCSL in promoting leadership development in schools*

	<i>Very involved (%)</i>	2 (%)	3 (%)	<i>Not involved (%)</i>
Headteachers (n = 573)	22	42	26	11
NPQH (n = 143)	27	50	21	2
Deputy heads (n = 210)	11	36	33	19
LEAs (n = 100)	76	20	3	1

*Table 7.4: Involvement in work of the College*

Respondents were also asked to express their desired level of involvement in the work of the College. The results (see Table 7.4) show that LEAs are very keen to be involved

with just over three-quarters expressing a wish to be 'very involved'. The lower levels of involvement expressed generally by school-based respondents show deputy headteachers expressing a desire for less involvement than headteachers and NPQH candidates. Nearly one-in-five deputy headteachers circled 'not involved' compared with about one-in-nine heads and only one-in-50 prospective heads. A statistically significant difference was found with primary headteachers, more so than their secondary counterparts, expressing a desire not to be involved in the College's work. Phase differences were not so apparent for the NPQH or deputy head samples, although amongst the latter group, more secondary (30%) than primary (14%) or special school (5%) deputies expressed a desire to be 'not involved'.

## **7.5 Views from headteachers and deputies**

The questionnaires, provider interviews and focus group discussions/'hot seats' all sought comments about how respondents would like the College to develop and what contribution they felt it could best make to school improvement and leadership development. About one-in-four headteachers responded to this open-ended question and provided a wide range of comments. The most common remark – noted by just over one-quarter of respondents – made some reference to the role of NCSL in analysing better the headteachers' role and styles of headship, drawing on best practice. As one head wrote, what was needed was an analysis of:

*...the true role or job of a school leader. Not what the Government thinks or wants it to be – human resource management – pupils, parents, teachers, governors, etc. To help make the job more realistic and manageable. It's my belief that many heads fail/leave/collapse because no-one has had the strength to analyse the job in its present form and admit there are not enough hours in the day to do it properly.*

Headteachers stated that it would be important for NCSL to support and celebrate the teaching profession, and for it 'to be mindful of existing school leadership workloads'. Other ideas and suggestions included the need for the college to assess the merits of a NPQSL (National Professional Qualification for School Leadership) for all members of the school leadership team or training for all deputy headteachers and not only those moving on to headship, 'which not all deputies want'.

Also noted were the importance of team-building in schools, strategies for developing self/school improvement and the use of the College as 'a time-out venue to allow school teams to work together over a few days at a time, not merely snatching INSET days at the end of term when we are tired'.

The importance of the College helping to provide contacts and networks, particularly in linking similar schools nationally, and making schools aware of similar schools in other areas, was mentioned by many respondents. Also noted was the role of headteacher mentor/buddy programmes and the need for sabbaticals and periods away from the school to enable 'all senior staff to review their progress, development, plan and research'.

Finally, a number of comments were made by respondents in relation to the vision and independence of the College, linking its credibility amongst practitioners with its ability to operate independently of the government that funds it and in the best interests of children. As one headteacher noted:

*The College should establish a vision for the future that involves an education system geared to improving the quality of life and looking beyond the current rhetoric of SATs results and ever-improving standards.*

Another's concern was that:

*NCSL will not be allowed to be independent in thought. I fear that it will not, therefore, explore areas which challenge government thinking, but rather will encourage a deadly orthodoxy and conformity.*

There was a view that the College needed to resist becoming an uncritical cypher for government policy. As one headteacher wrote:

*The College cannot train heads to run open, questioning, challenging organisations unless it is seen to be equally open and challenging in relation to some of the almost impossible demands which are being placed on heads.*

Many headteachers remarked that it was important for the College to help create a climate that allows them to prioritise agendas in individual schools. As one of them observed: 'at the moment we are drifting in a sea of external initiatives. We need to be able to set our own course'.

Respondents noted that NCSL could most usefully act as a disseminator of good ideas and research findings providing, as one of them put it, 'an authoritative filtering of ideas and initiatives, not simply to pass on the latest gimmicks'. As another head noted: 'One size doesn't fit all neither does one agenda. Let's leave room for ideas to grow and flourish' but, in the view of another, 'the initial offer (of the College) provides a good starting point'.

As with the headteacher questionnaire survey, a relatively small number of responses were forthcoming from NPQH candidates (n = 40) and deputy heads (n = 36) about the contribution and role of the College. The most common response centred around the provision of support and networks, and NCSL's role in disseminating the practical implications of educational research. One candidate, who referred to himself as a devotee of ICT, stated that he wanted the College to provide courses, but not solely on-line. He remarked:

*I do not have the time or inclination to go home having used a computer all day and then log on to a course aimed at developing leadership. Computers will never develop leadership though they are useful tools for management and administration.*

Another spoke of the danger of too much use being made of on-line work and not enough of face-to-face communication.

There was also only a limited response to this question on the on-line 'hotseat'. Nevertheless, some suggestions and ideas were put forward, including that the College should act as an ideas forum and an advice centre. As one participant noted:

*The NCSL should provide a professional forum for debate and discussion. This will enable leadership to grow in a developmental way, drawing on established good practice from different contexts. The NCSL should be the focus point for all leaders and the place to turn for advice and high quality professional development..*

A forum for new thinking, looking at doing things differently ('It needs to be brave'), a fosterer of creativity, a broker of good practice ('real practical advice with strategies on all aspects of school leadership which have been tried and tested') were noted by participants, as was the importance of the College acting as a provider of high-quality professional development. The College was seen as a significant 're-energiser of the profession' and it was said to be important for it to stick to a learning agenda, 'which is the real agenda for enabling and empowering change'.

Amongst the 'hotseat' participants there was support for a virtual NCSL where it stimulated discussion, promoted good practice and generated debate with school leaders from all over the world. In the words of one participant:

*I would like to emphasise on-line discussions and specific conferences - time is short to attend events outside school, and I really do think that one huge advantage of on-line discussion is the ability to use it (or not) flexibly!... NCSL in reality and the virtual NCSL must stimulate discussion, promote good practice, generate debate and generally keep the pot stirred so that original ideas are brought to the fore enabling others to benefit from research findings, or just sharing good ideas.*

But getting the balance right between the virtual and the real was seen as crucial, and each had a role to play. For one participant, who had attended a term's course at a university, what was found to be particularly valuable was:

*the quality time being taught by someone with a lot of knowledge and experience, and the discussion and learning together with a group of people at similar points in their careers, and bringing a wide range of experience to the group. I can see the advantages of the on-line nature of the NPQH in its current form, but my question is whether the establishment of the NCSL will lead to more opportunities for school leaders to meet together, for conferences or professional development purposes, and whether it would be possible to build more face-to-face elements into the professional development and training of school leaders?*

## **7.6 Training providers' views about and expectations of the NCSL**

The interviews with the 21 training providers and officers of the professional associations covered in detail many areas relevant to this section. These are summarised under six headings.

- *Expectations of NCSL – developing school leaders*  
There was a wide range of views expressed and levels of expectation of the College ranged from the limited ('it should do a few things well') to the bold ('it should be the major league school leadership development institution in the world'; 'the Harvard of

education in the UK'). Many interviewees saw the College as setting the agenda for the development of school leadership in terms of its nature and effective practice, focusing on vision, values and strategy not management and administration. They saw it as playing a key role in taking forward the debate about the kind of education or schooling that should be provided and the forms of leadership ('distributive', 'instructional') that might facilitate such development ('developing a broader discourse about leadership that gives high priority to its instructive aspects').

Many comments also referred to the need for greater coherence of the national programmes ('there is a crying urgency to make coherent sense between NPQH, Headlamp and LPSH'). The College should not necessarily be seen as a provider of leadership training, but rather it should oversee and quality assure its provision. Also there was perceived to be a need to focus on leadership *teams* rather than, or in addition to, individual leaders. The existence of the College was said to be to promote diversity and excellence, acting as a vehicle for strategically highlighting and co-ordinating good practice.

Several training providers, echoing the earlier noted comments from headteachers, referred to the independence of the College and the need 'not to have to toe the line' and 'to keep a distance from government'. One interviewee encapsulated this view, observing:

*I think that the major problem with the NCSL is how far it is free to follow a leadership agenda, and how far it is an agent of government. I think therein lies the crux, which would be the crux of any problem.....sometimes it has to be controversial and challenge stuff. I think the feature of education is by people challenging orthodoxy and the problem you have is how can something funded by government challenge orthodoxy? That is just the nature of the organisation.....I get frightened when the government says things like "we know how to do school improvement", well I think it is far more complex than that. So how can it actually be? There are many routes and many alternatives at least to fit your context, rather than this is the way.*

The College, then, was seen as being a key player in developing a debate, rather than in promulgating an orthodoxy or a government-determined discourse on leadership and school improvement.

- *Contributing to the school improvement agenda*

Developing school leaders and contributing to school improvement were seen as being inextricably linked. As one interviewee noted:

*School leadership is about improvement, raising standards, and there shouldn't be a divorce of leadership and improvement, the two things should be positioned together. It needs some conceptual framework to express that, which I haven't seen yet. But quite clearly, leadership and improvement have to be seen as part of the same strategy.*

There was seen to be a real opportunity for the College to develop the school improvement debate beyond its current obsession with 'raising standards' which was leading to various undesirable practices. Two interviewees reflected:

*I'm wary of heads going down effectiveness and value added route. The most common result is tactical development. This is inimical to strategic and capacity-building improvement. If leadership is allied to be more creative innovative type of leadership it would be better.*

*Of course it needs to contribute to school improvement but there is so much more to it than SATs results! The College has got to be brave here it's got its own contribution to make. It'll be very sad if the College is pushed down the route of having to measure their leadership programmes against models of raising standards. It needs to state from public platforms that there's more to school improvement than just results – it's about so much more! It needs to avoid being sucked into the school improvement sponge – if it does then it will lose its USP (unique selling point) and its credibility.*

The College was viewed by many as being in a good position to help define the outcomes associated with effective leadership but, as noted by several providers, those outcomes did not have an immediate or direct impact on pupil outcomes. The current focus on 'the measurable and standards' was said to be driving out equally important matters that were less amenable to easy measurement or quantification (e.g. school ethos; the affective domain).

A need for NCSL to concentrate on its immediate clients – school leaders - and not to lose sight of these in the focus on the school and its improvement was also a well aired view. For some interviewees, it was important that the College find ways to be supportive of teachers ('you want it to be creative rather than driven') and 'to convince schools that they have the tools to do it themselves'.

- *Priorities and programmes*

There was a general view that it is important for the College to set up a structure and framework for managing the effective operation of the national programmes and, initially, for it to give these a high priority. There was also a recognition that, although it was important to develop and commission programmes to include all leaders and leadership teams, that new headteachers, those about to enter headship and middle managers (seen by some as 'the great underbelly'; 'a yawning gap') ought to be given priority over others; and that leadership training ought to commence early on in a teacher's career (skills development to 'grow leaders'). More emphasis was said to be needed on 'strategic leadership' and that programmes should promote a diversity of opportunities so as to encourage a 'divergent approach to leadership development'. (It is interesting to note that many of the above priorities and suggestions have since been acted upon by the College.)

- *The College and research*

There was said to be a need for the College to take a systematic approach to research, identifying issues, undertaking desk research, and commissioning research as appropriate. But, for many, NCSL was seen as more of a disseminator – perhaps commissioning research reviews or syntheses or acting as a database of existing research – rather than as an originator of research. Nevertheless, specific areas to conduct research were suggested, including an exploration of the relationship between leadership capacity and school improvement; the impact of the national programmes on school performance; and 'how best do leaders learn'. It was also said to be important to initiate 'a debate about the kinds of schools we are going to have in 10-20 years time,

and the different type of leader required for the school of the future'. 'What are schools going to be like in the next ten years, how might they be structured, what of internal processes, how are they're going to relate to the outside world?' Such questions, although difficult to 'research', were seen as crucial because, as one respondent put it, 'you can't really provide for the next generation of leaders' with these unanswered.

Many agreed that it was desirable for the College to take as wide a perspective as possible, looking at good practice across sectors and internationally and to bridge further the gap between applied and 'pure' research and to ensure that research has an impact on teachers' practice in schools.

- *How the College should develop to meet expectations*

For many the College had made a good start, particularly in the way it was avoiding parochialism by looking overseas and across sectors. It was important for it to be allowed to develop slowly ('it needs to resist the pressure to meet targets'); to develop imaginatively, to be open-minded (to avoid 'a bunker mentality'); to build on success and not 'to throw the baby out with the bath water'. It was important for it to develop as a College and not as a quango ('it has a very bureaucratic agenda at the moment'). Also it had to be 'even-handed in its operations', avoiding 'cronyism' and patronage.

There was also said to be a need for a regional network of associated centres ('don't centre everything in Nottingham') and for the College to work collaboratively with professional associations and HEIs, building on current best practice. The College, it was stated, would require partners and should not see itself as 'a monopoly provider of free courses' but rather work towards building capacity throughout the system.

- *Aspects of the current work of the College*

Interviewees were asked to comment on the current work of the College and in particular its virtual arm for which there was general support, although with qualification. The ICT or on-line aspects of the NCSL had to be seen as complementary and supportive ('education is a people thing'; 'there is a need to get the balance right'), thorough and carefully thought through ('whilst welcoming a 'virtual' dimension, there has been a collapse in confidence in e-related things therefore it has to be done really well'), able to test the think.com approach or model, and with easy and open access.

## **7.7 Views from the LEAs**

LEA survey respondents were asked for their comments about school leadership and leadership development, and about their relationship with NCSL. A relatively high number (n = 65) provided comments, the most common of which referred to partnership with the College and the necessity to work closely together and develop links. It was seen as an opportunity to work in partnership; a partnership to enhance the quality of leadership rather than as a further example of centralisation and direction from the centre. But the partnership needed to be two-way and more of a partnership than was said to have previously existed with other agencies (e.g. TTA or DfES). LEAs were said to have much to offer in the way of experienced trainers and, most importantly, knowledge of the local context; NCSL they insisted could ignore this at its peril. As two of them noted:

*Much of the ability to influence schools resides with LEAs. The NCSL is likely to be able to achieve most working through LEAs rather than round them. Make good use of its skill and expertise.*

*LEAs have a great deal of strength in leadership and management that NCSL needs to access and support to ensure succession planning.... It should be valued and utilised.*

LEA personnel claimed to have good local knowledge and to be in a position to promote national initiatives effectively. Also effective professional development, including leadership development, leads to challenging behaviours and 'CPD needs follow up and LEAs are well positioned to do this'.

A link with the College through a named LEA person, and to whom materials, etc could be sent, was noted, with one respondent suggesting an annual conference for NCSL and LEA link personnel. Access to websites and chat-rooms would be welcomed, as would a greater recognition that advisers required the same quality and level of training as headteachers and school leaders.

Another common suggestion was for LEAs to link with the national programmes and the work of the College and to offer follow up and support. It was observed that this would help to ensure more effective leadership development linked to the local context. There was a wish too for information about LEA applicants and their progress on national courses. In the words of one senior adviser:

*The headline message from this authority in relation to the leadership programmes is: PLEASE KEEP US INFORMED! NCSL must take into consideration the idea that LEAs could/should know more about participant progress through programmes. At the moment we depend on ad hoc conversations, the passing comment in the midst of all else that advisers address during their visits. If LEA advisers are to work effectively supporting the development of school leadership we need to now more about our colleagues' work in centrally provided programmes.*

Few comments were offered about the nature of the College's provision, though one adviser noted that the LEA would not want to see NCSL's virtual arm (e.g. distance learning, e-discussion groups) becoming dominant as 'teachers value face-to-face work'. As such LEAs had an important role and could identify needs as well as assisting the College in measuring impact. Finally, two comments, one positive and the other less so, are worth noting. The new CPD framework, launched in the autumn term 2001, was seen as providing an excellent opportunity to create a coherent approach to continuing professional development of which leadership development was a very important part. However, the Department's principle of 'LEA involvement in inverse proportion to "relative" success (of schools)' was said by LEA respondents to be a serious stumbling block and, in the words of one, 'to get in the way of the leadership development agenda'.

## **7.8 Reflections on the findings**

- The findings reported in this section offer much which should prove useful to the College as it develops and refines its strategies and plans their implementation. Many helpful ideas and suggestions are proffered. The idea of a National Professional Qualification for *all* members of the school leadership team is an appealing one, as is more team rather than individual development. Expectations of NCSL are high and there is much optimism about the College and its role and function, providing it can deliver successfully the national programmes and steer a

line that shows independence of central government. The College has the potential to inform government thinking and policy and to be a useful means of communicating both 'to' and 'from' the profession.

- However, what will be a concern to the College is the significant minority of headteachers and deputies, especially those from primary schools, who expressed a desire not to be involved in its work and claimed not to be aware of its focus and aims. Also a significant minority of headteachers, again more primary than secondary, saw the College as having limited significance in either developing the school improvement agenda or in promoting leadership development in schools. Much work needs to be done to raise further awareness of the College and its profile, and thought needs to be given as to how this might be achieved.
- For the College to raise school leaders' awareness, to achieve its aims successfully, and to address its growing agenda, it will be necessary to work closely with other members of the education profession. In particular LEAs and HEIs must be seen as significant partners in this venture. The research findings show that LEAs are very keen to be involved with the work of the College. Indeed, the best of them have much to offer and will be able to apply local knowledge and help successfully implement leadership development strategies. But LEA involvement is likely to be limited by funding and other restrictions. For example, the government's stricture or principle of 'inverse proportion to "relative" success' will need to be reconsidered if local authorities are to have a meaningful role as partners with the College. Unless LEAs can build such activity into their Education Development Plans - and it appears that some are - their role will be limited.
- The College may also wish to explore further examples of best practice in leadership and management development, both within LEAs and HEIs. For example, case studies of good practice LEAs could be written up with a view to encouraging the less effective to adopt some of the practices of the more successful, bearing in mind the context in which they operate. How, for instance, have some LEAs managed to create a coherent approach to continuing professional development, of which leadership development is a crucial part, while others have not? (It is pleasing to note that the College, building on the initial findings of the research, has recently commissioned such a study.)

## SECTION 8

### DIMENSIONS OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

#### 8.1 Introduction

This section provides a theoretical lens through which to view and make sense of the case studies of leadership in action contained in Section 10. The schools described in that section did not require this research to evaluate positively the manner in which they are led and managed. That reputation went before each of them as a consequence of a recent inspection conducted by OfSTED, in the course of which their work in this area was assessed as 'excellent' or 'outstanding'.

At this point, it is worth reminding ourselves of what it is OfSTED inspect when they review the leadership and management of a school. There are four things in particular that inspectors look out for: first, the degree to which the school's leadership and management is 'effective' and 'efficient', with emphasis on the 'promotion of high standards of teaching and learning'; second, the 'effectiveness of the school's systems of performance evaluation'; third, the way the school uses its human and other resources and promotes 'best value'; and, fourth, how the school works with its governing body (Holmes, 2000, p.49).

While in all of these respects each of the schools reported on in Section 10 measured up very well, it is less clear from what the OfSTED inspectors wrote in their reports *how* precisely this was achieved. That is to say, we are left somewhat in the dark about the actual practices, notably recurring interactions and general behaviours, that underpinned their excellent leadership and management profiles. True, we discover from the OfSTED inspectors that one school has 'vibrant and effective leadership'; that another has 'excellent leadership that unites staff and pupils in the pursuit of high standards of attainment'; while in a third there is 'genuine consultation and effective delegation'. But what we do not learn much about are the actual ways and means each of these schools, and the others in our sample, went about creating the leadership and management cultures that the OfSTED inspectors rated so highly.

Accordingly, one purpose behind the writing of the case studies is to offer illustrations of how these schools translated their educational visions into constructive leadership actions. Another is to bring into the public domain the work of a set of schools whose high reputations are little known about beyond the localities within which they are set, thus contributing to the growing stock of knowledge about what counts as positive and good school leadership.

#### 8.2 Model building in school leadership

Although none of the schools presented in the case studies explicitly espoused a particular view about what counts as good/positive school leadership, each manifested behaviours which are well known in the academic literature on school management to contribute to good leadership and effective schooling. Some of this literature was highlighted in Section 1. Here the intention is to elaborate on it further, looking in particular at the prescriptive models of school leadership currently in vogue and the manner in which the case study schools exemplify aspects of what they point up. Even vague familiarity with the study of school leadership confirms that it is a field of enquiry that has a distinct tendency to go in for prescriptive model-building. The epithet

'prescriptive' is important here, inasmuch as it is included to emphasise the degree to which the models of school leadership currently being built and proffered – including the one presently being developed by the NCSL – come with a note of approval and a recommendation for implementation. That is to say, such models are less descriptive models of leadership (though that is part of them), and much more normative models for its development. To that extent, these models act chiefly as heuristics for thinking strategically about how better to do things. Their normative character also helps us to evaluate and comment generally upon practice.

### 8.3 Models and cases

Two prescriptive models of leadership have pre-eminent status currently within the field of education management studies and among those who presently make provision for the further professional development of school leaders. By 'pre-eminent', we mean to refer to the extent to which they feature prominently, in one combined form or another, and always in an approved sort of way, both in contemporary academic discourse and the programmes of study constructed by today's leadership training providers.

**Transformational leadership models** conceptualise school leadership along a number of dimensions, including building school vision, establishing commitment to agreed goals, providing intellectual stimulation, offering individualised support, and explicating and encouraging high expectations for staff. As this list indicates, this model of school leadership focuses on the people involved, their relationships in particular, and requires an approach that seeks to transform staff feelings, attitudes and beliefs. The implication too is that this model entails building a consensus among the staff group grounded in a common commitment to seek improvement. Common commitment of this kind requires a conception of leadership that is neither linked to status nor embodied in the actions of any single individual, but rather *dispersed* or *shared* throughout the school and, as such, is available to everyone.

Transformational models of school leadership articulate with other approved models in the field, in particular those that emphasise *inclusivity* and greater teacher *participation*. They also underpin models of school leadership that stress the important psychological function that communicating positive *invitational* messages has for enabling individuals and groups to build and act on a shared vision of enhanced learning for pupils. In addition, transformational models are informed by the suggestion that leadership status in schools cannot be assumed, but rather is more often conferred by *followers* when they perceive their values being fulfilled in the outlooks and actions of those occupying positions of leadership responsibility.

Typical leadership actions associated with transformational models include: mobilising commitment to an explicit educational vision that is corporately agreed; coaching and mentoring designed to support individuals and increase leadership capacity generally; visible dispersals of leadership responsibility throughout the staff group whose members are trusted to initiate and complete tasks; and group decision-making that is highly participatory, open and democratic.

The transformational approach to school leadership suffers from one major limitation, however. For while it can contribute positively to such institution-level effects as organisational learning, and has good repercussions for teachers' professional commitment and job satisfaction, and possibly also for retention, there is no evidence to suggest that, *on its own*, it brings about anything but modest improved consequences for

pupil outcomes. Which is where its complement - the ***instructional or pedagogical leadership model*** - comes into play.

This model, to which some reference was made in Section 1, typically assumes that the critical focus for attention by school leaders should be the behaviours of staff as they engage in activities directly affecting the quality of teaching and learning in the pursuit of enhanced pupil outcomes. Central to this is the need for leaders to think critically about how to develop a greater capacity to articulate specific educational values around the teacher-learner transaction – that is to say, to consider ways their schools might embody better in their actual work undertaken with pupils in classrooms the aims expressed in their mission statements, which frequently give rhetorical allegiance to the importance of enquiry-based and individualised learning approaches.

There are, of course, many *organisational* matters that school leaders can work at to enable improved learning to take place in classrooms. For example, they can control better particular constraints on the amount of time pupils spend on particular tasks; they can also differently legislate for the number of pupils in particular classrooms and their mix of gender, ethnicity, or ages; they can influence too the working patterns of teachers by re-arranging physical space and 'free' time to promote new norms of collegiality and experimentation; and they can use discretionary resources (money, release time, etc) to encourage and enhance innovative instructional activity. At the same time, they can foster agreement about the appropriate level of teacher-expectation needed to encourage higher levels of pupil motivation; and they can facilitate debate about what counts as a "good lesson", what theories of learning are appropriate to the achievement of particular curricular objectives, and the form feedback received by pupils should take on what is acceptable performance in school.

On the other hand, school leaders that take seriously their instructional role are concerned also to promote and develop their schools as *learning systems* or *professional learning communities*. In doing so, such leaders exemplify the qualities of good learners through undertaking themselves continuous professional development, and encouraging and enabling others to do the same. Indeed, becoming one of the school's 'lead-learners' is a distinguishing characteristic of instructional leadership. So, too, is an open-minded, enquiry-based attitude to the education project which thrives on experimentation, not as an end in itself, but rather as the means of developing ever better pedagogical strategies that are selected in order to bring about the positive learning goals the school has for its pupils.

Looking across the case studies included in the next section, one is struck by the degree to which the schools reported on are seeking to create a synergy between a focus on teaching and learning, on the one hand, and capacity building, on the other. That is to say, each school is seeking to develop a relevant mix for itself of aspects of both the transformational and instructional leaderships models.

Two consequences follow in particular from this.

First, in each of the schools, leadership is centrally focussed on the core business of finding ever better ways of helping pupils to reach their full potential. Thus, deliberations about the quality of both teaching and learning have high priority in both ordinary conversation and formal discussion. Ideas about good teaching and effective learning are thus routinely shared, and people's success – both pupils' and teachers' – is

continuously paraded and celebrated. This creates an ethos in which high standards are expected of everyone, and in which too the virtues of hard work are esteemed.

Second, each school effectively distributes leadership – almost ‘gives it away’ – throughout the staff group, and in some cases among the pupils as well. The result is a vibrant and fluid culture of leadership in which staff, for sure, and pupils to some degree, happily take on extra responsibility – indeed, almost will it upon themselves – and feel empowered and up-skilled as a consequence. Indeed, in all of the case study schools, one is struck by the high levels of professional efficacy felt by staff, the majority of whom appeared to thrive on the strong and inclusive team work underway in their schools and happy to exercise more than considerable good will on behalf of the pupils. No small wonder, then, that each case study school is successful in what it seeks to achieve – certainly, their results ‘stand up’, and their capacity to improve is very firmly embedded, evidence for which can be gleaned from reading the descriptive accounts found in Section 10.

## SECTION 9

### REFLECTIONS ON THE CASE STUDIES

#### 9.1 Introduction

The ten case studies which follow were carried out in schools judged by OfSTED and others to be outstandingly well managed and led. They reflect a range of types of school – four secondary, four primary and two special schools, and different contexts for leadership. Four are in inner-city locations, the others being in suburban or small-town settings, with one in the countryside. Six of the headteachers are male and four female. Some have been in post for ten years, while others are relatively new to the job. One headteacher comes from an ethnic minority background. The schools vary in size from a large secondary school of 1,300+ pupils to a special school with 40 pupils.

The headteachers were observed leading their schools and interviewed about their work, as were senior management or leadership team members and middle managers. Other members of staff, both teaching and support staff, as well as governors and pupils were also interviewed. School documentation was also accessed to provide necessary background. The focus was on how the headteachers led their school communities and promoted, encouraged and distributed leadership around the rest of the school.

The following two sections summarise the key findings from the case studies. The first examines the main characteristics of the outstanding leaders that emerged from the data gathered, while the second looks at specific examples of 'leadership in action'. Finally, evidence from the case studies is used to show how 'values-driven leadership' is central to ways of operating within schools.

#### 9.2 Characteristics of outstanding leaders and their schools

These are presented below non-hierarchically: no one characteristic is more significant than any other, rather a combination of the attributes and actions of these leaders seems to make them outstanding.

- *Many headteachers saw themselves or were seen as problem-solvers or as leaders who were solution driven.* Sometimes they solved these problems themselves, but usually, they encouraged the rest of the staff to work towards solutions that suited the school community.
- *It was noticeable that there were comments about the high visibility of more than half the headteachers, although one was deliberately self-effacing.*
- *Almost without exception, the headteachers had worked consciously towards the development of a senior management or leadership team (SMT) which was seen as strong and effective by the rest of staff.* However, this did not mean they were not accessible to other members of the staff. Our case studies were of teams which were seen as strong, but consulting, respectful and listening. They managed to be separate enough to lead the school, but accessible enough to know how the school community wanted to be led.

- *The headteachers, staff and students told us about a culture of clear and high expectations of performance.* We heard about 'no blame cultures' and about on-going dialogues about the school's aims and processes. These leaders had the courage to tackle staff and pupils who were under-performing and the vision to offer support for improvement. The focus on high standards of achievement, both academically and socially, was obvious in the schools, with staff giving constant reminders of what was expected, and celebrating the achievements of all.
- *Middle managers and subject leaders were seen as experts by headteachers as well as by the rest of the school staff.* We heard about middle managers who had been apprehensive and lacking in confidence upon appointment to their present posts. However, the senior managers' reliance on them to manage their curriculum area gave them confidence, and shaped the rest of the staff's perception of them as experts in their area.
- *There was a noticeably strong emphasis on continuous professional development.* In many schools, the headteachers brought courses to the notice of their staff members. But usually they interpreted CPD as much wider than courses, making sure that within the school, there were reflective conversations (Brookfield, 1987), 'learning on the hoof', and intentional role models and mentors. These leaders were prepared to take risks and to create a safe environment for others to do so. They were concerned to establish a 'professional learning community' (NCSL, 2001).
- *Most of the headteachers described mediating change, negotiating it effectively, and adapting it to fit the school's values and ethos.* Despite their different levels of acceptance of change, all the headteachers were clear that they responded to the changes they thought were important and necessary, fitting them into their own priorities for the school. They varied from those who went to look for new challenges and for new ways of extending the role of the school, to those who were selective about chosen changes, and made sure that they enhanced what the school was trying to do.
- *The schools had strong and involved governing bodies, or at least chairs of governors.* It seems that the most productive leadership partnerships were between headteachers and chairs of governors who were knowledgeable and had time for the school. Many of the chairs of governors were either ex-educators or people in allied or similar work who spent up to a day a week on school business. Several governing bodies were described as having 'led' or 'steered' the school through previously challenging changes.
- *Many of the school leaders functioned as superb examples of 'resource investigators' (Belbin, 1993).* They investigated new initiatives and made use of the resulting funding; they found appropriate research to support their work, and they gathered evidence to help decide how to react to new initiatives. They saw resources (including information) as key to school development, and they either secured them themselves or encouraged other members of the school community to do so.
- *There were widely differing attitudes to ICT in these schools, although most were now using it for administrative purposes.* Some schools consciously used it to look for research findings, others to help teachers manage paperwork, or to track student learning.

- *The majority of the leaders in the case study schools were centrally involved in the instructional leadership in their schools, although in differing ways.* Those who were less centrally and formally involved perceived their role as supporting the middle managers, working informally to address a particular teaching and learning issue, or having professional conversations about the learning of individual pupils. Those who were more centrally involved (working in the smaller schools) did a substantial amount of teaching themselves, or took the responsibility for monitoring teachers' planning.

### **9.3 Leadership in action**

The aim of this section is to develop further some of the above characteristics and to offer a series of operational images of how the 'outstanding' headteachers we studied worked within their schools. The example we have chosen to illustrate these characteristics or themes is the manner in which the case study school leaders translated their *educational values* into specific management and leadership practices.

Several themes about school leadership emerged from our data, some of them about the leadership of the school in general (including members of the governing body, key parents and middle managers within the school) and some of them directly about the school leaders themselves. Our case study school leaders were mediating government policy through their own values systems. We were constantly reminded by those to whom we spoke, of the schools' strong value systems and the extent to which vision and values were shared and articulated by all who were involved in them. Interviewees in several of the schools used the name of their school as a descriptor for the way they operated. The staff – both teachers and support staff - had absorbed the supportive and egalitarian ethos of the school, or its 'way of doing things', which in one case was meant to denote a liberal, broad-based and inclusive approach to education.

In all the schools, staff commented on the importance of teamwork as a way of developing and sharing vision and values, and as a means of making sure that they shared the same values and adopted the same approach to the young people and to learning and teaching in the school. The whole idea of sharing and teamwork within staff groups could be difficult to foster at a time when external forces (e.g. pay differentials and performance management) could so easily encourage internal competition.

We were keen to explore the ways in which school leaders managed to promote and encourage such shared values. It seems to us that almost all of them retained, articulated and communicated their core values by:

- Working with, managing and even searching out change;
- Paying careful attention to information management within the school – thus keeping staff constantly informed;
- Working very closely and sometimes seamlessly with their Leadership Groups;
- Developing leadership capacity and responsibility throughout their schools.

Each of these is briefly explored below.

#### **Working with constant change**

Most of the school leaders described mediating change, negotiating it effectively and adapting it to fit the school's values and ethos. Despite their different levels of

acceptance of change, all the school leaders were clear that they responded to the changes they thought were important and necessary, fitting them into their own priorities for the school. They varied from those who went to look for new challenges and new ways of extending the role of the school, to those who were selective about chosen changes, and made sure that the changes enhanced what the school was trying to do.

Several of the school leaders were generally proactive in their attitude to change, although for reportedly different reasons: one was good at 'environmental scanning', in order to anticipate 'what is coming along and preparing ourselves for it, so that when it does happen it's not such a shock'. Another told us 'if you don't do something different, you won't move on'. In another school a member of staff remarked that the head was 'good at saying "let's take the good bits"', but was reluctant to take up the latest government initiative (in this case, that of becoming a 'Beacon' School) because it was felt that one more initiative might cause them to 'take their eye off the ball'. We also heard about a school which had taken on several new initiatives where the school leader explained to us that the new initiatives 'make the school feel good about itself and give people a chance to raise their own game and learn'. Yet another case study school leader used ICT to research and bring back new ideas to the school.

Several of those we interviewed described the process of mediating new initiatives through the school's value systems as a reflective activity shared by all the staff: 'We're never stagnant...it's because we never really leave things that long without review ...we're questioning all the time, it's constant review'. Another school leader who believed that 'change must be at the shop-floor if it is to be effective' and was seen by the staff and governors as a visionary, did not believe in change for change's sake – not all initiatives were considered to be good for the school, but all must go through a filtering process of 'a healthy disrespect for change'. A school leader of a nursery and infants school protected her staff from multiple innovations by filtering external demands to try to ensure that 'we do what we think is best for our children'. She thought that the self-confidence and assurance that had grown during her leadership tenure ensured that she was not 'jumping simply because someone tells you to jump'.

### **Keeping staff informed**

In our initial interview schedule, we did not ask about information management and meetings – we asked about how decisions were made in the school. But frequently we were told about the importance of meetings as decision-making spaces and about the amount of information made available to staff. Meetings can be seen as the visible manifestation of a school leader's values system: clear ideals about respecting, transforming, developing and including staff can be evidenced by the importance given to meetings in a school and by the way they are run. The amount of information that is accessible to staff is also a values-led decision – notions of secrecy and exclusion from information do not encourage trust and empowerment or even informed decision-making. Many of the school leaders saw resources (in which they included information) as key to the development of their schools, and they either secured information (about funding, research and evidence about new initiatives) themselves, or encouraged other members of their school community to do so.

School leaders and other staff in our case studies cited examples of how meetings and information were seen as important: in one special school, for example, we heard how teamwork was fostered and facilitated through meetings of the whole staff, team meetings and a programme of individual discussions between the school leader and all members of staff. The free flow of information within the school was referred to by many

members of staff and was seen as contributing to the spirit of togetherness and the inhibition of any feeling of 'them and us'. In this school, good communication was not left to chance – there were systems in place, such as the staff-room notice board, the circulation of minutes of meetings and the weekly staff briefings, in order to ensure that information and ideas were freely shared.

In a large secondary school, we observed a woman school leader showing her respect for her colleagues through the way she ran meetings: she constantly invited them to contribute their views, building consensus round the discussion and generally building agreement through the discussion. In another large secondary school, teachers were encouraged to conduct research and enquiry, and most appeared to share a thirst for knowledge and investigation in the school.

In a smaller school, the headteacher used several strategies for encouraging a shared sense of purpose: staff meetings for discussions and review 'where we review things like what you say, what you do...'; a termly agenda setting staff handbook which also includes 'little articles...depends on what the focus of the term is, or whether we've got problems or where we've got weaknesses'; and his way of spreading the use of ICT among his staff – 'we've just been given laptops – all the teachers. The head's...putting planning sheets and school end of year reports and annual reviews, and everything's on it'.

### **Working closely with senior management and leadership teams**

As earlier noted, the case study school leaders developed strong and effective senior management teams or leadership groups which were accessible to other members of the school. Such teams were seen as strong, but consulting, respectful, listening and they could be trusted.

The deputy head of a large primary school remarked that the school's senior management team worked well together: 'we're all pulling in the same direction, sharing the same values'. The staff of that school held the head and deputy in very high esteem. Indeed, the relationship of mutual respect between the leadership team and the rest of the staff in the schools we studied was strikingly similar.

It was not always possible for the research team to be able to read the dynamics clearly within the senior management team, partly because the SMT did not articulate these to us, and partly because they sometimes worked so closely together that they would not have known themselves. This is an example of the synergy of the parts of the whole achieving more together than in isolation. For example, the head of a special school commented: 'It's a bit like a machine – it's my job in particular to come up with good ideas, or to encourage the deputy head and the senior co-ordinator to come up with good ideas'. Another member of the staff of that school told us: 'the head and deputy head are the school leadership...the SMT is important, ultimately the headteacher is the boss, he makes the final decisions, he is responsible...it's on his shoulders'. It was easier to trace the decision-making processes in this school because although the headteacher worked creatively with his senior management team to 'come up with good ideas', he ultimately took and was seen as taking, the final responsibility. However, in separate conversations with the school leader and his deputy, both of them stated that they did not always know which of them brought the new ideas to the SMT.

A large nursery and infants school we visited was led by a head and deputy head, neither of whom had a teaching timetable at that time (other than releasing colleagues).

Both were highly visible around the school, they got on very well with each other and worked closely together as the senior management team. The rest of the staff saw them as strong and purposeful: 'you don't feel threatened by the leadership here – you're moved forward and in a positive way'. It was clear that she and her deputy worked very closely and were often almost interchangeable in their instructional leadership activities.

In an inner-city large primary school, the leadership team was made up of talented and committed teachers with high energy, where there was an over-riding ethos of consultation between the members of that team and between staff. It seems that this relationship was fostered by the school leader's beliefs and management style: 'a very personal type of leader. He practices what he preaches. He doesn't say one thing and do another. He knows everybody and will go above and beyond the call of duty'. Also, unusually for an inner-city school, the staff had been relatively stable and the school able to recruit and retain good teachers.

In the leadership team meetings of a large secondary Catholic school that we studied, individual members of staff were encouraged by the headteacher to exercise full responsibility for specific areas of school policy. This entailed collecting data, taking decisions, developing schema and acting as an advocate. The school leader reinforced and re-integrated what they offered and invited everyone to pool their knowledge for the benefit of the meeting and for the school as a whole. There was an emphasis in the meetings of mutual appreciation, manifest in the careful, courteous way in which individual reports were listened to and discussed.

### **Developing leadership capacity in the school**

We were struck by the way the school leaders we investigated, without exception, paid attention to the development of leadership capacity throughout their schools. Middle managers and subject leaders were seen by them as experts as well as by the rest of the school staff. For example, we heard about middle managers who had been apprehensive and lacking in confidence upon appointment to their present posts. However, the senior managers' reliance on them to manage their curriculum area gave them confidence, and shaped the rest of the staff's perceptions of them as experts in their fields. Also noticeable in the case study schools was the expectation, encouraged by their leaders, of continuing professional development for staff, both teachers and others. We make the connection here between expecting expertise from middle managers and supporting them, and other staff members, with forms of training and development (such as reflective conversations, networking, role models and mentors) that are much wider and more informal than in-service courses, but which set up an ethos or culture where school leaders are prepared to take risks and to create a safe environment for others to do so.

In one large secondary school, the headteacher had given key roles and responsibilities to heads of faculty. Each had a devolved budget to run their subject area and was involved in appointing teaching staff. This challenged many of them, since these opportunities for leadership had not been delegated in the past. However, they welcomed the challenge and felt that the head trusted and supported them in the process, empowering them and giving them space to take risks, to try new things and to challenge decisions. As one long-serving member of staff remarked: 'The head trusts me to do more. His judgement is very sound. He does delegate – there is no doubt he's a delegator. I feel so much more valued now'. Staff at all levels within this school had opportunities for professional development: some were formal opportunities, others informal, such as being asked to lead on projects, to network and to work in other schools. Middle managers saw these opportunities as the most valuable form of

professional development for taking on more senior roles. The fact that the school was widely networked within its locality and beyond gave staff and pupils the opportunities to experience leadership roles across a wide range of situations and school environments. The school itself was planning an 'Aspiring Senior Managers' residential course for staff.

Another large secondary school in our study had a strong tradition of continuing professional development and training and ran a variety of in-school professional development programmes which included staff from other schools. Newly appointed staff were given individual mentoring sessions and were supported through the line-management system. Staff were developed by being involved in a range of initiatives and working parties, and often relatively inexperienced staff were promoted and given support for their roles. Staff were encouraged to think about career progression and were supported to take on responsibilities or to move to new schools if they chose. The headteacher commented that he 'gets a vast amount of pleasure from bringing staff on' and that he hoped they 'never forgot learning their trade' at that school.

Since we completed our case studies, schools in England are continuing to contend with problems of staff recruitment and retention, as well as issues of workload and low teacher morale (e.g. PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2001). For ethical reasons, it seems that the school leaders we studied encouraged younger teachers to take on leadership responsibilities. Our case study school leaders exemplify one way of encouraging energetic and committed teachers to stay in the profession by giving them the opportunity to take on leadership roles, but with support and professional development.

#### **9.4 Values-driven leadership**

All school leaders have – or should have – values, but what is not always clear from the relevant literature, including that recently published by the National College for School Leadership (NCSL, 2001), is their precise nature. This literature notes how successful school leaders are driven by personal, moral and educational values and are able to articulate these with total conviction, creating a clear sense of institutional purpose and direction. Such individuals have a passion for the job. But what do their values look like?

Staff within our case studies were working in schools where the school leaders held a number of clear - and shared – educational values and beliefs. They were principled individuals with a strong commitment to their 'mission', determined to do the best for their schools, particularly for the pupils and students within them. They endeavoured to mediate the many externally-driven directives to ensure, as far as it was possible, that their take-up was consistent with what the school was trying to achieve.

The origins of these values were not always clear (and this was not investigated as part of the research) but they might broadly be defined as social democratic or liberal humanist in nature. They were concerned with such matters as inclusivity, equal opportunities and equity or justice, high expectations, engagement with stakeholders, co-operation, teamwork, commitment, and understanding. Related to these strongly held values, and mentioned by case study interviewees, were the personal qualities of the school leaders. These included, openness, accessibility, compassion, honesty, transparency, integrity, consistency, decisiveness, risk-taking, and an awareness of others and their situations.

The case studies offer insights into how some of the above values and beliefs were demonstrated through the words, deeds and characteristics of school leaders. Their leadership was clearly values-driven and evidence from the case studies helps to provide a better understanding of the nature of those values and how they were most likely to be exemplified.

## SECTION 10

### LEADERSHIP IN ACTION: TEN CASE STUDIES

#### Case study A: ASHTON ON MERSEY SCHOOL

*'Pride in Performance'*

##### **Context**

Ashton on Mersey School is a 11-16 mixed secondary modern school in Trafford LEA with around 1,200 pupils on roll. Despite the fact the top 35 per cent of ability range of pupils in Trafford have the opportunity to be educated in grammar schools, the achievements of the pupils in Ashton on Mersey school are above average for secondary modern schools and compare very favourably with those of comprehensive schools with pupils from similar socio-economic backgrounds. In 2000, 45 per cent of pupils achieved 5 or more A\*-C grades at GCSE.

The school is situated in a leafy residential area of mature detached owner-occupied houses, but draws its pupil population mainly from a large nearby estate of publicly-owned housing. The school was built in the early 1950s and was originally a separate boys and girls school, which amalgamated in 1981. The original 1950s buildings form the core of the school, but, more recently, an ambitious building plan has added a new technology and science block, a state of the art gym and a new dining room. Further additions are planned.

##### **The school's achievements**

The school became grant-maintained in 1993, under the direction of the previous headteacher. The current headteacher, who has been at the school for four years, has maintained and enhanced the status and performance of the school. Under his leadership, it has become a Beacon School, a Specialist Sports College and has secured sponsorship from Manchester United Football Club, whose young players receive their post-16 education at the school. These achievements and other forms of grants and sponsorship have brought significant extra funding into the school, which has allowed it to expand and develop.

A recent OfSTED report stated that

*Ashton on Mersey is an outstanding school. Though it is designated as a secondary modern school, the standards of attainment of the pupils are high in comparison with comprehensive schools serving pupils from similar backgrounds.....Excellent leadership by the headteacher, senior managers, middle managers and governors creates a climate that unites staff and pupils in the pursuit of the highest standards.*

##### **Leadership style**

The headteacher of the school is comparatively young (early forties) and this is his first headship. He has taken on a school which was successful and had been developed as a GM school by a well-respected former headteacher. When choosing his successor, the governors decided on an individual with the vision to take the school forward to even greater achievements, both academically and in sports.

This headteacher's leadership style is open and participatory. He has formed a highly effective senior management team (SMT) consisting of two deputies, a finance manager

who has deputy headteacher status, and two assistant headteachers. This team focuses on all aspects of the school's development - raising sponsorship; bidding for funding; developing links with the community; raising the profile of the school locally and nationally, but, *above all*, ensuring effective teaching and learning.

The headteacher practices *distributed leadership*. He has given key roles and responsibilities to heads of faculties. Each has a devolved budget to run their subject area and is involved in appointing staff. This has challenged many of them, since these opportunities for leadership had not been delegated in the past. However, they have welcomed the challenge and feel that the headteacher trusts them and will support them. He has tried to empower them and to give them the space to take risks, try new things and to challenge decisions. This has raised the self-esteem and energy levels of the staff, many of whom have been at the school for 20 - 30 years (the average age of the staff is 45). In fact, some who had been considering early retirement have found new enthusiasm for the job and feel re-energised through being given new challenges within a supportive framework. As one senior long-serving member of staff put it:

*The head trusts me to do more. His judgement is very sound. He does delegate - there's no doubt he's a delegator. I feel so much more valued now.*

The headteacher's leadership style is open, and he is not afraid to challenge those he feels are under-performing:

*I do all the tough things. When somebody's not performing, they need to know.*

The combination of vision, willingness to face challenges and confidence to try new ways of doing things has resulted in an already successful school becoming even more successful. The headteacher is seen as always welcoming new ideas and having an adventurous attitude towards change.

The headteacher's philosophy is: *"If you don't do something different, you won't move on"*. However, the school is strategic about choosing which new projects or initiatives to bid for. If they are not considered to be good value in terms of the strategic aims and objectives the school, they will not put time into chasing them.

### **Leadership, vision and values**

The values of the school are encapsulated in the school mission statement which talks about 'treating the pupils as you would want your own children to be treated'. Thus the expectations for the quality of what is offered by staff and what is expected from staff and pupils are very high. The children wear a uniform which has recently be changed to include a school blazer. Expectations of dress and behaviour, including rules about not wearing jewellery (no earrings), and no very short haircuts, are consistently reinforced by all staff. The school is a calm and orderly environment, despite the numbers of children moving about.

Children's achievements are praised and celebrated at every opportunity, with regular letters home for good achievements. The physical environment is also carefully managed to provide pleasant surroundings for children and staff to work in. Classroom displays are colourful and eye-catching, in a way more usually found in primary schools. The aim of the SMT is to provide the support and environment to enable the teachers to

function effectively. One example of this was the decision to employ examination invigilators to relieve teachers of this task and free them up to attend to their core tasks.

In return, the teachers devote large amounts of their own time to extra-curricular activities before and after school, including an arts club, sporting activities, a cycling club, Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, and so on. The school's role as a Sports College and a Beacon School involves staff in visiting and liaising with other schools in the locality and also regionally and nationally, so that the opportunities to provide leadership exist for a wide range of the staff in the school, and also for the pupils.

### **Instructional leadership**

At the heart of everything that is done in the school is the aim of improving children's learning and achievements. Sports College status, although important in its own right, is also seen as a vehicle for improving children's commitment and self-esteem and therefore of improving their learning and development overall. Similarly, Beacon status is seen as a way of sharing good practice across schools in the locality and learning from others, as well as providing opportunities for others to benefit from what the school has to offer.

As a way of emphasising the central importance of teachers and the learning that goes on in the classroom, the senior management team undertake a rolling programme of faculty review. Each faculty is reviewed in turn and teaching is observed by the SMT. Feedback (mostly positive) is given to faculties and the results of the review are discussed by teaching teams. This has obviously had a positive effect, since OfSTED described the teaching in the school as: *'very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. In half of all lessons, teaching was either exceptional or very good'*.

Thus, although the headteacher is sometimes out of the school on national and international visits, he remains in close touch with what is going on in the school. The SMT, also, have clearly defined roles in respect of monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in the school.

### **Leadership and the community**

The school plays a leading role within the community as a Beacon School and a Sports College. It sees its role as providing a catalyst for the development of sport within the local community, both in the schools (where the teaching team also provide an advisory service for PE for the LEA) and in the local community, which can make use of the school's sports facilities.

As a Beacon School, there are many opportunities for school staff to offer their expertise and to share good practice with other local schools, not only in sport, but in all areas of the curriculum. Science and Performing Arts are two areas where there has been a lot of networking across schools. The Beacon Co-ordinator for the Performing Arts has recently initiated an after school club, which is open to pupils across the local area.

The school sees these opportunities as ways of networking and facilitating good practice and the approach is one of partnership, with the school acting in the role initiator and facilitator, rather than top-down leadership.

### **Leadership and governance**

The school has a strong and active governing body, which took it into GM status. It is currently a Foundation School. The school is used to its independence from the LEA, but continues to have a positive relationship with the local authority.

The chair of the governing body has been in that role for ten years, and has drawn together a talented team of governors to help lead the school. All governors visit the school regularly, and the chair is in at least once every week and is well known to all the staff and pupils. The governors take a 'hands on' approach to monitoring school performance. One example of this is in the area of attendance. In order to improve attendance, the governors have formed an 'Attendance Panel' to discuss why particular children are not attending school regularly and to search for solutions.

The Governing body have supported the headteacher and SMT in their applications for Beacon and Sports College status and in their quests for various forms of sponsorship. The key issue for them is whether any particular initiative will enhance opportunities for the pupils in the school. For example, when considering Specialist College status, they decided that to bid to be a Sports College would be the most effective way of engaging and motivating the pupils in their local area. They take immense pride in the achievements of the school.

### **ICT as a leadership tool**

The use of ICT is well-established in the school for running the budget and other administrative functions. More recently, however, the new Assistant headteacher for Pupil Progress has developed a school-wide data-base containing information on the progress of all the pupils in the school. Each faculty will have access to this, so that faculty teams can use the information to bench mark pupil performance in their area, with that of performance in other areas. They will also be able to track pupil performance over time and make value-added estimates for performance in their subjects.

### **Leadership and multiple innovations**

Ashton on Mersey school appears to thrive on change and innovation. It was one of the first GM schools in the country, and more recently has become both a Specialist College and a Beacon School. Staff are able to cope with these changes because there are systems in place to enable them to attend to their core tasks of teaching and managing pupils' learning. The SMT has recently been expanded to involve two assistant headteachers - one as Director of Sport and one as Head of Pupil Progress. In addition, the Finance Manager and his team have responsibility for managing the total budget, including sponsorship funding. Two deputies - one for curriculum and one for pastoral matters complete the team. The headteacher meets with the team regularly, every Tuesday and Friday, to discuss issues in their respective areas, but also has an open-door policy, where any member of staff can see him before school to discuss new ideas, problems and so on.

A printed bulletin goes out to staff every morning to inform them of things that will be happening in the school - visitors, trips, etc. There is also a white board in the staff room for last minute notices.

Many of the core tasks and ways of working in the school remain constant in the midst of change, so there is a firm foundation for all that goes on. When changes and new projects are introduced, they build on existing practice and are seen as vehicles for delivering the basic mission of the school which is to enhance pupil performance, both academically and socially.

### **Developing leadership capacity in the school**

Staff at all levels within the school have opportunities for professional development. Some of these are formal – such as NPQH, and others are informal – such as opportunities to lead on projects, to network and to work in other schools. Middle management staff see these opportunities as the most valuable form of professional development for taking on more senior roles. The fact that the school is widely networked within its locality and beyond gives staff and pupils the opportunities to experience leadership roles across a wide range of situations and school environments. The school itself is planning an 'Aspiring Senior Managers' course for staff, which will be residential.

### **Leadership and evidence-based practice**

The school uses all available data to track pupil progress and to set targets for pupils and for the school as a whole. It also is good at exploring opportunities for development through Government schemes and local and national sponsorship.

The headteacher makes time every week to read the educational press to keep up-to-date with current policy and practice developments.

### **Leadership for inclusion**

The school caters for all children within the local area. There is a special facility for hearing impaired pupils and the school has also been adapted for wheel-chair users. The OfSTED report states that 'the school meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs very well...The work of the hearing impaired unit is effectively integrated into the life of the school'. In addition, the school has links with a residential special school for pupils with EBD in the Lake District. There are many joint activities between the staff and pupils of that school and the staff and pupils at Ashton-on-Mersey, particularly in the areas of sport and outdoor activities.

### **Key themes and issues**

- A key theme for this school is the continual search for success. The leadership is not content to sit back and be satisfied with the remarkable achievements of the school so far, but to build on those and to look for new challenges and new ways of extending its role.
- The headteacher's leadership style is both enabling and challenging. He has given significant responsibilities to middle managers and has supported them to fulfil those responsibilities.
- There are also opportunities for all members of staff and pupils to exercise leadership within the school and across schools in the many networks, both local and national, that the school belongs to. Ashton-on-Mersey is an outward looking school, which shares good practice within its locality and beyond.
- The headteacher has managed to re-energise a staff, some of whom have been at the school for many years. This has been achieved by supporting the excellent initiatives already happening in the school, but also by bringing in new ideas and initiatives and implementing them.
- Despite the many initiatives in which the school is involved, the leadership never loses sight of the main focus, which is improving the teaching and learning in the

school. Thus, new projects are incorporated into the work of the school and are not 'add-ons'. This strategic view enables innovation and change remain manageable.

- The leadership is not afraid to take risks and to try new things. If they don't succeed, the failures will be analysed to learn from them. There is no 'blame culture' in the school.

## **Case study B: BISHOP CHALLONER CATHOLIC SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM CENTRE**

*'Transformational Leadership in Action'*

### **Context**

Bishop Challoner School is situated in the densely populated and socially and economically deprived inner suburb of Kings Heath, a few miles from the city-centre of Birmingham. It was opened just under 50 years ago as Birmingham's first mixed secondary (11-16) voluntary-controlled Catholic School.

Today, after previously being a grant-maintained school for six years, Bishop Challoner is a voluntary-aided Comprehensive School and Specialist Sports College, providing education for just over 1000 boys and girls aged 11 to 18 and employing over 70 teaching and support staff.

Nearly a third of Bishop Challoner's pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds. Above the national average number of its total intake is entitled to free school meals; the same is true of those identified as having special educational needs. In addition, although Bishop Challoner recruits from the full ability range at age 11, its proportion of higher attaining pupils in Year 7 is annually put under pressure by the competition exerted by a number of local grammar schools.

While plans are well in train to improve the school's accommodation, including providing a new sixth-form block and accompanying teaching rooms, staff and pupils have not for some considerable time universally enjoyed the opportunity to teach and learn in purpose-built, state-of-the-art premises. On the contrary, some teaching spaces are cramped, while others are housed in uninviting temporary buildings that are ill-suited to good teaching. Even the school's sports facilities, which partly service its Sports College status, are limited.

### **The school's achievements**

Limitations in its intake and accommodation, however, do not constrain Bishop Challoner's capacity to provide a quality education. On the contrary, they seem to act as a spur to its staff to seek remorselessly for improvement, as evidenced by the fact that pupils make very good progress from entry to the school in Year 7 to the end of Year 9. During the last five years, the upward trend in standards attained in national tests by its pupils has risen incrementally more sharply than that achieved nationally. While much of this success is due undoubtedly to the quality of the teaching offered in Bishop Challoner, which OfSTED inspectors last year evaluated as mostly 'very good', some can be accounted for by the additional funding made available to the school via participation in various Government schemes, including the Excellence in Cities initiative.

The result is that the school has grown in popularity. Year cohorts, for example, have expanded by 50 pupils on average since 1991, while last year there were over 450 applications from parents for the 180 places available at Year 7. If their attendance rates are anything to go by (less than 1 per cent of absences are 'unauthorised'), pupils appear also to want to be educated at Bishop Challoner. Moreover, in a recent survey of parents conducted by the school, only two per cent of families indicated that their children did not 'enjoy going to school'. Little wonder, then, that the OfSTED inspection report on

Bishop Challoner concluded that it was 'providing excellent value for money' and 'achieving very well', with 'good capacity to improve even further'.

### **Leadership style**

For the headteacher, the meaning of school leadership is best summed up in her detestation of unnecessary bureaucracy, which is reflected in a wish to discourage meetings in school that serve only to communicate information rather than make decisions. She has also moved to flatten hierarchies, and to build leadership capacity throughout Bishop Challoner by inviting staff at all levels to work hard and take responsibility for their actions. Helping this process is her *generous energetic expectation*, by which she inspires all with whom she makes contact – teaching staff, support staff, pupils, parents, governors, visitors – by the way in which she enthusiastically 'walks and talks the job'. This entails, as she puts it, providing 'clear education direction for the work of the school'; 'encouraging an effective learning environment and good relationships throughout'; and, fostering 'a consultative style of management' and associated 'clear lines of communication and effective team membership'.

The headteacher's respect for her colleagues is noticeable in the way she conducts meetings, where she constantly invites colleagues to contribute their views ('What do you think we should do?'; 'Do you think that is a valid point?'; 'Is there anything we have left out?'). She never calls for a vote, preferring to take soundings around the room and then offering a view about the best course of action, if one has not already been suggested. She builds consensus through discussion, and sometimes even argument. Her leadership on such occasions is profoundly democratic. For sure, she often knows where she wants to go, but she forges agreement beforehand about what needs to be done through participation.

### **Leadership, vision and values**

Transformational leadership is premised partly upon optimism, which takes on a variety of guises in this headteacher's case. First, she is infectiously enthusiastic about her role and the work of her school and the efforts of her colleagues and pupils. Consequently, she is publicly never down-beat or ever defeatist. She has what is often described as a 'can do' approach to headship, which is exemplified in what she says and does. It is also evident in her body-language. She speaks quickly, urgently sometimes, and readily makes eye-contact. She listens to what people say, often refracting back to them her own version of what they are talking about.

The starting point for this is a shared system of values. The headteacher's professional values – which are to do with doing one's best for *all* children irrespective of their backgrounds and measured abilities – are her colleagues' values as well. Indeed, their 'followership', and the achieved leadership status that she enjoys as a result, derives centrally from her ability to inspire *collective* confidence in the validity of a vision the staff hold in common – namely, "to give glory to God by developing our full potential and in our service to others". It also derives from the sense staff have of her honesty, competence, perspicacity and far-sightedness. In other words, she models in her conduct about the school the very values the rest of the staff adhere to and which they expect her role to embody.

### **Instructional leadership**

The headteacher is solution-driven, rather than problem-preoccupied, and consequently has high professional expectations of herself, which she translates into a positive view of

the potential and capability of all those she works with and for. Indeed, she holds very high expectations *for others*, and consciously seeks out ways of reinforcing what they can do rather than drawing unnecessary attention to their shortcomings. She is an optimist, continuously drawing attention to and acknowledging publicly the achievements of staff and pupils, while seeking out ways to tap better into their potential for growth and development. She thus speaks *with* staff and pupils, not *about* them, affirming their worth and encouraging their efforts. She uses the 'we' much more than the 'I'.

The result is that staff at all levels feel good about their work and have a strong sense of purpose and professional efficacy. They feel invited to perform at their best. Of course, the headteacher is not entirely responsible for all of this. They are responsible for it as well. In fact, she successfully feeds on and into a professional climate that predates her arrival at Bishop Challoner. Her achievement has been to consolidate and extend this positive attitude and foster a more inclusive leadership style than prevailed before.

### **Developing leadership capacity in the school**

This is achieved by being receptive to the suggestions of others and sharing her leadership with them. This is particularly evident in Leadership Team meetings where individual members of staff exercise full responsibility for specific areas of school policy – the Curriculum; the Sports College; Financial Management; the Sixth Form; Performance Management; and School Improvement. This entails taking decisions; collecting data; developing schema; and acting as advocate. The headteacher does not simply defer to each of these people's greater expertise during Leadership Team Meetings, she reinforces and re-integrates what they offer. In particular, she strategically invites everyone to pool knowledge for the benefit of the meeting and the school as a whole. The result is that there is an absence of 'empire-building' and a great emphasis on a form of mutual appreciation that is manifest in the careful, courteous way in which individual reports are listened to and discussed. Such encounters lack rancour and exude good will. Consequentially, they invite all those present to participate fully, thus adding to the school's stock of social capital.

Transformational leadership contributes to its growth by the way in which it cares for and supports the efforts of others. At Bishop Challoner, this project takes a variety of forms. One entails linking closely the school's professional development plan with its overall strategy for institutional improvement. Accordingly, professional development monies at Bishop Challoner are used chiefly to build up the capacity needed to move the school forward on its medium and long-term aims. Another is to make better efforts to identify and strengthen staff weaknesses and limitations. This headteacher has a reputation for knowing about the skills of individual members of staff which presently do not feature in their work role, but which would enhance the individual's job satisfaction and performance as well as contribute positively to the life of the school. She is, in other words, good at profiling the strengths of the people she works with, especially the members of the Leadership Team.

As an transformational leader, the headteacher is thus continually on the look out for ways of better deploying her staff and pushing them on to success. Young teachers beginning their career at Bishop Challoner particularly comment enthusiastically about this aspect of her leadership, which they see as promoting their interests in the wider cause of advancing the school's.

Transformational leaders not only act with integrity, they also trust others to behave in concert with the organisation's mission. The result is a willingness on the part of such

leaders to divest themselves of their own power and to allow that of subordinates to grow.

### **Leadership and multiple innovations**

Rather than collude with the idea that what is presently needed in schools is a 'period of stability', the headteacher subscribes to the notion that change is an inevitable feature of the educational world that has to be anticipated and managed. She also encourages risk-taking among her staff – the sort associated with taking well-judged initiatives for which there is no guarantee of success. Thus she is receptive to staff experimenting, while keeping a watchful eye out for any unintentional negative consequences.

Relatedly, she recognises that she must sometimes protect her staff from the worst effects of reforms generated from without. Consequently, she is not afraid to be decisive when others may be unsure of how best to proceed. She also displays humour, in the routine face-to-face encounters with colleagues and pupils, which are always friendly, frequently up-beat, and sometimes jokey. Certainly she smiles a lot and does not look downcast in public.

### **Key themes and issues**

- Transformational leadership entails a shift away from a leadership paradigm based on power and control to one based on encouragement of greater overall professional efficacy.
- To exercise transformational leadership successfully requires headteachers to possess the disposition and desire to invite others to take responsibility for their own actions.
- While the school's 'capacity to improve' cannot be accounted for by exclusive reference to the efforts of its headteachers, her leadership capability – as evidenced in the remarks made about her by colleagues and pupils - have a good deal to do with it.
- The headteacher of Bishop Challoner was able simultaneously to 'lead from the front' *and* foster a climate in which staff in particular felt confident to suggest new ideas and take initiatives to see them through, without constant reference back.

## **Case study C: BONNER PRIMARY SCHOOL**

*'Everybody matters'*

### **Context**

Bonner Primary School is a large primary school situated in the most socially deprived borough in England. It has 420 pupils aged 4-11 years and 19 (fte) teachers. The school is housed in a three-story Victorian building and serves a multi-cultural community. Fifty per cent of the pupils are from Bengali families, 40 per cent from white backgrounds and the remaining ten per cent mainly from the Turkish and Afro-Caribbean communities. Only 40 per cent of the families have adults in work, 74 per cent of the children receive free school meals and 60 per cent have English as an additional language.

The school is generously staffed, as Tower Hamlets LEA recognises particular needs of the school population. It is a two-form entry school, and each year has two class teachers and one support teacher. Because of this, all class teachers have one half-day of non-contact time per week, and children who need extra support are able to have access to the support teacher. Additionally, each class has a well-trained classroom assistant, whose role is to support the pupils. Thus, all pupils benefit from a high adult-to-child ratio.

When children enter the school at the age of four, many have not attended pre-school and their spoken English is limited. According to the head, pupils live in seriously overcrowded flats and have to contend with a variety of social issues outside school: poverty, drugs and racial tensions. According to an OfSTED report in 1997, attainment on entry to the school is well below average. By the end of Key Stage 1, it is at the national average, and by Key Stage 2, it is well above average. In 2001, the percentages gaining level 4 and above in Key Stage 2 SATs were: 91 per cent in English, 94.5 per cent in Maths and 100 per cent in Science.

### **The school's achievements**

The above are remarkable results, given the entry levels of the pupils, but they are only some of the achievements of the school. Bonner is part of a mini EAZ, which was predated by a Partnership-in Education between four primary schools and one secondary in the local area. This has provided opportunities for both staff and pupils to share ideas and experiences. In addition, the school has formed relationships with the Barbican Arts Centre and the Guildhall School of Music, and staff and pupils have participated in a number of arts activities with professional artists, performers and musicians. Thus, although there is an emphasis on high academic achievement for the children, there are also high quality opportunities for them to develop in arts activities.

The school has recently become involved in an international initiative with 14 school principals from Trenton, New Jersey, USA. They have visited the school and more visits and interchanges are planned involving Canada, the US, Australia and the UK. The scheme, which has charitable funding, is eventually envisaged as sharing good practice with developing countries. Thus, the school looks beyond itself to bring new experiences to staff and pupils and to share good practice. Interestingly, though, Bonner has recently decided not to become a Beacon School, as it was felt that one more initiative might cause them to 'take their eye off the ball'. It is likely that Bonner will be inspected by OfSTED in the near future (it is four years since the last inspection) and senior staff felt that they would prefer to await the outcome of an inspection before becoming a Beacon School.

### **Leadership, vision and values**

The central value upon which the school operates is that 'everyone matters'. This includes children, teachers, support and administration staff. The school has a friendly, informal atmosphere, with pupils calling into the office and having conversations with teachers and other staff, and the children being aware that the headteacher knows each of them personally and knows their strengths and needs. So pupils behave well and are supportive of each other and report that there is no bullying in the school. The teachers model supportive and positive behaviour between themselves and to the children. The headteacher's key value is that praise and positive support are key motivators for staff and pupils and these are the foundation of the school's approach.

When the present headteacher joined the school as a deputy, the then headteacher was working along these principles and the school was a happy and positive place. When he became headteacher, he was able to build on this foundation and to raise significantly the levels of attainment of the pupils. He sees his role as helping to energise staff and pupils by introducing new ideas and goals and by ensuring that systems are in place to track the attainment of every child in the school. A key message for every child is: 'What you get out of something depends on what you put in'. It was clear from conversations with pupils that they work hard and are proud of their achievements. They are confident and proud of their achievements. Year 6 pupils are looking forward to the next stage of their schooling and have already made good contact with the neighbouring secondary school through joint activities as part of the EAZ.

### **Leadership style**

The headteacher was described as: 'A very personal type of leader. He practices what he preaches. He doesn't say one thing and do another. He knows everybody and will go above and beyond the call of duty'.

The positive approach is part of the headteacher's management style: 'You don't get very far if all you do is criticise'. His role is to appreciate and build on the strengths and talents of others. The key people in the senior management team are also high energy, talented and committed teachers. The staff has been relatively stable (unusually for inner London) and the school has been able to recruit and retain good teachers.

There is an over-riding ethos of consultation between the members of the SMT and between staff. New initiatives are debated with staff and are customised to fit the 'Bonner' way of doing things. They were a pilot school for both the literacy and numeracy projects, so that staff were able to try out and modify these new approaches to suit the needs of their pupils.

*Enthusiasm is the main thing. You have to have the energy – you're not going to get anywhere if you can't take your staff along with you.*

As one of the senior team put it:

*Everything that happens links together. You can see the point of everything.*

She also said:

*The people who work here are a very close team. That's what really makes the difference between here and other places. Because you feel involved, you end up doing more.*

### **Instructional leadership**

One of the headteacher's key tasks is to be involved with the teaching and learning that goes on in the school. He doesn't have a formal teaching commitment, but will cover for teachers. He will also monitor what goes on in the classroom: 'I feel I need to know and understand what's happening. I want to know the children and go into the classroom. I want to know when children are stuck and help move them on. Some of the most useful times are when I'm sitting with teachers talking about children.'

Thus, the education of the children is seen as a shared endeavour and teachers appreciate this and feel safe about sharing their ideas on teaching with him. The chair of governors (herself from a management consultancy background) described the school as 'a learning community for children and adults'.

There is a definite pressure on children and staff to keep on improving. Education within the school is seen as a seven-year process, with a focus on tracking and monitoring progress right through the school. The children are tested every year, so that the process of testing is familiar to them and so that those who need support can be identified. All achievements are celebrated through class and whole-school assemblies.

### **Leadership and governance**

The role of the governors was one area which the 1997 OfSTED report picked out as needing development. Since that time, the governing body has elected a new and very capable chair, and has developed its role as a 'critical friend'. The chair of governors, because of her management consultancy background, is able to take a coaching role with the headteacher and to bring a wider vision to the management of the school. The governing body, as a whole, has been developing its role and has undergone a range of whole governing body training. However, the extent to which a school which has outstanding leadership and management from the headteacher and SMT needs the active involvement of the governing body is an interesting question. The headteacher finds it useful to be challenged and to have to present a rationale for his decisions, but it is not clear whether having an active governing body is a key factor in the success of the school.

### **Developing leadership capacity in the school**

There are four members of the SMT – the headteacher, deputy, the Maths and KS1 co-ordinator and the KS2 and Creative Arts co-ordinator. Currently, leadership in the school is quite centralised. There are a number of reasons for this, but there is a recognition that some changes need to be made, and, in fact, these will be in place in the next school year. During the past year, the recently appointed deputy headteacher has had a full-time teaching commitment and thus has not taken on a full range of management responsibilities. Next year, she will be in a support teaching role and will take on more of the management. Additionally, the school secretary is retiring after 31 years and the school will appoint a full-time financial manager, which will enable the headteacher to delegate much of the financial management.

The headteacher's 'hands on' leadership style means that he likes to be involved in the nitty gritty day-to-day management of the school, but this leaves some of his very capable staff feeling slightly frustrated that they are not given more responsibility. At the same time, all staff feel well-supported by the headteacher and staff and children recognise that they are known and cared for by him. Thus, there is a delicate balance to be struck between allowing staff to grow and develop their leadership capabilities, and keeping an involvement with the Key Themes and Issues of teaching and learning which

are at the heart of the school's mission. There is also the issue of workload to consider, since the headteacher currently starts his day at 6.30am and works through to at least 6.30pm every day.

### **Leadership and the community**

The school serves its local community. Most pupils come from the local area. It is also part of the Globe Town Partnership in Education (now an EAZ), which consists of four primary and one secondary school in the local area, whose mission is to provide a high quality educational experience for all the children of the community.

As described earlier, the school population is multi-cultural, with a majority of the pupils coming from homes where English is not the first language. The school has appointed a home-school liaison worker, whose role is to build up links with the community. She visits the children's homes to sort out problems and also runs parenting classes and a toddler group. A Bengali-speaking teacher works with her once week to help make community links.

However, generally, although parents are supportive of the school, they do not become involved to any great extent. An exception to this are some parents who have come in as volunteers or as meal time supervisors and have then been appointed and trained as classroom assistants.

### **Leadership and multiple innovations**

As described earlier, the school has been an early adopter of many of the Government's innovations, including the literacy and numeracy projects. In common with other examples of excellently-led schools, these are taken by the school and adapted to its philosophy and the needs of its students. There is a confidence to implement what the school thinks is useful and to reject what does not fit. 'He's good at saying "Let's take to good bits". He let's you have the power to say that'.

The EAZ grew out of an existing partnership. The headteacher gave credit to Tower Hamlets LEA which, he said, was extremely pro-active in bidding for funding which might enhance the work of schools. Thus, extra funding enabled the school to support useful innovations, such as the partnership with the Barbican.

### **Leadership and evidence-based practice**

The school is beginning to make extensive use of monitoring and tracking data to enable it to be more focussed on the support it gives to pupils with their learning. Data from non-statutory tests will be used and a data-base is being set up to do this. Half-termly assessments are done for each child to ensure that they are achieving their potential and that any difficulties are picked up.

In the wider sense of using research findings to support teaching approaches, there is a wide range of techniques and materials used in the school, within the frameworks laid down by central government. There is also a willingness to question the effectiveness of approaches and to change them if they are not producing the necessary results for the children.

### **Leadership for inclusion**

Bonner is an inclusive school in the sense that it welcomes all children from the local area. There are limitations in terms of the building which mean that children with physical disabilities cannot be easily accommodated. However, children with special needs, such

as autism, are being educated in the school, as are children with a wide range of learning difficulties. The high level of support available to all children means that those with special needs are identified and supported at an early stage, whether through EAL support or through the SEN co-ordinator.

### **ICT as a leadership tool**

This is developing currently, and will be more developed when the new financial manager is appointed. Management information systems are in place and the headteacher uses ICT to communicate with the headteachers in the EAZ (ICT is an EAZ priority area for development).

### **Key themes and issues**

- The headteacher is centrally involved in the teaching and learning processes of the school. He sees one of his main roles as having professional conversations with teachers about the learning of individual pupils.
- A key theme from the headteacher was that he provided energy to sustain the momentum of achievement within the school. His role was also to generate energy in others.
- The caring ethos of the school extended to everybody – staff cared for and supported each other; children felt cared for and supported to achieve their best; children cared for each other and there was no serious bullying in school.
- The staff saw themselves as models for the children. They were respectful and hard-working and expected the children to be likewise.
- The school was selective about what it chose to do. All new initiatives had to fit in with the school ethos and to enhance what the school was trying to do.
- The school was open to outside influences and offered a wide range of creative activities for the children, making use of opportunities in the local area and beyond.
- All achievements – academic, sporting and artistic – were celebrated and both staff and children's efforts were recognised. This led to high self-esteem and confidence.
- The school is a happy and energetic place, even at the very end of the Summer term!

## Case study D: ELLIOTT SCHOOL

*'A School for All'*

### **Context**

Elliott School is a large (9-form entry) 11-18 former grant-maintained comprehensive school which currently has Foundation status. The initial impetus for the school to become GM was to preserve its comprehensive intake in an LEA which was moving towards a more selective system. The commitment to remaining comprehensive is still at the core of the school's mission, despite its current status as a Specialist Languages College. All children wishing to enter the school are given an ability test and placed in five ability groups of equal size. Pupils from each group are then offered 20 per cent of the available places on the basis of other criteria, such as, whether they have siblings at the school, proximity of the home to the school and any special medical or social needs. Thus, there is a range of ability in the school, although the 1998 OfSTED report states that there are more pupils below average on entry than above, perhaps reflecting the nature of the catchment area. The school has more boys than girls in each year group and about 30 per cent of pupils come from ethnic minorities.

### **The school's achievements**

In 2000, just under three per cent of the pupils had statements and 19 per cent had special needs, but no statement. This is close to the national average. GCSE results are above the average for the LEA (an inner London borough), but slightly below the national average. The OfSTED report of 1998 considered that GCSE results were 'well above average in comparison to similar schools'. 'A' level results, also, considering the comprehensive nature of the intake, are well above the national figure.

The headteacher of Elliott has been in post for 20 years, and has taken the school through its various phases as an LEA, a GM and now a Foundation school. He has also seen the school achieve Specialist College and, most recently, Beacon status. The 1998 OfSTED report stated that:

*Elliott is an outstandingly well led and managed school. There are examples of excellence at many levels. The different talents of the staff involved are harnessed together through a careful balanced combination of very systematic line management and sensitive awareness of individual needs. Many managers at the school maintain a vision of the direction of their work throughout the day to day tasks that make it happen. The headteacher maintains a high-profile presence with students, parents and staff, yet delegates authority and responsibility to great effect and in such a way that a powerful learning ethos permeates the school.*

### **Leadership, vision and values**

The vision and values of the school are shared by all who are involved in it: staff, governors, parents and pupils. There is much talk of 'the Elliott way' which denotes a liberal, broad-based and inclusive approach to education. The vision is:

*London children of all abilities being educated under one roof.*

The chair of governors, whose own children had attended the school, talked of the type of teacher that the school wanted to attract:

*They have to be an Elliott person. They have to be able to survive....a particular kind of personality....They've got to have a spark, an enquiring mind and a sense of humour. As well as a commitment to their subject, they've got to have a wider view of life.*

And the type of parents who are attracted to the school:

*A very wide social mix...get a lot of media-type people. We've always had a strong emphasis on dance, drama and the performing arts...But we also take local kids. There is a large percentage of band C/D/E boys.*

One young teacher, in his first year of teaching at the school, was a former pupil and described how he had gone off to university, done his PGCE and then chosen to come back to teach at Elliott because he liked:

*The atmosphere....the attitude. It's comprehensive...mixed... quite liberal, open-minded and easy-going. There is an emphasis on achievement. There are lots of high-achieving kids here, especially in the sixth form.*

Another teacher, a middle manager, described the school as 'a principled school' where the aims actually mean something. For the headteacher, central to the job were the core values of school which 'had to be balanced against the environment in which we work'.

### **Leadership style**

The school had a 'collegiate style of management at all levels' whilst the headteacher was very visible around the school:

*(He) wanders around giving off good vibes.*

He saw his role as an enabling one - to support the development of staff and 'to effectively negotiate one's way through periods of change'.

The new initiatives the school has taken on - the Specialist Language College and Beacon status - 'make the school feel good about itself and give people a chance to raise their own game and learn'.

Staff at various levels within the school are given opportunities to take on leadership roles and introduce innovations. In fact, the school actively looks for and promotes young and relatively inexperienced teachers, whilst giving long-serving teachers new challenges and roles.

The headteacher sees his role as a steering one, to set the direction and tone of the school and to be involved in selecting staff who will enable the vision of the school to be realised.

*My job, in terms of leading the school, is to bring the staff into a commitment to teaching all children of all abilities and teaching them 100 per cent.*

### **Leadership and governance**

Like the staff, the governors of the school are committed to its ethos and values. They have steered the school through its transfer to GM and then to Foundation status. They

have enabled the school to 'become a good client', spelling out what its needs are and obtaining best value for its funding. The governors were centrally involved in the discussions about the school's mission and values in the run up to the decision to become a Foundation school.

That said, the governing body is not centrally involved in the day to day management and decision-making in school, nor is it felt that it ought to be. Governors are seen as a sounding board and as providing 'checks and balances', rather than being 'hands on' in terms of decision-making in the school. For key strategic decisions (e.g. about the status of the school, or taking on significant initiatives), involvement and support of the governors is crucial.

### **Leadership and the community**

Elliott takes pupils from across South London. Most of the pupils are not from the local estates. Thus, the school is not a 'local' school. However, it takes its relationship with the local community seriously, and has had a post of responsibility in the school for careers, citizenship and community. The holder of this post is part of the school's management group.

The school's status as a Beacon School involves working with a number of other schools in the locality, and much inter-visiting of staff across local schools. At the time of our visit, one of the deputy headteachers had been seconded as acting headteacher of another school in the borough that was experiencing difficulty. This had proved to be very successful for both parties. Thus, the school is in touch with the wider school community in its immediate area and is working co-operatively with other schools.

### **Leadership for inclusion**

Elliott sees itself as 'a school for all' and tries to ensure a balanced intake in terms of ability. There are a number of children in the school with significant special needs, such as physical difficulties and autism. However, despite the school's endeavours, they acknowledge that, in common with most schools, they have a problem with motivating and keeping on board working class boys. This is something that the school is working actively to address through one-to-one mentoring. An issue is the fact that there are more boys than girls in the school (a 60/40 split), so the emphasis on the school on academic success and on languages may cause problems for a significant minority of male working class pupils.

### **Instructional leadership**

Although 'securing and sustaining effective teaching and learning throughout the school' is listed as one of the headteacher's key tasks, in general, this is seen as the key role of the heads of departments. 'It comes from our (departments) tier. Our primary function is teaching and learning'. Nevertheless, the headteacher 'pops into lessons' and signals his interest in teaching and learning by being involved in what goes on in the classroom. The headteacher maintains that his teaching staff are 'the experts' in their areas, and thus builds confidence that they have the support and resources to be effective teachers and curriculum managers. He tries to model effective leadership for his heads of department so that they, in their turn, will become enabling leaders for the subject staff whom they manage. There was a recognition that as far as the school's leadership was concerned 'teaching and learning comes first' and then 'the other bits'.

### **Developing leadership capacity in the school**

The school had a strong tradition of continuing professional development (CPD) and ran a variety of in-school programmes for professional development, which, since being accorded Beacon status, included staff from outside Elliott. Newly appointed staff are given individual mentoring sessions and are supported through the line management system. There is an NQT training programme and a CPD programme for second and third year staff. Staff are developed by being involved in a range of initiatives and working parties. Often relatively inexperienced staff are promoted and given support for their roles. Staff are encouraged to think about career progression and supported to take on responsibilities or to move to new schools, if that is what they want to do. It was acknowledged that perhaps staff 'sometimes get responsibility before they should do but opportunities to take up posts coming early are supported through line management'. Teachers are actively encouraged to take on whole school positions. The headteacher remarked that he personally 'gets a vast amount of pleasure from bringing staff on', and that he hoped that they 'never forget learning their trade at Elliott'.

### **Leadership and multiple innovations**

Like the other confident and well-led schools we have studied, Elliott takes on new initiatives and uses and adapts them to achieve its basic goals. For example, the decision to become a Specialist Languages College was prompted by a review of the aims of the school and discussion about the future of Elliott in the 21st century. Out of this came a vision about an outward looking school with an international focus preparing its pupils for a globalised future. The language college provided the funding and the framework for achieving this. It has enabled the school to set up international links and to encourage overseas visits and exchanges.

There are very clear systems and lines of responsibility within the school, so every member of staff is very aware of what is required of them so the school can respond quickly and effectively to change. Thus the introduction of new initiatives, such as performance management, do not cause significant problems. 'Elliott School takes hold of change and manages it - not the other way round'. Key people were selected to take initiatives forward - 'There's always someone to take it on....Staff are encouraged to come forward with ideas'.

### **Leadership and evidence-based practice**

The school uses research to inform its policies and encourages staff to bring forward ideas and develop them. The school has a forum for ideas; a recent example was 'bullying' and a the possibility of a referral room was being discussed. This was being thoroughly researched, the middle managers' group had produced a paper and this had been taken to the senior management group for further discussion. Teachers were encouraged to conduct research and enquiry and requests to undertake Master's degrees were looked upon favourably. There was a thirst for knowledge and enquiry in the school.

### **ICT as a leadership tool**

It was acknowledged that ICT was not being used as much as it might have been in as part of the school management and leadership process. There was a need to become fully aware of ICT management tools and 'Bromcom' was now being used for termly grade system and for registration. There was a need to ensure that the ICT applications 'worked' and to demonstrate that they saved time - 'then they will be introduced'.

### **Key themes and issues**

- This very large school has effective systems in place to ensure that all staff know what is expected of them – and expectations are high.
- The headteacher is a 'people' person. His role is 'conciliating, putting people together, running proper systems and praising people'. He enjoys seeing people grow. The pleasure gained from 'seeing teachers doing a good job and learning the job' was sufficient to keep the headteacher highly motivated.
- The headteacher and senior team were trusted by staff and seen as having 'street cred' and 'working harder than you'. There was mutual respect and staff worked well together.
- The school strives to maintain its comprehensive intake, but at the same time to achieve high standards in all aspects of the curriculum.
- New initiatives are embraced if it is felt that they will contribute to fulfilling the schools' mission.
- All members of staff are encouraged to take responsibility and to bring forward new ideas. The school has a strong focus on staff development.
- The school has a strong identity and ethos which is shared by staff, governors, parents and pupils.

## Case study E: KESTON INFANTS AND NURSERY SCHOOL

*'Inclusive Leadership for an Inclusive School'*

### Context

Keston school is located in spacious grounds, which it shares with the Junior school, in a residential area in the south of the London borough of Croydon. There are just over 300 pupils on roll, aged between three and seven, who come from a wide catchment area with most coming from a small local area of owner occupied housing and a large public housing estate, part of which has been identified by social services as an area of social deprivation. (13 percent of pupils are entitled to free school meals and a higher than average number of pupils have English as an additional language.)

The school is very popular and its two reception classes are regularly oversubscribed (a third class has recently been created due to the number of children who had a successful appeal). The school has a good reputation for inclusion of, and provision for, pupils with special educational needs, although there is no designated provision for this. As a result, the LEA directs a growing number of SEN children from outside the school's catchment area. Currently there are four children with autism and one with a cochlea ear implant (there are only two in the country in a mainstream school). One-quarter of the pupils, including four with statements, are on the school's SEN register. Attainment on entry to full time schooling at age five is wide ranging but generally in line with national expectations.

Keston school employs 11 teachers and 14 support staff, many of whom have been at the school for a considerable time. The staff is stable, secure and very experienced and in the first year of the scheme, all teachers who applied successfully passed the threshold.

### The school's achievements

The school experienced a very successful OfSTED inspection in March 2000 when *no* Key Themes and Issues for action were identified. The report described Keston as 'an outstanding school' and went on to state:

*The school provides a high quality of education for all its pupils which enables them to develop self-confidence, very positive attitudes to learning and achieve their best.....together the whole staff work incredibly hard and are most successful in fulfilling the school's Mission Statement to.. 'create a happy, secure environment in which each child discovers the joy of learning, gains self-confidence, self-respect, and confidence in order to achieve high academic standards and to successfully meet the challenges and opportunities in their life'*

Keston is an improving and self-evaluating school which never sits on its laurels, improvements having continued to be made since the school's initial inspection in 1996. The headteacher and staff are keen to improve the provision for all the children but the 2000 OfSTED report notes that:

*there are no areas in which the school could, realistically, improve further. High standards have been sustained in reading, writing, and maths and recent National Curriculum test results show the school to*

*be in the highest five percent of schools in the country. Compared to 'similar' schools, standards are very high in reading, writing and maths.*

The success of the school has been acknowledged and Keston is about to become a Beacon School (for literacy; SEN and inclusion; nursery provision; leadership and management; and display).

### **Leadership style**

The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher, governing body and senior management team are described by OfSTED as 'outstanding' and committed to sustaining the high standards achieved in the school.

The headteacher has been in post for over 12 years. She came from another school where she was deputy but also has experience of working outside of education. The deputy headteacher, who has also been at the school for many years, was appointed by the new headteacher having been acting deputy for one year prior to the headteacher's appointment. The headteacher and deputy work closely with each other and together constitute the school's senior management team. Year Group leaders form the middle management team but the small size of the school and its egalitarian ethos meant that it was not considered hierarchical with the weekly staff meeting being an important forum for debate.

This year neither the headteacher nor deputy headteacher teach (although the deputy is expected to return to the classroom in the near future) and their style is best described as management by walking about (MBWA) – both are very visible and 'pick up things from classroom visits and share them with others', often at staff meetings.

Those 'at the top' were seen as doing their jobs very well; they were highly respected and staff responded positively to any requests. The leadership was recognised as strong and purposeful but it was also seen as extremely good at delegating, facilitating and empowering others – 'you don't feel threatened by the leadership here – you're moved forward and in a positive way'. 'The headteacher leads in a very positive but relaxed way'. 'She gives us space and respects our professionalism'. 'We're all involved right from the outset regardless of status – we're treated as equals'. 'Leadership is shared – the headteacher involves everyone'.

The manner in which this approach was operationalised can be seen in relation to the making of decisions. The school was not a democracy, votes were never taken but all staff - from the very experienced to the newly qualified – were given the opportunity to contribute and were closely listened to. For example, the decision to become a Beacon school was agreed once the consequences were clearly spelt out and a consensus reached after each individual's view was sought. Similarly, with the introduction of the 'literacy hour', the English co-ordinator presented the pros and cons and staff were asked for their views and a decision made not to do it on every day of the week.

On other occasions, decisions were made by the headteacher alone – on some matters the staff felt she was better placed than they were to make informed judgements. But there was a sense of trust of the school's senior team and governing body and a genuine openness in all that was done. 'We're kept in the picture – there's an openness about everything and their consequences are made known'. 'We're asked for our views about most things'.

Leadership at Keston was not 'in your face'. As described by one teacher:

*It's not so much an enabling or an empowering leadership as this implies a top down approach; it's more an approach that involves and includes you – it's involving or inclusive leadership.*

### **Leadership, vision and values**

The headteacher's vision for the school had not changed very much since her appointment – she knew from the outset what she wanted to achieve for the school and this reflected her own background. She was very aware that different children had very different opportunities in different schools. She wanted her school to treat ALL pupils equally and to offer an all-round education. This had been a challenge, but staff had been excited by this and were prepared to work towards its achievement. The school was very much the making of the headteacher's vision but it was a shared vision. A centrally expressed value of the school was that 'Everything we do is for the benefit of the pupils'. The school had been successful in creating a disciplined environment but one which was sufficiently relaxed to encourage creativity and learning – the children (as were staff) were always encouraged to question and to give of their best.

A core value of the school was valuing what people had to offer but to do this in a non-patronising way. Everyone was valued for what they brought into the school and everyone wanted each other to do well. Staff were given 'ownership' and constantly reminded that what they did made a big contribution to the school and its development.

Care was taken when appointing staff to ensure that they would fit into the culture of the school. Some staff referred to themselves as 'Kestonites' having absorbed the supportive and egalitarian ethos of the school. There were no status differences amongst staff and the whole school community would, on occasion, socialise together. Opportunities were frequently taken up to celebrate and to give thanks, e.g. the headteacher sent notes of congratulation to staff, flowers given in assembly to departing dinner ladies. Staff were happy to reciprocate and it was quite common for the headteacher to receive tokens of appreciation for something she had done.

Working at Keston was variously described by staff as relaxed, happy, supportive, like a family or a team. Camaraderie was clearly evident and there was 'a joy at work' where 'everybody laughs a lot!' and there was 'never any tension in the staffroom'. There was a willingness to share good practice and knowledge, the atmosphere was relaxed and there was mutual respect and openness.

### **Instructional leadership**

Although the headteacher did not have a regular teaching commitment she was determined not to divorce herself from the children and made concerted efforts to visit classrooms to both monitor and look at samples of pupils' work. Both the headteacher and the deputy were in and out of classrooms regularly and the staff were used to this and did not find it threatening. Both were very much 'hands on' and demonstrated by example, e.g. the deputy showed how to teach the literacy hour (both had an LEA wide role in relation to the literacy hour). Teachers were used to visitors (including the occasional governor). Monitoring was conducted by the senior staff and curriculum co-ordinators but it was mainly of an informal kind. (Teachers could expect to be observed at least termly.)

The staff showed a genuine interest in how children learn and develop and even over lunch it was not unusual for the talk to be about teaching and learning (pedagogy). Good practice was regularly advertised and celebrated. The headteacher had good knowledge and understanding of nearly all the children. The emphasis, for both staff and pupils, was on giving positive feedback. The senior staff were regarded with high esteem, afforded much respect and credibility and seen as *first rate practitioners*.

### **Leadership and the community**

Keston was seen as a village school and tried to be part of the local community, endeavouring to involve itself in community activities (e.g. visits to the local bakery and the library, floats, book trail). The school operated an open door policy with parents and parental involvement was seen as crucially important – parents were encouraged to share things with the school and to be aware of their role in their children's education. Home visits were made to every Nursery and Reception child prior to starting school. There were close links with the local church; the ex-curate was a governor and the lay reader conducted fortnightly assemblies.

### **Leadership and governance**

Both the past chair and present chair of the governing body were former teachers. The chair had been a governor for nine years (since her retirement as a teacher at the adjacent Junior school for which until recently there had been a common governing body) and chair for the last three years. She spent about one day a week in school.

There was mutual trust and respect and the headteacher was held in high esteem. As with the staff, governors were encouraged to state their views and were not afraid to disagree with the professionals. They were 'never made to feel unwelcome or unimportant'. This central value permeated the whole institution and the way it operated. The governors' role was one helping to make sure things ran as smoothly as they could – 'helping to take the pressure off people'.

### **Leadership and multiple innovations**

The constant change of the last decade had helped to keep the headteacher motivated – 'there's been so much change that you can never relax!'. Her approach to leading and managing this welter of initiatives had been to make a judgement and decide what required instant attention and what could wait. Also - and this comes with a growing self-confidence and assurance – 'not jumping simply because someone tells you to jump!'. The headteacher protected her staff, filtered external demands and tried to ensure that 'we do what we think is best for our children'. Her expertise in knowing how to pace change and not to overload staff was widely acknowledged. Staff were always given adequate time to respond. The headteacher was also good at environmental scanning, being able to anticipate 'what is coming along and preparing ourselves for it, so when it does happen it's not such a shock'. The sooner something was known about then 'we can prepare for it and pick out the good points'.

The school was always looking at their own practice with a view to improvement (e.g. listening skills, questioning skills). The latest challenge was becoming a Beacon school and moving to three form entry. The school had a very positive approach to change – staff were not afraid of it and were very supportive of each other – 'there's always someone there to help you if needed'. The school tried to ensure change was seamless and built upon what it was already doing.

### **Developing leadership capacity in the school**

Approaching change in this way was a powerful form of professional development in itself but many other forms were also found. The way the school operated meant that staff learned from each other through such things as joint planning and mutual observation. Staff were encouraged to avail themselves of all opportunities (e.g. in-house shadowing of curriculum co-ordinators; job sharing with a view to taking over in the future) and the headteacher kept staff informed of CPD opportunities, specifically mentioning courses that were thought to be useful. There was a system of mentoring in place and lots of opportunities to observe good practice.

The school provided an excellent grounding for staff who were encouraged to take on a whole school approach and to think about their career development. Many opportunities were available for staff but many did not wish to leave the classroom for promoted positions or even to undertake INSET during school time. Teachers were loath to leave their classrooms as with 'little ones' they 'needed to be there all the time'. Also so much change had been experienced in last decade or so that teachers did not want the further challenge of taking up senior posts. Teachers were happy at Keston, morale and job satisfaction were high, so it was asked 'why move?' It was not that life was cosy - far from it – it was hard work and much was expected but importantly it was an enjoyable and relatively stress free place to work. Some teachers did envisage moving on and were extremely appreciative of the learning opportunities that were being provided simply by working in such a well managed and led school. NQTs became very rounded individuals and the school was seen as a good training ground and young teachers were expected to gain promotion relatively quickly. Keston was an excellent place to work, offering high job satisfaction – 'I know I am at a very good school'. As such there was a reluctance to leave for pastures unknown.

### **Leadership and evidence-based practice**

Keston was very much a self-evaluating school, keen to improve but wanting to base this on evidence of what works (e.g. boys' writing; listening skills). New initiatives were always evaluated and the school was keen to move forward being able to absorb new ideas, evaluate them and adapt them to their best advantage.

OfSTED noted that the school undertook excellent analyses of NC test results, baseline profile information and other standardised testing. The senior team and the relevant co-ordinators examined data and looked for trends which were discussed with the whole staff. Co-ordinators were now doing this analysis without prompting. Such enquiry had led to changes in school policy or schemes of work. Why, for example, did boys do so well in writing and did this mean the girls were disadvantaged?

### **Leadership for inclusion**

Inclusion was very high on the school's agenda and the intake included pupils from across the ability spectrum and a growing proportion with language difficulties and defined special needs. All the Nursery staff had undertaken speech and language training and the headteacher and several teachers had formal qualifications or received training in special educational needs. The headteacher's spouse worked in SEN and she had a personal and professional interest in inclusion. Staff had seen the benefits to mainstream children of having SEN pupils in class. But it was not inclusion for inclusion sake – 'only if we feel the child will benefit as a result'.

### **Key themes and issues**

- The school was well resourced with excellent classroom support. The headteacher was a great fighter for and acquirer of resources.
- Trust, honesty and openness – staff felt the senior staff were on their side and fighting with them to do all they could to provide a quality experience for the children. Keston was a very close knit community of which the governing body was a part.
- A stress free atmosphere was found. Stress was minimised and collaboration and mutual support created by a strong emphasis on teamwork and valuing everyone's contribution.
- Clearly the headteacher was a key player but school was more than its headteacher – it was not a 'one person show'. The success of the school was seen as related to its effective leadership – but there was a strong collaborative culture, no marked hierarchy, no 'them v. us'.
- There was no desire on part of most staff to take up more senior positions – preparation for deputy headship courses in the past had no take up. Many staff wished to remain in the classroom, not wanting to be a manager but to stay with the children.

## **Case study F: KING EDWARD VII SCHOOL, KING'S LYNN**

*'A thriving school in a traditional setting'*

### **Context**

'The origins lie in the sixteenth century, but the school was re-endowed by Sir William Lancaster and rebuilt on its present site in 1906. It was renamed King Edward VII Grammar School and it remained a boy's grammar school until comprehensive re-organisation in 1979. King Edward VII School is a voluntary controlled day school for boys and girls aged 11 to 18 years. There are some 1,330 pupils on roll of whom 230 are in the Sixth Form. As from September 2000 the school has been designated a Specialist Sports College.

The school is housed in the original imposing three-storey brick building of 1906 with later additions including a Sports Hall and four other teaching blocks. In the main building, classrooms lead off a galleried hall decorated with honours boards, sports trophies and memorials to the Old Boys of the school killed in the two World Wars. Externally very attractive, it is, however, a rather 'unforgiving' building for a modern school with narrow stone staircases and many nooks and crannies. The Royal connection with the school continues as Her Majesty still appoints a governor (currently the Rector of Sandringham) and the pupil with the best A-Level results goes annually to Sandringham to receive a gold medal.

The headteacher has been in post for 11 years, having previously been the headteacher of a comprehensive school in Derbyshire. He is a very experienced Geography teacher and text-book author and was, at one time, tutor in his subject in a university education department.

There is a good mixture of experienced and new members of staff and, in particular, there is a stable group of heads of department. The three deputy headteachers were all appointed by the present headteacher and the strong senior management team is an obvious feature of the school.

### **The school's achievements**

'This is a very good school in almost all respects. It achieves high standards overall, but could do better for older, low attaining pupils. Teaching is very good. Very effective leadership and high expectations create a purposeful, happy, orderly school that has high achievement at its heart and seeks to improve further. It gives very good value for money. The school has significantly improved the quality of teaching and examination results since the it was last inspected in December 1995 (OfSTED, 2000).

The school enjoys immense prestige in the locality and is over-subscribed every year. Many members of staff have, or have had, their own children in the school. Estate agents use the location of a house in the school's catchment area as a positive selling point.

### **Leadership style**

*He has a presence - that's what makes a difference to the school. You know who's the boss.*

The headteacher does not describe himself as a charismatic leader. He does not see it

as a key part of his role to be constantly visible around the school - indeed this leads to complaints from some students that they don't see him enough. He does, however, have very high expectations of both staff and students and he makes these abundantly clear. He expects the staff to work hard and, in this respect in particular, sets the example himself. He ensures that the teachers' efforts are rewarded, where possible in material ways. The staff pay tribute to the success of his financial management and it is significant that this is the one management area which he refuses to delegate. As a result of his expertise in this area, the school is well-decorated, well-equipped and money is available to meet all the reasonable demands made upon the budget. The environment is further enhanced by excellent displays of pupils' work in classrooms and corridors.

### **Leadership, vision and values**

*He (the headteacher) lives by the values he espouses.*

In 1996, the headteacher had a sabbatical term at Churchill College, Cambridge. He used his time to explore gender issues in teaching and the current state of research into school effectiveness and school improvement. He was much impressed by the publication, in 1979, of *Fifteen Thousand Hours* by Michael Rutter and colleagues, and uses this as a basis of his talk to new members of staff on the school ethos. He reminds them that in a good school, there is an atmosphere of confidence and high expectations, both in terms of pupil achievement and pupil behaviour. This is based upon a strong pastoral care system, within which rules should be clear and consistently applied and the staff provide positive models for the pupils. A good school is well organised and managed, there is a pleasant working environment and a high level of pupil involvement. These tenets are very clearly demonstrated in the daily life of King Edward's School.

The senior management team (SMT) consists of the headteacher and the three deputy headteachers and meets formally once a week after school. Recently, an extended management team has been formed to include, in addition to the SMT, five other senior members of staff. This group meets monthly and is designed to act as a sounding board and forum for the discussion of long-term issues. There is a daily morning briefing for all members of staff and a programme of meetings of various groups of staff - departments, year teams etc - provides for a two-way flow of information. Younger members of staff are given opportunities to take on leadership roles, for instance through the House system or the introduction of recent curriculum initiatives. The school has recently received the 'Investors in People' award.

### **Leadership for inclusion**

King Edward VII is a comprehensive school; it takes all of the children from within the catchment area. The intake for September 2001 will include 11 statemented children and the school devotes considerable resources to meeting the needs of the less able. In 2000/01, the school spent almost half as much again as the LEA had actually allocated for special needs. When a child suffering from Asperger syndrome joined the school and experienced some bullying, all form tutors were briefed and in turn discussed this issue with their forms. Another pupil who has twice been excluded for temper tantrums is to have anger management counselling. The School Development Plan includes pastoral as well as academic targets.

Although there is a strong emphasis in the school on academic and sporting excellence, there is a wide range of activities, such as music and drama, to enable pupils to develop

their talents in other areas. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme operates within the school. When given the opportunity, the governors declined to opt-out from LEA control and seek grant-maintained status. Had they chosen to go down that road, there is little doubt that the school could, once again, have become highly selective and returned almost to its grammar school status.

### **Developing leadership capacity in the school**

There is a strong emphasis on the importance of professional development within the school, with a senior member of staff having specific responsibility for this aspect of the school's work. The three deputy headteachers rotate their responsibilities so that over a cycle of about six years, they have experience of every aspect of senior management and they are also given opportunities to take responsibility for big initiatives in the school. Of the three, one has completed his NPQH, a second will complete shortly, and the third will start the course in September 2001.

There is a very full induction programme for all new members of staff - not just the newly qualified teachers; this programme was described as 'exemplary' in the 1995 OfSTED inspection report. The school buys into the LEA staff development programme and sends a large number of teachers on courses each year in order to address the needs of the school and of the individuals. The school has organised residential training days away from the school at which staff have the opportunity to address wider issues away from the day-to-day concerns.

### **Leadership and evidence-based practice**

The introduction of the system of academic reviews and target-setting, under which parents of Years 7, 8 and 9 pupils meet only their child's form tutor rather than a range of subject teachers, is a good example of the school's use of research, arising as it did from a project carried out under the aegis of the London Institute of Education. Since the scheme has been introduced, parental attendance has risen to over 90 per cent. The modern languages department is currently trialling teaching in single-sex classes, again on the basis of reported research.

### **ICT as a leadership tool**

*We couldn't manage without it.*

Seven years ago there were only three computers available for school administration. Now there are around 150 computers in the school with an administrative network of some 30 machines. Apart from its obvious use in managing the budget (including projected costs), the school makes considerable use of ICT in other areas of school management. Every Head of Year has a terminal, which they use daily and which enables them to call up data on pupils, write letters to parents, discuss attendance with the Education Social Worker, etc. Data on pupils is used extensively to compare predicted and actual performance in order to provide feedback for pupils and staff. The school timetable is prepared on the computer and staff and pupils are able to have their own September timetables in July.

### **Leadership and governance**

The school is very fortunate in having a group of very committed, supportive and experienced governors, the majority of whom have, or have had, children in the school. The relation between headteacher and governors is not, however, unduly 'cosy'. The governors take their role as 'critical friends' very seriously and, while appreciative of

current achievements, are always ready to press for more. They know the school well and visit frequently as well as taking part in meetings of the full governing body and its sub-committees. As one example of governor involvement, members of the governors' curriculum committee, together with members of staff, visited a school in Hampshire recently in order to see a new approach to student-focused activities in action.

### **Leadership and the community**

Sports College status will enable the school to develop further the existing links with the community. For instance, coaching programmes are planned for cricket and tennis which will draw in youngsters and adults from a wide area. The existing tennis courts are being renovated and the redundant CCF hut is being converted into a tennis pavilion with changing rooms, bar etc. There are plans to build covered courts to provide all-year facilities.

There is a large work experience programme in operation for pupils and speakers from a very wide range of organisations are invited into school. Sixth Formers can opt to undertake community service instead of games and younger pupils also go out to work, for instance in the local special school. Pupils raise many thousands of pounds a year for local and national charities. There is a very active Parent-Teacher Association in the school.

### **Leadership and multiple innovations**

*We take a pragmatic approach.*

The headteacher and his colleagues are very selective in their approach to innovation, choosing to introduce change slowly and when and where it is appropriate for the school. For instance, when the new AS levels, with their key skills, were introduced, it was decided that the school would concentrate upon developing ICT skills in Year 12 pupils and pay relatively little attention to literacy and numeracy – a strategy which appears to have been wholly justified. Staff are supported through the change process and not expected to take on too much once. The school's approach to the new Key Stage 3 strategy will be based upon preparatory work on literacy and numeracy which has been taking place over the last three years.

### **Key themes and issues**

King Edward VII School is an excellent comprehensive school led by an exceptionally able headteacher. Staff pay tribute to his leadership, clear sense of direction and clarity of vision. Contributing factors in the school's undoubted success may be summarised as follows:

- The headteacher's establishment, and communication of, high expectations of performance for both staff and pupils.
- The headteacher's clear expectation that the staff will work hard. He sets the example in this respect - 'He walks the talk'.
- The school offers an environment in which staff and pupils can flourish.

*Everything is about improvement - there is an environment in which everyone can flourish.*

- The school places a high emphasis on staff development.
- There is a high level of delegation and support for initiatives.

## Case study G: KINGSLEY SPECIAL SCHOOL

*'This is a motivating school'*

### Context

Kingsley School, Kettering, caters for pupils aged 3 to 11 with a range of learning disorders including autism, physical disability and profound and multiple learning difficulties. There is an on-site 28-place nursery for mainstream children, which is always over-subscribed. There are currently around 100 pupils in the school and some 70 staff - teachers, nursery nurses, classroom assistants and therapists. The caretaker is the only male member of staff. The majority of pupils are brought in by bus from the surrounding locality. The school is housed in a relatively modern building but has been so short of space that some classes have been housed in mobile classrooms and what was once the caretaker's bungalow is also being used as a classroom. New buildings, due to open in September 2001, will ease this problem and it is intended that the bungalow will become a parents' centre.

The present headteacher has been in post for two years, having previously been the headteacher of a special school elsewhere. The deputy headteacher was an internal appointment made 12 months ago. The staff is organised into five teams of teachers, nursery nurses and classroom assistants, each with a team leader.

All teachers have time-tabled non-contact time for planning and the teams meet weekly in order to plan their work together. Team representatives meet first thing on a Monday morning for a briefing in the forthcoming week's events. The senior management team is now called the school leadership group (SLG) in order to highlight its role in strategic planning. It consists of the headteacher, deputy headteacher, the five team leaders and the bursar. Team and SLG meetings are minuted and teams receive minutes of the SLG meetings in order to encourage the open exchange of information. The School Improvement Plan is very much a working document and is frequently referred to by staff. The SLG monitors progress on the School Improvement Plan and uses it to inform the agenda for its meetings.

### The school's achievements

*This is a very good school. Teaching is of high quality enabling pupils to make very good progress and achieve high standards in relation to their individual needs. The quality of leadership and management is excellent and the school provides very good value for money. The ethos is excellent, staff are highly committed, well qualified and provide a stimulating high quality learning environment (OfSTED, 2000).*

### Leadership style

Members of staff greatly appreciate the headteacher's openness and approachability and the fact that they feel able to discuss any difficulties with her. Not only are they able to discuss their problems, but she is seen as being able to produce solutions! She deliberately operates an 'open-door' policy in order to facilitate easy access by any member of staff. Decision-making is a shared activity. For instance, the starting points for the School Improvement Plan are, firstly, individual discussions between the headteacher and all the members of staff and, secondly, ideas put forward from the various staff teams. A draft plan is then presented to the governors, who may make further suggestions and the revised plan goes back to the staff. The final draft is then

presented to the governors for their approval. The recently established School Council provides an opportunity for the pupils to contribute to decision-making.

A very significant feature of the school is the manner in which *all* members of staff, without exception, see themselves as members of the one team, sharing the same values and adopting exactly the same approach towards the pupils. This means that, for instance, in terms of the school's behaviour policy, all adults are fully aware of the policy and adopt a similar approach so that the pupils are always treated in exactly the same manner by every adult in the school with whom they come into contact. This common approach is seen as especially important for severely handicapped children.

Teamwork is fostered and facilitated through meetings of the whole staff, team meetings and the programme of individual discussions between the headteacher and all members of staff. Well organised and planned school-based CPD for all relevant members of staff also contributes to the sense of unity. The free flow of information within the school, also referred to by many members of staff, contributes to the spirit of togetherness and inhibits any feeling of 'them and us'. Good communication is not left to chance; there are systems in place, such as the staff-room notice board, the circulation of minutes of meetings and the weekly staff briefings in order to ensure that information and ideas are freely shared.

### **Leadership, vision and values**

As the school prospectus states:

*Ethos comes from everybody - everybody values each other.*

*We wish to respect and value the childrens' thoughts, ideas and opinions and encourage the development of self-esteem through success and equality of opportunity.*

The headteacher has very clear and positive views about the ethos of the school. She will not compromise on her belief that Kingsley School is an educational establishment, not a care institution - the emphasis is always upon teaching and learning. She believes that the children must be challenged so that they become self-motivated at the same time as their self-esteem is enhanced. She and her colleagues are constantly striving to provide the best possible education for their pupils and to promote their independence as much as possible. One small example of how this independence is promoted is that older pupils now fetch their own lunches from the serving hatch rather than having it brought to them. Pupils contribute to and help to produce the school's Newsletter.

The headteacher has high expectations of staff and pupils and communicates these very clearly. The school's aims are explicit and put into practice on a daily basis; a training day was used for staff to discuss how the aims could be made 'tighter' and how their delivery could be assured. The staff are motivated through training and shared good practice, together with sound knowledge and good planning. This high level of motivation ensures that the children's learning is challenging, interesting and devoted to bringing out the very best in each child. The headteacher believes that good leadership at all levels is the key to a good ethos and she encourages and enables other members of staff to take on leadership roles. She is attempting to change the leadership style from a model in which every member of staff came to the headteacher for decisions to one in which appropriate decisions are taken at different levels within the school.

Parents are welcomed into the school at any time. The style of written reports has been revised so that parents are made more aware of precisely what their children have achieved and the progress they are making.

*Reports on our children are written in a loving way; you really do feel that the staff love and care for your children.*

### **Instructional leadership**

The headteacher normally teaches for two hours a week covering for absent teachers. She and her colleagues believe that this is an important factor in maintaining credibility. Together with her frequent visits to classes (which she refers to as 'management by walking about'), her teaching in different classes provides her with an overview of the school and of the individual children within it. She regularly does dinner-duty and takes two assemblies each week. However, the headteacher believes that her role in teaching the staff is more important than any teaching of the pupils. She, therefore, makes a considerable contribution to school-based CPD.

### **Leadership for inclusion**

*They haven't learnt it if they can't do it for themselves.*

The staff see Kingsley as part of an inclusive educational spectrum. Their view is that as long as special schools are totally separate, then adults with special needs will be totally separate in society. The children are treated as individuals, every child is given every opportunity and their life is made as near natural as possible. The school works hard to ensure that the pupils do not lose contact with the community from which they come. Children from Kingsley go out into other schools and pupils from other schools, especially the neighbouring Infant and Junior schools, come into Kingsley on a regular basis, for example, for music lessons.

### **Developing the leadership capacity in the school**

The headteacher meets with every member of the staff once a year for a discussion about their work and future plans. As stated in the school's staff development policy:

*Kingsley School is committed to providing opportunities to enable all staff to further develop their knowledge and skills. It is our belief that a skilled and motivated staff will enhance the children's learning and ensure progress.*

The school has recently gained the 'Investors in People' award and continuing professional development is seen as an important feature of the school's work. The deputy headteacher is responsible for this aspect of the school's management and the discussions between members of staff and the headteacher help to identify individual developmental needs. There is a carefully structured induction programme for *all* new members of staff through which expectations are communicated and a common approach ensured. Staff are encouraged to attend appropriate courses, e.g., for Nursery Nurses. One difficulty is that some courses run by the LEA, e.g., on ICT, are open only to teachers and this hinders the team approach which is so fundamental at Kingsley.

As previously mentioned, the headteacher believes that she has an important role to play in staff development. Well planned and managed training and development days, attended by all staff members, are used as opportunities to develop shared vision,

common aims and a common approach to the delivery of those aims.

### **Leadership and evidence-based practice**

In addition to reading books and journals (there is a staff library) and attendance at courses, the Internet is used as a way of keeping in touch with current research (e.g., on autism at the University of Sunderland and at the University of North Carolina).

### **ICT as a leadership tool**

In addition to this use of the Internet, ICT is an important tool in the school's administration, not only in financial planning and control but also in other ways. For instance, e-mail is used as a means of communication between members of the administration team in order to avoid interrupting colleagues who may be busy. The pupil data base is used on a multi-professional basis as an aid in producing the necessary statutory reviews on pupils. There is a data base for staff training which is used not only for record keeping but also as an aid in the analysis of needs.

### **Leadership and governance**

The school is supported by a very committed group of governors who are not afraid to ask challenging questions. The governing body is actively involved in policy making and is able to offer a fresh perspective and can sometimes be more objective than the staff who are so closely involved. The headteacher is encouraging them to generate their own ideas and also to take a more active role in monitoring the work of the school. All governors visit at least once a year to observe the school in action. In the past, however, they have been reluctant to adopt a monitoring role seeing themselves as unqualified to make judgements on the work of the professionals. From September 2001, in order to give a sharper focus to their visits, they will take the school's aims as a starting point and, during their visit, look to see how these are being addressed.

### **Leadership and the community**

The school has developed a variety of links with the local community. Some of the pupils are integrated into main-stream schools for part of a day and there are particularly close links between Kingsley and the two neighbouring mainstream primary schools. Children from the neighbouring Infant school and from the on-site nursery use the school's swimming pool. Children from Kingsley go out on visits into the community and, last year, took part in the local Carnival procession. Pupils have invited their own grandparents and some residents of a local Old People's Home to a tea-party. As a result of this, one pupil now regularly visits and writes to a resident in the Home. The school is developing closer links with the local media in order to raise the profile of pupil achievement locally. Students on, for instance, Nursery Nurse training courses, are regularly placed in the school.

### **Leadership and multiple innovations**

Teamwork among the staff is an important asset in enabling the school to address change. Staff are kept fully informed and appropriate support is offered where necessary. During the present year, the staff have worked together to revise the whole curriculum structure in order to be able to demonstrate measurable pupil progress more clearly.

*The headteacher makes everything seem possible - she gives us lots of confidence.*

## Key themes and issues

Kingsley School is indeed a 'special' school. It is special because of the tremendous sense of unity and common purpose among the staff. 'A school where everyone works together for the best for the children'. The staff are highly motivated and all of them have a very high regard for their headteacher. They enjoy working in the school and welcome the opportunities for their own development. Contributing factors in the school's undoubted success may be summarised as follows:

- The leadership of the headteacher. Staff appreciate her energy, enthusiasm and determination to *'put the children first'*.
- The sense of teamwork which involves *every* adult working in the school. This is engendered through high expectations, good organisation and planning and a system which ensures a free flow of information.
- All staff feel valued and able to contribute to the school's development. *'I feel valued as a person and as a professional'*. *'Everybody can have a say and everybody is listened to'*.
- The emphasis on staff development for all members of staff. This is facilitated through the induction programme, the annual discussions between headteacher and every member of staff and by the well-planned and effective school-based CPD.

## Case study H: NEW WOODLANDS SCHOOL

*'Everything we do is for the benefit of the kids'*

### Context

New Woodlands School is a special primary school for 40 children with emotional and behavioural difficulties. At the moment, there are only boys attending the school. There are eight FTE teachers and each class has a Learning Support Assistant (LSA/TA) as well as students on placement. The premises officer has been with the school for over 20 years and works closely with the boys. The school is in Lewisham LEA, so the majority of the boys are bussed in from Lewisham, as well as others from Kent, Greenwich and Westminster. It is located in Downham, Bromley, in a new, purpose built building which is large, light and airy, and much appreciated by the staff and the pupils.

The headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the senior co-ordinator and the chair of governors all began working at the school within a year of each other - the senior co-ordinator was promoted to the SMT three years ago. The headteacher has thus by now built up his own SMT and appointed nearly all the staff, and it is clear that he has been the major influence on the ethos of the school.

The OfSTED report of November 2000 says about the school:

*The school provides outstanding provision for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The inspirational leadership and vision of the headteacher results in a clear sense of purpose and very good teamwork amongst staff.*

### Leadership, vision and values

Each member of staff said in some way that 'everything we do is for the benefit of the kids'. They also said: 'we provide a safe secure environment in which the children can learn,' 'we're looking for what is good for the children, basically'. The school works towards re-integrating as many children as possible into mainstream schools, and teachers share that aim:

*Children are valued as individuals, socially, emotionally and academically. Our ultimate aim is for children to reintegrate. We try to equip them with skills to pass on to the best provision... The staff basically share the culture - they want the best for these kids.*

The commitment to the children and to helping them towards less challenging behaviour shows during break time and in the dining room - the deputy headteacher and several other teachers and teaching assistants (TAs) were in evidence throughout these times, and continually spoke and joked with the boys. The cook and the premises officer were also clearly part of the team in that they take part in the same discourse of discussion, explanation, respect for and joking with the boys.

It is clear that the headteacher wants the school to be as much like a mainstream school in its provision to every child of the national curriculum and the numeracy and literacy hour as possible. To achieve this, he has recruited teachers from mainstream whenever he could. He and his senior management team tend to have the creative management ideas about the whole school, and he expects his curriculum leaders to lead as middle managers:

*It's a bit like a machine - it's my job in particular to come up with good ideas, or to encourage the deputy headteacher and the senior co-ordinator to come up with good ideas. Both those two are terrific - they come up with some really nice ideas, and I see it very much the literacy and numeracy co-ordinators job to encourage, motivate, lead by example.*

The other staff members are aware and support this view of management:

*The headteacher and deputy headteacher are the school leadership. Excellent - ever so supportive, always open for you to go in and have a chat with them... friendly, and the bottom line is that they do their job well with the boys... They'll always support how we deal with (the boys). They don't go against what we've done.*

### **Leadership style**

Staff describe a thoughtful, but firm headteacher, who works very closely with the two other members of the senior management team, but who ultimately guides the school in the direction he wants it to go. He welcomes ideas, suggestions and comments, he tries out new ideas with the senior management team, but he makes the final decision:

*The SMT is important, ultimately the headteacher is the boss, he makes the final decisions, he is responsible ... it's on his shoulders.*

There is an air of purpose about the school in that members of staff are working together to see where things can be improved:

*We're never stagnant... it's because we never really leave things that long without review... We're questioning all the time, it's constant review.*

The headteacher has several strategies for encouraging this sense of purpose, both in groups and individually: he uses staff meetings for discussions and review, and he produces a staff handbook each term which sets the agenda in many ways for the term ahead:

*We have regular staff meetings where we review things like what do you say, what do you do...trying to be consistent, reviewing the language we use with them... At the beginning of each term, we go through the, to the staff booklet to see what is expected, e.g. 'catch them being good'.*

Staff feel encouraged and valued by all the senior management team, each of whom seems to work with them in a different way:

*(The headteacher) rewards where it's due so that makes you feel nice about yourself ... I think that's probably the strength of the team probably - they've all got something you can learn from: .... is very organised and he listens well, and .... is positive and finds a positive in everything, and .....has got an amazing way with the kids that they do as they're told - manages consistency and he never gets ruffled by it.*

### **Instructional leadership**

There are several aspects of the 'specialness' of the school which make issues of instructional leadership different here from mainstream schools. Despite the fact that there are only eight FTE teachers, the headteacher and the deputy headteacher do not have timetables. This means that the deputy headteacher covers classes for other teachers in the morning wherever necessary, as well as doing assemblies, break duties and lunchtime supervision. She teaches her subject in the afternoon.

The headteacher seems to take most responsibility for the behaviour management in the school, and there is a strong expectation that subject co-ordinators lead the curriculum.

*I do the behaviour management - you can't have a school without clear boundaries. I feel the strength of having a good behaviour system is that it provides the foundations to build on.*

The headteacher does, however, keep a firm eye on the paperwork of each teacher, and obviously makes his expectations clear to staff. At the beginning of each week, staff are expected to give the headteacher their plans for that coming week, evaluation for the previous week on the planning sheet, and an assessment activity for one of the cores subjects. Every month the Headteacher also looks at their record folders.

The OfSTED report noted that the headteacher has developed very effective systems for checking that teaching and the curriculum are of a good standard. They commended the monitoring of teachers' planning, and commented on his clear expectations of staff.

### **Developing leadership capacity in the school**

The school/SMT define professional development in the widest sense - staff described staff meetings which focus on different issues; the staff handbook contains writings about different aspect of education, both from education writers and from the headteacher; and there is constant discussion when staff meet.

The headteacher is also very keen to encourage staff to attend appropriate and worthwhile courses. He has explored (and attended) some business courses outside education, and continues to recommend courses to the staff where appropriate, while making sure that there is also support and development within the school:

*He will come to you with courses that he thinks are interesting for you. At the same time he makes sure that everybody gets on a course during the year. Also, in appraisal, it's talked about where you want to be in the future, and I haven't done it yet, but he's said why don't you go on a preparation for deputy headship course?*

### **Leadership and evidence-based practice**

There is clear evidence of the use of research in the school both in the staff booklet and in the excellent practice. But there were varying reactions among the staff about the use of research. The headteacher includes articles and quotations from books in the staff booklet each term:

*I put in little articles about EBD or whatever. Depends on what the focus of the term is, or where we've got problems or where we've got weaknesses. Things where I think we could do slightly better as a team. I*

*try to make the theory something they can use rather than theory for the sake of theory.*

### **ICT as a leadership tool**

The headteacher uses ICT a great deal: to keep records, to produce the handbooks and other reading matter, to gather information and research about SEN work, and to communicate. He is at ease with information technology, and uses it skilfully and creatively himself, while encouraging the staff to develop their own skills in ICT.

It was noticeable that some members of staff were reluctant to work with ICT, but the headteacher had found ways of encouraging them to use it, by showing them how it would ease their workload, by issuing them with laptops, and by setting up ICT classes for those who needed them.

*We've just been given laptops - all the teachers. In fact, the Head gave us PC laptops. It's new - he's put planning sheets and school end of year reports and annual reviews and everything's on it. National Grid For Learning - training coming up in September.*

### **Leadership and governance**

The chair and vice chair are both very involved in and supportive of the school:

*It'd be good to just have (Chair) and (Vice Chair) as your outside monitors to bounce ideas off... We use them to see kids that have given us a hard time. I always listen to them because they are a fresh set of eyes. They're both level headed, feet on the ground, in it for the right reasons...In a way they are true critical friends. (Head teacher)*

### **Leadership and multiple innovations**

This question was answered differently by people at different stages of the management of the school: the headteacher seems to respond to the changes he thinks are important and necessary, reflectively fitting them into his own priorities for the school. The deputy headteacher, too, uses her experience in education to decide what really matters:

*We read a lot, using your common sense really. I think some of it is a bit misinformed, so we just don't do that.*

The English co-ordinator has a measured report on the school's reaction to change:

*I think like any school, you're going to have some teachers that panic, but actually they do quite well.*

### **Key themes and issues**

- Working with EBD boys is very stressful, but these members of staff remain cheerful and balanced. The leadership of the school enables them to take the view that the work is 'a job', and that they have lives outside which also deserve attention.
- The role in behaviour management taken by the headteacher, and his support for staff means that teachers can focus on delivery of the curriculum.
- The headteacher is clear in his expectations and talks these through with staff so that there is an on-going dialogue about the school's aims and processes.
- Staff feel well-supported when new initiatives (such as the numeracy and literacy strategies, or ICT) are introduced.

## **Case study I: PRINCE ALBERT INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOL**

*'An oasis for pupils and parents'*

### **Context**

Prince Albert is a large primary school with 750 pupils on roll, situated in Aston in the northern part of Birmingham. It is a multi-ethnic school with pupils coming mainly from Pakistani and Bangladeshi origins. The majority of pupils come from homes where English is not the first language. Over half the pupils are eligible for free school meals. A quarter have special educational needs although there are none with physical disabilities. The school is very popular and is seen as the school of the local community whose strong cultural traditions are reflected in the life of the school. Some pupils come from adjacent wards. Prince Albert has a stable and committed staff from across the age range, some with considerable experience but a number at, or near, the beginning of their careers. The headteacher likes to appoint 'challenging youngsters'.

### **The school's achievements**

The school had its last OfSTED inspection in 1998 and is expecting another soon. The OfSTED inspection found that:

*Prince Albert School is a very good school. The high standard of teaching, the good quality of education it provides for all of its pupils and the high quality of leadership and management are significant strengths.*

The comment of the inspection team in 1998 'that the school has a culture of improvement' is still applicable. The standard of attainment in mathematics is in line with national averages but, as English is a second language for nearly all the pupils, attainment in English is, understandably, below national averages. The school uses Accelerated Learning Schemes, targeting small groups of children over a short period of time.

### **Leadership style**

The headteacher sees the leadership of the school as corporate and not simply 'in terms of himself'. By corporate leadership he means that every member has a management role, a shared responsibility in the running of the school and for moving it forward. The underlying philosophy is ownership. The headteacher promotes enterprise and innovation, encouraging staff to bring new ideas and suggest changes. Furthermore, staff suggesting changes would be given the responsibility of devising a strategy to effect them. This has happened in the case of one young year leader, who is, from September, experimenting with changes in class groupings. Not all her staff, some with more than 20 years experience, were convinced of the merit of the change, but have agreed to support it for a trial period.

The headteacher believes that:

*Change must be at the shop-floor if it is to be effective*

Year leaders are overseen and monitored by the phase co-ordinators, each of whom is responsible for two years. The headteacher looks to these leaders for the standards of teaching and learning in their areas. It is at phase meetings that school improvement issues are discussed.

The headteacher is seen to have a very professional status within the school and the pupils also see him in that role. He is at times 'invisible' as he has a number of outside engagements but, even when he is absent, his 'presence' is felt.

*The headteacher is a good leader. He's part of the fabric. He considers everyone's views: staff, parents and governors. (chair of governors )*

The senior management team work well together:

*We're all pulling in the same direction, sharing the same values.(DH)*

They complement one another in styles of leadership and personality. One deputy is fairly new to the school, the other has been in post for a number of years. One is the SENCO and in charge of Key Stage 1 whilst the other is responsible for Key Stage 2. None of the SMT has a teaching commitment.

The staff hold the headteacher and the deputy headteachers in high esteem and enjoy being given responsibility and being empowered by them; it was commented that: 'Phase co-ordinators have as much responsibility as some headteachers in smaller schools'.

Staff feel trusted to do their job, and in response, offer a high level of commitment, as reflected by the teacher who said:

*You sell your soul to the school. If I'm going to do a job, I'm going to do it properly. (NQT)*

### **Leadership, vision and values**

The school has a very strong value system which is morally supported by the majority of homes. The pupils have respect and consideration for one another. The atmosphere is friendly and welcoming, 'pupils greet you in the corridor'. There is a strong pastoral approach, 'the school is not test-driven'. The emphasis is on positive rewards for pupils. Each class has 'Circle Time' within the classroom sometime each day. There is a theme for the week, which is taken up in assemblies. There is a relaxed atmosphere amongst the staff. All share the work-load and agree on the ideals the school is working towards. At present there is a massive re-generation programme for the local area and the school regards itself as an 'oasis for pupils and parents'.

The headteacher is described by the staff and governors as a visionary;

*He knows where he wants to go and how he intends to get there  
(Vice-Chair)*

The headteacher had a vision of creating a community school, and over the ten years of his headship, this has been evolving but gradually, because the community needs to be carefully nurtured and encouraged. This is clearly paying off with some success as one long-serving member of staff recognises:

*I have seen the head's progress over the last ten years and the changes he has made for the better. For example, when I came here there was only one Bengali speaking member of staff. Now there are several and this puts out a positive image.*

It is all based, however, on a solid foundation with a disciplined yet relaxed environment. One in which pupils and staff can work to their best advantage. Everything that is done by the staff is valued by the senior management who miss no opportunity to express their appreciation. There is no gap between teaching and non-teaching staff: all work together and socialise happily.

### **Instructional leadership**

The senior management are totally involved in the teaching and learning process. The headteacher does not teach. The deputies, although not class-based, carry a 50 per cent direct teaching load. They also do a great deal of informal work, particularly during directed time, dropping into phase and year meetings and discussing educational issues with individual staff. Sometimes it is a matter of 'pouring oil on troubled waters', at other times it is a case of 'driving forward'. It is common practice for the headteacher and deputy headteachers to walk about the school and carry out classroom observations. This is made easier by the fact that the school is open plan. On occasions, the headteacher or one of the deputies will address a particular teaching and learning issue or a visiting speaker will be invited to deal with a specialist subject.

The main formal instructional leadership is provided by the phase co-ordinators with the senior management ensuring that they are doing their job. Performance management has helped by putting in a formalised structure. It is the task of the phase co-ordinator to set short-term and middle-term targets and to monitor and moderate the work in the classroom. They sort out staff problems, give praise, organise resources, ensure lesson delivery and deal with discipline and pupil absence. Phase co-ordinators are described by the headteacher as 'workers on the shop-floor, taking the spanner out of the machine'.

The headteacher regards his senior and more experienced staff as 'senators', giving guidance and leadership to the younger staff. He wants these senators to 'open up their craft knowledge', to pass on their experience to others. It could be a basic technique, such as getting children to assembly without making a noise, or strategies they have found successful in the classroom. There is an openness among the staff, a trust which enables them freely to share ideas on teaching and learning issues, and a prevailing ethos that makes it possible for staff to talk to one another 'without fear of reprisal'.

### **Developing leadership capacity in the school**

The headteacher considers the most important element in staff development to be support and encouragement. Teachers learn 'on the hoof' and are encouraged to see their role developmentally. It is common for staff to take up an acting role for a term to gain experience. NQTs tend to stay longer than in many other schools. In two or three years, they take on management levels one and two and, after five years are ready to take promotion in another school. NQTs have two mentors – one main mentor and one pastoral. A motivating factor for staff is that personal interests are encouraged and funds provided to pursue them. For example, one NQT is being given the opportunity to develop her interest in art by taking a course. All NQTs are given good support and encouraged to develop their own strengths.

As it is a large school, people are given early opportunities to lead and to rise to middle management level. The headteacher believes that money empowers people. If staff are to progress in their careers, they need to learn to manage budgets effectively.

Staff feel that the school is an excellent training base with a strong ethos of promoting people within the school:

*I started as an NQT, the next year I was a Year Leader and now I am a Phase co-ordinator.*

The headteacher has widened his own educational experience by his involvement with projects outside the school and he brings to the staff the latest thinking and practice in the outside world. This means that, although it is a stable school, it is always moving forward.

### **Leadership and the community**

The community is very supportive but has very little knowledge of the British education system. The school has a friendly relationship with members of the community and communicates with them in different languages. There are a number of informal groups of parents meetings, particularly those of pupils in their early years of schooling. Interpreters are available. One of the secretaries speaks Urdu.

Home/school relationships are excellent. Some teachers visit homes. Good relations are maintained with the mosque which is always informed if pupils are unable to attend because of a school trip.

Members of the governing body represent the school on community groups such as the Regeneration Group, and the parent governor attends EAZ meetings. The governing body has a community governor who makes contact with the police and outside agencies.

A Community House is sited within the school in which after school clubs and societies and adult language classes are held. Because of the nature of the school, there is probably a closer link with the community than in most other schools.

### **Leadership and governance**

Members of the governing body are very visible in the school and have a leading role in relations with the community aided by a special Governors' Community Committee. The chair and the vice-chair are considered 'a huge strength'. Everybody in the school knows who they are. Both are well respected. The vice-chair is active in the school assisting with auditing, monitoring and bench-marking. The chair has links with the ICT team and the vice-chair with mathematics and English.

There is a good relationship between the headteacher and the governing body but it does not automatically accept the headteacher's proposals. It is prepared to be challenging and is sometimes pro-active. The chair always insists on hearing what the teachers think. The major decisions are made by the governing body. Their role is not just to 'rubber-stamp', although sometimes that is all that is required. The chair sees the headteacher as 'one who empowers the governing body:

### **ICT as a leadership tool**

The vice-chair of governors has written a computer program for an assessment system which records where children are in their own ICT skills. The headteacher aims to have pupils reaching Level 5 in IT by 2005. Members of staff have had one year of NOF training. ICT is used in the classroom to help children reach curriculum objectives and to reduce bureaucracy in lesson-planning, record-keeping and assessment. All members of

staff have computers at home. Those who could not afford new sets were offered re-conditioned machines.

Each phase timetable is on the computer. All reports are done on the computer. A great advantage is that work can be done at school and then accessed by staff at home. For example, a member of a phase team will prepare a lesson plan, save it on the web-site and then e-mail it to the rest of the team.

The school has Intranet, which is its own internal network and, through Digital Brain, has set up its own access with a school password. All staff attended a session on Digital Brain in directed time. There is ready access to information about pupils and direct access to all websites, e.g. The Birmingham Grid for Learning.

### **Leadership and multiple innovations**

The headteacher is recognised as adventurous. He is prepared to take risks, particularly in trying out new ideas in the school. As a result of his attendance at seminars and conferences, his involvement in LEA and national projects and his visits to other schools, he brings back examples of best practice and applies them appropriately to his school. Nevertheless, the headteacher does not believe in change for change's sake. Some changes can be made immediately, others can be safely 'kept on hold'. He does not consider all initiatives to be good for the school and that there needs to be a filtering process. There was always a danger of being too re-active, particularly before an inspection. In the headteacher's view: 'one needs a healthy disrespect for change'.

A great deal is going on in the way of curriculum initiatives in the school but the staff remain very positive. The headteacher is selective about what the school takes on in the way of change and is careful, as a co-ordinator commented, 'not to throw out the baby with the bath water'. The strong management system ensures a proper control of change and a sharing of responsibility.

### **Leadership and evidence-based practice**

The leadership looks at the various areas of the school and 'adopts a problem-solving stance'. For example, pupils with special educational needs receive considerable support from the Nursery stage to Year 6, yet still do not come out with the level required. Why? How can the school change this?

To answer such questions the headteacher has appointed a member of staff to be in charge of research. He has, in co-operation with The Institute of Neurophysiological Research in Chester, initiated a research project in the school on SEN and Neuro Development Delay. The headteacher is also carrying out some research in co-operation with Exeter University. The aim is to raise the level of achievement in maths. Pupils are taken out of class for one hour three days a week. There has already been a dramatic improvement.

### **Leadership for inclusion**

One of the deputy headteachers has written a plan for Inclusive Practice in Early years. It is her intention next to write a plan for the main school. The greatest need is to develop the inclusion of parents so that they will be able to share the vision of the school. They need to understand that the school caters for a large number of children with special needs, not just educationally but physically e.g. children with food allergies.

The school population is 96 per cent Muslim with 50 per cent Bengali. Every major religious festival is celebrated including Id and Christmas. Every individual and faith is treated with the same respect.

### **Key themes and issues**

- The school's system of delegated management engendered a relaxed and stress-free environment. Management and staff shared the same ideals and freely shared their expertise with one another.
- Staff were deeply committed to the school and were happy to remain there. It was encouraging to see young teachers prepared to drive forward with ambition to develop into managerial and leadership roles.
- The headteacher was a key figure but kept a low profile. He was considered to be 'part of the fabric' and put a unique stamp on the school.
- The school was a base for research and was prepared to take on innovation and experiment.
- The use of ICT in assessment, administration and school and class management has taken the school to the forefront of computer technology in schools.

## Case study J: THORNTON-IN-CRAVEN COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

*'Quality through Teamwork'*

### **Context**

Thornton-in-Craven Community Primary School is a small primary school located in the village of Thornton-in-Craven in the Yorkshire dales near Skipton. There are currently 79 children aged 5-11 years in the school. The school has three classes: one for reception and Year 1 pupils, one for Years 2, 3 and 4 pupils and one for Years 5 and 6. There are 3.4 teachers on the staff - the headteacher teaches the Year 5/6 class for three days and the 0.4 teacher covers her for two days.

In addition to the teachers, there are four classroom assistants and a school secretary, who also helps out in the classroom. Several of the classroom assistants are parents of children in the school (or past-parents) and the feeling of involvement and participation in the life of the school by parents and the community is marked.

The school takes its pupils from quite a wide area around Thornton-in-Craven, including some from villages across the Lancashire border. The social class of the school population is mixed, with some children from middle-class professional and farming backgrounds and others from working class families in former mill villages in Lancashire. The ability range of the intake is generally around the national average, although in 2000 it was significantly below average.

When the present headteacher came into post 14 years ago, there were only 22 children on roll. The school population has grown during this time to around 80 pupils, which has led to some acute accommodation problems. Up until two years ago, there was no staff room or office for the headteacher and secretary. Break times were taken standing up in the corridor. After an OfSTED report in 1996, which judged the school to be outstanding, but the accommodation to be unacceptable, pressure was put on the LEA to improve the buildings. Currently, there is one new classroom and a new staff room, headteacher's office and secretary's office. The second classroom doubles as a gym, assembly hall and dining room, and the third classroom is a temporary building. The playground is small and there is no grassed area for games. Parking is also a problem, as the school is down a narrow lane with houses occupied mainly by retired people and there is no suitable place for parents in cars to drop off or pick up their children.

### **The school's achievements**

A recent OfSTED report judged that:

*This is an outstanding school. The pupils consistently achieve standards which are well above the national average in English and mathematics and very high in science. The school also achieves impressive results when compared with schools with similar intakes. The teaching is excellent and the challenge for all pupils is sharply focused so that they make rapid gains in their learning. The headteacher provides excellent and inspirational leadership and is supported very successfully by the staff and governors in managing the school. The school makes very effective use of the resources available and provides excellent value for money.*

### **Leadership style**

The motto of the school is: 'Quality through Teamwork' and this is a theme which runs through every aspect of the school's organisation and operation. An early influence on the headteacher was a course she attended, when newly appointed, on 'developing teams'. This has been her approach throughout her headship.

The headteacher has created a small and very cohesive team who work well together and share the same values and approach. The headteacher has been in post for 14 years and one of the other teachers for ten years. The third teacher has been a permanent member of staff for two years, but had been a supply teacher in the school for some time before that. All decisions are fully discussed before they are implemented. The smallness of the school contributes to the ease of communication, but it is the headteacher's willingness to listen and be open and to value the contributions of all that facilitates the teamwork in the school. 'She rarely makes a decision without consulting'.

Another aspect of fostering teamwork and showing that all are valued is that all staff, including classroom assistants, the secretary and the cook are included when the staff meet up informally for social outings. Governors are also very closely involved in support and decision-making. 'There is an openness to ideas. Leadership is informal and in place'. 'Her leadership style is open....she's approachable...we're all together in the staffroom (teachers and NTAs)'.

### **Leadership, vision and values**

The guiding principle under which the school operates is that every child in the school should be enabled to reach his or her potential and that the school should offer a broad and balanced curriculum. All staff have been involved in developing and using the national literacy and numeracy strategies creatively to incorporate a broad range of topic areas, such as history and geography. Whole school topics are developed, such as one on the Second World War, which involve all aspects of the curriculum and also make use of a range of visitors to the school. During my visit, I heard the school orchestra playing World War Two tunes and saw work drawing on the reminiscences of older visitors about life during the war. The school regularly uses visits from outside teachers, artists, dancers and people from other cultures to broaden the curriculum.

Another key contributory factor to the school's success is the detailed assessment and monitoring of children's progress. Classes in the school are not small - the older children are in classes of 29 and 31 pupils. Even so, each child's work and progress are closely monitored and areas of difficulty are supported. Having mixed age classes means that children whose progress is slower can be supported unobtrusively, without any stigma being attached to extra support. The group of children I spoke to were aware of pupils' different learning styles and teachers' different teaching approaches and spoke enthusiastically about school and the caring approach taken by all staff towards all pupils. One staff member said: 'The head really *cares* about the children. She's always out there, in the playground taking care of them'. The children said: 'It's really friendly like. It's really nice how the teachers talk to you'.

### **Instructional leadership**

The head teaches a class for three days per week. This has been a key factor in the development of teamwork across the curriculum. She has been fully involved *as a class teacher* with the implementation of the national literacy and numeracy strategies across the school. Her leadership has enabled the staff to adapt national initiatives to fit their own vision for the school, and to deliver the broad and balanced curriculum which the

whole school staff has been involved in developing. 'It's a very interesting curriculum. The children go to lots of places and have lots of people come into the school - writers, artists, poets. More than normal....'.

As the teaching staff is a very small team, each staff member has taken on responsibility for the development of several subject areas. This has meant that all staff members have had the opportunity to develop their management skills and to take a lead for one or more curriculum areas. This has given them the confidence to apply for leadership roles in other schools.

The staff in the school - both teachers and classroom assistants, as well as the governors, look to the headteacher as a model and a mentor. One member of staff commented: 'She sets a very good example of excellence through her own classroom practice...it all follows from that and the children pick up the ethos'.

### **Developing leadership capacity in the school**

The school is part of the 'Excellent Schools SCITT' (school-centred initial teacher training) and has trained two teachers through this scheme and will begin training another in the next academic year. This involvement has given one staff member the opportunity to act as a mentor and further develop her skills in this area. It also links the school to others in the SCITT team, both regionally and nationally.

Professional development is also enabled by the broad range of responsibilities which each teacher has and by the linking in of classroom assistants to the planning and delivery of the curriculum. This has resulted in classroom assistants who are described as: '...superb. The best NTAs (non-teaching assistants) I've ever had...' by one teacher, who has worked as a supply teacher in a wide range of schools.

### **Leadership and governance**

The governors are fully involved in the life of the school. Seven of the governing body members are also parents of children at the school and are thus very keen to be active and to play a full role in decision-making. The headteacher's openness and willingness to share responsibilities and decisions makes this possible. Governors bring a range of skills and experience to the school, especially in financial planning, where they played a key role in the implementation of LMS. Small schools with teaching headteachers often found this to be a particular challenge.

The governing body is really keen on using bench-marking data to assess how well the school is doing. They spend a lot of time analysing the Autumn Package data and talking it through with the headteacher. Governors are frequent visitors to the school. Each governor takes an interest in a particular area of the curriculum and is also attached to a year group.

### **Leadership and the community**

The school is very much part of the community. Parents are welcome into the school at any time. 'Any issues are dealt with immediately, there's no division between parents and teachers'. Every Friday there is a 'Good Work Assembly' and parents are invited in to see their children receive recognition for their efforts. The school participates in community projects, such as the Millennium Project and the community supports the school through fund-raising. The 'Friends of Thornton' raise about £2,000 per year for the school.

## Key themes and issues

- The key theme for this school is 'teamwork'. This has been facilitated by the small size of the school, which enables everyone to play an active part in the development of the learning culture in the school. It is also enhanced by the personal style of the headteacher, which is characterised by openness and high personal standards.
- Another key theme is 'instructional leadership'. The headteacher commands such respect partly because she is fully involved in teaching and curriculum development and she acts as a role model and mentor for teachers, classroom assistants and pupils.
- A third theme is 'caring and respect for individuals'. The children at the school spoke about how the teachers care for the children. 'They make sure we don't get hurt when we're playing'. 'Girls can play football and boys can play netball if they want. Boys and girls can do any game they like'. 'Lessons are good. They teach you so you can understand it'.
- A major issue which emerges from this case example is the personal cost of such dedication and excellence. All the teachers work between 50 and 60 hours per week. The headteacher has been in post for 14 years and has sustained these high standards throughout, including during a recent bereavement. She is about to take up a part-time post as a LEA adviser, having been refused early retirement.
- Another issue is the extent to which the ethos and achievements of the school rely on the presence of key individuals. Another long-standing teacher is also about to leave to take up a post in another school. Thus, two thirds of the teaching staff will change in the next year. The question is whether the school will be able to maintain its vision and values when these key staff have moved on.

## SECTION 11

### PRACTICAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH: SOME REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 11.1 Introduction

This section reviews the practical and policy implications of the findings of the research for both the NCSL and the DfES. It also puts forward some recommendations particularly as they relate to policy makers and the providers of professional development and leadership training. Some of these have been anticipated by both bodies, but the College in particular since the project began, chiefly through the publication of various consultative documents (e.g. NCSL, 2001) that set down its aims and purposes in more developed ways and a strategy or way forward to meet them.

Six sections of this report deal with the empirical findings of the investigation. Section 3 provides some baseline statistical information about the headteachers, deputies, NPQH candidates and middle managers who responded to the questionnaire surveys; Section 4 reviews differing perceptions of the nature and practice of school leadership provided by these and other respondents; Section 5 reports on the views of various people about how best to improve the leadership capability of particular school leaders; Section 6 summarizes the views of different respondents on the need for and value of inquiry-minded leadership; while Section 7 reports on different people's knowledge about and views of the role of the NCSL. Sections 9 and 10 present the main findings from ten case studies of school leadership and look at leadership in action in contrasting settings and in different kinds of school.

#### 11.2 Issues warranting a policy or practical response

Looking across the specific findings reported in each of these sections, and the reflections offered about them in paragraphs 3.9, 4.9, 5.10, 6.7, 7.8 and 9.2 (which should be read alongside what is written here), it is possible to distil the following list of specific issues warranting a policy or practical response by either or both the NCSL and the DfES. For each of the issues discussed a set of recommendations is offered for both policy makers and those responsible for professional/leadership development.

##### **i) School leadership profile**

Our research brought out interesting messages about the demographic profile of school leadership in England. Gender representation in school leadership is moving further towards the balance in the population as a whole. But, in order to recruit a more representative cross section of the population as far as ethnicity and disability are concerned, work should be done on both the image and general appeal of school teaching and leadership, and on recruitment and selection training for those who make leadership employment decisions. We also found that a large number of headteachers were looking to leave their posts, and that many deputy headteachers were not undertaking NPQH or planning to move to headship.

- *Policy recommendations*

More work is needed on making school leadership an attractive and 'do-able' task for all those who hold or aspire to such positions, including looking at the workload implications. Policy makers need to disseminate examples of good practice in managing

workload and models of school structures and processes that make effective use of administrative and other staff, using appropriate task delegation.

- *Leadership development recommendations*

School leadership programmes need to pay more attention to encouraging participants to develop strategies for balancing work and other aspects of their lives. It is also necessary to work with selection panels (and as an important aspect of governor training – see later) on equal opportunities aspects of recruitment and retention of teachers and school leaders.

For ‘career deputies’ – those whose commitment to the classroom leads them to decide not to seek headship – development opportunities need to be offered to support and enhance their role to enable them to use their expertise and experience to best effect (for example as mentors and leaders of staff development in their schools and more broadly in their LEAs).

## **ii) The appeal of leadership**

‘Vision’, ‘values’ and ‘high expectations’ are key terms informing the conceptions of school leadership held by many respondents. We were struck by the power and vitality of the language used when our respondents described how the appeal of leadership was that it allowed them to make a difference (or other such terms). In our case studies, where we could examine in greater depth such matters, we were able to tease out the importance to school leaders of these concepts, and also to see them in action. Much of the leadership training literature highlights vision and values as important, but does not then go on to identify or develop further their practical implications. The literature does not explicate which values and visions are best fit for particular *educational* purposes and contexts. Furthermore, there is little connection between vision and values and leadership in action.

School leaders also complained about being unable sometimes to live up to their own and other people’s lofty perceptions of their role, and about the de-motivating consequences of what they perceive to be too many administrative and paper-work demands on their time. This sense of disappointment and frustration may be a factor in discouraging some existing and potential headteachers from seeking positions in challenging contexts; it may also be a factor in persuading others to seek early retirement or education-related employment outside of schools. Balancing work and life is also crucial – some of the headteachers and many of the middle managers who responded to our research regretted the loss of personal life, or feared that it would be lost if they were promoted.

- *Policy recommendations*

Both the NCSL and the DfES therefore need to consider what each can do to help the education service hold on to its better headteachers and ensure that the majority of its talented deputy and assistant heads move into headship positions.

Furthermore, each may need to examine and put in place measures that better distribute leadership talent and related experience throughout the system so that schools, especially those located in challenging contexts, can either look forward to being led by good headteachers or learn ways of developing such leadership capability and capacity themselves.

Our research shows that many school leaders work best and are most committed when they are able to put their core values into action. We suggest that national literature about school leadership allows for this more than it does at present. We also suggest that the role and job description for school leaders is reviewed in order to allow for other parts of their lives and that the work-life balance be recognised as the serious issue it is.

- *Leadership development recommendations*

School leadership programmes need to find more space for examples of leadership values in action – how to articulate those values, how to prioritise them, how to develop strategies around them, and how to measure all leadership activities against them. In addition, leadership programmes should include strategies for achieving an appropriate balance between working and other lives, as well as disseminating examples of good practice.

### **iii) Leadership teams and teamwork**

The importance of teamwork and working together were central features of well-led schools yet the whole idea of sharing within staff groups could be increasingly difficult to foster at a time when external forces (e.g. pay differentials and performance management) could so easily encourage internal competition, division and a sense of injustice. Similarly, moves to promote more distributive and dispersed forms of leadership in and throughout schools must acknowledge the potential impact this should have on salary differentials and work loads.

The research brought out clearly the value of teamwork and collaborative working, especially at senior management or leadership team level. However, the national leadership programmes are mainly offered to individuals rather than to the teams of which they are members.

- *Policy recommendations*

Policy makers need to take account of the potentially divisive consequences of particular aspects of performance management. Factors which help or hinder moves to distribute or devolve leadership more evenly in schools also need to be considered.

- *Leadership development recommendations*

The College should consider the provision currently available for school leadership teams and, if necessary, encourage or create more opportunities for team members to experience professional development as a team.

### **iv) Middle managers or ‘emergent leaders’**

An additional challenge is posed by the apparent lack of leadership said to be shown by many current middle managers operating in both primary and secondary schools. Middle managers – or ‘emergent leaders’ as the College is referring to them - are the largest group of leaders in a school, and are at the forefront of the management of teaching and learning in their subjects and curriculum areas. Many of them are satisfied with this role and should be encouraged to continue to lead well from this position. In many ways they are *the* key to school improvement.

Others, though, are the future senior managers in schools. We found there were several issues that sometimes made the working lives of middle managers difficult. These included:

### *1. Lack of role clarity*

We were surprised how often the questionnaires we addressed to subject leaders ended up in the hands of senior managers, and also how often those who seemed to us to be clearly middle managers did not see themselves as managers, let alone leaders. Those who worked in schools (like some of our case study schools) where senior managers specially encouraged leadership throughout the school, seemed more at ease in their management roles.

### *2. Bureaucratic overload*

We had most difficulty making contact with middle managers: their rate of questionnaire return was the lowest in all our responses and we found that we often could not reach them by phone. Those who did answer our questions often did not want to take on greater responsibilities because of the perceived bureaucratic overload of senior management, and they told us they were already struggling with paperwork, along with their teaching responsibilities. We were struck by how much better headteachers handled bureaucracy, and wondered whether this was because they were more at ease with prioritising external demands and had better coping strategies for paperwork, or whether they managed it by passing it down to their middle managers.

### *3. Lack of development opportunities*

The middle managers and team leaders in our research were the least likely of all respondents to have taken part in professional development in the previous three years. They seemed least well-prepared for leadership, and sometimes did not see themselves as leaders.

### *4. A national coherent whole career development framework*

Professional development for middle managers in schools is more patchy at the moment than that for beginning teachers or for senior staff. If an LEA or a particular school or headteacher is committed to professional development in general, then middle managers seem more secure in their work – we found this especially in our case study schools, where we looked at this issue in greater depth.

- *Policy recommendations*

Greater clarity about the role and expectations of middle managers in primary, secondary and special schools would be welcome.

Some research is already being done nationally on bureaucratic overload: our investigation shows that paperwork seems to be located especially around subject leaders and middle managers. We urge that middle managers' 'bureaucratic burden' is explored further with a view to reducing it.

- *Leadership development recommendations*

Leadership development for middle managers should become as automatic as other professional development, and part of a whole career plan. Training programmes should take account of aspects of the National Standards for Subject Leaders.

While increasing attention is presently being given to offering more training opportunities in leadership development to this group - and the NCSL's 'Leading from the Middle' is an important development here - the suggestion that comes through strongly from this investigation is that this will need to be co-ordinated nationally and targeted systematically in order for it to have positive consequences throughout the system. This

is linked to the urgent need to put in place a map of leadership development ensuring coherence, continuity, some common themes, and elements of choice at different stages. The existence of phase differences in training needs (in relation to the National Standards) should be recognised. Middle managers' and subject leaders' training and development has been and continues to be a crucial area worthy of the attention it is currently being given by the College.

In our view a whole career professional development plan would include various issues that are specific to middle management: how middle managers are managed and how they manage and lead others – their particular, and central, position in schools; strategies for managing paperwork and bureaucratic issues; demonstrating leadership and moving forward to senior management.

#### **v) School governing bodies**

A parallel lack is found in the general leadership roles that school governors are enabled to play. Some of the school leaders surveyed in this investigation, for example, appear to have either minimal or negative expectations of governors in terms of them offering strategic advice about the future direction of their schools. Where these expectations are low, they are likely to be lived down to by governors themselves. The research found that a significant number of headteachers thought their governors *should* play a key strategic leadership role, but far fewer reported that role actually being enacted. This unsatisfactory waste of opportunity and potential governor talent could perhaps helpfully be redressed if the training of headteachers gave even greater priority to how they can work strategically with governors. However, potential headteachers are better served as the current NPQH model gives considerable focus to this aspect of their role, which includes face-to-face training.

Our research shows the clear value of effective governing bodies, especially chairs of governing bodies, when the relationship between headteachers and governing bodies is successful. However, we often saw a lack of clarity about the role of the governing body, both about acting as a critical friend to headteachers and around their possible contribution to strategic leadership. It may be that there are unreal expectations of time and 'semi-professional' input from people who are doing this work as volunteers, often in addition to their own full-time work and family commitments.

- *Policy recommendations*

There should be further exploration about ways of articulating and then disseminating greater realism and clarity about the role of the governing body.

- *Training and development recommendations*

Headteachers' and governors' training should focus more clearly on the governors' role in strategic leadership. There should be more joint training in this area for headteachers, school leadership teams and governors, particularly chairs of governing bodies.

The new governor induction training materials recently produced by the Department are helpful, but joint training, would also assist - as well as draw attention to the fact that many governors could be operating in very conservative ways on appointment panels where they are possibly giving too much priority to 'safe', sometimes, internal candidates. Specialist training on recruitment and selection should be a requirement for all those governors involved in the appointment of school leaders, but especially headteachers.

### 11.3 Other leadership development recommendations

A number of other recommendations for leadership development and training emerged from our findings and reflections. These include the following:

1. We were struck by how much school leaders seemed to value managing interpersonal relationships far above other management tasks.

- *Recommendation*

Leadership development programmes need to ensure they are paying sufficient attention to this aspect of leadership and management, and that they are linking the more strategic implications to the management of staff and the management of vision.

2. The case studies drew our attention to the importance of effective internal communication as a vision sharing and empowering dimension of leadership.

- *Recommendation*

Professional development programmes need to include internal communications as an important part of school leadership. Models of good practice in ways of keeping staff informed could be introduced as well as an exploration of different aspects of internal communication.

3. Preparation for the job – we noted that although many headteachers reported themselves as prepared for the job, especially those who were involved in NPQH, fewer middle managers reported this to be the case.

- *Recommendation*

A whole career framework for leadership development should encourage preparedness further, and allow participants to think and plan ahead as well as reflect on their present leadership activities.

4. ICT – those school leaders who were comfortable with ICT seemed to use it more and to see it as a time saver, rather than demanding of their time. However, relatively few headteachers and other school leaders use ICT on a regular basis. In the light of this finding and with so few using it as part of their training and development, the College may wish to acknowledge the considerable challenge this presents given its commitment to using web-based learning environments as a central feature of so much of its work.

- *Recommendation*

Further ways need to be explored of developing ease with ICT for school leaders and the fact that relatively few of them are regularly on-line is an important issue for those who are developing web-based leadership and management development programmes.

5. Professional and leadership development need not be as formal as programmes and courses, either face-to-face or on-line. The best development practice we saw took place in school, and ranged from learning conversations to modelling good practice.

- *Recommendation*

We suggest that a key component of leadership programmes includes managing professional development for others, as well as theoretical frameworks which underpin professionals as learners.

6. As exemplified in the series of case studies found in Section 10 of this report, some schools are very well led, but such good practice is not always widely known outside the immediate locality in which it takes place.

• *Recommendation*

There is a need to give further thought to how best to disseminate this good practice in ways that foster new learning throughout the system about leadership capacity and capability. The College's commitment to 'network learning communities' is an attempt to address this issue of 'learning better from each other'.

Other leadership development or training-related issues which may require a DfES/NCSL response, of which the most important are, the fact that:

- some headteachers appear to have an inadequate appreciation of the demands of their role before taking up their posts, and feel inadequately prepared once in post;
- many headteachers and deputies express a wish for increased training and professional development opportunities in the 'management of teaching and learning';
- many school leaders derive great professional development benefit from undertaking acting headship or shared headship roles, opportunities which currently are not available to all or even most of those aspiring to such positions;
- many respondents value the contribution currently being made by the HEADLAMP and LPSH national programmes to their professional development, though a number suggested it would be better to offer a more coherent set of national qualifications and development opportunities which address leadership issues both in general and specific to particular roles;
- most school leaders fail effectively to access and make appropriate use of relevant educational research on different aspects of their role.

#### **11.4 The need for further research**

This investigation and the recommendations that follow from it highlight a number of areas that may warrant being researched by the NCSL and/or the DfES. These include the following:

- the role of the governing body in the appointment of senior school leaders;
- the career patterns of long-standing headteachers whose high professional commitment is undiminished by their length of service;
- the factors which inhibit some successful school leaders from seeking employment in challenging contexts;
- the attractiveness or otherwise of contracts of employment that allow some headteachers to be appointed for fixed periods and for others periodic time away from the school context to undertake research sabbaticals or purposeful secondments;

- the ways in which well led schools create enabling internal bureaucracies and structures and, relatedly, effective ways of managing the heavy external paper-work demands that are made upon them;
- the way in which individuals manage their workload effectively, with a view to producing illuminative and exemplary case studies to inform others;
- the role of on-line communities of school leaders in furthering their professional development and associated learning;
- how leadership capability is best developed;
- the work cultures and career aspirations of middle managers.

### **11.5 The College's future role**

The investigation has unearthed four issues that have direct relevance to the future public role and function of the NCSL and its capacity to deliver fully on its objectives. We recommend strongly that these are kept at the forefront of the College's thinking as it moves into the next phase of its development.

- The first is to do with the apparent lack of desire on the part of some headteachers, and primary ones in particular, to be involved in the work of the College;
- The second concerns the view expressed by this same group of school leaders that the College will have limited impact on promoting leadership capacity;
- The third relates to the concern presently being aired among some school leaders and training providers that the College's future work may become over-directed/influenced by the imperatives of current government policy;
- The fourth derives from the concern expressed by some LEAs that the College is presently failing to draw sufficiently on their local knowledge and leadership training experience.

In broad terms, the research findings outlined in this report suggest that the NCSL's consultation papers, including its ten 'leadership propositions', are moving the professional debate in the right direction. Certainly, the main findings of the research are generally consistent with current developments as proposed by the College.

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## Appendix

The first headteacher survey (sample 1) was conducted in May 2001. Further analysis of this sample however found that there was an unexpected over-representation of urban primary schools, particularly from Birmingham and London. Therefore, in order to ensure the sample was representative of all schools in England it had to be both augmented and weighted. As a result, a second survey of headteachers (sample 2) was conducted in October, 2001. In addition, the returns from sample 1 were weighted so that the combined headteacher sample (samples 1 and 2) could be said to be a random stratified sample of all schools in England.

The Autumn term sample of headteachers was designed in part to compensate for the over-representation of urban primary schools. Samples 1 and 2 have been combined for this report but weighted for the purposes of most statistical analyses (see Table A1). The weighting was necessary in order to be able to make use of all the responses from the first survey (sample 1) of schools. It was derived by dividing the approximate number of primary schools in England ( $n = 18,250$ ) by the approximate number of primary schools in the two geographical areas which were over-represented in the sample (Birmingham and London,  $n = 2,225$ ). As a result the figure of 0.1213 (approximately one-ninth) was calculated and became the weighting ratio. This weighting was added to the SPSS data set to ensure that, where necessary, statistical calculations involving primary schools in sample 1 would take this into account.

*Table A1: Headteacher sample*

<i>Time of survey:</i>	<i>Returns</i>	<i>Returns (weighted)</i>
Summer term	475 (63%)	330 (54%)
Autumn term	283 (37%)	283 (46%)
<i>Total</i>	758 (100%)	613 (100%)

The different times that the two headteacher surveys were undertaken – in the Summer and Autumn terms - could have skewed or biased the results, so this needed to be carefully considered. Each question on the headteacher questionnaire was therefore examined to see if there was any likelihood of it being affected by the different timings of the two surveys. The questions where it was considered the timings could possibly have had the most effect included: heads' future work preferences, relations with governors, heads' training needs, self-assessment, and the use of ICT applications. However, no significant differences between the two headteacher surveys were found on any of these questions (see Tables A2-6 below).

*Table A2: Future work preferences of serving headteachers (weighted  $n = 613$ )*

		<i>Survey 1 (<math>n = 330</math>) -%</i>	<i>Survey 2 (<math>n = 283</math>) -%</i>
Remain at present school	( $n = 368$ )	59	61
Move to a different school	( $n = 182$ )	29	31
Become an HMI/Inspector	( $n = 56$ )		
Become a University lecturer	( $n = 26$ )		
Take up an LEA post	( $n = 60$ )		
Become a Consultant/Trainer	( $n = 127$ )	20	22
Leave the education system for employment elsewhere	( $n=85$ )		
Retirement/early retirement	( $n = 227$ )	36	38
Other	( $n = 32$ )		

*(Percentages only given where numbers permit meaningful comparisons)*

**Table A3: Governing body and strategic leadership**

	<i>Major role - 1</i> %	<i>Moderate – 2</i> %	<i>Minor – 3</i> %	<i>No role at all 4</i> %
Survey 1 (n = 330)	21	60	18	1
Survey 2 (n = 283)	23	55	18	4

**Table A4: Further training opportunities with reference to the National Standards –top 4**

<i>Element of the National Standards</i>	<i>Survey 1</i> (n = 330) %	<i>Survey 2</i> (n = 283) %
Keep the work of the school under review and account for its improvement.	46	42
Promote and secure good teaching, effective learning and high standards of achievement.	62	54
Monitor, evaluate and review the quality of teaching and learning.	44	37
Agree, develop and implement systems to meet the learning needs of all pupils.	48	47

**Table A5: Importance of self-assessment of own leadership role as important**

<i>Self-assessment</i>	<i>Very important(1)</i> %	<i>(2)</i> %	<i>(3)</i> %	<i>Of no importance (4)</i> %
Survey 1 (n = 330)	75	23	2	0
Survey 2 (n = 283)	74	25	1	0

**Table A6: Headteachers' use of ICT 'a great deal' – top 4**

	<i>Survey 1</i> (Summer term) (n = 330)	<i>Survey 2</i> (Autumn term) (n = 283)
e-mail educational establishments (n= 185)	28	34
Surf net for ideas (n = 111)	21	17
Accessing DfES website (n = 171)	32	25
Management info. Systems (n = 180)	31	32

Questions that concerned the College, for example, awareness of its focus and aims, its part in developing the school improvement agenda, and in promoting leadership development were probably the most likely to show any temporal differences. A further question asked respondents how involved they wished to be in the College's work. Analysis of these key questions about the College found, as with the other questions, that there were no statistically significant differences between the responses of the May and October surveys. (The results for the questions concerning the College are shown in Tables A7 – A10.) It was therefore deemed legitimate to combine the two headteacher

samples and to use the weighting ratio (in relation to primary schools in sample 1) as appropriate.

*Table A7: Awareness of NCSL's focus and aims*

	<i>Very aware (%)</i>	<i>2 (%)</i>	<i>3 (%)</i>	<i>Not aware at all (%)</i>
Survey 1 (Summer term) (n = 330)	14	41	33	12
Survey 2 (Autumn term) (n = 283)	9	42	37	12

*Table A8: Significance of NCSL in developing the school improvement agenda*

	<i>Very significant (%)</i>	<i>2 (%)</i>	<i>3 (%)</i>	<i>No significance (%)</i>
Survey 1 (Summer term) (n = 330)	21	51	25	3
Survey 2 (Autumn term) (n = 283)	17	53	27	3

*Table A9: Significance of NCSL in promoting leadership development in schools*

	<i>Very significant (%)</i>	<i>2 (%)</i>	<i>3 (%)</i>	<i>No significance (%)</i>
Survey 1 (Summer term) (n = 330)	29	48	19	4
Survey 2 (Autumn term) (n = 283)	25	52	20	2

*Table A10: Involvement in work of the College*

	<i>Very involved (%)</i>	<i>2 (%)</i>	<i>3 (%)</i>	<i>Not involved (%)</i>
Survey 1 (Summer term) (n = 330)	24	42	23	11
Survey 2 (Autumn term) (n = 283)	19	42	29	10