

Second headship

Challenge and revitalisation

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October 2006



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Executive summary

Introduction

This is a report of a study of second headship in primary and secondary schools in England, funded by the National College for School Leadership (NCSL). By 'second headship' we mean those in headships beyond their first. The study examines headteachers' reasons for seeking a second headship, how they made their choice, and their experiences in their first and second schools. The extent to which their successes are repeated in their second school, and the challenges and rewards of the move, are also studied, along with any development activities that could facilitate moves from first to second headship.

Previous surveys of headteachers indicate that about one third of primary heads are second heads and about one quarter of secondary heads are second heads (Earley et al 2002; Stevens et al 2005).

The literature suggests that such a mid-career transition may have the effect of renewing the motivation of those who make such a transition (Oplatka 2001a). This may be particularly effective when the transition takes place as the person reaches a plateau in their work performance and their work is likely to be less good in the future. Headship involves the processes of organisational and professional socialisation (Parkay et al 1992). The first is concerned with adapting to a new organisation, and the second is concerned with adapting to the role of headteacher. For those who have already been a headteacher and are moving to a new organisation, the major process is expected to be that of adapting to a new organisation (Fidler and Atton 2004).

The study was conducted using a large questionnaire survey of second heads who had been identified with the aid of a representative sample of local authorities. Eighty-six completed questionnaires were received from primary school second heads – a 74% response rate – and 78 from secondary school second heads – a 70% response rate. Telephone interviews with 20 primary and 20 secondary heads were also conducted. These covered: reasons for seeking second headship and choice of school; similarities and differences in the two schools; and success in the new post. Development activities that heads had found valuable in either or both headships were also studied. The work was conducted in the 2005–06 school year.

Primary survey findings

Findings from the primary questionnaire indicated that:

- 55% of second heads were female and 45% were male;
- 40% of heads are in third and fourth headships and 60% are in second headships (see Figure 5.2);
- they were appointed to their first headship between the ages of 27 and 54 with a mean age of 38 (see Figure 5.4);
- about half intended to go on to second headship when appointed to their first headship;
- they spent an average of nearly six years in their first headship (see Figure 5.3);
- they were appointed to second headship between 30 and 50 years of age with a mean of 44 years (see Figure 5.4);
- about one third followed a predecessor who was a second head if they knew details (almost a fifth had no details of their predecessor);

- two thirds moved to second headship for personal reasons, 27% for school reasons and 6% ($n=5$) for external reasons;
- two thirds said they were more selective in their choice of second school compared to their first;
- a third were interested in only one school or a small number and over half were interested only in schools of a specific type (see Figure 5.6);
- these heads had typically made a large improvement in their first school's SATs scores between taking up post and leaving (see Figure 5.7);
- their first schools tended to be less well performing schools than the national average when they took up post;
- for second headship as a general trend, half those in lower performing schools moved to higher performing schools and half of those in higher performing moved to lower performing (see Figure 5.13 and subsequent discussion);
- the overall trend in location was to move from rural to suburban schools (see Figure 5.9 and subsequent discussion);
- heads generally moved to larger schools for their second headship (see Figure 5.11);
- in both schools the highest priority for improvement was curriculum, teaching and learning (see Table 5.1);
- two fifths said that they had more surprises on starting work in their second school than their first;
- almost two fifths rated themselves more successful in second headship than their first and only four did not – these had moved on to third or fourth headships;
- about 30% of existing second heads plan a further headship in the future;
- over two thirds would definitely recommend second headship to first heads (see Figure 5.14).

Secondary survey findings

Findings from the secondary school questionnaire indicated that:

- 60% of second heads were male and 40% were female;
- 17% of secondary second heads were in a headship beyond their second;
- they were appointed to their first headship between the ages of 31 and 52 with a mean age of 41 (see Figure 6.4);
- 44% intended to move on to second headship when appointed to their first headship;
- they spent an average of six years in their first headship (see Figure 6.3);
- they were appointed to second headship between 35 and 60 years of age with a mean age of 47 (see Figure 6.4);
- one third followed another second head in their second headship;
- 60% moved to second headship for personal reasons, 30% for school reasons and 10% ($n=8$) for external reasons;
- over 70% said they were more selective in their choice of second school compared to their first;
- a third were interested in only one school or a small number and 20% were interested in a wide range of schools (see Figure 6.6);
- these heads had typically made a large improvement in their first school's test and examination scores between taking up post and leaving (see Figure 6.7);
- their first schools tended to be less well performing than the national average when they took up post;
- for second headship as a general trend, half those in lower performing schools moved to higher performing schools and half of those in higher

- performing moved to lower performing (see Figure 6.11 and subsequent discussion);
- the overall trend in location was a small move from urban to suburban and rural schools (see Figure 6.9 and subsequent discussion);
- heads generally moved to larger schools for their second headship (see Figure 6.10) and to 11–18 schools (see Figure 6.8);
- in both schools the highest priority for improvement was test and examination results (see Table 6.2);
- over one fifth said that they had more surprises on starting work in their second school than their first;
- almost half rated themselves more successful in their second headship than their first and only five did not;
- almost 30% of existing second heads plan a further headship in the future;
- over two thirds would definitely recommend second headship to first heads (see Figure 6.12).

The research investigated a number of themes in depth using telephone interviews. The findings from these sections are as follows.

Reasons for seeking second headship

The reasons given by primary and secondary school second heads were complex but were analysed under the headings of 'personal', 'school' (first or second), and 'external'.

Personal reasons: the most frequent reason given was that the head sought a fresh challenge. A further prompting was provided by a consideration of what they wanted to do with their remaining career. Second heads concluded that they did not wish to spend their whole headship career at only one school and most added that they did not consider this would be good for the school either. Some considered that they personally had completed the improvements that they wished to make in that school. A small number in challenging schools found the workload in their first school was unsustainable in the longer term. Finally, family relocation could intervene even if the head did not wish to move to a second school at that time.

School reasons: almost all were under no pressure to leave their first school where they were very happy, but the most frequent reason given was that their first school needed a fresh impetus and there was a general concern that their school would become complacent if they stayed. Often this was associated with the identification that the school had reached a stage in its development that provided a suitable point for someone else to lead the next stage. Occasionally there was some concern about the school's future either because of falling rolls or local authority reorganisation. For a few heads it was the attraction of a particular second school that was the key reason.

External reasons: for a small number of heads it was local authority reorganisation that closed the head's first school. There were also a very small number of cases where the head was headhunted by consultants or a local authority to take on the headship of a specific second school.

While these were the positive reasons for moving to a second headship, heads spoke of some potentially negative features that they recommended potential second heads should consider before making their decision. A small number spoke of recognising a risk of moving from a successful first headship to a headship that might prove less successful. However, only a tiny minority had this doubt in the early years

of their second headship. There was a more general concern that the higher workload required to establish oneself in a new school might be underestimated.

Choice of school

As heads were generally under little pressure to leave their first school, they were able to look for and choose a second school that they wanted. Some sent for details for some time before applying. They had some very general criteria that affected their choice such as wanting a new challenge and wanting a school where they could make a difference, but they also had more specific criteria. These concerned age range, faith, ability range, social and ethnic composition, location, performance and development needed. Second schools were generally larger than first schools and some heads had this as a specific requirement. About 15–20% of primary and secondary heads were interested in only one specific school with a slightly larger group interested in a small number of specific schools. Around a half had schools of a specific type in mind and 15–20% of primary and secondary heads looked at a wide range of schools (see Figure 8.1).

About a half made only one application. There was some comment about their selection by heads who were moving to a somewhat different type of school. Many of these related to heads of very small primary schools moving to larger schools. Previous experience in a larger school and their development while head of their small school played a part in convincing selectors of their ability to head a larger school. A small number of heads that applied for a prestigious or particularly large secondary school reported that they considered that this was a second headship school – the previous head was a second head and all the shortlisted candidates were second heads.

Some heads noted that despite their efforts to investigate their second school before accepting the job and even after visits before taking up post, there were still some important surprises that they discovered in their early period in post.

Experiences: successes and challenges

There was a great deal of evidence mentioned by heads of their success in their first post but there was less evidence in terms of public indicators of success in their second school. This was largely because the interviewees were chosen from those in the early years of their second headship who were in the process of re-establishing themselves in their new school. A good deal of effort was being placed on adjusting to a new school, discovering similarities and differences from their first school and reviewing processes that would lead to more conventional measures of success later. A surprisingly common issue was dealing with budget deficits.

They generally attributed their greater success in second headship to their greater maturity and their learning through their first headship experience. Indeed a small number of heads found themselves in schools that they considered needed a second head, so great were the skills required. While there were a number of heads in schools in challenging circumstances, it was heads who found themselves in a very difficult internal situation but not in a challenging external context, often resulting from destabilisation, who found life far tougher than they expected. The other group who for different reasons met an unexpected challenge were those who had moved from a struggling school where staff worked together and were willing to change, to one that was already quite successful but where staff saw no reason to change and improve.

While there is more discussion of challenges than would be warranted by the number of heads who raised them, this was an attempt to raise awareness such that

potential second heads would be forewarned of situations that previous second heads had met. But there was also overwhelming evidence of satisfaction from second heads who had moved and had experienced the re-invigoration of a new challenge, and this included those meeting unexpected challenges.

Learning and professional development

Headteachers acknowledged the difficulty of meeting such diverse needs but identified a number of activities, programmes and approaches that had assisted them to meet their professional development and support needs. The NCSL programmes, particularly the Leadership Programme for Serving Headteachers (LPSH), received praise for its rigour and its success in facilitating headteachers' self-review processes. Other sources of support were also cited, among them being: local authority personnel and structures; coaches, mentors and consultants; professional associations, higher education establishments; secondment opportunities and visits (some overseas); directed and focused reading; and document consultation.

On the specific issue of preparation for second headship, headteachers were in agreement that their development needs could not be solely met through a new national programme. Moreover, the growing complexity of the role meant that headteachers would continue to rely on their favoured source of support, namely the support of informal and formal networks made up of colleague headteachers.

Useful additional ways identified by headteachers for preparing for second headship included:

- thorough and timely research of the new school and its context;
- a realistic handover period accompanied by a relevant and robust induction process;
- systematic self-review and self-reflection opportunities, for example, LPSH.

The career of headship

Second headship expands and extends the career of headship and also has implications for leadership careers before headship. One of the reasons that second heads gave for moving from first headship was the thought of spending their entire headship career in a single school. Thus the possibility of moving to a chosen school for a second headship extends the career of headship and by offering different school possibilities, it also expands the career of headship.

Analysis of the data also point to implications for leadership careers before second headship. Those who take a range of posts in different sizes and types of school are likely to find that more opportunities will be open to them in terms of choice of headships than those who have taken a narrow path with a limited range of experience. Such effects particularly showed in moving from very small schools to larger ones, moving from single-sex schools and when taking an additional age range for a second headship compared to a first headship.

Seeking opportunities for acting headships at any career stage widens experience of different types of school and so provides a broader base from which to seek particular choices of school for a second headship.

Policy implications

The findings of this research suggest implications for a range of groups.

Heads

- Keeping options open by wide experience before first headship.
- Length of time in first school – think in terms of five to seven years and think of moving when there is a danger of plateauing rather than continuing to improve.
- Choice of school – choose a second school that will provide a personal challenge and where you can make a difference.
- Workload in first year – be prepared for a heavier workload re-establishing yourself in a new school.
- Take care transferring expectations and practice from your first school to the second.

Governors

- Governors as selectors of headteachers need to have a full appreciation of the value of appointing an experienced first head to their vacancy.
- If governors wish to appoint an experienced head they need to ensure that the salary they offer to the successful candidate is attractive.
- Governors need to identify schools that have levels of challenge for which those who are already experienced heads are likely to be best suited.

Local authorities and diocesan authorities

- The possibility of a headship beyond their first needs to be made known to those who are in senior leadership positions in school.
- Authorities need to try to provide acting headship opportunities to existing heads who may plan a second headship in order to increase their knowledge of different schools.
- Authorities should provide induction and make suitable mentoring available to all heads including second heads.

Government

- Government need to make further efforts to make headship an attractive career option.
- The pressure of expectation on headteachers needs to be lessened.
- Expectations of headteachers' careers need to be broadened to include second headship for individuals and a role identified for them in school improvement.

NCSL

- Information and publicity is needed on second headship and the advantages that it may bring.
- NCSL could incorporate career planning into its training courses before and during headship and specifically draw attention to the implications for earlier posts of preparing for second headship.
- NCSL could run awareness-raising activities for experienced heads who are at a stage in their headship that a second headship might be appropriate.
- There are some training and development activities that could prepare for acting headships or second headship for experienced heads. These could include analysing new organisations and planning change in a range of scenarios.

- There are a range of follow-up research studies that could broaden and deepen knowledge of successes and challenges in second headship, particularly the transfer of experience from first to second headship.

Acknowledgements and key to quotations

The authors of the report would like to express their gratitude to all who supported and contributed to this research. In particular they would like to thank the members of the project Advisory Committee and the local authority advisers and officers from the local authorities listed in Appendix 2 who helped us identify second heads. Finally, they would like to thank all the anonymous headteachers who piloted or completed a questionnaire and gave a telephone interview. This research could not have been completed without their cooperation.

In the text where there are quotations from interviews with headteachers:

P = primary
S = secondary

M = male
F = female

The number is an identification number so that different quotations from the same headteacher can be identified.

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2 Background

Introduction and terminology

Here, we use the term 'second headship' to cover any headteacher who is in their second or subsequent permanent headship. We have heard of heads that, through short-term appointments, may have headed as many as seven schools. Where we specifically want to deal with those in third or more headships, we shall refer to them as 'further' headships. However, our main focus in this paper is on headteachers in the next headship after their first.

Trends over time

There have been no studies until very recently that have indicated the prevalence of second heads and no previous studies that have focused specifically on second heads. A number of earlier studies of headteachers have mentioned more than one headship but that was noted in passing. Moving on to another post after headship including second headship was not so rare 40–50 years ago. But, only recently have there been any statistics.

The two large-scale national surveys that have been carried out in 2001 and 2004 on the State of School Leadership asked about the previous posts of their sample of headteachers. Thus, in the 2001 survey (Earley et al 2002: 22) "a stratified random sample of headteachers" was conducted in the summer and autumn terms, but some weighting was required as there was an over-representation of urban schools in the summer term survey. A total of 1,050 primary and 450 secondary heads were sent questionnaires with a response rate of 47%. Of the combined group, almost 18% had served between 10–15 years and over 6% had served over 15 years. Twenty-two per cent had been appointed as an internal candidate to their first headship and 27% had been a headteacher previously. This figure was the same for primary and secondary schools.

This group was also asked about their career aspirations and 30% said they wished to move to another school. Too much reliance should not be placed on stated intentions since there is much evidence that the reality is rather different but, nevertheless, the two figures for moving on to another school in terms of the past and future are not very different. Primary heads were more likely to consider moving to another school than secondary heads.

Copies of the questionnaires are not included in the study and therefore it is not possible to analyse the particular wording used to ascertain how far it was permanent headships that were being investigated (other than acting headship was given as a separate result category).

Mori conducted the follow-up survey in 2004 (Stevens et al 2005: 18). The sample was stratified by phase, Government Office Region and school size. The initial sample was 2,352 but only 2,097 heads agreed to take part. They received back 911 questionnaires from heads, giving a response rate of 43% of the questionnaires sent out and a response rate of only 39% of the original sample. This was described as "a relatively high response rate" (p 20) and error rates were calculated statistically despite the size of the response rate. When asked about their future (p 57), 47% intended to leave in the next three years and of these, 36% said they would seek another headship. Thus, only 17% of all heads would seek another headship in the next three years.

Further, unpublished, analysis of the results giving the previous post of the headteacher reveals that 158 of 489 primary heads had been headteacher at another school (32%) and 99 of 421 secondary heads had held the position of headteacher (23.5%)

Thus the proportion of headteachers in headships beyond their first revealed by these two studies is 27% for both primary and secondary second heads (2001) and 32% primary and 23.5% secondary second heads (2004). Our study only looked at second heads and so our findings do not give any further evidence on how many heads are in this group.

Starting points

An important starting point for the work was transcripts of three interviews that had been conducted with secondary second heads in 1998. These transcripts formed the first evidence probing why heads had sought a second headship, together with their experiences. From reading through them, it was clear that the decision to move was a complex process, which was influenced by both the individual and their first school.

Personal issues: these centred on looking for a change and a fresh challenge. Sometimes this was specific in terms of a move from a challenging school to one in more favourable circumstances but, generally, the second school was larger.

First school: there was a general feeling that a particular stage of the school's development had been achieved and either it was not clear what should come next or that the next phase would require different skills.

Learning from the change of school: being head of two schools made them more conscious of differences between schools and the things that they had taken for granted in their first headship. They felt much better prepared for their second headship but things turned out not to be so straightforward as they had anticipated. They had clearer ideas about the kinds of changes they wanted to make but had met some setbacks. They were very aware of the legacy of expectations left by their predecessor. Where they wished to adopt a very different, more involving style they found this change was taking much longer to achieve than they expected. Change was something that generally they were finding unexpectedly tough. A willingness to change that they had experienced in their first school was generally absent in their second more successful school. Aspects of this could come from both governors and staff.

These findings were from three male heads in a particular part of the country at a particular point in time and although we suspected that they were more general, we did not have more up-to-date evidence. We therefore decided to carry out a small number of in-depth pilot interviews with more secondary second heads in different parts of the country.

Pilot interviews

Fidler and Jones (2005) decided to conduct eight interviews with a more varied group of second heads in the spring term 2004. From heads on training activities and local authority (LA) contacts we identified a group of second heads from which we chose seven. These were in different types of LA and different types of school and consisted of five males and two females.

Findings

Career intentions: why go on to second headship?

Only one head had a plan for a second headship when he took up his first headship. The others had not really thought about a further headship until they had been a head for quite some time or there was some event that precipitated a possible move. After a successful Ofsted inspection, it was suggested to one head, by her LA, that this would be an opportunity to move on. For another, it was a period of secondment to NCSL that served as the stimulus, while for another, it was the headship of a particular type of school within the LA that led to an application.

From the accounts of the heads and their applications they expected that age would be a factor if they applied for a further headship.

What came through the accounts from all of the heads was the wish for a fresh personal challenge. They all had in mind particular kinds of school that they would like to move on to. Some moved to a school that had similarities with their first school, while others moved to a different type of school. All moved on to larger schools or schools that paid a higher salary. Salary was mentioned in passing by the heads and only one saw a higher salary as being important to legitimate his choice of second school.

These headteachers had successful first headships and were under no pressure to leave their first school. This partly explains their views and their choice of next school. They were able to be selective. All were looking for particular types of school and were much more discriminating in their choice of school. In some cases, the shortlist for the posts that they applied for consisted entirely of those who were already headteachers. This suggested that some schools may be sufficiently attractive that they can attract such a field and that governors may have a preference for candidates with experience. As further support for this possibility, in some cases they were following a second head. Thus, there may be a different pool of preferred applicants for some schools.

While they were under no pressure to leave, a number mentioned that they considered that their school needed a fresh impetus that a new headteacher could bring. One chose to move for this reason, despite being offered extra salary by governors.

3 Literature review: second headship – issues, challenges and opportunities

Introduction

Career transition within and between organisations, including schools, is a common phenomenon due to changing conditions and circumstances. It is increasingly becoming accepted that the phenomenon is inevitable and the trend is bound to continue (Louis 1980). Associated with job mobility are positive and negative consequences (Draper and McMichael 2000). It has been argued that career transition results in a self-renewal process to the transitioners, marked by innovativeness, reflection and reframing (Oplatka 2001a). This is a positive aspect of transition. Second headship has been identified as an opportunity for personal and professional replenishment, as a means to overcome one's internal crisis (Oplatka 2001a), and as an opportunity to take up new challenges (Fidler and Jones 2005). Individual headteachers would often like to move to another context, another headship, once they realise that they have reached a plateau in their current post and once they view their job as a chore and no longer a challenge (Earley et al 1995). Plateauing is associated with fatigue and disenchantment, and fatigue impairs performance (Earley et al 1995).

Career transition involves stages and second headship has been located as a mid-career stage transition (Oplatka 2001a). Although literature on second headship is limited in scope (Oplatka 2001a), there is evidence to suggest a growing interest in the subject (Earley and Weindling 2004; Fidler and Jones 2005; Mackenzie 2005).

Definitions and concepts

As a preliminary step in the discussion of second headship, the following terms will be defined: second headship, job mobility, transition, career transition, work role transition, premature departure and involuntary departure.

- *Second headship*: headteachers who are in their second or subsequent headship (Fidler and Jones 2005: 12).
- *Job mobility*: a departure from a leading position of whatever nature and for whatever reason (Krüger et al 2001: 400).
- *Transition*: both a change and a period during which the change is taking place (Louis 1980: 330).
- *Career transition*: the period during which an individual is either changing roles (taking on a different objective role) or changing orientation in a role already held (altering a subjective state) (Louis 1980: 330).
- *Work role transition*: any change in employment status and job content. Thus it includes all forms of intra and interorganisational mobility and other changes in employment (Nicholson 1984: 173).
- *Premature departure*: job mobility that is not caused by personal factors such as health or the acquisition of a new job, but that is forced by circumstances in the context of the job, in the organisation where the leadership is performed and/or by personal characteristics of the principal, such as gender, age or leadership style (Krüger et al 2001: 400).
- *Involuntary departure*: departure that takes place against the will of the person concerned (Krüger et al 2001: 401).

Career transition

Subsections considered in this section are: career phases and stages, first headship and second headship.

Louis (1980) identifies different types of career transitions. In addition to moving jobs she includes changes to the individual within the same job. She distinguishes between inter-role and intra-role transition. The former involves changing jobs while the latter involves “a new and different orientation to an old role” (p 332). Within the inter-role transitions she identifies five different types, which could involve changing organisations and changing role. Within the intra-role transitions, she identifies four. She observes that some of the intra-roles may not have been embarked on consciously. She also talks of intra-role and extra-role adjustment. Regarding intra-role adjustment, the formal role is not changed but there is “an internal change in the role holder’s orientation” (p 334). The extra-role adjustment involves a change in one’s life role, which leads to a change in another role, for instance, private and work. She also looks at role/career stage, which she claims to change over time without conscious effort or awareness. Also considered within her discourse is life stage transition, which is about a series of stages in the psychosocial development of the individual, for instance, mid-life crisis.

Nicholson (1984) links the degree to which individuals adapt to their job and their degree of adaptation of the job to their skills and preferences and variables associated with these different orientations.

Vardi (1990) examines career development and mobility within organisations. He notes the major approaches to careers and careers mobility, for instance, economic, administrative, sociological, psychological, and identifies major career concepts. He identifies organisational level characteristics and individual level characteristic constraints and mediating processes. Krüger et al (2001) examine job mobility of principals in the Netherlands and identify a wide range of reasons for job mobility as ‘innocent’ and ‘heavier’ that span the whole spectrum (p 405). The former includes:

- retirement (at age 65);
- early retirement (58+);
- resignation (younger than 58 without financial settlement or reduced pay);
- health problems or long-term disability;
- death;
- discontinuance of the function in the event of mergers or reorganisations;
- acquisition of another position in the principal’s own school, in another school or outside education; and
- termination of employment contract by the court. (Krüger et al 2001: 405)

The latter involves “rescission of employment contract by the cantonal court; summary dismissal; and dismissal on the basis of incompetence or disability” (p 405). They note that the official reasons for job mobility cited by both men and women principals are “acquisition of a position in another school” and “resignation” (p 405). They also raise the issues of premature departure and involuntary departure, which are conceived as job mobility. They concluded that job mobility in secondary education was higher for women than men. Draper and McMichael (1998) note that becoming a headteacher involves an occupational transition from a teacher to a manager.

Career phases and stages

A review of literature on headteachers’ career experience reveals classifications based on either phases or stages or both (Day and Bakioglu 1996; Reeves et al 1997; Fidler and Atton 2004). While the usage of phases or stages in the literature seems to be a matter of preference, Day and Bakioglu (1996) preferred to use phases to stages and support their position as follows:

Stage implies distinct periods of time that differ qualitatively from both the preceding and succeeding stages whereas a phase may include behaviour across several domains. Phases are recurrent in that individuals can pass through various phases in and between each of many different content domains. (Day and Bakioglu 1996: 207)

Following Karmiloff-Smith (1984), Day and Bakioglu (1996: 207) make a distinction between phases and stages: "The phase concept is focused on underlying similarity of process, whereas the stage concept usually refers to similarity of structure". Day and Bakioglu (1996), in their study of the experience of long-serving headteachers, classified their career experience into four main phases namely, initiation, development, autonomy and disenchantment.

Others have preferred to use stages without necessarily implying that these are linear. Researchers have identified different numbers of stages. From work on eight new principals in the US, Parkay et al (1992) identified five stages, used later by Benaim and Humphreys (1997) on a case study in Israel – survival, control, stability, educational leadership and professional actualisation. Reeves et al (1997), in a European study, grouped eight career stages into three broad phases, namely, early, middle and mature. Earley and Weindling (2004), following a long-term follow-up of headteachers in England who began work in 1982, identified six stages and their timescale, something that may be very significant in terms of assessing one's length or duration of career tenure and progression.

Oplatka (2001b: 220) following Weindling (1999) argues that "a person's experience and attitudes towards work and life vary across the career life cycle and that developmental change processes were assumed to be differentiated into observable career stages." And yet others have preferred to use both phases and stages to illustrate the relationship between them (Fidler and Atton 2004). Those who have used both phases and stages have shown that each phase consists of two to three stages. Other writers have given stages with a timescale while others have not. For instance, Earley and Weindling (2004) have given six stages and a timescale, something that may be very significant in terms of assessing one's length or duration of career tenure and progression.

A number of models have been developed that are significant in terms of providing a theoretical framework for studying headship career pathways and identifying the stage for support or intervention. Some models have more stages than others (for instance, some have six while others have nine). They also start and end with different stages. Another observation is that while there may be an agreement among different writers that career experience of headteachers can be viewed or considered in terms of stages, consensus is lacking on the content, order or number of stages. Fidler and Atton (2004) produced a consolidated set of stages based on the work of previous researchers showing that the career stages from different authors have much in common. This is shown in Table 3.1. It shows stages to the end of first headship. For those headteachers who go on to a second headship, the fresh start is the beginning of their second headship.

A number of studies have identified plateau, disenchantment and time for change phases/stages as very critical in terms of planned support or intervention for the benefit of the individuals and their schools (Fidler and Atton 2004; Fidler and Jones 2005; Mackenzie 2005). Mackenzie (2005) points out that plateau is characterised by deterioration in morale and motivation. Fidler and Atton (2004) also observe that a plateau situation leads to disenchantment, which in turn is characterised by declining confidence, enthusiasm and personal fatigue.

Table 3.1: Showing different stage models to the end of first headship

Overview	Fidler and Atton (2004)	Gronn (1999)	Day and Bakioglu (1996)	Hart and Weindling (1996)	Parkay et al (1992)	Earley and Weindling (2004)	Reeves et al (1997)	Gabarro (1987)	
Early life and career	Formation	Formation							
Preparation for headship	Preparation	Accession				Preparation	Warm up		
First headship	Encounter: surprise, adjustment and survival	Incumbency	Initiation: idealism, uncertainty and adjustment	Encounter and confrontation	Survival Shock Sorting it out	Entry and encounter (first months)	Entry (0–6 months) Digging the foundations (6–12)	Taking hold Immersion	
	Taking hold: getting on top of the situation and setting priorities		Development: consolidation and extension	Accommodation and integration	Control Setting priorities Getting on top of the situation	Taking hold (3–12 months)	Taking action (12–24)	Reshaping Consolidation	
	Stabilisation				Stability	Reshaping (second year)	Getting above floor level (24–36)		
	The crunch				Educational leadership	Refinement (years 3 and 4)	The crunch (24–60)		
	At the summit: plateaued/time for a change		Autonomy: single loop learning	Stabilisation				Consolidation (5–7 years)	At the summit (48–120)
	Plateaued: disenchantment			Disenchantment	Professional actualisation		Plateau (8+ years)	Time for a change (60–120)	
	Preparing to finish	Letting go	Divestiture						
Continuing working life	A fresh start								

Source: Adapted from Fidler and Atton (2004)

In that connection Benaim and Humphreys (1997: 86) argue that:

When you are in a job for long time you do not feel the need for change, you are sitting in the same class and sometimes even giving the same exam each year, so teachers do not try so hard to change themselves.

The disenchantment phase has also been linked to individual heads experiencing loss of vision for the future of the school (Day and Bakioglu 1996).

First headship

Draper and McMichael (1998), in a small-scale study of primary heads in Scotland, identified two significant features of those who were likely to apply for first headship. First, they were more often within their thirties than over their forties. Second, they had headship as their long-term strategic view of career development. A large number of those who were likely to move to first headship were deputy heads. Others were those who were in acting heads positions, advisers or secondments (Draper and McMichael 2000). Deputy heads felt that they were familiar with most of the tasks surrounding the headteachers' role (Draper and McMichael 2000), while those in the position of acting head, adviser or on secondment felt that they had "acquired a wider and more strategic view of the education system and the needs of individual schools" (Draper and McMichael 2000: 462). Interestingly, deputy heads' aspirations for headship were driven by their own self-determination, perceived competence, wider experience and high expectations (Draper and McMichael 1998).

Moving to headship involved a certain degree of careful preparation, for instance, attending headship and management courses (for example, timetabling, financial management), observing the heads of their previous schools and undertaking many delegated duties (Draper and McMichael 1998). However, despite long preparation and previous experience, the shift of context has been reported to bring challenges and surprises and gains and losses to the newcomers. Evidence suggests that some heads felt decontextualised and therefore deskilled (Benaim and Humphreys 1997; Draper and McMichael 1998, 2000). Some of the challenges that have been identified in the literature include integrating and harnessing the force of high expectation of the school community on the one hand and that of establishing a new vision with a new authority on the other. There are also issues related to a highly esteemed and successful predecessor whose impact is difficult to follow and dealing with negative criticism (Benaim and Humphreys 1997). Some of the surprises experienced by new heads include: loneliness; some of the procedures that had worked in the previous school failed to work in the new school; inadequate support from the local authority; and the amount of official returns to be made (Benaim and Humphreys 1997; Draper and McMichael 1998, 2000). Others received pleasant surprises, for example, overwhelming respect.

Table 3.2 Showing a model of the gains and losses of job change (GLAD)

	Attachment	Detachment
Benefits/gains	Positive consequences of holding the new job	Positive consequences of leaving the previous job
Losses	Negative consequences of holding the new job	Negative consequences of holding the previous job

Source: Adapted from Draper and McMichael (1998: 200)

Draper and McMichael (1998) examined gains and losses associated with the job change of new headteachers and grouped them into two categories – detachment and attachment, as illustrated in the model (GLAD) above.

In their study they identified the “loss of friendship and support from previous colleagues and association with pupils and parents” and “loss in knowledge of how things worked with respect to parents, the school, the community and the local authority” as a major detachment loss (Draper and McMichael 1998: 200). Such a situation also affects almost anybody who changes jobs. New things to learn and master (personal development) were identified as attachment gains (Draper and McMichael 1998). Frustrations associated with the previous school have been identified as “significant motives for application” for the new job (p 204).

Second headship

From research in Israel, Oplatka (2001a, 2001b) identifies second headship as both an interorganisational and mid-career transition, often occurring between the ages of 40 and 50 (mid-life stages). He also argues that mid-career transition often occurs after 8–14 years in the same career. It is similar to intra-company transition in Louis' typology (Louis 1980).

Several studies (Oplatka 2001a; Fidler and Jones 2005) link second headship to plateau or peak period and view it as a strategy for personal and professional development, and therefore as a means to “overcome one's internal crisis” (Oplatka, 2001a: 73). Having identified career stages in the previous section, it is important to establish the reasons for career transition. Foremost, it is important to point out that career transition may not be a linear process and that stages may occur concurrently. Reeves et al (1997: 50), in a study that had six headteachers (who had held two headships) in the sample, point out that career stage patterns were often repeated in the second headship, “but the progression through the stages was quicker second time round because they understood better what to expect and how to handle situations”. Also, that career transition may occur at either an early stage, mid-stage or later stage of one's career. There are several reasons for career transition. For instance, Flintham (2003) identifies the reasons headteachers leave early:

Reasons cited for leaving spanned the full spectrum. This ranged from successful heads with a planned and career-driven exit strategy, who had sought to capitalise on their experience in the wider educational arena to those who felt burnt out and had suffered high levels of psychological stress which had made it impossible to continue in headship or even in gainful employment. (Flintham 2003: 5)

Flintham (2003) grouped headteacher transitioners into three clusters: ‘striders’, ‘strollers’ or ‘stumblers’. Striders were those whose exit was based on a clear plan; strollers were those who wanted to walk away from headship in a controlled manner; and stumblers were those to whom the realisation of that burn-out came suddenly and unexpectedly. He observes that the striders had a clearly defined strategy for moving on.

A review of literature on mid-career reveals some negative and positive aspects associated with career transition (Oplatka 2001b). The negative aspects include:

... headteachers experienced low opportunity to change their career, feelings of stagnation, plateau, loss of enthusiasm and disenchantment. (Oplatka 2001b: 220)

The positive aspects headteachers experience include:

... high levels of self-fulfilment, enchantment, job satisfaction, new challenges in their role, and experience professional development. (Oplatka 2001b: 220)

Headship is associated with professional socialisation and organisational socialisation (Parkay et al 1992). Van Maanen and Schein (1979: 211) define socialisation, professional socialisation and organisational socialisation as follows:

Socialization refers to the process through which an individual acquires the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to perform a social role effectively. Professional socialization refers to the process through which one becomes a member of a professional and over time, develops an identity with that profession. Organizational socialization on the other hand refers to the process by which one is taught and learns 'the ropes' of a particular organizational role in a specific setting.

Fidler and Jones (2005) define professional socialisation and organisational socialisation as follows: professional socialisation is "the process of acquiring the skills and attitudes of a headteacher and of understanding what it means to be one" (p 12). Organisational learning "is about discovering how the particular school in which they work operates and how it might respond to efforts to change and improve" (p 13).

Earley and Weindling (2004) see professional socialisation and organisational socialisation as two overlapping phases, arguing that "professional socialisation begins in the pre-appointment phase of a school leader's career and continues into early post-appointment growth and development" while "organisational socialisation begins upon appointment and is specific to the education context" (p 21).

It is assumed that headteachers in their second headship are likely to experience low to medium levels of professional and organisational socialisation due to their experience in their first headship (Fidler and Jones 2005). Organisation learning involves knowledge about the school prior to and in the early stages of taking up the post and in our case second headship (Fidler and Jones 2005). In a small-scale study of secondary second headteachers, it was observed that such knowledge assisted second headteachers in terms of making some assessment about the school before accepting the post. In terms of gaining knowledge of their second headship school, one head used financial analysis and comparison techniques, which may have involved visitation and observation as part of their assessment (Fidler and Jones 2005). Two of the heads in the study that had used individual staff interviews in their first headship to get to know the school did not use them in their second headship but recognised afterwards that this may have been a mistake (Fidler and Jones 2005).

Organisational socialisation and learning is facilitated by the social organisation of the school as suggested by Hart (1993) and as cited in Benaim and Humphreys (1997: 83), who argue that:

The 'principal's succession' is not a simple event but a complex interactive process, based not only upon the characteristics of the new leader and the succession process, but also upon the social organisation of the school. There is an inevitable tension between a school's need for creativity and development and the need for the headteacher to integrate within the social structures that already exist.

Organisational socialisation is about reality testing, adjusting and being accepted in the new environment (Louis 1980). It is also about adapting into the new environment (Louis 1980). It could identify well with the encounter stage of the career stages, which involves surprise, adjustment and survival (Earley and Weindling 2004; Fidler and Atton 2004; Fidler and Jones 2005). Parkay et al (1992)

identify central office personnel, peers and administrative guidelines as key to the organisational socialisation of a new principal. Other critical areas for new principals include a need to adjust to alienation from the faculty, developing patience and flexibility in regards to other's opinions, and also developing a broader perspective (Parkay et al 1992). Also the interaction between an individual's interpersonal orientation and situational factors plays a significant role in terms of an individual's socialisation into the new role (Parkay et al 1992).

There is a serious danger, however, if the new head fails to integrate, as explained by Benaim and Humphreys (1997: 83): "the succession process is not only a tremendously important event but is also extremely disruptive if the new headteacher fails to become an integrated and respected member of the social system". The importance of the notion of integration of new headteachers receives support from Draper and McMichael (1998: 459), who note that:

It can be argued that there is need for new appointees to become integrated into the organisational context in order to access support from colleagues and to gauge the attitudes and skills of those colleagues who plan the most appropriate order and speed of strategic change.

They further observe that the process of integration may require personal change from the new headteacher (Draper and McMichael 1998).

Understanding challenges in the new context

Being successful in the first headship does not necessarily make one immune to second headship challenges. For instance, Fidler and Jones (2005: 13) argue that:

There are cases where successful headteachers in their first headship are less successful in their second. Also, some headteachers who are less than successful in their first post may go on to become highly successful in second headships.

Headteachers who move from one post to another move to new contexts or settings that are different from their previous experiences and expectations (Draper and McMichael 2000). Despite their long experience, the shift of context poses certain challenges, changes, expectations and surprises. The heads in the new setting are faced with the challenge of establishing new aims and goals (Oplatka 2001a). There are also issues relating to the contextual factors. For instance, in Reeves et al's study (1997: 50) some of the six headteachers who had held two headships "felt that their second headship had been more difficult than their first and that contextual factors meant that transfer of learning from one situation to another was not necessarily straightforward or helpful". Benaim and Humphreys (1997) identify three broad categories of problems experienced by new headteachers. They include those internal to the school, those external to the school and those related to staff and staffing issues.

Rieger and Bradley (1995) as noted by Benaim and Humphreys (1997) also identify four challenges that confront new headteachers encapsulated in the text below, which may also be related to change of context. They include:

Those related to highly respected predecessors whose impact was difficult to follow, the need for vision and competence that is combined with perceived consistency, the need to develop resilience in handling negative criticism and the challenge created by an improvement-oriented leadership style. (Benaim and Humphreys 1997: 84)

Besides challenges, there is also the issue of higher expectations from the school staff that view the new headship as a new opportunity and expect them to "establish their professional credentials" (Benaim and Humphreys 1997: 81). The headteacher

who may be excited by the new opportunity also expects to set up a new vision and new authority in what Benaim and Humphreys (1997: 81) describe as “part of the new power parcel”. Benaim and Humphreys (1997: 81) note that “the integration and harnessing of these new forces is of great concern not only to the staff of the school, but also to the pupils and their parents”. In connection with new headship expectations, Benaim and Humphreys (1997) raise the notion of “a fresh pair of eyes and a new sense of perspective” (p 86), and view them as important assets in relationship to the school’s development programme. In an Australian study, Peters and Cornu (2004) have also identified what they call paradoxical challenge, which they claim is the result of “the contradiction between perception and expectations of the incoming leaders about what their roles should be, and those of some members of their new school communities” (p 12). Reeves et al (1997: 52) emphasise the importance of understanding the school culture in their observation that:

Whilst new school leaders have their own ideas and values, their task is very much to find out what the school culture is and to cooperate with teachers primarily, and with parents to develop the school collaboratively.

Associated with transition to new contexts are surprises. Surprises “are the differences that arise between an individual’s anticipations (tacit and explicit) of future situations and experiences, and the subsequent real-time happenings” (Louis 1980: 332). Surprises often result when there is considerable difference between the jobs as expected and as experienced (Louis 1980). Louis (1980) identifies a variety of surprises that are often experienced during transition. She explains “surprises are subjective appreciations of differences between a personally forecasted experiential world and the individual’s subsequent experience of self in the role and setting” (p 332). Draper and McMichael (2000) have identified some of the surprises that may face headteachers in their new schools. These have to do with their personal reaction to their new position, for instance, their degree of loneliness, or to do with the things they found in the schools they inherited, for instance, the decor, the arrangement of the head’s room (barricade erected against intruders in some cases), or more seriously, the poor conditions of the buildings, poor discipline, amount of parental pressure and amount of time spent on administrative matters as opposed to teaching and learning (Draper and McMichael 2000: 466). However, as Fidler and Jones (2005: 13) note, their “experiences in the second school will be influenced both by the differences between the contexts of the two schools and also by their learning in the first headship”.

Conclusion

This review of literature on career transition in reference to second headship has established that the practice of headteachers moving from one headship to another is a common phenomenon. The change of headship is influenced by the change of conditions and circumstances in schools and involves a number of phases or stages. Associated with change of headship are gains and losses, challenges and surprises, and heads have to go through a successful organisational socialisation process in order to create an impact in the new school. However, the literature offers little information on the experiences of heads who have aspired to second headship.

4 Brief account of how the research was carried out

The aims of the project were to investigate:

- the effects on headteachers who went on to a second headship in a state primary or secondary school in England;
- headteachers' motives for taking on second and, in some cases, third headships;
- the circumstances that led to such a move;
- how such choices fitted their career aspirations;
- their choice of school;
- the extent to which the successes and failures experienced in first headship were repeated;
- the challenges and rewards of such a move;
- the continuing professional development needs of these headteachers to prepare for and sustain such a transition;
- the nature of any self-renewal and fresh challenge;
- successful transfer of skills and learning;
- any preparation and development that may be helpful in the transition.

The study involved a literature review, a questionnaire survey and follow-up telephone interviews. The secondary school survey was carried out in the autumn term 2005 with interviews in the spring term 2006; the primary school study involved a pilot study in the autumn term 2005, a survey in the spring term 2006 and interviews in the summer term 2006. Full details of the methodology are given in Appendix 2.

A purposive sample of LA advisers were asked for details of headteachers known by them to be in a headship beyond their first. Forty authorities from the nine Government Regions in England representing county, metropolitan districts, London boroughs and unitary authorities provided details. These LAs are listed in Appendix 2. The larger number of primary school second heads was randomly sampled and postal questionnaires were sent to 122 primary second heads and 125 secondary second heads. The details of the responses are in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Responses to postal questionnaires

	Primary	Secondary
Final list	122	125
Eligible	117	113
Initial declines	0	4
Valid responses	86	78
Response rate	73.5%	69.6%
Offering telephone interview	84%	82%

From these responses, heads were chosen for 21 telephone interviews with primary second heads and 21 secondary second heads. Nine of each interviews focused on the three main reasons for taking a second headship: personal, school and external. Six interviews focused on heads who had rated themselves either more or less successful in second headship and six interviews explored the experiences of heads

who said that they expected their second schools to be either similar or different to their first school. All interviewees were asked about the forms of training and development that they had undertaken in either first or second headship. The interviewees were mainly in the early stages of their second headship, within the first three years of taking up post. These interviews were recorded, transcribed and content analysed to provide the material for the themes in Chapter 8.

5 Findings from the primary school survey

These are the findings from 86 completed questionnaires.

Who are second heads?

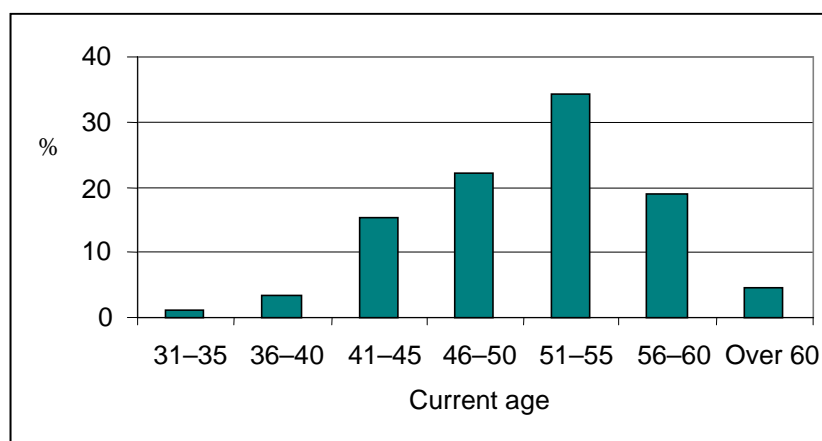
Gender

Of the primary heads that completed questionnaires, 55% were female and 45% were male. There is an over-representation of males and an under-representation of females compared with the national picture.

Age

Their age when completing the questionnaire is as shown in Figure 5.1.

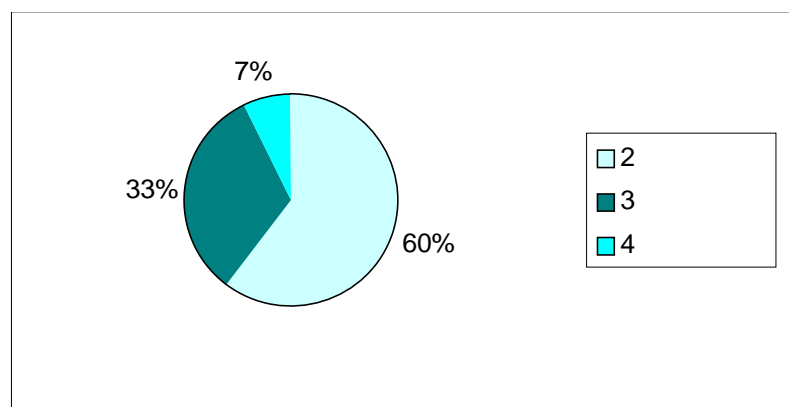
Figure 5.1: Current age of respondent primary second heads



Number of headships

Some respondents had gone on to third and fourth headships, as shown in Figure 5.2.

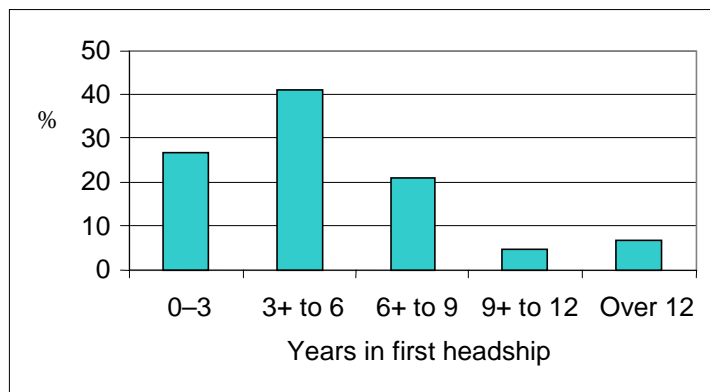
Figure 5.2: Number of primary headships held



Sixty per cent of the heads were in their second headship and the remaining were beyond second headship, that is, third and fourth headship. They were appointed to their first headship between the ages of 27 and 54, with a mean of 38 years. Only 14% (12) of second heads were internal appointments to their first headship. Second

heads spent an average of nearly six years in their first headship with a distribution shown in Figure 5.3. The most likely duration was between three to six years. Ninety per cent moved straight from first to second headship. Those who did not move directly mentioned time as acting head, local education authority (LEA) advisor/inspector and school improvement officer between headships.

Figure 5.3: Length of time in first primary headship



For those who went directly onto second headship (90% of the sample), the mean age of appointment to second headship was 44 years. The mean length in the second headship was five years with a range of one term to 22 years. Twenty-nine per cent had intentions of becoming a headteacher when they started teaching. Almost half intended going on to a further headship when appointed to their first headship.

Figure 5.4: Ages on taking up first and second primary headships

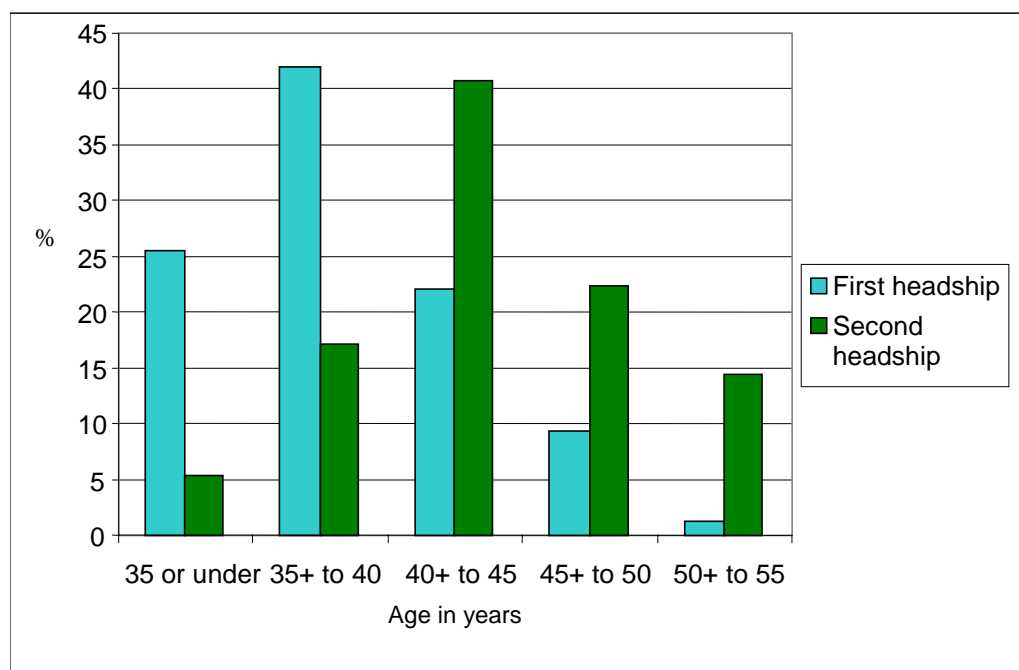
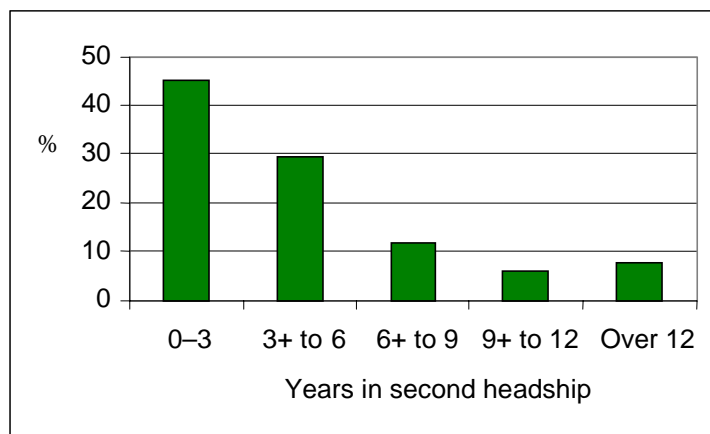


Figure 5.5: Experience of second headship by 51 current primary second heads



The mean length of time in second headship by the 32 who had gone on to third and fourth headships was just over five years, with a range of one to 22 years.

Reasons for moving

The heads were asked to prioritise their reasons for moving to second headship. The percentage indicating their single most important reason was:

- 66% had personal reasons
- 27% had school reasons
- 6% had external reasons.

Table 5.1: Personal, school and external reasons for choosing second primary headship

Personal	School	External
<p>The range of personal factors in order of decreasing importance was:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fresh challenge ▪ Timing was right ▪ Use skills in new context ▪ Personal circumstances 	<p>The range of school factors in order of decreasing importance was:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Timing right for school ▪ Achieved aims there ▪ School needed fresh impetus ▪ School needed different skills at this stage of its development ▪ Insufficient leadership time 	<p>The range of external factors in order of decreasing importance was:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Particular headship advertised ▪ Headhunted to apply ▪ School reorganisation

The possible discouragements to moving from first to second headship that were identified as very or quite important were:

- 46%: more to do at first school
- 43%: recognised possible risks involved.

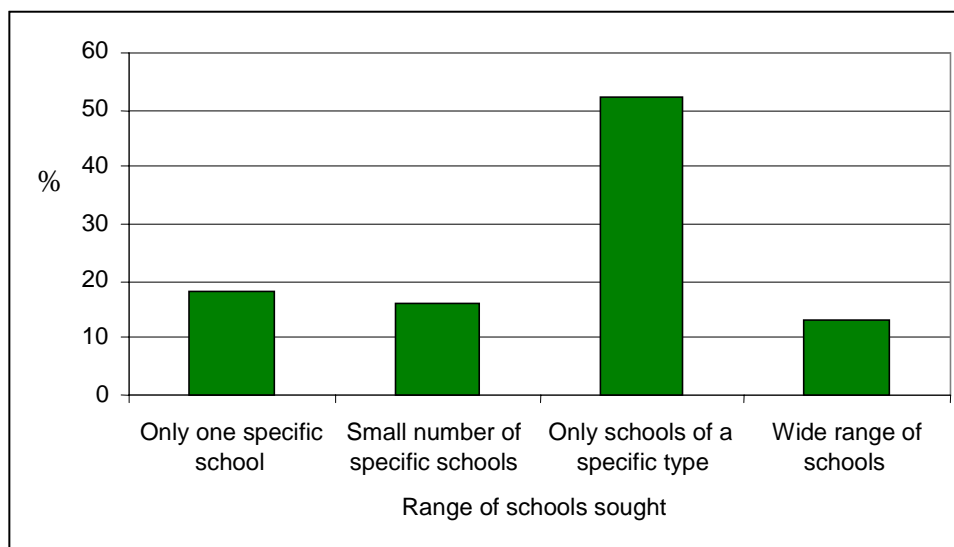
Choice of school

The most important factors in choosing a second school in decreasing order of importance were:

- geographical location
- school size
- salary
- school type
- catchment area.

Sixty-seven per cent said they were more selective for their second headship while 28% said they were equally selective. When asked about their selectivity, Figure 5.6 indicates the range of schools that they said that they were interested in.

Figure 5.6: Range of schools sought for second primary headship



When asked about the actual applications that they had made the findings were as follows:

- 54% applied for only one school
- 44% attended only one interview
- 20% withdrew an application made to a school
- 25% had an internal candidate for their post.

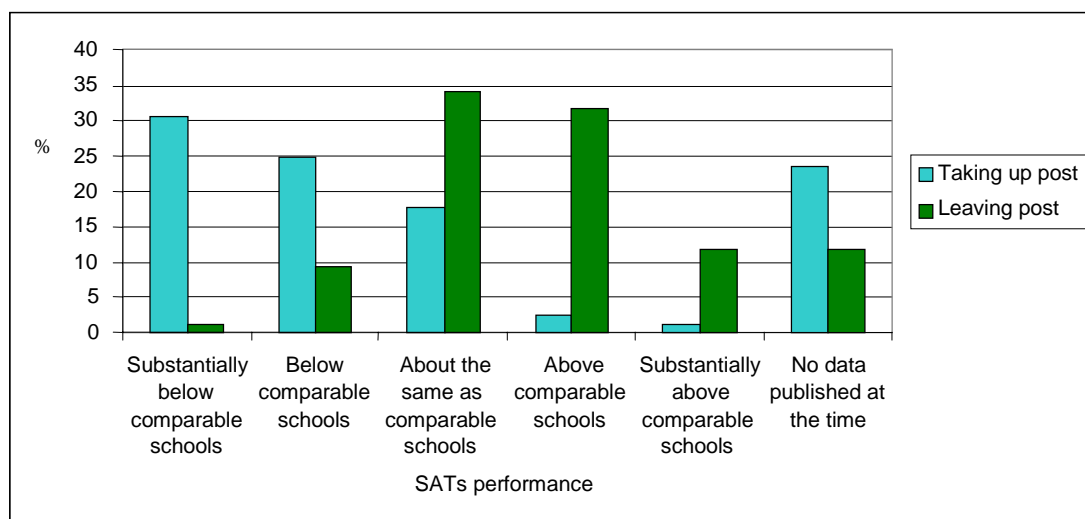
The reasons for withdrawing were:

- lack of match
- unprofessional behaviour of the governing body
- school too similar to the first school
- few candidates shortlisted
- the school's close links with the church
- poor school facilities
- long commuting distance between school and home
- the school's inability to appoint.

Comparison of schools

The heads were asked about the assessment of their first school's performance when they began their headship there and when they left.

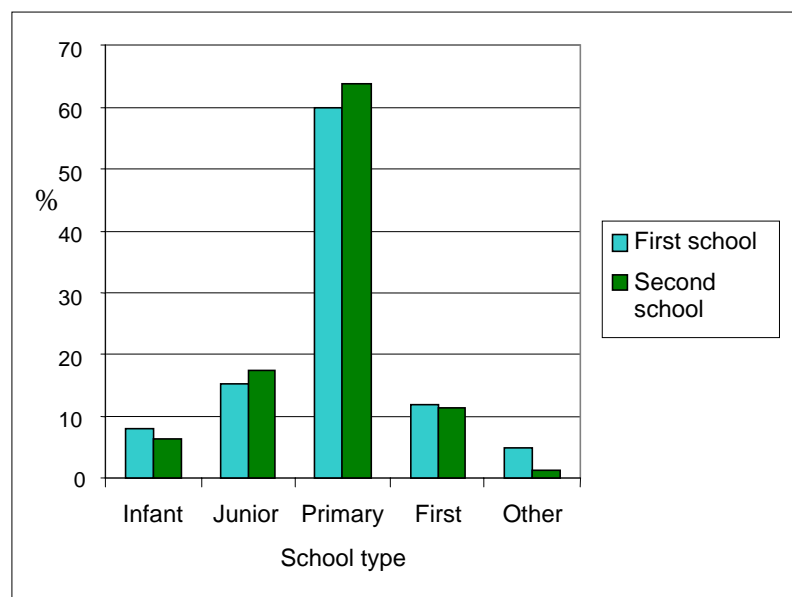
Figure 5.7: Performance of the school on taking up post and leaving first primary school



For the schools where there was comparable data, it is clear that there was a large improvement in test results over the period of first headship.

Type of school

Figure 5.8: First and second primary school types



Most of the first and second headships were concentrated in primary schools. The figure shows that there were only small overall differences in going from first to second headship. However, looking more in depth at the movements that took place from first to second headships shows that only 61% moved between the same types of school.

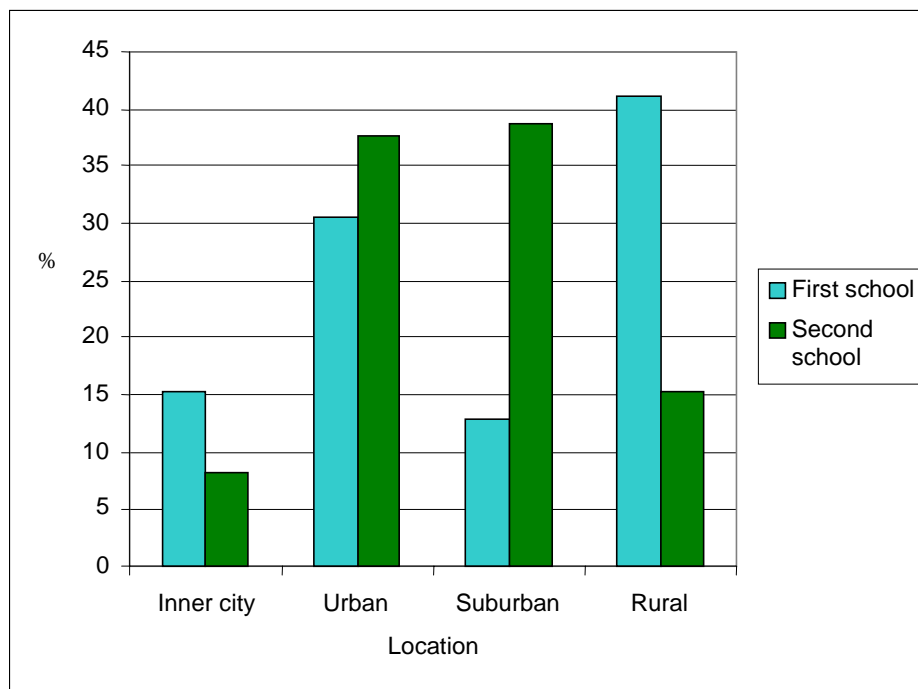
Four of the six heads in an infant school for their first headship moved to a primary school for their second headship. Just over half the heads in a junior school for their first headship moved to a primary school for their second headship while the others moved to another junior school. Seventy-five per cent in a primary school for their first headship moved to another primary school for their second headship while 5 of

48 moved to a junior school and the same number went to a first school and just 2 moved to an infant school.

Location of first and second schools

The favoured locations for first headship are rural and urban and for second the move is towards suburban and urban locations.

Figure 5.9: Location of first and second primary schools



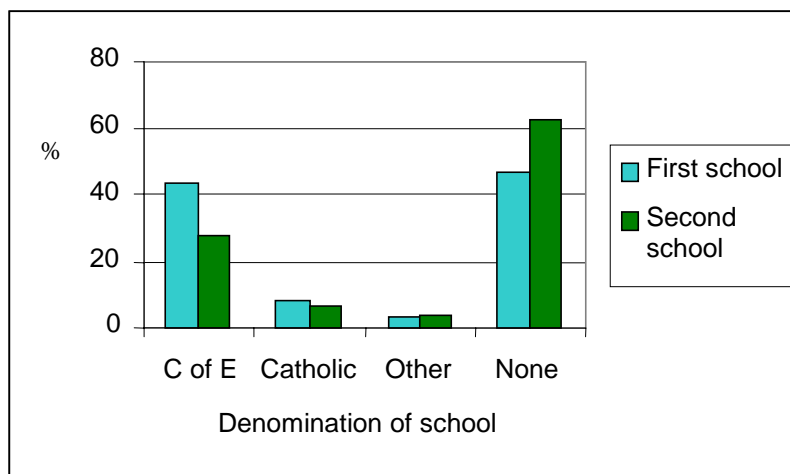
While there are clear overall trends in movement from rural to suburban schools for second headship, the movements of individuals are more complex than this might imply. Only 45% of heads moved between schools in the same location types.

Three of the 13 heads of inner-city schools for their first headship moved to another inner-city school for their second headship, while the others split between moves to an urban or suburban school. Just over half of the heads in an urban school moved to another urban school and almost a third moved to a suburban location. The remaining split – three moved to an inner-city school and one to a rural school.

Eighty-two per cent moved from a suburban school to another suburban school and the remaining moved to an urban location. First heads in a rural school moved almost equally to rural, urban and suburban schools with just one moving to an inner-city school for their second headship.

School denomination

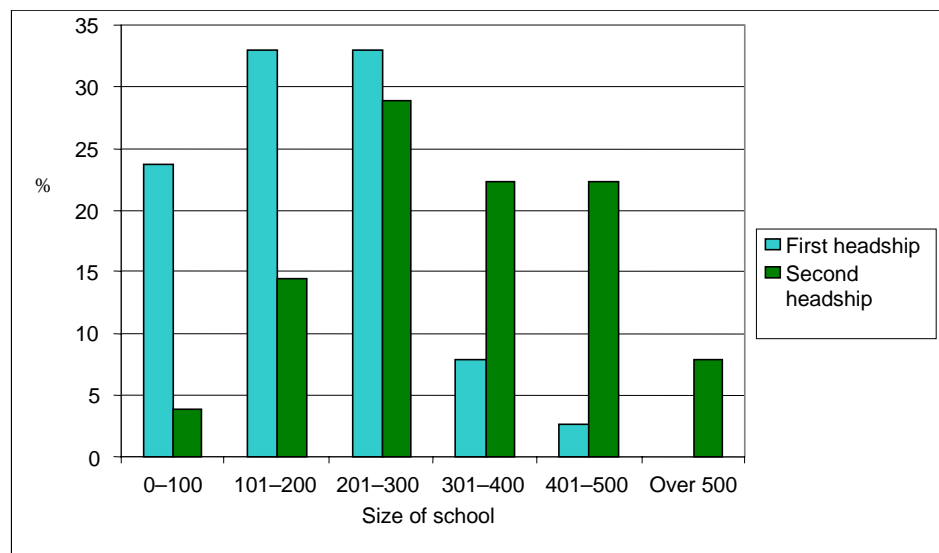
Figure 5.10: Denomination of first and second primary schools



Most of the first headships were in either a Church of England (C of E) or a non-denominational school but non-denominational schools were the favoured type for second headships. Fifty-seven per cent moved between the same types of school. The changes came about mainly as over half those in a C of E school for their first headship moved to a non-denominational school for their second headship. In part this movement reflects the move to larger schools and from rural to suburban areas.

Interestingly, three of the five first heads in a Catholic school moved to the same type for their second headship and one head in a C of E school and one in a non-denominational school for their first headship moved to a Catholic school for their second headship.

Figure 5.11: Number of students in first and second primary schools

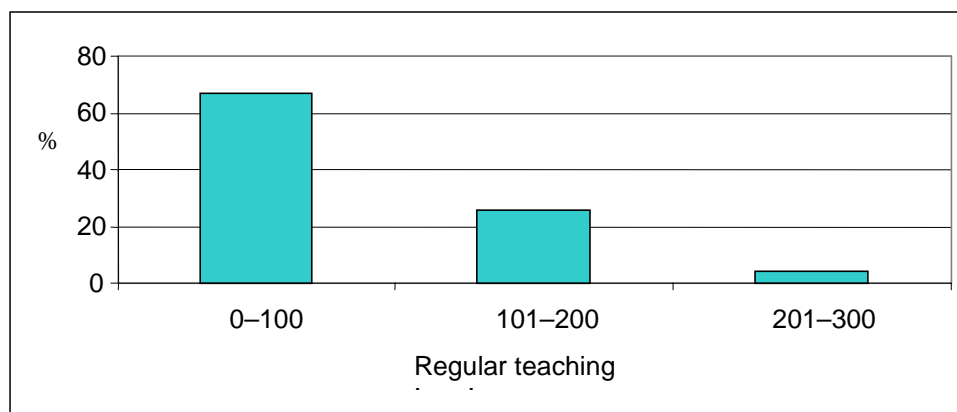


The trend was to move in the second headship to a larger school. Typically, heads moved to a school in one of the next two larger size bands – this covered 60% of heads. A further 20% ($n=17$) moved to a school in the same band. This included four who moved within the 0-100 band and four who moved within the 101-200 band. Only five heads moved to a school in a lower size band. The remaining heads ($n=12$) moved to a school more than two bands higher than their first school.

Regular teaching load

Comparison of regular teaching loads in the two headships is difficult in part due to the small numbers in the larger schools in first headship and small numbers in smaller schools in second headship. Another factor is that the comparison might have been made some years apart when staffing norms had changed in the meantime. The regular teaching loads in first headship in the three smallest categories of schools (where there were between 20 and 30 in each group) shows a falling load with increased size in Figure 5.12.

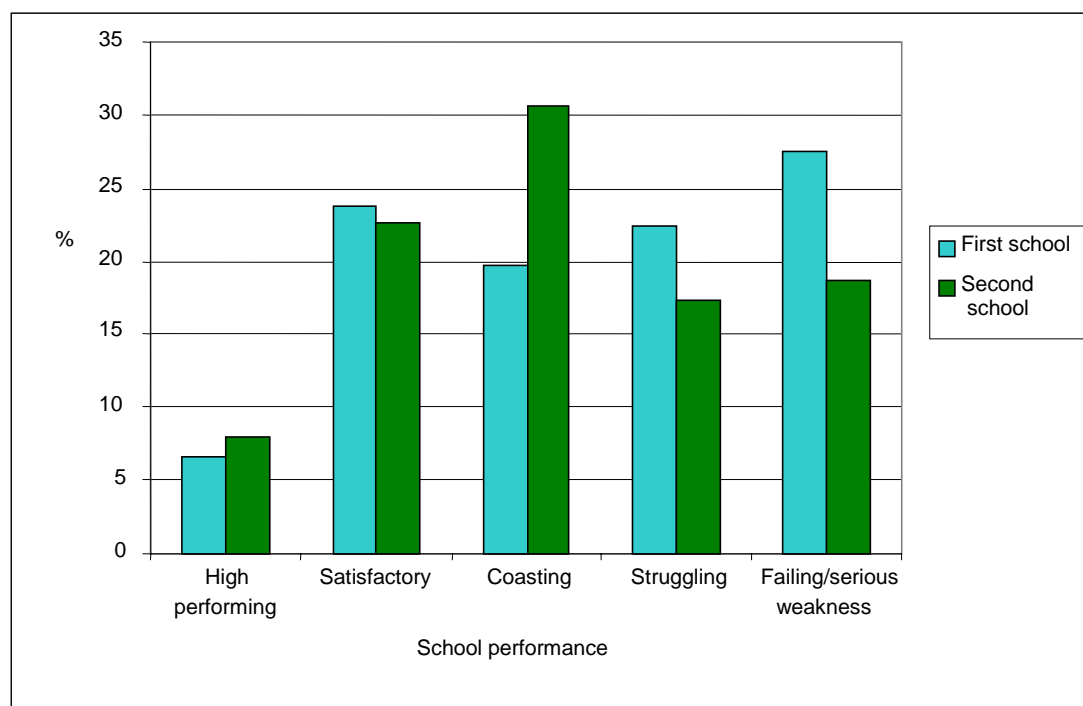
Figure 5.12: Regular teaching load in the smallest primary first headships



By comparison in second headship almost a quarter (6) of the 25 heads in schools of 201–300 children had a regular teaching load. The numbers in other sized schools are too small to give reliable figures but it appears that more heads of larger schools have a regular teaching load. These comparisons do not take into account the extent of the teaching load.

School performance

Figure 5.13: Performance on taking up post in first and second primary schools



The performance of first schools when heads began there is heavily biased towards schools in the lower performance categories compared to schools generally; for example, only around 10% of schools nationally are in the lowest category. While there is a small movement away from the lowest performing schools, this overall trend masks a great deal of movement of individual heads. For example, only about a quarter have a second headship in the same performance category as their first and just over 40% stayed within the two upper, lower or coasting categories.

Half of those in higher performing schools moved to the same type of school and the others were about evenly split between coasting and lower performing schools. Three quarters (12) of those in a coasting school moved to either a higher or lower performing school. More than half of those in a lower performing school moved to a coasting or higher performing school. About one third of the heads in their second headship followed a predecessor who was also a second head (almost a fifth had no details of their predecessor). The areas of work on which heads prioritised in their first and second schools are given in Table 5.2 in decreasing order of importance.

Table 5.2: Areas of work that heads prioritised in their first and second primary schools

First school	Second school
Curriculum, teaching and learning	Curriculum, teaching and learning
Recruiting and developing staff competence	Test results
Test results	Recruiting and developing staff competence
Improving premises	Improving premises
Parental satisfaction and support	Parental satisfaction and support

There is great similarity in the order of these areas even though they took place in different schools and there was a gap of several years in time.

Expectations and experiences

Just over one fifth expected their second headship to be essentially similar to their first headship school while 78% expected it to be quite different. Just over two fifths experienced more surprises in their early stages of second headship than in their first while 29% experienced fewer surprises. The remaining experienced a similar number of surprises.

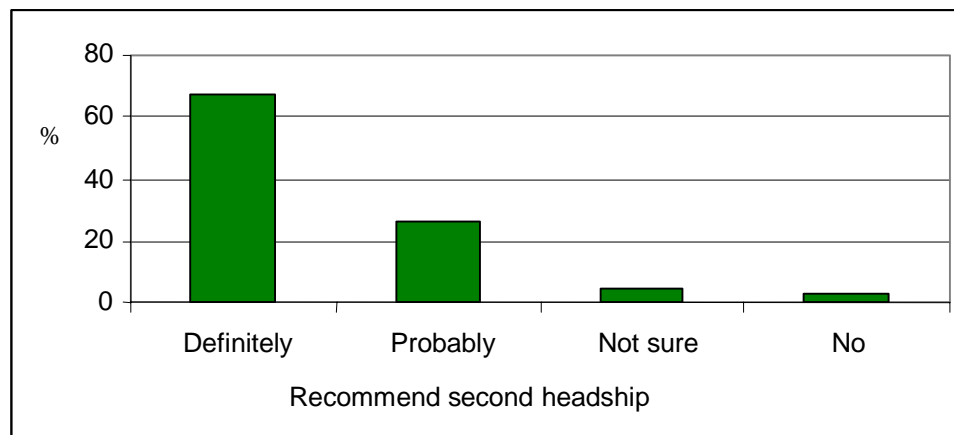
Almost two fifths rated themselves more successful in second headship than their first and a further two fifths rated themselves equally successful. Only four rated themselves less successful in second headship and they had gone on to third and fourth headships. The remainder thought it was too early in their second headship to say.

When asked about any plans for their future that the second heads had at this time (in a multiple response question), the following were indicated:

- 30% plan a further headship (this was planned by almost one fifth of those over the age of 50);
- 44% plan retirement (one fifth of those under 50 and 60% of those over 50 plan to stay in their present post until retirement);
- 55% plan other work in education (planned by those under and over 50);
- 19% plan work outside education (mostly those over 50).

Recommendations and advice

Figure 5.14: Recommend second primary headship to first heads



Sixty-seven per cent of second heads would definitely recommend second headship to those in first headship and only 2% (two heads) would not recommend it. Analysis of the open-ended responses offers the following suggestions:

- Headteachers should keep another post in mind from first appointment so that preparation and development in the first post can be transferable.
- While in first headship they should analyse what skills need developing and try to address them.
- The heads need to have at least five to seven years maximum in the first headship to ensure that change is embedded. They need to avoid stagnation in the first headship and use the first headship to learn substantively about the job.
- The heads need to research about their second headship school and the local authority. This could involve reading the Ofsted reports and talking with colleagues. They need to know about the governors' involvement and financial situation.
- Heads need to take with them everything that has worked well but introduce them carefully and tactfully and remember that different schools have different issues/challenges.

6 Secondary schools second headship

These are the findings from 78 completed questionnaires.

Who are second heads?

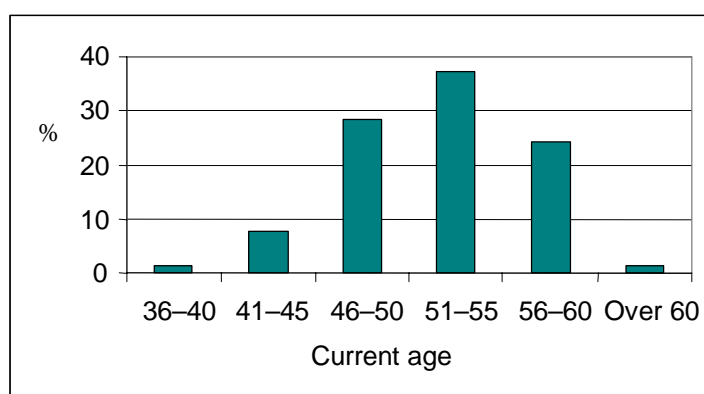
Gender

Of the total number of secondary heads who completed questionnaires, 60% were male and 40% were female. There are more females than would be expected from the proportion of female secondary schools headteachers.

Age

Their age when completing the questionnaire is as shown in Figure 6.1.

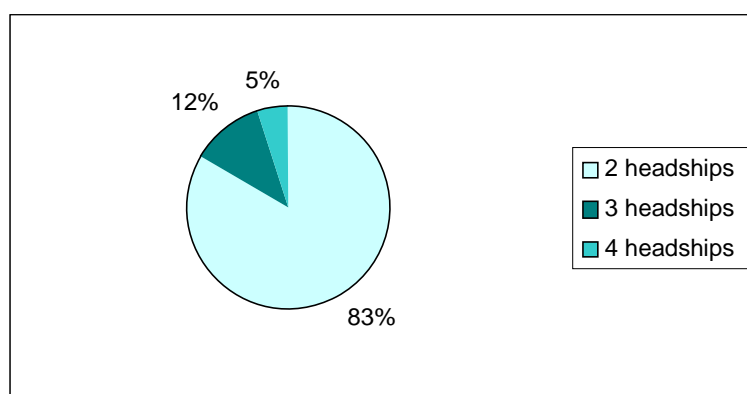
Figure 6.1: Current age of respondent secondary second heads



Number of headships held

Some respondents had gone on to third and fourth headships, as shown in Figure 6.2.

Figure 6.2: Number of secondary headships held

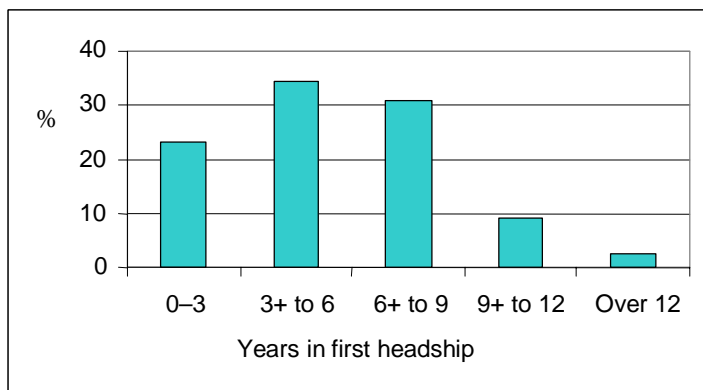


Eighty-three per cent are in their second headship. They were appointed to their first headship between the ages of 31 and 52, with a mean of 41 years, as shown in Figure 6.4. The largest single group were between 40 and 45 years old when appointed to first headship.

Only 12% (9) of second heads were internal appointments to their first headship. They spent an average of six years in first headship with a distribution shown in Figure 6.3 from two terms to 18 years. The most likely duration was between three and six years.

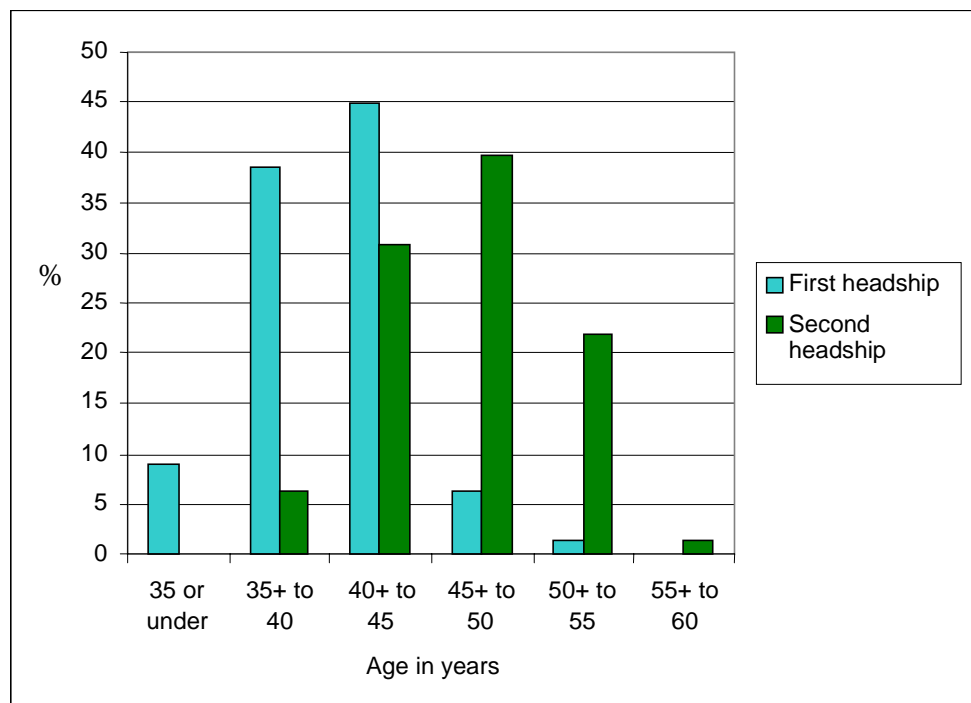
Ninety-two per cent moved straight from first to second headship. Those who did not move directly mentioned time as acting head, LEA officer and school consultant in their time between headships.

Figure 6.3: Length of time in first secondary headship



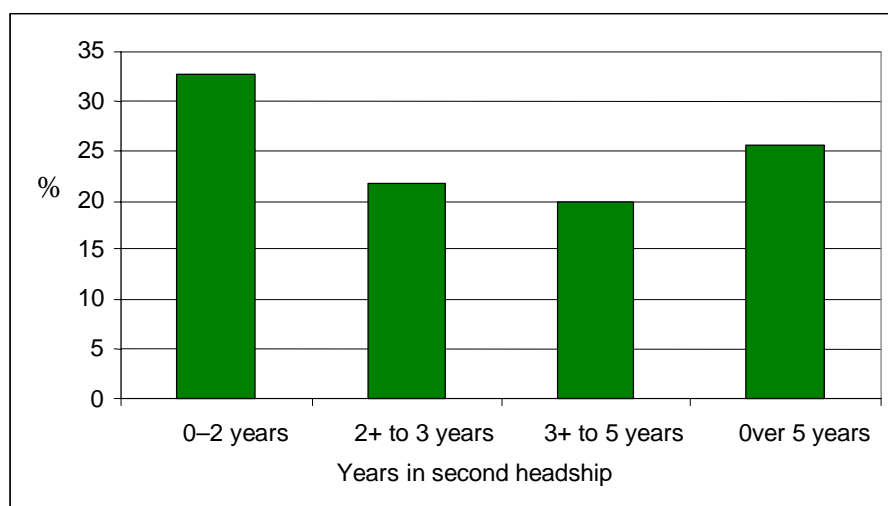
Their mean age on appointment to second headship was 47, with a range from 35 to 60 years of age, as shown in Figure 6.4. The largest single group were between 45 and 50 when appointed to second headship.

Figure 6.4: Ages on taking up first and second secondary headships



The experience of second headship of the 83% who were currently second heads is shown in Figure 6.5. The largest single group is of those appointed within the last two years.

Figure 6.5: Experience of second headship by 65 current secondary second heads



The mean length of time in second headship by the 12 who had left second headship to go on to third and fourth headships was four years, with a range of one to seven years. Twenty-two per cent of second heads said that they intended to become headteachers when they started teaching. Forty-four per cent said that they intended to go on to second headship when they began their first headship.

Reasons for moving

The heads were asked to prioritise their reasons for moving to second headship. The percentage indicating each single most important reason were:

- 60% had personal reasons
- 30% had school reasons
- 10% had external reasons.

Table 6.1: Personal, school and external reasons for choosing second secondary headship

Personal	School	External
<p>The range of personal factors in order of decreasing importance was:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fresh challenge ▪ Timing was right ▪ Use skills in new context ▪ Personal circumstances 	<p>The range of school factors in order of decreasing importance was:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Timing right for school ▪ Achieved aims there ▪ School needed fresh impetus ▪ School needed different skills at this stage of its development ▪ Insufficient leadership time 	<p>The range of external factors in order of decreasing importance was:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Particular headship advertised ▪ Headhunted to apply ▪ School reorganisation

The possible discouragements to moving from first to second headship that were identified as quite or very important were:

- 50%: more to do at first school

- 40%: recognised possible risks involved. As one noted, there were some heads who were less successful in second headship.

While most noted positive personal benefits from their move to second headship a small number commented on the workload involved in establishing oneself in a new school.

A small number noted that there were adverse consequences for their first school after they had left. This tended to be an adverse Ofsted inspection. In part this was attributed to failing to appoint a suitable replacement and three considered that they had left their first school after too brief a period.

Greater insights into the complex reasons for seeking second headship from interviews can be found as a theme in Chapter 8.

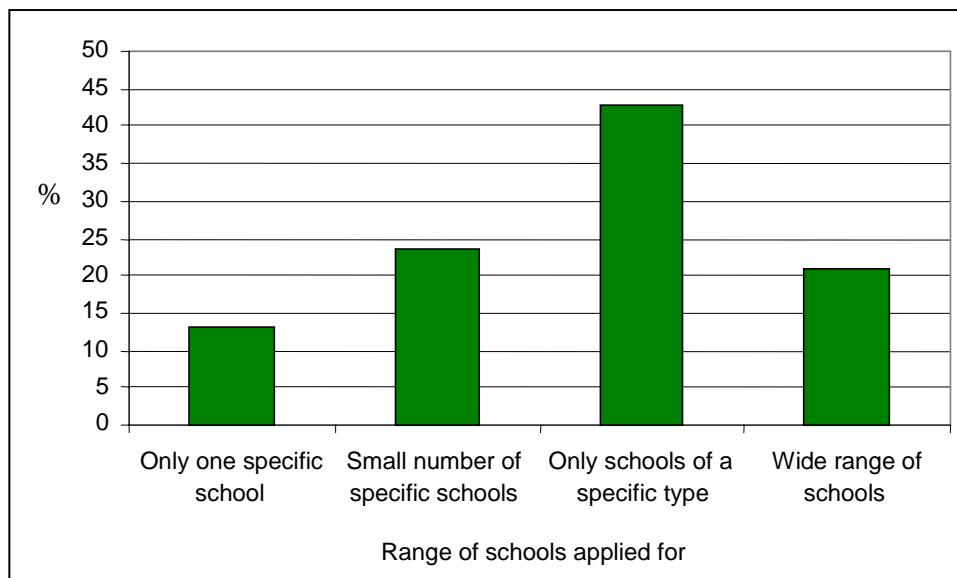
Choice of school

The most important factors in choosing a second school in decreasing order of importance were:

- personal skills fitted current needs of new school
- type of school
- geographical location
- salary
- school performance
- catchment area.

Salary was rated important by almost 80% and very important by almost a quarter. Seventy-one per cent said that they were more selective in their choice of second school compared to their first. When asked about their selectivity, Figure 6.6 indicates the range of schools that they said that they were interested in.

Figure 6.6: Range of schools sought for second secondary headship



In the event, when asked about the actual applications that they had made the heads had considered a number of schools but had submitted few applications:

- about half applied only for one school

- almost two thirds attended only one interview
- just over half withdrew from an application they had made.

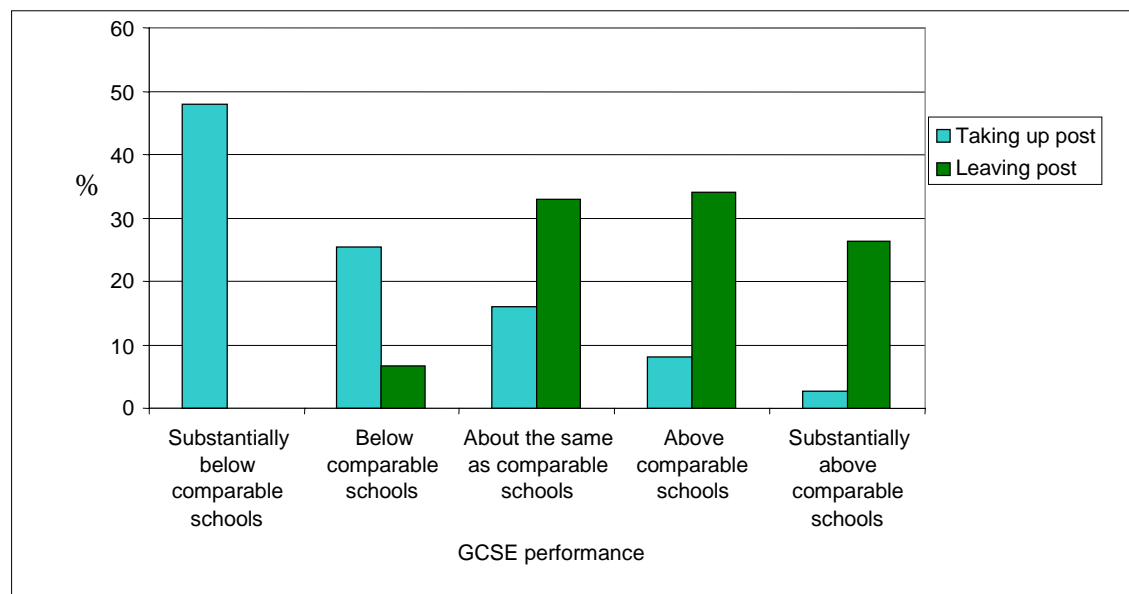
The range of reasons for withdrawing were:

- lower salary
- wanted more challenging school, that is, where a job needed to be done
- mismatch between details provided and reality
- philosophy of LEA/governors lacked challenge; wrong ethos
- too many 'blockers'
- the school was in serious weakness and the governors could not allow any contact between students and staff and organisational questions
- related to poor support from an LEA for two schools facing serious budget and ethos issues and on that basis, the head was not confident that he/she would receive sufficient support to make the difference needed
- aware that the headship of current school was about to be advertised.

Comparison of schools

The heads were asked about their assessment of their first school's examination results when they began their headship there and when they left. The substantial improvement is clear from Figure 6.7:

Figure 6.7: GCSE performance on taking up post and leaving first secondary school

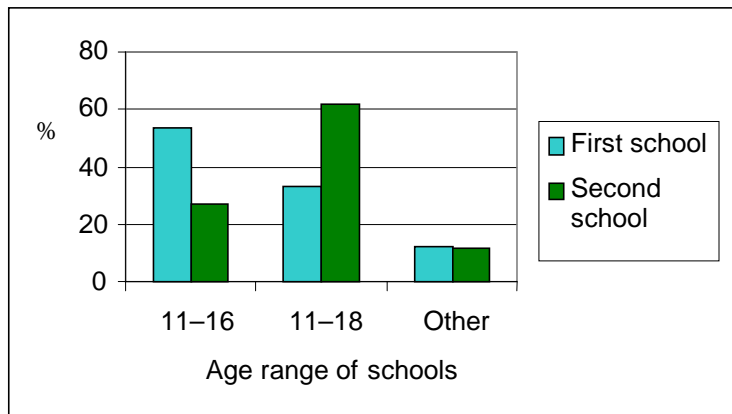


The gender of the heads' first school was 84% mixed and 16% single sex. While these figures were little changed in second schools, there were movements into and out of single-sex schools: 9 of 10 heads in single-sex schools went to mixed schools and 7 of 53 in mixed schools went to single sex. Almost all heads were in comprehensive schools. Only four heads were in grammar schools for both headships but two moved out of comprehensives and two moved into comprehensives.

Age range of first and second schools

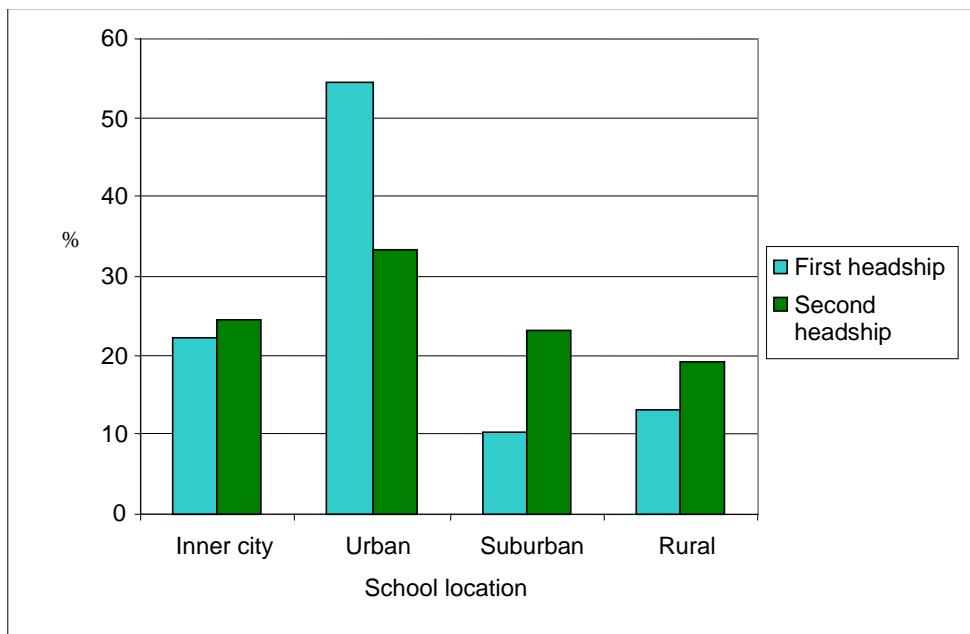
There was a movement from 11–16 schools to 11–18 schools.

Figure 6.8: Age range of first and second secondary schools



Location of first and second secondary schools

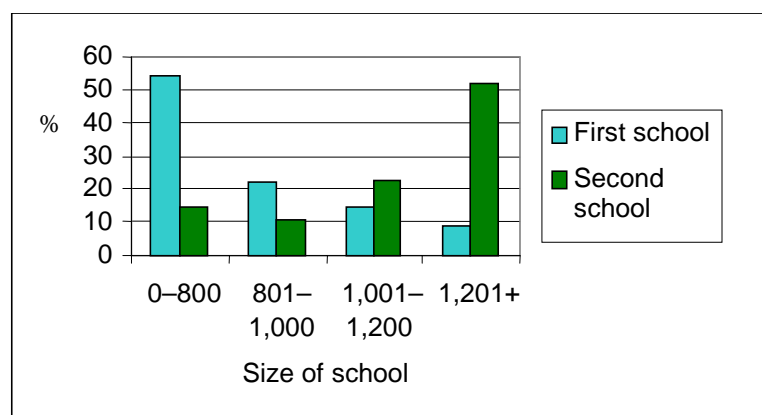
Figure 6.9: Location of first and second secondary schools



There was more movement between types of location than is apparent from Figure 6.9. Only about one third of heads remained in the same type of location for their second headship. From each type of location in first headship there was appreciable movement to each other type of location for second headship.

School size

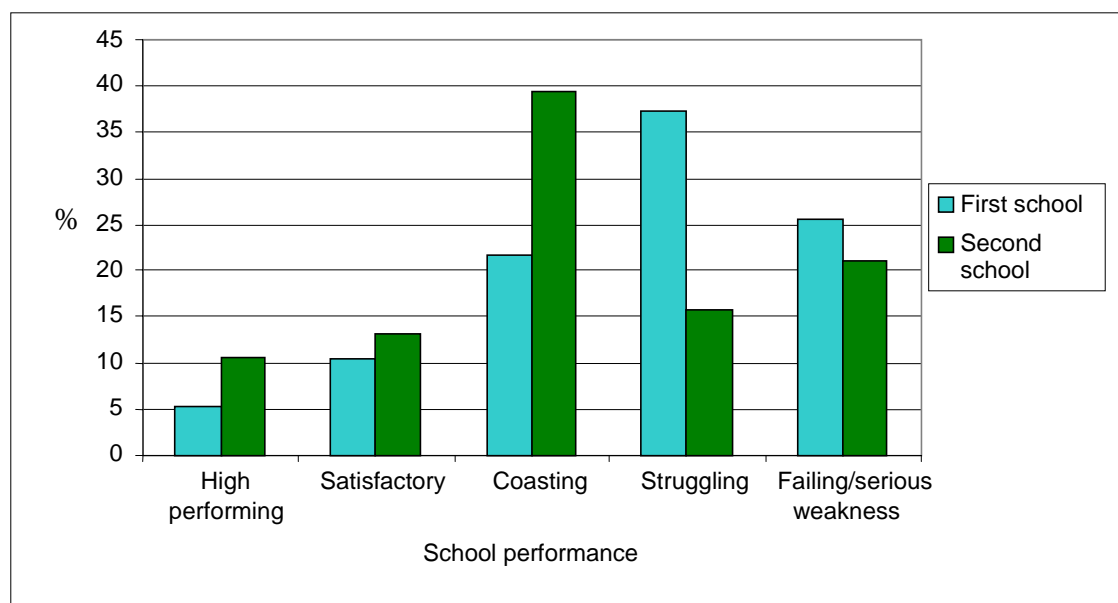
Figure 6.10: Number of students in first and second secondary schools



There was a clear trend to move to a larger school for second headship. Seventy per cent moved to a larger size category. But just over a quarter of heads did not change their size category and just two moved from one of the larger categories to one of the smaller.

School performance

Figure 6.11: Performance on taking up post in first and second secondary schools



School performance on taking up first headship was generally less well performing than on taking up second headship, but in the transition there were two trends going on. Over half of heads in better performing schools in first headship went to less well performing schools while half of those in struggling, failing and serious weakness schools in first headship moved to better performing schools. About one third of heads followed another second head in their second school. The areas on which heads prioritised importance in their first and second schools are given in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2: Areas of work that heads prioritised in their first and second secondary schools

First school	Second school
Test and examination results	Test and examination results
Student numbers and public image	Premises
Premises	Curriculum, teaching and learning
Curriculum, teaching and learning	Student attendance and behaviour
Student attendance and behaviour	Recruiting and developing staff competence

Expectations and experiences

Almost a quarter of heads expected their second school to be quite different to their first school and just over three quarters expected it to be essentially the same. Over one fifth experienced more surprises on taking up their second headship compared to their first. Two fifths experienced fewer surprises and two fifths an equal number. Almost half rated themselves more successful in second headship than their first and only five rated themselves less successful. Of these five, one had gone on to a third headship and two were in their first two years of second headship. Where success is investigated in more detail in Chapter 8, some of the those rating themselves less successful had changed their mind by the time of the interview a term later, as their view had become more optimistic as events progressed.

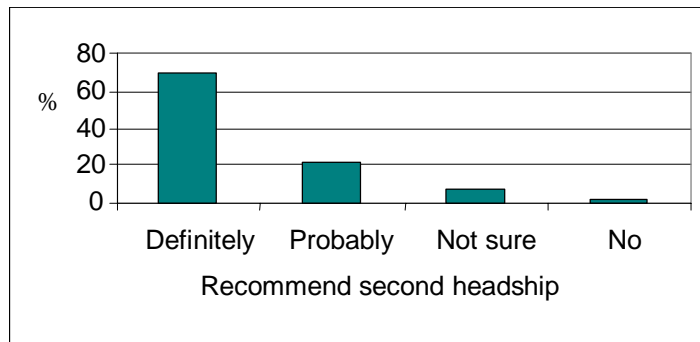
When asked about any plans for their future that the second heads had at this time (in a multiple response question), the following were the results:

- 26% planned another headship (8 of the 20 planned this in combination with other choices);
- 39% planned retirement (almost half planned this in combination with other choices);
- 54% planned other work in education (23 of the 41 planned this in combination with other choices);
- 16% planned work outside education (9 of the 12 planned this in combination with other choices).

Recommendations and advice

Most second heads would recommend second headship to those in first headship, as shown in Figure 6.12.

Figure 6.12: Recommend second secondary headship to first heads



Analysis of the open-ended responses (38 participants), revealed the following most frequently offered advice to newly appointed first heads contemplating a second headship in the future:

- To give the first school five to seven years to complete a full headship management/leadership cycle and if possible to leave a successful school.
- To choose or select the school wisely ensuring that it offers the right challenge. There should be a thorough search about the school, the local authority and the school's potential for improvement.
- To choose a school that can contribute to work–life balance.
- Consider the appropriateness of their leadership style.
- To choose the school at which they know they can make a difference.

7 Comparison of major findings from primary and secondary schools

- Fifty-five per cent of primary second heads were female and 45% were male. For all primary heads in 2003 (the latest year for which statistics are available) the figures were 63% and 37% respectively. This means that there were more male second heads in primary schools than would be expected.
- Sixty per cent of secondary second heads were male and 40% were female. For all secondary heads in 2003 (the latest year for which statistics are available) the ratio was 68% to 32% respectively. This means that there were more female second heads in secondary schools than would be expected.
- Forty per cent of primary second heads and 17% of secondary second heads were in headships beyond their second.
- The average age of appointment to primary first headship was 38 and to secondary second headship it was 41.
- Only 14% ($n=12$) of primary second heads and 12% (9) of secondary second heads were internal appointments to their first headship. Both these are much lower than the proportion of internal appointments to all first headships.
- Fifty-one per cent of primary second heads and 44% of secondary second heads intended to go on to second headship when they became first heads.
- Both primary and secondary second heads spent an average of six years at their first school.
- The average age of appointment to primary second headship was 44 and to secondary second headship, 47.
- In both cases about one third followed a head who was a second head.
- The frequency of reasons for moving were similar but there were more external reasons in secondary second headship and fewer personal reasons than primary.
- Both groups were highly selective in their choice of second headship.
- Twenty-five per cent of the primary second headship sample withdrew from at least one school, while 40% of the secondary sample withdrew from at least one school.
- Both groups had more lower performing schools for their first headship than would be expected and both groups greatly improved the test and examination results in their first school.
- There were similar movements in terms of school performance from first to second headship with half moving from high performing schools to lower performing and half from lower performing moving to higher performing.
- Primary heads in their first headship chose curriculum, teaching and learning as their highest improvement priority while secondary heads chose test and examination results.

- Both groups moved to larger schools for second headship.
- Heads from both groups expected the two schools to be quite different, that is, primary (78%) and secondary (77%).
- A larger proportion (41%) of heads in the primary second headship group had more surprises compared to those in the secondary second headship group (21%).
- Heads from both groups (67%) said that there were skills they needed to acquire in the second headship that were less important in their first headship.
- More secondary second heads rated themselves more successful (48%) in first headship than did primary second heads (39%).
- A similar proportion plan to go on to a further headship (30%).
- Over two thirds of both groups would definitely recommend second headship to first heads.

8 Themes

Reasons for seeking second headship

Introduction

Heads explained their reasons for seeking a second headship both on the questionnaire survey and, at greater length, in the telephone interviews. Although only 18 were selected for interview on the basis of their reasons for seeking second headship, the remainder also gave brief details of their reasons as part of their interview responses on related topics. Almost invariably, their reasons were multi-faceted with a number of interconnected threads rather than simple causes. Here we examine the stated reasons under three headings – personal, school and external.

Reasons that involve the headteacher personally are covered under the heading 'personal'. 'School' reasons may involve factors associated with either their first or second school, and 'external' covers reasons not related to the previous two headings. In general, the reasons given by primary and secondary heads were very similar. The only marked difference between the phases was that there were teaching heads in small primary schools who wished to move to a larger school with either a smaller enforced teaching load or to one where they could choose the extent to which they taught regularly.

Personal reasons

Character: a number of heads prefaced their remarks about seeking a second headship by commenting on their personal character, saying that they needed fresh stimulation and became bored if they were not active. They were not sure if that was true also of other headteachers but they thought it an important aspect of their decision making.

“Now I’m the sort of person that gets bored easily and I have to get involved in things other than just being the head of the school that I’m in.” (PM089)

“... my predecessor was here for 15 years. I wouldn’t fault his performance at all. The ICT wasn’t up to scratch, but that’s a small price to pay for the lovely school he handed on. But you see that wouldn’t suit me. I wouldn’t stay in one place for such a long time. I have shifted a lot in my career, albeit within a relatively small geographical area and that seems to suit me.” (SM050)

New challenge: they sought a second headship as a way of taking on a new challenge. The change would provide a challenge and some had in mind particular school characteristics that would provide the challenge that they sought. But change and challenge were key words from most interviewees.

“I was really looking forward to taking on a challenge such as the school I took on. I wanted that in the second headship.” (PM122)

“I felt that at the end of 12 years my energy levels were going down, which was worrying but then the interesting thing for me was that starting here I felt a lot more energetic and a lot more excited than I’d felt for many years and that’s got to be something to do with a new place and new challenges.” (SM122)

“One of my frustrations at my previous job was simply repeating or refining things that I had done before, and going to a new school with different challenges altogether has just made me think and read and talk and go to conferences with a real personal agenda. I’m not going because of going but because I need to think, to force myself to think and learn about issues that are current in the school. In terms of personal

growth, I wish I had done this before, two years before I did – five years as head and then left.” (SM071)

Remainder of career: a further widely stated reason was when the heads considered the remainder of their professional career and asked themselves whether they wished to spend the rest of their career at their first school. They had calculated what their total length of headship might be with some notional retirement age in mind and thought that this option of staying was quite unpalatable. Such a calculation appeared to come at a particular stage in the developments at their first school.

“I think partly one gets to the point when one feels you’re either going to stay in the same job pretty much for the rest of your career or if you’re going to move perhaps you ought to think about moving soon.” (PM018)

“... the fresh challenge – at the time I was still only 44 – which in a teaching career is still only very young, well in terms of the headship career. And I thought that if I wasn’t careful I could have sat still in that headship for another 16 years.” (SM122)

“... if I had stayed in my previous school – I would have ended up being there for fifteen to seventeen years. How many times can you reinvent yourself – a school doesn’t stay needing the same leadership style across seventeen years. I think it’s a huge challenge for people who actually stay in one place and reinvent themselves to meet the changing needs in education and actually taking up your bag and walking to somewhere else makes it easier to do.” (SF022)

From the questionnaire almost 50% of primary and 44% of secondary second heads said that they thought of a second headship when they took on their first headship but a few, in explaining their particular reasons for moving to their second school, implied that this had been part of an ongoing plan rather than a more general awareness of one option that they might take at a particular point in time.

Unsustainable workload: there were two other reasons where the personal and the particular school situation intersected. Some of those in particularly challenging schools felt that the workload that they were finding necessary in that school was unsustainable for them in the longer term. There was no doubt that they expected that headteachers had to work hard but what they were currently doing was way above this. Thus a need to move to a more sustainable work–life balance was a motivating factor for a move to another school. In particular, heads of small primary schools, where the head had a substantial teaching load (up to four days a week) in order to balance the budget, were likely to cite the difficulties of combining the work of a class teacher and a head as very demanding.

“The first headship I had was a teaching headship – it was a very small rural school and it was a fair distance from my house, about 40 miles, so quite a commitment. The school itself was very small with one other teacher and although I enjoyed it very much, I felt that I preferred to work with a much larger team.... When you’re a teaching head you’re flying by the seat of your pants so to speak and trying to teach and deliver as well as managing all the other things that come through your desk. Quite often the same amount of paperwork as you do get in a bigger school.” (PF052)

“I wouldn’t have gone for a second headship that was as challenging as my first one because I didn’t want to meet the same issues again and I used to work over 90 hours a week, seven days a week for about three years. I couldn’t do that again.” (PF016)

“It’s a far more real and normal kind of experience and I’ve found it really quite invigorating. I’m not as stressed as I was in my previous school. They expected a

pound of flesh plus in the previous one. I think top schools and maintaining a top school in that position is very daunting.” (SM116)

Improvements completed: the other reason cited by a small number of heads was that they had made the improvements that they wanted to in that school. This was not to suggest that further improvements were not necessary but they did not have the motivation to take these on. They had done their bit in this school. In general, the heads who had gone on to second headship were likely to say that they were not good at maintenance and were more interested in making an impact.

“... having spent six and a half years in a small village primary school, I was really getting to the point where my vision for that school was getting somewhat blurred if you like, I couldn't see clearly where I could take that particular school any further.” (PM066)

“I would say that by my eighth year I was beginning to think we could go on making changes but it was difficult to see though any major changes we could bring about which would be as exciting as previous ones. I think I also felt that I was personally running out of ideas and found myself beginning to think 'not another GCSE certificate evening coming round'.” (SF020)

“I felt that the school had made significant strides forward, and I had explored all the areas I wanted to explore and improve and I felt that I was still a decade off retirement and I didn't really feel that I would get personal satisfaction retiring after 20 years at the school. I felt my effectiveness would decrease and I wanted to move on before that happened and have the re-invigoration of my enthusiasm, by taking on somewhere that still needed to be improved.” (SF029)

Family relocation: a personal reason that could cut across any of the foregoing or supersede any of them was some change in personal circumstances. The most frequently cited was relocation with a partner. There were a number of examples where the timing of a move of school was due to a family relocation occasioned by the work of the other partner.

“The personal side was that I was relocating from the east side of the country to the west side of the country – I'd been a head in a small school where there were 100 pupils and I wanted to work in a school where there were more, so I've moved to a school where there are 300.” (PF009)

“We were relocating as a family ... when I knew we were going and we were coming across to [... LA], so I knew roughly where I would relocate to, it wasn't very long before I was lucky enough to get one. So I didn't have very long thinking what I need to do now is find a headship in that area.” (PF060)

Work-life balance: just occasionally a move to a second headship could reduce travelling time or have family advantages such as being closer to aged parents but in such cases these did not appear to be precipitating factors. Unlike relocation with a partner, these tended to influence the choice of school rather than whether to move to a second headship or not.

“My journey to the previous school was taking me up to three quarters of an hour a day; now it's a quarter of an hour which gives me much time in school but also the ability to return home. So the home work-life balance was important.” (PM066)

“... I was sick to death of driving the distance every day.... So I looked for somewhere closer.” (PM093)

Salary: in the questionnaire 23% of primary and secondary heads had said that salary was very important. In interviews, some heads mentioned the attractions of extra salary and its effects on pensions. A small number of primary heads pointed

out that they had moved for no increase in salary and they thought that this might have deterred other heads from moving.

“I was on the same scale before in my previous school as here. So I didn’t get any extra money to come here – so there wasn’t a financial inducement.” (PM093)

“I kept a weather eye out on what was around because I had been getting a lot of positive feedback about my headship and so I thought well I could probably do another one if I didn’t leave it too much longer. My current salary is almost a third higher than what it was at [...].” (SM050)

Not the right school: only one primary head moved after two years because her first school was ‘not right for her’ and another was under pressure to leave.

“That’s probably one of the reasons I didn’t stay at the first school too long because it wasn’t the right school for me really ... [length of headship] I think more than two years would probably be advisable but for me definitely I did need to move. I would have thought that you would want to change before five years.” (PF007)

“I left my first headship with a sense of regret that I hadn’t been allowed because of various circumstances to complete the job.... Part of it regrettably was racial – a predominantly Muslim school and the community would have liked to turn it into a Muslim school.... So there was certain tension there and the LA’s way of dealing with that was to take the ostrich approach. That’s why the school had got into the state it had got into.” (PM089)

School reasons

These could either be associated with the first school providing a push to move on or a pull from a possible second school.

First school needed new impetus: most frequently cited was the recognition that their first school needed a fresh impetus from a new headteacher. Most heads mentioned that it would be good for their first school to have a change of head.

“I was there for about another year after that [successful Ofsted] and I felt that the school needed a new direction anyway – somebody new coming in, some new ideas rather than me just taking it along the same path. I think it wasn’t good for the school having me still there and so it was just the right time to move.” (PF016)

“I think I was ready to move and I think the school benefited in a way from me moving as well because I think you can get into certain ways of operation which perhaps – I think you can get to a point where you need a fresh pair of eyes. I think you get quite battle scarred if you stay in the same place too long.” (SM122)

Often this was accompanied by noting that the school had reached a particular stage in its development and that this was a suitable point for someone else to come in and take it on the next stage of development.

“I left my first headship at a time when I felt I had achieved something. We had just had a full Ofsted inspection that had cleared us of the serious weaknesses and I felt that we had worked through quite a difficult time and it had been therefore positive. But I also thought that was the right time to move, for the school to take on its next phase of development.... I felt it was right for the school and it was right for me – a natural change. The school had a new agenda and I had done a particular job there and got to the end of that particular job and therefore it was time to move on.” (SF005)

“I actually think that most people that move on to a second headship I don’t think set out, when they go to a school, to say that I’m going to stay here for six years and

then I'm going to move on. I think that that feeling either evolves or it doesn't – if you had asked me about seven years into my first headship whether I was considering a second headship, the answer would have been no; whereas if you'd asked me a year later, the answer clearly at that stage was actually yes, maybe for both myself and the school it would be good because if I don't do it now, it's not going to happen and then you are stuck with me for another ten years." (SM115)

Doubts about first school's future: a further school-related reason was where the head had a perception that the school's future might be in doubt. This could involve expectations of a falling roll or some imminent LA reorganisation of its school system that would involve the school. These tended to be cited as contributory reasons for a move rather than as a prime cause.

"But about five years in, [LA] – is always threatening to re-organise – and it ought to, there is fundamentally one secondary school too many for the current population – so I felt that it might be.... You see I am now 57 this year – what I was afraid of was that three or four years down the line from then, I would be involved in applying for a headship very similar to my own headship or something here in the city as result of a closure and be at the wrong age to be successful.... I need to work at least to the age of 60 for the family, because of the age of my children. And I like my job and don't wish to retire early. So I saw that potential for me to be thrown on the scrap heap as it were at the age of 59 and that didn't suit my plan at all." (SM050)

Attraction of second school: in a smaller number of cases it was the attraction of a particular school or particular type of second school that was a key reason. Most frequently cited were: a larger school that offered more opportunities; a school taking the full age range of either primary or secondary education; and primary schools where the head could choose how much time they teach rather than have a large enforced load. Faith schools introduced polarities. Some heads wanted a second headship in a similar faith school to their first but there were a number of primary heads who had a church school for their first headship who sought a non-denominational school for their second headship. (The choice of school for second headship was complex and the general trends are described later in this chapter.)

"It's a bigger school and I felt that to be a fully rounded head, I needed to have the Early Years and Key Stage 1 experience." (PM078)

"When I took over the headship of a boys' school, I knew I was taking over a school that knowing that I needed to prove I could do boys because I'd been in girls' education for quite a long time just by coincidence. So I made a conscious decision when that school came up – it was a Catholic school, it was a school in serious difficulties and I was known in the area and it was worth going for ... I wanted mixed and I think that's been increasingly the case since and I wanted post-sixteen." (SF022)

"I wanted a school that was truly comprehensive – that is, a full range of ability and a full range of socio-economic background which is quite important as well." (SM115)

One head that was unhappy in a grammar school wanted to move to a comprehensive but any move had to be within travelling distance and so particular schools being advertised was the trigger. Where it was a particular school that was the attraction this conditioned the timing as it became vacant.

External reasons

LA school reorganisation: the most common external reason was where there was an LA reorganisation actually taking place and the first school would not continue to exist in its current state. This obviously precipitated some change. This might be a pre-emptive move to another headship out of the area or a headship within the

reorganised school. Clearly this reason was different in kind from the previous reasons in that it was forced on the head that might have wished to continue in first headship. Afterwards heads welcomed the move but not this form of enforced change.

“It closed yes as a result of reorganisation.... I made a definite choice for the school – I could have gone elsewhere, I could have applied elsewhere. But I made a choice that I wanted to have the primary school headship.” (PF058)

“I’d been a head since January ‘82 at age 31 and I was head of the original school on this site until it closed in July 2001.... I’d always wanted a bigger school and so I did try for another couple of other large school headships while I was entangled in all of this because I wasn’t a hundred per cent sure I would get the headship. Although it would be ring fenced....” (PF125)

Headhunted: the final reason where the head may not have been planning a second headship was where he or she was headhunted. That is, they were sought out and invited to look round the school with the prospect that if they applied they were likely to be appointed to the headship in view of their track record and their suitability for the post. This kind of approach could be very flattering and such an approach with a suitable second school in mind was likely to be successful in interesting a head that had not considered second headship. In such cases the head had a choice unlike the previous LA reorganisation, and usually there was a substantial financial incentive. The headhunters could either be management consultants involved in improving failing schools or the LA chief officer.

“Until Price Waterhouse and Cooper asked me to apply for this job, I wasn’t quite as aware as I should have been of the success I’d managed to create both for me and my senior team, the teachers and the students at [...] School.... So I felt very good about the fact that there’d been recognition – I think something which motivates me is achievement anyway – but the fact that it had been recognised makes it that much more special. I felt very valued and flattered but it wasn’t flattery that was the final spur, it was the thought that the salary increase would actually do something in relation to my pension that would secure everything financially. There was an element of monetary gain for the first time in my life having been in teaching since I graduated.” (SM097)

“I was appointed to my first school in January 2004 and unbeknown to me the school had been judged to be the worst school in the country.... When I got to the school, if Ofsted had come into the school in the first term, they would have put it into special measures category. Fortunately, they didn’t and I had an awful lot of work to do in terms of putting basic systems into the school ... I was approached in the spring term of 2005, early on, because [second school] had gone to national advert on three occasions and only two people had shown any interest. I deliberately hadn’t applied for it because I thought I had more work to do at [first school]. But prior to getting these fantastic results in 2005, there were question marks about the viability of [first school] because it was a small school in a falling-roll situation and the LEA were considering if it was still going to be around four years down the line. So that sort of swayed me a little bit and it was suggested to me – I had a ‘phone call from a senior officer in the LEA and he said to me would I like to go and have a look at this school. And I did go and have a look at it and I absolutely loved it.... This school, of course, was in special measures – had been in special measures since 2003. So HMI were saying, quite rightly, that they wouldn’t take the school out of special measures until there was a substantive head that was why, I think, there was the urgency within the LA to have somebody appointed.” (PF080)

In the case of a head of a Catholic school that was approaching 60 and considering his future, this second headship became an alternative to retirement. This was a fixed-term contract to oversee the re-launch of a school in very challenging circumstances. This second headship was very different to his first headship and, as

he pointed out, he had to make a major reappraisal to his views about appropriate student behaviour in school. He pointed out that if he had not undertaken a number of acting headships in this type of school during his first headship such a move could have been disastrous as he would have been unprepared for this kind of challenge. But he was relishing the challenge and identifying hopeful signs of the school turning the corner after two years.

“The first school was a very pleasant, Catholic secondary – a mixed comprehensive school which had improved greatly in the last number of years of my headship and was very over subscribed. By 2004, when I was 60 years of age, I was just thinking in terms of retirement when Director of Education of [...] came and said did I fancy a special challenge before you retire as he had got wind of the fact that I was thinking of retiring and indicated a school that the LEA had tried to appoint a head to and found great difficulty in so doing – a school that was in exceptionally challenging circumstances and was to become a city academy in September 2008. So really he was looking at a short-term contract, ie three to four years, which is not that short. The terms of the contract seemed attractive and the package including the salary being offered was definitely attractive. I thought about it and I had done for the LEA a couple of seconded stints at schools in [...], the first school in [...] that was put into special measures back in 1997 the LEA borrowed me from the governors of my permanent headship and I was at that school for six months. I knew what I was coming into but it was attractive enough and stimulating enough for me to say yes, OK I'll do it.” (SM113)

Invitation from second school: a final external reason given by two heads was where they were sent details of a school whose vacancy had been advertised, and invited by the governors of the school to visit in order to find out more about the school. In another, a governor suggested an application.

“I suppose you could call it headhunted for two or three jobs actually which rather surprised me. But I actually received something in the post that was the application form and the fact that these particular schools were advertising a headship in the next couple of months, they wanted me to look at the details, come and visit the school if I wished, and see whether I would be willing to apply for the job.... One of these schools actually employed consultants – so I received a letter from this firm of consultants who said they had been hired to attract a good interest for the headship and here are the details, would you be interested in applying? It was that direct really. And then the others were two that came directly from the schools, with my name on it, just to say would I be willing to look at the post and visit the school.” (SM082)

“[having been approached by three schools] What was interesting was that these three schools were not in challenging or difficult circumstances. All three schools were in good areas, and were successful schools. It took me by surprise really.” (SM082)

“I did have a look at one or two but none that made me feel I really wanted to leave this school where I was very happy. But then, this school where I am now came up in the same authority, and I was approached by one of the governors, who I knew from various other contexts....” (SF020)

Potential risks and negative features

There were potential risks and negative features both of moving to a second school and also of remaining in the first school.

Moving to a second school

While almost universally second heads would recommend second headship to other heads there were some potentially negative features that prospective second heads

should bear in mind. Again we have organised these under the headings of 'personal' and 'school'.

Personal reasons

Less successful: heads did not tend directly to mention thinking about the potential risk before applying for second headship but a small number hinted at it. Obviously leaving a successful first headship and moving to a second headship involves some degree of personal risk that the second headship might be less successful or that he or she might be less happy in the new school.

“... after I got the job – thinking what happens if I make a hash of it and what happens if I’m not actually as good as I thought I was? OK, I did well there but was that because of the people, the circumstances, the particular time in that school’s evolution that I was the right fix for them at the right time – can I reproduce that somewhere else?” (PF062)

“[headhunted for a failing school] I went into the process in a way with absolutely nothing to lose in the sense that if I didn’t like what I saw here and wasn’t convinced by the school community here, then I could walk away from it knowing that I was doing a very good job somewhere else – perhaps even use that as a bargaining counter.” (SM097)

There are anecdotal cases mentioned where a second head is unsuccessful after a previously successful first headship and the most widely cited desirable outcome of this research was thought to be identifying how second headship might go wrong. This was by way of forewarning prospective second heads about how to ensure that the transfer was successful.

All heads identified their learning in first headship as being valuable preparation for second headship and a number who were finding their second post challenging made the comment that they were only able to do the job because they had already been heads. But heads that were finding second headship more challenging than they expected were now more aware of the possible risks. This feeling of insecurity was exacerbated where, in a school that had been failing, they were under pressure to make speedy improvements by the LA. It was the expected speed that they saw as unreasonable and that they saw as their vulnerability.

“[second could be less successful] ... certainly for the last couple of years when my results have been falling, I’ve been thinking the same but now it seems to have worked its way around fortunately and we’re getting to where we want to be.” (PM107)

“The risk involved in that is that in a Catholic community you’re well known. If I had failed at the second school, not only would I have failed the school community but the whole community would know. And that’s the element of risk that people who take on faith schools often have in addition to those who take on community schools.” (PM122)

“So there’s definitely that element of risk – you’re moving from a successful school to one that is now unsuccessful.... You think can I do it again? Can I do it again in the same way? I don’t think I’m a person with loads of self-confidence....” (SM071)

Changing LA: this was particularly the case where they had moved from another LA where their reputation, based on their previous success, was well known. They recognised that in their present LA their reputation was based on their current headship. Although this had not gone wrong, it was not yet the success that they expected.

“... you’re the head of a school in difficulties therefore you’re a head in difficulty. The two are not matching at all.” (PM122)

“It’s a huge gamble and it was a huge gamble for me because I was so happy in my previous school, I was really well established and I was doing a lot for the local authority there because I was well known to the local authority. And I was coming to a different local authority with no reputation if you like.” (PF069)

High workload in first year: a feature that was mentioned by a large number of heads was the workload involved in establishing oneself in a new school. This had generally been higher than expected and this was attributed to them forgetting the effort required to establish themselves in their first school and then the length of time that this had taken.

“I underestimated how long it takes to get the staff to be in a position where they can change reasonably quickly and easily because I was in a situation previously where there was a staff that could do that.” (PM078)

“... even if you move into a school that’s by and large well sorted there is a lot of work in your first year because it doesn’t matter who you are following on from, the headteacher very much sets the tone of what happens in the school and no two heads are the same. So unless you’re prepared to go through all that work again and you’ve got a good reason for doing it, I would say don’t do it. Having said that, I’ve personally found it very rewarding and would recommend it to people as long as it’s done for the right reason.” (PM089)

“... it’s going to probably be twice as much hard work as your previous one – don’t think that necessarily because you have done the job somewhere that is going to make life easier somewhere else.” (SM042)

They commented that heads needed to bear in mind that they were leaving a school in a state that had taken some time and effort to achieve. Even though this process might be expected to be somewhat easier and quicker in a second headship, this should not be underestimated. The few who were finding this particularly challenging identified the workload as the most difficult aspect that they had experienced. Even they, however, noted that the work was stimulating and that they welcomed the challenge – it was just not quite what they had expected.

“[having taken on a second school in special measures] I have to say it’s been the most difficult year of my professional career.” (PF060)

“I think what had happened before is that the school had been run for a fairly small, exclusive group of parents. Clearly that was reflected in results and things, and now it is being run on behalf of every child and every parent and, of course, that brings benefits but it also brings the disadvantage that a powerful minority, who’d held sway before and no longer do so, obviously don’t take kindly to that. Some noses out of joint, and they needed to be. It’s a very complex inheritance, and I have learned a lot about taking over a school that has not been run properly. It was very difficult.” (SM042)

School reasons

Attachment to first school: most heads spoke of a sense of attachment to their first school that made it hard to leave. They had invested great effort in its success and had identified with it. This made it quite a wrench to leave. A small number later in assessing their success early in their second headship recognised that they had not fully left their first school mentally and that this had inhibited their leadership in their second school in the first few months. (See the section on ‘Experiences, successes and challenges’ later in this chapter.)

"I had great loyalty to my previous school. I'd worked there for eighteen years both as deputy and head and you don't work in a school for eighteen years without developing some very strong ties." (SM061)

"When you've invested your heart and soul over two or three years you have a sense of ownership and loyalty that doesn't go away but at the end of the day it's a job not a life sentence." (SF023)

"I stayed too long in my previous post. It's a personal thing. I will never stay that long... The leaving was an emotional thing. There was turmoil in the weeks before. I've never been back, and I still feel very attached to it. I've never been back precisely because I still feel too attached." (SM071)

Applying for posts: a small number of heads mentioned in passing the difficulty as head of a school when applying for other jobs.

"... where do you find the time actually to go and look elsewhere, fill in the form, etc. But more importantly causing unsettlement where you're at because if the staff find out that you're actually going to look somewhere else, that would cause them to be unsettled and perhaps not perform the same way. I think the head is a crucial role for that really." (PF062)

It was difficult to let anyone know until obtaining another post. While this is not dissimilar to the position of other staff seeking to move schools, for a head there is a school dimension and not only a personal one. There was great concern about the effects on the school if it became known that the head was trying to leave. Clearly this became a greater issue the longer the head spent actively seeking another post.

Reaction of staff in first school: indeed, some heads reported a reaction from some staff – especially very long-serving staff – of disloyalty to the school by moving to another school. Heads who reported this were surprised at this reaction, sometimes because they were not aware of how much they were appreciated by staff.

"[leaving first school after two years] ... the staff were very strange actually, they were quite awkward about it – it was as though it was slight on them that I decided to leave after such a short time." (PF007)

Difficult to appoint a successor: some heads reported difficulties in appointing a successor. Up to two years was not uncommon where it was difficult to appoint and long periods of acting headship were not be good for the school.

"They've had an interim arrangement and it's taken two years." (SM061)

In one or two cases heads reported that their successor had not kept up the improvement that they had started and the school had slipped into special measures after an Ofsted inspection.

"... they had an Ofsted after about six years after the successful Ofsted we had there. One should never criticise one's predecessor but one's allowed to criticise one's successor. The guy didn't pick up the teaching and learning agenda and didn't realise if you lose sight of teaching and learning, then your grip on standards is going to fall away." (SF023)

However, most heads did not mention any knowledge of what had subsequently happened to the school. By their references to the actions of their predecessor as second head, they considered that heads that had left a school should not be seen to take any interest in their former school lest it be seen as interference in the work of the following head.

Timing of the actual move: finally, there were issues about the timing of an orderly transition. This was especially acute where the second school had an acting head but there were also tasks to complete at the first school. This situation could see the new school marking time with the new head having too little opportunity to get to know the new school before taking up post. The situation was worse in small primary schools where there was no deputy head.

“And the headteacher at the time had moved on [from second school] to become an adviser for the local authority ... at the previous school I had to give very short notice. In fact I had to ask the governors’ permission to leave much earlier than one would normally and that was because they needed someone here to cover the school for a term and, as I’ve said, there’s no deputy at this school ... and it did cause some bad feeling from one or two of the governors at the previous school ... and I suppose it’s partly because schools may not have a deputy or someone that is obviously in line to step in when the head is away and that was the case not only with my previous school but with this school as well. And if there’s no one to step in, it does cause difficulties when the head moves on rather suddenly.” (PM018)

“[difficult transition] ... the previous incumbent wasn’t particularly keen for me to get involved and the school I was running was in challenging circumstances and if you took your eye off the ball things would go haywire. I couldn’t afford to do anything other than complete my previous job, and I wasn’t allowed to find out much before the last guy left in the place I was inheriting.” (SM042)

Remaining in first school

Personal and school reasons

Only one or two heads were under any pressure to leave their first school and almost all were happy there but they had considered what might happen if they did not move and they generally interpreted their thoughts as a further impetus to try for a second headship.

Complacency: most heads indicated that they were in a favourable position in their first headship because they were under no pressure to move other than their own wishes and so they could take their time in choosing their second school. Some had been sending for details of other schools for some time. Others were aware that their situation was comfortable and often were reluctant to leave their first school when it had some very attractive features. However, it was a common view that this comfort would lead to complacency and they saw this as a warning sign that they needed to move on.

“I had reached the stage where if I’d stayed at my last school I could have cruised quite easily. And I thought go to another school and start a new challenge and it will revitalise me as well as the school hopefully.” (PF067)

“... at the beginning I thought I’d probably stay there forever. It was very nice and I was very comfortable. As I said, I’d built up a very good relationship with the staff. We’d had a big turn around in results and pupil take up. Then there came a point where I thought actually this is too comfortable.... It wasn’t right for the school and it wasn’t right for me because I like a challenge.” (PF062)

“I could have carried on at my old school in one sense quite happily, I could have carried on there and done the job to a certain level but I think what you do after a while is you lose perspective. There’s a danger in that, and you become overprotective of what you do, and you are less likely to listen to external criticism in a constructive way.” (SM082)

Choice of school: similarities and differences

Introduction

The choice of a school for second headship has many parallels with the choice for first headship except that, of course, second heads have the experience of first headship to guide them and influence their choice. On the questionnaire just over two thirds of primary heads and just over 70% of secondary heads said they were more selective in their choice of second headship than their first.

A choice of school for second headship has a number of phases:

- sending for details
- identifying criteria
- further investigation including visits
- application
- selection
- discovery after taking up post.

Not all heads went through all stages. For a few heads it was when a particular school was advertised that they chose to apply and those who were headhunted were not sending for details.

Sending for details

Once heads had begun to think of a second school they began to send for details. While a few had been sending for details for some time, most only send for a few over a brief period. Implicitly at this stage heads had criteria in mind but some sent for quite a range to see what was being advertised.

“I always kept my eye on the vacancies but not particularly looking.” (PM107)

“... you just have to look once you're in the game. You have to look and you have to decide and you definitely don't apply for one you know you can't win but on the other hand you can't wait around for the perfect one because you don't actually know what they're going to be like really.” (PF060)

“For a year I had been applying, not applying, no I had been sending for information from the *Times Ed* once a week. Every time there had been something that looked interesting, you know, and I didn't mind where it was in the country, I sent for it as I just wanted to see what was going on in the job market.” (SM071)

Where heads did not intend to move house and they were beginning to plan to change schools, it depended on which headship vacancies were advertised within travelling distance. It could take some time for a suitable school to come up.

Criteria: what first heads were looking for in a second headship

There were some with generic criteria, some that were more specific about types, and some who appeared to be interested only in certain schools.

Challenge

As has already been reported in the section on reasons for seeking second headship, most heads indicated that they wanted some kind of challenge from their new headship. In some cases it was a challenging context, in others it was a

particular development that they wished to pursue, while for others it was a change of school that provided the stimulating challenge.

“I very much enjoyed my first headship in a secondary school in very challenging circumstances, highest percentage of free school meals in [...]. And we had really turned that school around and I had felt the need to move on to a different kind of challenge which is what I have here, in that we have a high attaining but slightly under ex-grammar school with absolutely tremendous potential so I suppose it is about personal challenge for me really.” (SM078)

Make a difference

The most generic criterion, which came up in some form or other in most interviews, was the idea of choosing a school where the individual head ‘could make a difference’. Indeed there was concern from some heads about schools where they could not envisage how they would be able to make a difference.

There were some school conditions where it was easy to see that potentially a new head could make a difference and it would show. These were likely to be destabilised schools, schools in challenging contexts, schools experiencing temporary difficulties and coasting schools. While these types of school, in principle, might show up the difference a new head could make, first heads recognised that they needed to assess in these cases whether they personally could make that difference. On the questionnaire 45% of primary heads and 55% of secondary heads said it was very important that their personal skills fitted the needs of their new school and a further 37% of both groups rated this quite important.

In part this assessment depended on their experiences in first headship and their first school but in a number of cases it also depended on their experiences in their school career before headship. Occasionally where they also had a career before teaching or more often where there was some job between headships, this also could play a part in the assessment. In the case of ‘coasting schools’ or schools that were performing at a level that appeared superficially good, it was a personal professional decision by the prospective head about whether they should have been performing better and how.

Where potential second schools were not in one of the foregoing categories, heads still spoke of their assessment as to whether they could make a difference in some way but this was particularised to an individual school rather than a category of schools. The most likely to be mentioned were dealing with a process issue such as a financial deficit or taking the school forward in terms of specialist status or some other way that would not directly lead to improved performance in league tables of test or examination results. Occasionally a specific difference that was mentioned was in terms of broadening the curriculum that was offered.

When heads had decided on generic features of their choice of second school such as it being larger, they implicitly were considering making a difference as they mentioned some possibilities that larger schools offered.

“I do think if you’re moving when you’re already a head, you’ve got to feel really enthusiastic about the school you’re going to. The grass is always greener on the other side, isn’t it? But you’ve got to be quite clear about it – if you go in and it’s just another school and you look round and it’s very similar to the one you’ve got, then I don’t think that’s a reason for moving. If you go and look and you think I could get really excited by this but I think that could be changed and that would really move that school on and I can do that, then that’s the reason to change. When I came here it was obvious it was a high-achieving school but it was obvious something could be done with special needs and I felt I was the person who could that.” (PF007)

Specific criteria

There were a number of criteria, often in combination, that were given to explain the choice of second school.

Size: most heads wanted a larger school. Usually this was seen as offering more opportunities for the head to engage in a wider range of developments. Some primary heads did not want a second school that was too large where they would lose touch with classroom practice.

“... the feel of the school came with the package actually because it had children’s opinions of who, or what, they wanted their headteacher to be like, which was very interesting. Originally I thought it was too big for me going from a school of 50 to over 200 – I was looking for something like about 150. But actually my daughter read it and said, ‘This is your school’. She said for me to put an application in and so I did.” (PF052)

Phases: if the first school did not take the full age range for the phase there tended to be a wish to take on the extra age groups. Typically this was Foundation and Key Stage 1 and 2 in primary and a sixth form in secondary.

“It’s a bigger school and I felt that to be a fully rounded head, I needed to have the Early Years and Key Stage 1 experience.” (PM078)

“... a bigger school and I wanted it to be a primary school.” (PF124)

Faith: there were three groups. First, those who had a faith school for first headship who were committed to a similar faith school for their second; second, there were those who had a faith school for their first who wished to move to a non-denominational school for their second; finally, there was the largest group, for whom this criterion was not mentioned. On the questionnaire just over two thirds of primary heads said this was not an important consideration.

“I wanted a church school because that’s where the majority of my experience has been.” (PM107)

“I was keen not to have a Church of England school because I’m not a religious person.... But this school has quite a flavour of multi-cultural backgrounds and also a huge range of different families. So it’s the mix I enjoy.” (PF052)

Ability range: in secondary schools, a wish to take on a school that educated the full ability range was mentioned by a small number of heads.

“I wanted a school that was truly comprehensive – that is a full range of ability and a full range of socio-economic background that is quite important as well.” (SM115)

Social and ethnic composition: some heads only wanted to take on schools in disadvantaged catchment areas while others wanted a full mix of parents from social and ethnic groups.

“... in my whole career, I’ve never worked in a school other than in a disadvantaged area and would never do so. And it’s not because I think these are the best places to work – part of it is, I think, that because I think I can contribute more – the other thing is that I’d be a fish out of water. If you got me into a really middle-class school, I think I’d find that really difficult.” (PM089)

“I think I wanted something bigger, I wanted something mixed and in a challenging setting.” (SM122)

Location: most heads did not want to move home and so their choice of second school was more limited and any move was highly influenced by a suitable vacancy within travelling distance. The questionnaire indicated that a geographical location was important for more than 85% of primary and secondary heads. A small number of heads wanted a particular type of location, for example, rural or inner city.

“I wanted to go for a village school – I like the ethos of a village school and I wanted a school that had challenge as well. This met all the criteria.” (PF030)

Performance: a group of heads in both primary and secondary schools wanted second schools with poor results that were in need of massive improvement, where their success would be clearly seen. The second group wanted a coasting school that they could motivate to make a substantial improvement in test or examination results. A final group wanted to see if they could take a school ‘from good to great’. However, as a head remarked who was leaving a highly successful school after his first headship, “I think top schools and maintaining a top school in that position is very daunting” (SM116).

“I was fortunate in being asked to be seconded on a couple of occasions for reasonable periods of time – six months in one case – because it does let you know what’s going on elsewhere. I think, had I come directly from [... RC] to [...] Community School, it would have been much more difficult because the culture of the schools was so very different and the environment was so very different. So the real barrier on moving to a very different sort of school is that you will really not have a clear idea of the expectations and of the culture that you’re going into. And if you are thinking of taking on a school in challenging circumstances from a nice sort of rural or city, successful or high achieving school, you need somehow to do an apprenticeship before you go. You certainly need to spend some time in such a place, otherwise, I think, you’re going to be struggling from day one.” (SM113)

“The school was a very successful school when I came into it if we take SATs scores as being a marker of success, they were successful. However, it was that the curriculum was so narrow in order to achieve that and that for me was the challenge to broaden the experiences the children did get, while maintaining the high standards that they achieved.” (PM107)

“... partly personal challenge I guess, in terms of leading a different type of school. So my first school was a smaller inner-city school and I’d done a good deal of work on trying to raise attainment there and I’d always been very aware of people saying well it’s easy just to raise attainment from a low start level, a low base level, but it’s less easy to raise attainment in a good school to excellent, in terms of a school that’s already performing well in terms of exam results. So I was quite interested to see if that was the case and what different types of strategies you’d use to raise attainment from good to great in management terms and also in terms of raising achievement in a school.... I didn’t seek it in actual fact, it occurred that a school that I knew about and was a large school with a sixth form with a good reputation already and with good exam performance came up. And when the post was advertised I thought that that was something that I would want to look at.” (SM104)

Developments: there was one head that had planned a second headship so as to gain experience of the kind of school developments that he saw being more important in the future.

“I really thought this out very carefully actually – I decided, I mean I’m looking at the way education is going and a lot of the key issues around education are about working with other agencies and extending schools and things like that. I had done quite a lot of that in my last school because I had some extended services and a lot of things around the nursery. What I felt was that I wanted to move to an area where that was much more developed. And so you look at more challenging, more deprived areas where that is actually beginning to happen in quite a big way. So I thought I’m

going to look for schools like that and the other side was, I suppose, it was the challenge.” (PM093)

Eliminating schools

Just a few heads appeared to be selecting their second school by knowing the kinds of schools that they did not want and eliminating these from those advertised.

“I knew what I didn’t want and I’d had experience of a small school and I didn’t want to be a teaching head any more – that perhaps restricted my choice a bit because I was narrowing down what my choices were. I think also if you’ve worked in a challenging school, you can pick up what those challenges might be because those same kind of things are mirrored within the school – you look round the class and there are behaviour issues – and it’s whether you want that challenge again or whether you want something different. I think you know the stress levels, so that could have an impact. I think if there are budget issues, you’ve got to be aware of whether you want to deal with those again or not.” (PM009)

Specific schools

For some heads, although they may have had general requirements in mind, it was when a specific school was advertised that they decided it was the one they wanted for their second headship.

“... the challenge for me was taking a school which had different facilities because my previous school was a school which was like a concrete jungle ... it was all classrooms and playground. There wasn’t a great deal of space there whereas the school I’m at now has a beautiful environment ... but I wasn’t specifically looking for a job at the time – it was when this one came up and I noticed it and I thought that’s interesting, let me have a look, which I did and it was more by chance than me searching for a position.” (PM107)

“... it occurred that a school which I knew about and was a large school with a sixth form with a good reputation already and with good exam performance came up. And when the post was advertised I thought that that was something that I would want to look at.” (SM104)

Applications and movement

On the questionnaire heads were asked how wide a range of schools they had applied for. There were similar trends from primary and secondary heads. Most frequently they applied for schools of a particular type.

Most heads applied for only one school for their second headship.

From the questionnaires the primary heads indicated that the substantial movement was from rural to suburban schools. While the overall numbers in different types of school was the same there was compensating movement between junior and primary schools. There was a small movement towards better performing schools and a general trend towards larger schools.

Figure 8.1: Range of schools that interested second heads of primary and secondary heads

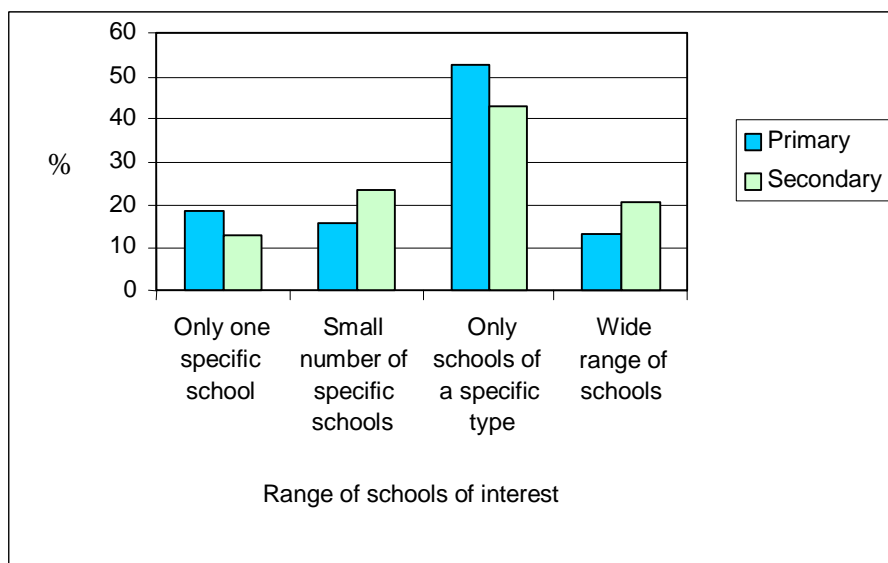
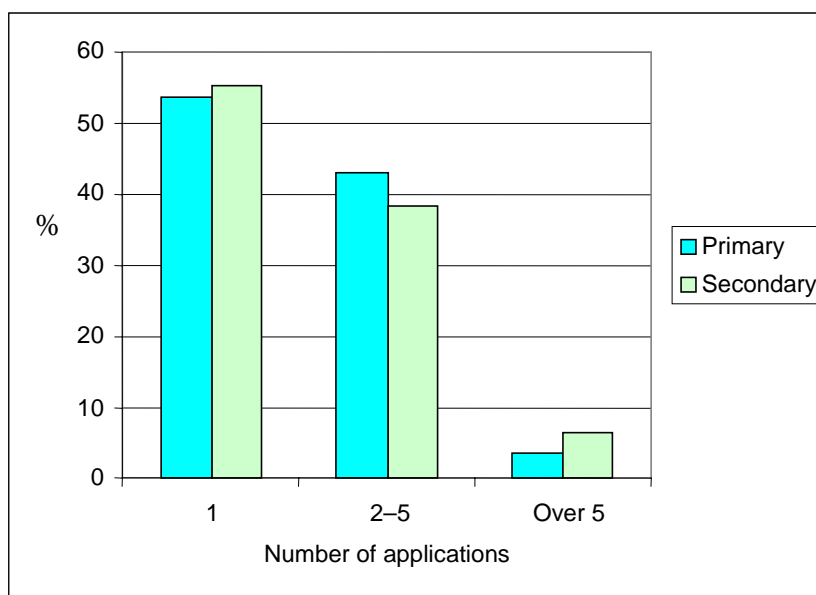


Figure 8.2: Number of applications for second headships by primary and secondary heads



From the questionnaires we know that there was a small movement from urban to suburban and rural secondary schools and from 11–16 schools to 11–18 schools. In terms of performance the greatest movement was from struggling to coasting schools and in terms of size from schools with fewer than 800 students to ones with over 1,200. These were the overall trends but the movements of individual headteachers were more complex and some moved in the opposite directions to these trends.

Further investigation including visits

Many heads mentioned that they did some homework on schools that they were interested in. With the further details they were sent a variety of information and they also knew sources such as the Ofsted website where they could find out more. However, it was visits to potential schools that prompted the final decisive decisions.

Heads looked at a number of schools and did not proceed to application and they also withdrew from some applications during the selection process. Fifty-five per cent of secondary heads made only one application and just under a fifth of secondary heads reported withdrawing from an application. There were similar figures from primary heads.

The visit helped heads decide whether there was a good fit between themselves and the potential school:

“For me personally, I also wanted a larger school and different challenges – not a school that had a high number of free school meals and lots of SEN [special and educational needs] children; I wanted to look at the other end of the spectrum, to schools that were high achieving. To some extent, some of those schools can be coasting schools because it’s fairly easy to get high results if everything’s set in place, everything perfect for them. Hence my second headship was a very successful school but even then there are things we can do and develop. Also the head had been here 25 years so it was quite nice coming in with some new ideas and some new direction for the school.... They’d advertised it first and I’d gone to have a look at it and the acting head was very honest saying that financially it was in deficit, the behaviour was awful, it had had a poor Ofsted, a large turnover of staff – you name it, it had it.... I looked at it and I thought I’m not touching that and I left it and they didn’t get anybody. Then they advertised again and I thought I’d go back and have another look and I went back with a different view of it, knowing exactly what I was going in for. I felt there’s a challenge there – it can’t get worse, can it?” (PF016)

“... one of the drivers for taking the job was that my interviews with the senior team, during the interview process, convinced me that was a group of people there that had nothing at the heart of their well-being other than the good of the school and were a very professional team who were looking for leadership and I like to think that the students who also interviewed me – I was convinced actually that the school and the school community wanted success as hungrily as I’d ever seen before.” (SM097)

From the questionnaire 38% of secondary second heads said that they withdrew from at least one application and of these, half withdrew from two or more. Only a quarter of primary heads withdrew from an application and for most of these it was a single withdrawal.

Selection

There were three particular features of the selection process that received comment during the interviews. One was a perception that some large and prestigious schools expected to appoint a second head to a vacancy. The second involved experiences of heads that were making what selectors perceived as a major change from their previous experience. Specifically, primary heads moving from very small schools and those taking on a school, which took a wider age group than their previous headship, were most likely to be mentioned. And the final one was a perception that age was a determinant for appointment to headship.

School expecting second heads

Two indicators were cited as suggesting that some selectors had in mind those with previous headship experience for their vacancy. A number of heads reported that the candidates shortlisted for interview were either all existing heads or almost wholly so. And in addition the outgoing headteacher of the school had been a second head. A third of all second secondary heads reported that their predecessor was a second head. This is higher than the proportion of second heads in secondary headship suggesting that they are more likely to be found in some schools than others. In

primary schools only a quarter of second heads reported that their predecessor was also a second head.

“... the governors here wouldn't have looked at a deputy, really. They would have seen it as essential to recruit somebody with experience of running a school.... I think governors of large schools or governors of successful schools often think that they will be protecting themselves in some way by appointing somebody who is already a head.” (SM050)

“I think there are some schools like [...] that somehow have second headship stamped on them. The bigger schools ... which are, or perceive themselves to be more successful or prestigious, tend to have second headship stamped on them. When I came here the other interviewees were all going for second headship.” (SM078)

Internal applicants

Forty-five per cent of secondary heads had an internal applicant for the post that they were appointed to. This was a little higher than their chances of having an internal applicant for their first post when just over 38% reported an internal candidate. Twenty per cent of heads had experienced an internal applicant in both headships. Primary heads with comparable figures of 25% and 29% reported a similar trend respectively. There were six heads that had experienced an internal candidate in both headships.

After appointment most heads reported getting on well with such internal candidates after the potential effects were discussed. A few reported an ongoing difficulty.

Selection and moving to a different type of school

Most comments related to moving from the teaching head of a small primary school. The scope for managing staff was much less in a school with few teachers and there was also the recognition that the style of leadership and management in a bigger school would need to change.

“I think had I stayed any longer in a small school [three years] then I think it would have been difficult for me to move on to a larger school because you would be known as a 'small school head' and be too far removed from the larger picture.” (PF052)

“... my barrier was that I'd only been head of a very small school so it was actually convincing the governing body that I could transfer those skills effectively to a larger school and staff management because in my first school there was such a small staff that issues were dealt with very, very quickly. There's a very large staff at this school despite the fact that it's still a relatively small school. So it's a lot to do with staff management and really performing to a larger audience. I had to convince the governing body that I would be capable of doing that.” (PF030)

“... if you've had a lot of ... small schools – then it may be that a teacher or a head may have only taught in a small school – and I know that then some governors would say they'd rather have a deputy who's been a deputy in a large school than somebody who's been a head but only in a very small school because of the different experience that they would have had.... I was able to call on that [deputy head of large school] – that I'd been a deputy and at times acting head of a large school of 350 pupils, as well as having had the experience of being a head in a small school.... I was in a small school and I enjoyed my job very much but I wanted my next headship to be in a larger school and so therefore the experiences that I was having – for example my professional development at the time – I was bearing in mind my next headship which I would like to be a larger school and therefore I needed to have 'big' experiences while I was there.” (PM008)

A few heads mentioned their need to convince governors that they could deal with a wider age group of pupils than their previous headship.

"[asked about difficulty of moving from first to primary] I think some of the other experiences I had – being contact inspector with primary schools and some of the curriculum and assessment work I did and I did use to work in a first and middle school, my first job, so I could say I'd had contact. And also I have to say there are general principles in teaching and learning that go across age groups. So I think that's how you sell yourself on your application form. Although some governors may say that she's never taught ... or she doesn't know about KS2 [Key State 2], that sort of thing. I think that would be dependant on previous experience and how you sold it." (PF125)

A few heads mentioned age as a barrier to further headship. From the questionnaire the range of ages that primary heads were appointed ranged from 31 to 55 and secondary second heads were appointed from 35 to 60.

"I think personally speaking people tend to look at your age as well for second headships. I think that there is an invisible barrier there in that the governing bodies are a bit wary I suppose – you're knocking on the door of 50, they're thinking is this someone who just wants an easy time until they retire. There's always an element of that. I think they think they're going to get more out of a young head because I think they think they can manipulate a young head more as well." (PM078)

Discovery: some differences in practice compared to expectations

In the section on success as a second head there is a part that deals with observations by second heads on similarities and differences between their first and second schools. Here we identify differences that second heads noted early in their second headship that had not been revealed by any information they had previously had or visits that they had made.

"... there were staffing issues here and there were issues about management and leadership which gradually dawned on me weren't quite apparent when I first came." (PM078)

"When you visit a school it's quite difficult because you're taken around by people and you get a chance to talk to the head and they say that you can tell about a school as soon as you walk in but I'm not so sure you can." (PM093)

"... again I came across a situation where it was a different picture here from the one I'd been presented with. So again very similar issues actually to my first school in terms of systems that weren't in place, very little provision for children with special educational needs, assessment wasn't in place so staff had no idea where children were in terms of progress they were making. So I had to do lots of revisiting the things I did in my previous school." (PF080)

"There were a number of personnel issues that I had to deal with that I don't think that I had picked up on during the interview process or from any of the paperwork that was sent to me. They were to do with working as a team and how the school operated using procedures and policies.... And I knew, I was aware from the PANDA, that the school was on a downward trend in terms of results but I certainly didn't expect the standards to be as low as they were once you start to unpick what was happening in the school ... the governors were not aware of the extent of the deficit budget – the communication hadn't been as effective as it should have been which then led the deficit budget to be larger and again the paperwork didn't indicate that, that I received when making my decisions about whether I would apply for the school." (PM009)

"I must admit that having been here for two or three months, my conclusion was gosh there's even more to do here than I thought. So in a sense I actually thought I was

coming to a school that was a pretty good school, after I arrived it became pretty clear that it was a satisfactory school. That hasn't fazed me in the slightest but I remember thinking that maybe I wasn't quite as sharp as I thought I was when you were here for a couple of days." (SM115)

"[surprises]... because that was a product of the previous regime and the interview process itself because very clearly when I started work I began to understand all the depths and complexity of problems that I had inherited. They weren't above board or visible when I took the job on." (SM042)

Sometimes the problems were revealed at interview:

"Although the governors and the LEA officers who were on the interview panel were pretty up front... about the issues facing the school – there were more of them and they were more difficult, more profound, I suppose than had been made evident to the headteacher candidates. Now I don't, I didn't feel that they were concealing anything deliberately and I suppose to some extent that kind of thing is inevitable in that situation after all they have got to recruit.... I set myself 18 months to see if I could make some kind of difference and if I felt I wasn't going to I would look for something else. I knew that it would be a really difficult 18 months and it was three times more difficult than I anticipated." (SF020)

These observations suggest that there are limits on the degree to which the state of the school can be expected to be fully appreciated before actually beginning work there.

Experiences: successes and challenges

Introduction

From the questionnaire, 46% of primary and 51% of secondary heads said that they were more successful in their second headship than their first and only four primary heads and five secondary heads at that stage said they were less successful. The remainder regarded themselves as equally successful or thought it was too early to say. This was followed up in telephone interviews. Interviewees were chosen so that they were in the early stages of second headship, so that their recollection and account of their experiences would be most accurate. There was a term's gap between completing the questionnaire and being interviewed and in a few cases the situation had moved on in the intervening period with the result that they were more satisfied with how things were working in their second school than a term earlier. We take this to show the difficulties that may be encountered in the early stages of headship are less intense in the memory later. This leads to a more positive account of changing schools after the first two years or so.

In this section we cover some of the difficulties that heads experienced. When, at the pilot stage of the research, we asked heads what research such as we were proposing ought to achieve, the most common reply was to find out what could go wrong so that future second heads might be better prepared by a knowledge of possible pitfalls that they should avoid. It is to achieve this aim that we have given such detail of the difficulties that some heads experienced particularly early in their second headship. This material draws heavily on the 42 telephone interviews from the 164 questionnaire respondents.

Evidence of success in first headship

Most heads were able to cite a great deal of evidence using conventional public criteria that they had been successful in first headship. These often included changes in GCSE scores and the results of Ofsted inspections. Some of these were

very impressive changes as they had taken headships in schools under challenge and been able to transform them in terms of these indicators. In describing their experiences they had generally found staff in these schools aware and motivated to change and so they had worked together to bring about the improvement. Indeed, by the time they left they took some of their school practices as comparators to measure their new and usually perceived as more successful schools.

“... many of those things that I did bring to this school and say well OK let’s see what the current school does in this respect – looking at things like the assessment systems that we’d created in terms of the monitoring and evaluation of school self-assessment – all of those are elements that I’d used successfully in my previous school I thought they’re the things I’ll bring with me. And what I did initially, when I came here, was to give myself a period of time to assess the current strengths of this school.” (PM107)

“[[first school] ... the results have secured the school’s future. It’s wonderful. And the roll is actually rising.” (PF125)

“[[first] school has just been Ofsted as well and has come out as outstanding and so hopefully I can take a bit of credit for what’s happened there.” (PM066)

Evidence of success in second headship

Here there was much less evidence to cite of success. This may have been largely due to the early stage in their second headship at which they were being interviewed. It may also have been due to the second schools that they went on to. Most heads when talking about their choice of second school had as one of their criteria that ‘they could make a difference’ but often this difference was slower to come than they expected and sometimes there were issues that had to be dealt with before the conventional difference that they were expecting to make.

“The school came out of special measures in March but with a notice to improve because it was based very much on last year’s PANDA obviously and over which I had no influence. They also recognised the improvements I have made in the school.” (PF080)

“I expected the success to be more obvious – I did expect that – because we were starting from a lower base and a base where relationships were poor. I felt that any fool can make an improvement! And therefore the success is more evident.” (PM122)

Budget deficit

Some of the successes that they were able to evidence were eliminating budget deficits. These were generally unexpected. Deficits were surprisingly common in view of the care that second heads said that they took in choosing their second school. Eliminating quite large deficits could not be achieved painlessly and so they could find their popularity affected at the start of their headship through no fault of their own.

“... the governors were not aware of the extent of the deficit budget.” (PF009)

“I hadn’t been aware before I arrived of the extent to which the school was in deficit, a massive deficit budget heading towards a million rapidly.” (SF016)

“The school where I was a head first had a deficit when I arrived, and I left it with a quarter of a million pound surplus, and I’ve come here to a school with a quarter of a million pound deficit ... the LEA didn’t know the deficit was as large as it is.” (SM116)

Re-establishing yourself in a second school

Many heads remarked on the time and effort needed to establish oneself as the head of a second school. Although they assumed that their greater experience would mean that this process might be more speedy and require less effort than in their first headship, they were surprised by the actual time it took. In part they attributed this to forgetting just how long similar processes actually took in their first school and indeed a few remarked that in second headship it was quicker than in their first school. But it was those who were surprised who cautioned prospective second heads to be prepared for unanticipated work on these processes in the first year in their new school and not to underestimate the necessary commitment when deciding on second headship.

“I underestimated how long it takes to get the staff to be in a position where they can change reasonably quickly and easily because I was in a situation previously where there was a staff who could do that.... And I had accepted that that was the culture of schools really and then moved to somewhere where ... the accepted culture was that we're fine, so really there was no need to change anything.... I hadn't put the culture in at the last place, it was there already when I took it – but I'd underestimated that and taken it for granted that that's how schools are.” (PF060)

“It's very stressful getting a school to where you want it to be and getting your staff in place and depending on your work–life balance when you then leave and start again, it brings more stresses to it. So I think people ought to be aware – it's not easy to say that you'll transfer everything from one school to another because even if you go to a successful school, it still presents challenges. You're putting new staff in and developing your idea of teaching and learning and creating that ethos in the school and schools do change according to the leadership of the school. It depends how much you want to take on.” (PF016)

Experiences in second headship

Discovering similarities and differences in the second school

The experience of second headship had made all the heads more aware of the particular context and situation of their first headship because they had a comparator. Other than perhaps size of school there were few explicit comparisons with their deputy headship or earlier schools. As might be expected it was the differences in particular on which they commented. Sometimes these comparisons were more positive about their second school and sometimes more negative.

Some external context differences that were noted included: the composition of the catchment area; and attitudes and practices of parents, governors and practices in the LA. It was the differences on changing LAs that primary heads were most likely to comment on. As one head noted, each LA that he/she had worked in had different practices and so being able to access services and know who to approach was an issue for anyone new to the LA. Almost universally this problem was exacerbated, as there was no induction for experienced heads and mentoring, even where it existed, did not appear to meet this need.

“That was difficult in terms of the different structures that the two authorities employed and trying to find your way around. In my previous authority, if I needed support with this, I would go to X or if there was this that needed doing I could always ... so the different systems that were in place ... but then it's like anything moving authority – this is the fifth local authority I worked for and they're all different.” (PM107)

“I've moved boroughs and I'm in a different local authority because you can't help but compare to the experiences you had in your other headship. And a lot of what I'm

finding challenging here is because the authority works in such a different way.” (PM009)

The differences in internal situation were more numerous but essentially involved differences in staff attitudes and practices. The most common comparison was of staff attitudes to change and there were observations both ways: some noted a greater willingness to change but rather more noted an unwillingness. Later in this chapter we examine in more detail this contrast to their experience in first headship.

“... the schools are in similar sorts of areas of the city – here the way that the teachers talk to children was different altogether.” (PF067)

“Certainly in the authority I’m in – small rural schools – and if you’re going to move on often the second headship is more of a suburban type and they are very different. That was quite a culture shock really – the one thing that perhaps was more than I really anticipated.” (PF062)

“... I think part of it is that difference in clientele. If your clientele are tough you stick together. If you don’t stick together, God help you, you know, you’re defeated straight away. When your clientele are a little easier it is easier not to be as tightly knit.” (SM071)

“When I was first here they’d worked with the previous head but had to run everything by him and ask him can I do this and it took me a long time to get them to realise that I’ve delegated that to you and you don’t have to ask me. If you’ve made a mistake we’ll discuss it but I won’t blame – we’ll discuss what you could have done differently and what you might do differently in future.” (SF023)

Larger school

Generally their second school was larger than their first and heads knew that they had to delegate more, and those who found a receptive senior team found little difficulty in doing this. However, where there was a senior team who had not previously had clear responsibilities and did not look particularly favourably on the prospect and who may not have been wholly competent, there were serious problems.

“... moving up to a large number of 420 plus a nursery, we didn’t anticipate, I certainly didn’t anticipate anything like the logistics of the difference it would make to my job. In terms of things like school management, I think I had underestimated the need for what we now call ‘distributed leadership’ and certainly over the last couple of years I’ve realised that distributed leadership is definitely the way forward.” (PF058)

“... the nature of a small school means that you actually do take on quite a lot of administrative jobs that in a larger school, by their very nature, are much more delegated and so things for example – just happening this afternoon – will be the return for the attendance for this last academic year. I used to deal with all the attendance issues and the analysis of that at my last school but here it’s dealt with by the secretarial and some of the pastoral care staff here.” (PM066)

“I think there are certain things that I’ve had to do in a larger school that were easier to do in a small school so I assumed they were going to be easy to do here and that was about my lack of knowledge of working in a larger establishment..., for example, at the moment we’re changing the way that we’re trying to use ICT to impact on standards and to help the staff reduce their workload. When I had done some of these changes in a smaller school because it was easier to communicate with a smaller group of people, people were willing to give things a try. When we started to introduce change in a larger school, often the communication is harder to make sure it’s absolutely right and everybody understands why.” (PM009)

“In a small school, a smaller school, I think it is easier to adopt the approach that good deputies do, where it is hands on all the time. And it’s easier to be a head in that mould.... But in this school, I’ve had to learn not to be as hands on as I think I previously was. You know, to work with other people and expect other people to do it. My first instinct was ‘I can sort this blinking place out. I’ll bring my force as an example, or whatever’. And I’ve learned.” (SM071)

“That dilutes the personal impact you can make, and those things about ensuring that your senior management team are all reflecting what you want to be reflected around the school, and are all doing the things that you want them to be doing, are much more important in this headship. I think this is something I was a little more naïve about in the previous school.” (SM071)

Positive experiences

Positive experiences could happen in any context but were expected where the move from first to second schools had been to a less challenging external context. Those who had moved to what they expected to be an easier context recognised that they needed to change their own pace of expectations of developments. They could take their time to appraise the school and prepare for change rather than expect that other staff would be as driven to bring about change as they and their staff had been in their first school. But in the early stages of such a headship there was not a lot of evidence of success compared to the demonstrable improvements that had taken place in their first schools.

“I think the first school was very cautious – the staff that were there had been there for years and they didn’t want change. We did try – the parents were very favourable but the staff were stubbornly resistant. Whereas the school I’m at now the staff are very keen to develop – develop the curriculum, develop their own professional expertise and that’s why it’s a highflying school. It’s a pleasure to teach in.” (PF007)

“I suppose the biggest surprise was that, at the school I’m now at, if a member of staff had a problem they would come to you with the problem and then they would say and if we did this, we thought it would work. At my previous school you only ever got problems, you never got solutions. That’s the biggest surprise.” (PM089)

“... one of the main differences is that in your first headship – and depending upon the sort of school you go into – your leadership style is very much ... well you have to go in and make the decisions and everyone just has to go with it. In my second headship, because it was a successful school, I could actually say I’ve got time to see how things work and to actually go for a team approach and not have to make changes and don’t change for change sake and so it was a lot more relaxed coming in.... I think the surprise for me was how you had to adapt your leadership style because I couldn’t have come into the second headship doing the same as I did in my first headship.” (PF016)

Unexpected challenges

The heads that were least happy with their success at this stage were those who had gone from success in a challenging school to a coasting school in an easier context. They generally found that the staff were unaware that they could do better and, in some very traditional schools, were very resistant to change. This was outside the experience of the new head that they found very difficult to deal with. They were discovering that change had to be handled very differently and that they may have made initial errors.

“... my first school was a school in challenging circumstances where it was we are all going to work together or we get shut down. So you start from nowhere and enjoy considerable success.... Now the school I have gone to, people were much more

reluctant to receive the message that ... there needed to be a whole school improvement.” (SM042)

“I think I was somewhat naïve in thinking that every school staff was like the team that I’d built in my first school – that they were all willing and they were all there for the benefit of the children because that was not the case here and I think that I really went from one extreme to the other in terms of that. That probably has been one of the most difficult things.” (PF069)

“... my leadership style changed radically because I had been a very consultative leader from the beginning in my previous school because the pace of change was not needing to be particularly great there. Here I knew that if Ofsted arrived quickly we would have been in special measures – I think I knew that by the end of the first half-term. I knew that was a possibility. I felt it was a coasting school and told the LA so within a month but as the year went on I realised we were inadequate in every single respect. So if you want to change things quickly you cannot do it in quite such a consultative way because if I’d consulted people they would have all said it’s absolutely fine thank you very much – we were an outstanding school in 1997, we haven’t changed anything since therefore everything is OK. What they hadn’t realised is that everyone else had moved and overtaken them.” (PF069)

“This is perceived by many to be a very successful school. The big difference is that my first school was in a very challenging area with low results. My colleagues were quick to accept that we had to develop and move quickly. This school’s headline figures are very positive, the GCSE and SATs results are now at the higher end spectrum but in terms of value added, the contextual value added, it was only satisfactory. It’s more of a challenge to persuade colleagues that there is a job to be done when on the surface things seem to be positive. So I’m finding it harder.” (SM074)

“The school that we’re in was in a great deal of difficulty because the two previous heads had taken on some very difficult challenges and it hadn’t worked and there was almost a sense of let’s see what she’s going to do and see what she manages to mess up. In a nutshell, sense the speed at which you can introduce and implement change in your workplace, don’t try to rush them otherwise you will alienate people and they will dig their heels in and they will in the end work at their own pace.” (SF016)

Governors

Sometimes heads were indicating problems with their governors that they had not experienced before. This typically occurred where the new head was making governors aware of the school performance in a way that had not happened previously. In particular this did not go down well where this indicated a need for change in a school that governors had perceived to be performing well.

“I don’t think I made myself popular by telling them [the governors] that the school was failing which they couldn’t believe because they’d been told it was a great school.” (PM078)

“... schools have very different governing bodies with very different level of expertise and experiences and so forth and one of the things that I found in this school, as a new head, a school that already believed it was doing well and that it had a very strong governing body – with people who, I was going to use the word defensive of the achievement that the school had already made and were very cautious. It’s the concept of ‘if it isn’t broken don’t fix it’. It was quite unusual for me to find that I had to convince a different group of people – and the type of people that perhaps I’d not worked with before – that it was worth making changes to bring about the good-to-great type changes in attainment – because they already believe the attainment was fine – the attitude was why change the school.” (SM104)

Contributions to greater success

Through their experience of first headship heads had developed their personal understanding of important features within the school that had to be worked at if the school was to work well. They had recognised that it was staff that most differed from school to school and that they were the key to a successful school. A small number indicated that they thought that they were too inexperienced when appointed to first headship. This included one internal applicant who had applied and was surprised to be appointed at the age of 32. These heads were likely to cite their greater maturity and experience as the particular contribution they took to second headship.

“I think probably one of the main reasons is that the second time round you don't make as many mistakes as you do the first time round. How you approach parents, how you approach staff, your relationship with the children – whether that's part of maturity as well, I don't know, but I think my approach to the whole school was far more logical. There wasn't anything I was frightened of.” (PF067)

“I think when I first took headship it was a big shock to me that everything else was my responsibility as well. So the second round, I've probably paced myself better and also gone for the strategic longer view than being reactive; I'm more proactive in this headship than I was in the last one.” (PF067)

“I'd lived five years of that in a school in special measures, I'd worked with HMI and with the local inspectors and I had a pretty good handle on how to identify what the problem was and as to then what we were going to do about it. And so that was really very useful to me moving into second headship. Now if I'd moved from perhaps a more stable first headship, I wouldn't have had that and, I think, that is one of the things that has made the second one as successful as it has.” (PM089)

“Relationships with staff, personnel issues, health and safety issues – I just felt better prepared the second time around. I didn't leap into things that I'd done the first time round. I felt here that I could just sit back and watch it and then look strategically further ahead than I was doing in my previous headship even after eight or nine years.” (PF067)

“I think in the first headship you are so concerned with getting the immediate job right and your confidence isn't there so quickly and so perhaps you don't take risks and operate far more 'safely' and your focus is probably quite narrow whereas in your second headship you're confident to look beyond school and see opportunities where you wouldn't have seen them before.” (SM122)

“... one thing I would say is that I think in your second headship you're certainly more confident (a) to have a vision for the school and (b) to articulate it more strongly than before and it's surprising how quickly people jump on board with you. I think in my first headship I didn't articulate the vision enough, whereas here I've been careful to make sure everybody is on board and everyone is clear about where we are going in the next 12 months.” (SM122)

“... when you come into a school and you're sitting there thinking well what do I do now, twiddling your thumbs for the first few weeks, thinking what does a headteacher actually do, there's something missing. When you come to your second headship, you know exactly what to do because you've been there, had all the issues, you've worked out how to do the system and you just come in and you hit the ground running.” (PM066)

“I had much more experience – I felt that I was too young when I took up my first headship – I was 38 – and although I'd been a deputy head for three years before in a large school in London, I felt I didn't have the breadth of experience. In my second headship, I've had a lot more experience and have spent time building up staff and leadership teams.” (SF023)

Some heads mentioned that they were surer of being able to diagnose competence in staff because of the staff performance that they had experienced in their first school. They know what standards should be expected and they were more aware when this was not forthcoming.

“... in my first place I was very lucky in the team that I had around me were quite sharp ... people like my bursar, my office manager, the deputy head – they were quick thinkers who knew their job and I think if I hadn’t had those people around ... I wouldn’t have seen the Rolls Royce way of doing things ... it’s having sharp, bright people in those key positions because they educate you at the same time.” (SF016)

Schools needing a second head

Some second heads identified schools where an experienced headteacher was needed to deal with the issues in those types of schools.

“... because we were in special measures we had got a number of teachers with issues. There was quite a number of staff with poor teaching and lots of things to sort out. I didn’t find that challenging because I’d been through a lot of that before and although getting good staff to work in an area like this is really, really hard and a lot of the year I’ve spent trying to sort out the staffing and quite a few people have moved on.” (PM093)

“I couldn’t have done this job without having been a head previously and having enjoyed some success previously, because the knowledge that ... as you go through any school year, and probably any term, there’s always a moment of crisis when you feel bloody hell this is not working, this doesn’t feel right.... And it’s having the experience and probably the confidence to know that this is temporary and to keep functioning and keep believing that the things you are doing, and the way you do the things you do are right, you know, and to keep bringing everybody along with you – all those things. In some ways it is more difficult bringing the staff around than bringing the kids around, which was the job in the previous school. It’s only having the confidence, the self-confidence of a previous successful headship has given me, that has enabled me to keep this thing on track.... We had set pieces, you know, staff meetings, you know, where things I’ve wanted to do have been questioned, and I’ve had to stand and fight the good fight, and those sorts of things are hard to do or I find them hard to do anyway and I wouldn’t have been able to do that if I hadn’t had the previous success under my belt.” (SM071)

Challenging schools

Challenging schools tend to be referred to as if they were a homogeneous group. Here we identify three types of challenge as experienced by second heads. The reasons for the challenge may occur singly or in combination, although there are likely to be some combinations that are more likely than others. For example, a destabilised school may have an external context, which is deprived, and may also exhibit an internal situation that is dysfunctional, or such an internal situation could be discovered in a stable school in a favourable context.

As we explained in the section on choice there were some heads that had chosen to work in challenging contexts and this was often associated with challenging internal situations and destabilised schools. Some had achieved rapid success in improving their first school and had gone on to a second. Sometimes this had been inspected and gone into special measures before they got there. It was heads that found themselves in a very difficult internal situation often resulting from destabilisation that found life far tougher than they expected.

But it was the few who found themselves in a challenging internal situation where the external context was not itself challenging who were most surprised to discover what

they were dealing with and its entrenched nature. They were the most likely to note that without experience of first headship they would have found the task even more difficult if not impossible.

The types of challenging schools are as follows.

Challenging external context: the context that is typically described as challenging is the one where the catchment area and surroundings are economically and socially disadvantaged. This is described as a challenging external context, and is often associated with a challenging internal situation, although this is not necessarily the case. A particular case of this mentioned by a small number of primary and secondary second heads was where this was an 'estate school', where the surrounding area was public housing serving a predominantly white, poorly educated population who either had low-paid jobs or were unemployed. Many were single parents. It was the relative homogeneity of the social and ethnic mix that such a school served that the heads found challenging and they considered that insufficient attention had been drawn to the difficulties of this kind of school.

"... in a relatively challenging area. I didn't realise how challenging it was because the school went into special measures just after I had the interview. So it became even more challenging ... [catchment] it's pretty homogenous – I hesitate to say white working class, white not-working class probably; a lot of single-parent families, a lot of big families as well. As a measure of the deprivation – at everything we're at the bottom really, especially educational attainment [...] is renowned for being one of the lowest in the country ... for educational attainment of the parents. So it is quite homogenous in that way – there are very few parents of higher social rank in the area. So the real issues around here are often around parental aspirations and knowledge of education and attachment to education at all. That's the issue really. I think of it as culturally deprived – it's quite poor but a lot of it is around just not seeing education as important. And when you say estate that's it, because we're not inner city, we're right on the outskirts of [...] but we're a big, old council estate basically." (PM093)

"[challenging school] I think the positive that I would pull from that is that you bring with you your experience of school improvement. What works in one place doesn't necessarily work in another but bringing in a fresh pair of eyes, a fresh mindset into a school – and certainly in this school has been a fantastic boost and a real fillip to the staff and the improvements we've made since September – I'm not taking the credit for it, I'm if you like a motivator – and I've got fantastic staff and they've made phenomenal improvements and I'm hoping Ofsted recognise just how far we've come in a short period of time." (PM066)

"The first school was a very pleasant, Catholic secondary – a mixed comprehensive school that had improved greatly in the last number of years of my headship and was very over subscribed.... I've been here eighteen months – but I think one continues to be surprised at two aspects: one, what the youngsters are actually capable of and how much they can be changed and, secondly, you continue to be surprised at the expectations, or lack of them, that you come across on a daily basis from a lot of the adults already both working in the school and in the community.... Children do things – a fourteen-year-old told me last week in no uncertain terms where to go. Now in my previous school that would have been immediate exclusion and probably a permanent exclusion from the school because it would have been so unusual and unacceptable in that environment that I found that if I were to apply the exact same standards ... to this school that I'd be putting them out by the dozen every day but what I think is very important is that I maintain the level of standard in my mind that I'm aiming at with children and then have a realistic map of when we're going to arrive there." (SM122)

"... leadership was something that I grew into in my first headship. The full realisation of, if you like, being able to empower people didn't occur for many years in my first headship but coming to the second headship it was at the forefront of everything that

I did and empowering my senior team was obviously key to the success of the school and getting it through its Ofsted inspection and taking it out of 'serious weaknesses'." (SM097)

Challenging internal situation: this is where there may be problems with pupil or student behaviour and there may also be problems with staff competence or motivation associated with poor test or examination results. Although this situation may be most likely to be associated with a challenging external context, it can be encountered in any school and is perhaps more unexpected when this is where it is discovered. Schools that have previously had good performance that over a relatively brief period find themselves in this category can be expected to quickly recover with appropriate leadership, and this was reported by heads from their experience in either their first or second schools.

"... in many ways more challenging than the first one. The first one was in your face – what you saw was what you got. With this one it wasn't." (PM078)

"I spent my first year peeling back the layers of the onion because I kept feeling that I had got to the centre and discovered everything awful and it continued for at least a year and one or two things emerged in my second year that were still huge areas for concern.... It was an interesting experience. I can look back on it and smile now but at the time I was – I had to keep logging my thoughts on paper so I did myself a kind of benchmarking document at the end of my first half-term and just sat and dumped on paper everything that I'd found and then I just kept coming back to it so that I could see that I'd made a little bit of progress on that or this was red because I was really concerned about it and it's turned to amber or even to green. I just had to use every skill I'd got to turn up everyday." (PF069)

"... in my first headship, during my first week, I did think what can I actually do here to make a difference? But in the second school they had been through two – well a period that Ofsted described as turbulent – and the previous headteacher had left suddenly. There was an environment of very high staff turnover, very rapid turnover, and some behaviour management problems and declining – indications that exam results and so on were starting to decline – that sort of thing. I felt that, although I really didn't want to.... But there were two things really ... one was that I wanted a change anyway, I would have been quite happy to stay in my previous school, but I don't think it would have been good for either me or the school in the long run. Secondly, I fancied the challenge of seeing whether I could take on the challenge of a school that was experiencing some difficulties but you wouldn't in the least say it was a struggling school, but it certainly was in quite difficult circumstances." (SF020)

Destabilised school: this is a further type of school that may be associated with a challenging external context but is most likely to have a challenging internal situation. This is where a school has had a relatively rapid turnover of headteachers including acting heads. It appears to occur where more than one headteacher has had a relatively brief period of headship. Four heads in five years featured in a number of schools and in the case of one secondary school four heads in 10 years had left a difficult internal situation. Second heads who took on, or found they had taken on, a school such as this found a school that lacked direction, had experienced a series of failed initiatives and an air of impermanence of leadership that they experienced as far more of a personal challenge than they had expected.

"... she'd been there for nine/ten years and because it was on a split site, she'd been head of the infants and then they amalgamated and on the split site she was then head of both buildings. Then she left to go on secondment for a year and they had some acting heads in and then she decided not to come back – so within eighteen months a very successful school as it was, suddenly found itself not very successful." (PF016)

"I have to say it's been the most difficult year of my professional career.... I'm the third headteacher in this school in the last two years – so that brings all kinds of issues for staff because they think here we go again, what's this person going to do to us now." (PF080)

Personal satisfaction

Earlier in this section we gave details of many of the challenges both anticipated and unexpected that second heads experienced. We are well aware that this runs the risk of giving a distorted picture of experiences and satisfaction of second heads. Thus we wish to take this opportunity to briefly present the overwhelming evidence of personal satisfaction from second heads about their choice of taking on a second headship. Only 2 out of 86 primary heads and 1 out of 78 secondary heads would not recommend second headship to other heads while 68% and 70% respectively would recommend it highly. Even those in unexpectedly difficult situations did not regret their move and there were countless statements of satisfaction at the results of the move from first to second headship.

"... for me it has been a positive experience moving from first to second headship ... and I did want to change, and for it was something I wanted to do and therefore because it was my decision, I embraced it and looked upon it as a challenge and it has worked successfully for me." (PM107)

"... it was a huge learning curve having to familiarise myself with the expectations for early years and that was tremendous." (PF058)

"... if I had no family then I would perhaps have gone anywhere but my home life is equally important. And so I tried to straddle that balance really. And therefore the reorganisation was actually a good thing for me because it gave me what I wanted and a fresh start to move the new school forward." (PF125)

"... the fact that this particular school is closer to home means that I've got a better quality of life and certainly I'm enjoying every minute of what I'm doing now." (PM066)

"... second headship is a lot more exciting. It's a much larger school ... and of course since 2002 when I joined here, we've moved into what I think I would call an era of increased opportunities as well." (SM122)

"I am so pleased that I've moved, not for any negative reasons about my previous job that I really did enjoy, but I think I have grown as a person from having to do ... face new challenges. I think it has been fantastic. It has been life enhancing for me." (SM071)

"I felt a lot more energetic and a lot more excited than I'd felt for many years and that's got to be something to do with a new place and new challenges." (SM122)

However, we need to keep a sense of perspective, as one head joked:

"Most of the time I quite enjoy what I do. But if I won the lottery tomorrow, don't get in the way of my car!" (SF023)

Learning and professional development

This section deals with findings related to the professional development and overall support of headteachers. It identifies those development and support strategies that headteachers in the sample found to be both helpful and, in some cases, a hindrance to the fulfilment of their role.

A view held by some respondents was that finding time to undertake any form of professional development was difficult given the many competing pressures they faced.

“One of the problems when you get into headship, particularly when you get into the job initially, is having the time to dedicate to professional development.” (SM082)

“I always feel bad about it because I feel that I ought to be doing more courses but I’ve never got time.” (PM093)

There was no evidence from the headteachers’ accounts that they had constructed a planned programme of professional development or support for themselves. The following comments are typical:

“I wouldn’t say that I’ve ever sat down and said this is my programme for professional development.... I don’t think I’ve ever planned in that way, and perhaps that is a mistake. I’ve tended to respond to things. So, if I had to address certain issues I would then try to find professional development to match those issues at that time.” (SF005)

“If I need to do a course in something specific, I will find it and do it but I don’t have a long-term plan for this.” (PF052)

Some respondents added that no amount of professional development and support could prepare headteachers for all the eventualities they might encounter:

“What I did do was a lot of conferences, professional networking but none of them could be designed as training for headship.” (SF029)

“I don’t know how you can be trained, to be honest, because you never know what you’re going to experience. I think every school is different ... this job is very different from the last one.” (PF080)

“I think it’s really doing the job that’s taught me a lot and being involved with and talking to other heads and those sorts of contacts.” (PM093)

Respondents reported a variety of experiences in relation to professional development and support. Among the more negative reactions were the following:

“I got very little professional development actually – I hate to say.” (PM093)

“I didn’t get anything as a first head and I even went to the LEA and asked them.” (PF124)

“I didn’t have any as such.” (SF029)

An opposing view, reported by some, is that they had been well supported throughout their time in headship by a range of agencies:

“In my first headship they [the local authority] put quite a big package in place for new heads.” (PF052)

“The LEA were very supportive and good.” (SF005)

Asked to identify forms of professional development and support strategies that had been particularly significant in extending their skills, knowledge and understanding, headteachers identified the following.

NCSL professional qualifications

Some respondents had benefited from the Headlamp (Headteachers' Leadership and Management Programme) and later HIP (Headteacher Induction Programme) schemes in their induction period as headteachers:

"I did the NPQH and then Headlamp and then I trained as a consultant leader with NCSL." (PM008)

"I involved the local authority advisers to reflect things back to me – which is how I used the Headlamp money when I took up the first headship." (SF022)

Not all the headteachers who responded had been required to take part in the NPQH programme since the qualification was not mandatory at the time. For some, this was regarded as regrettable:

"I would have welcomed some sort of NPQH back in 1990." (SM122)

"I think I would have valued the chance to do NPQH in my first headship because, as I say, I really didn't know what the job entailed other than superficially – what I'd seen previous heads doing." (PF030)

Most of those who had participated found the experience a positive one and had singled out for particular praise the facilitating styles of the tutors involved and the emphasis they placed on dealing with realistic issues:

"The NPQH was very good ... gold star stuff. The two tutors we had would regularly start us off with a difficult problem, a realistic problem you would have to solve coming into school." (SF016)

Others were more sceptical about the value and content of NPQH, claiming that it did not go far enough to prepare headteachers for the realities of such a complex and demanding role.

"I don't know what to say, it just seems so detached from reality." (PM093)

"It was of absolutely no use to me whatsoever." (PF124)

"I would radically overhaul it [NPQH] and make it much more rooted in things that are the most important to heads ... such as crisis management." (SF023)

In the case of headteachers from primary schools, especially the smaller schools, the lack of time and the pressures of the role were identified as prohibitive for undertaking programmes such as NPQH:

"I just couldn't commit to that amount of time ... because I needed to be there and I had so little time to tackle the issue I just couldn't contemplate it." (PF030)

The large majority of respondents were agreed that the LPSH had proved to be a highly valuable form of professional development and support. Among the very positive comments made were the following:

"I think the best piece of training I've had was LPSH without any question." (PM066)

"The LPSH was good – very good." (PM089)

"The LPSH was excellent." (SF020)

"I have to say that my experience of LPSH was fantastic" (SM074)

Perceived to be of unique and significant value was its rigour, the opportunity it offered for reflection on issues such as leadership style, and the 360 degree feedback element:

“It gave me time to reflect, but it was the 360 degree feedback that was the most helpful because I chose some very challenging colleagues to give me that.” (SM074)

“I’ve just started the LPSH and that has been tremendous and has given me a real insight into my own leadership style and how that impacts on the climate within the school.” (PM030)

“It is actually intellectually quite rigorous and challenging unlike some other [programmes] I have been on.” (SM050)

“For me the LPSH programme was particularly useful. It was excellent professional development. The 360 degree was very, very good.” (PM107)

“I did the LPSH – I must confess under duress. The governors actually made me go and do it because I’d not actually done anything out of school for years – and I really enjoyed it and found it very valuable. It was very useful indeed.” (SM115)

Despite its apparent value and popularity, not all who responded regarded the LPSH programme positively:

“I did the LPSH, which I personally didn’t feel was much good ... I felt it was a bit airy-fairy and I wanted something a bit more concrete – I’m not a great person for theory.” (PM078)

“Compared to my MBA, LPSH was so low level and it was all based on the one piece of research from Hay McBer. I actually think something like an MBA-type level, at that kind of intellectual standing, but not necessarily award-bearing.” (SF029)

Local authority personnel and services

The quality and range of support and professional development provided by LAs was reported by primary headteachers to be variable. Where the capacity of the LA was good, headteachers reported having experienced good levels of support:

“I just couldn’t have asked for better and that’s been another way of keeping me going. I have been able to share things with people in the LA in a very honest and open way.” (PF069)

“They provided a very comprehensive package of professional development for leaders and that was at several different levels. There were mentors who would come and work with you and so that was very individualised and there were also networks. So, we had cluster collaboratives where groups of schools would work on things that were of interest. We set up a whole programme and worked with the University of the First Age, they supported us with that and the authority gave us funding towards that.” (PF009)

“My LA set up a Heads Space programme that gives you the opportunity to talk about issues that you’re dealing with and using the support of a colleague to help you see things in a different light.” (PF080)

“The LEA were very supportive and good and I felt I was very lucky with the district officer I had. That was very important because where there were issues that arose which I felt I didn’t have enough information, or knowledge or skill, they were able to point me in the right direction.” (SF005)

“I was very fortunate in my first headship in that I had an excellent local authority advisor who worked with me all the way through. We worked very closely together.” (SM078)

Others had found the support and provision to be inconsistent and unsupportive:

“The support has been variable.” (PM093)

“You look at what your local authority have offered and if it can’t offer what you want then you look at outside providers and usually you can find a balance of what you want at the time.” (PF060)

“I think the local authority support for heads is generally held up here to be nil.” (SM042)

Some respondents were particularly pleased with the contribution of their school link/development adviser:

“The support from her [school link adviser] and the local authority has been fantastic.” (PF069)

“I felt I was very lucky with the district officer I had.” (SF005)

“I’ve been very well supported by my school improvement adviser ... his support and the support I get from the LEA is fantastic – really, really high quality.” (PF080)

Some LAs were reported to be organisers of high quality seminar programmes, workshops and conferences:

“There is an annual headteachers’ conference which is an opportunity to spend two days together – it’s a residential, leadership conference with national keynote speakers – and the networking for that is really good.” (PM008)

Consultants and associates

Headteachers cited examples where they had been provided with experienced and expert professionals or where they had taken the initiative to identify and recruit levels of expertise to support them in their task. In the examples quoted here, these arrangements appear to be linked with schools experiencing challenging circumstances and/or:

“The relationship I have had with my associate headteacher has been invaluable in confirming, as much as anything, that you are doing the right thing.” (SM071)

Several headteachers placed emphasis on the importance of having access to someone who might serve as a sounding board for their ideas and proposed strategies. They were at pains to point out the benefits and importance of having a critical friend with whom matters could be discussed at a distance from those who were calling the school to account, such as the LA.

A small number had recently embarked on a new professional relationship with a school improvement partner:

“I like the idea of school improvement partners ... and I’ve got one who is actually himself a head.” (SM078)

Networks and networking

Many respondents commented on the value of local and national networks in enhancing their professional development and in providing support. In many cases, these were informal networks involving small numbers of headteachers within a small area, district or community.

“The biggest, the most important professional development as an experienced head is the collaborative aspects of working in networks with other headteachers. We are on call to each other and often meet, speak and email.” (PM008)

“The best networks are those you make yourself. I’m at that stage in my career when I can build up my own networks and clusters so I’ve got people I can share my problems with.” (PM093)

“The other thing I find as useful as anything is networking with other heads. I’m part of a small schools group and the other three heads and I, are almost a self-support group.” (PF007)

“I gain great professional development by talking with fellow heads.... I make it my business to ensure that I put myself in places where I can talk to other heads.” (SF020)

Others were more formally established.

“I also keep up with the -----shire Association of School Heads which runs about three meetings a year and also two whole-day conferences.” (SF020)

“I actually lead the -----Heads’ Network at the moment. We’ve also got a learning network with the middle school and two of the senior schools. While these haven’t been training course, they have helped me to think professionally about where the children go next, what we need to provide to help that school and liasing about curriculum changes and things like that which actually impact on the development of my staff.” (PF062)

One example emerged of a headteacher who, having attended the LPSH with other headteachers from across the country, continued to meet with them periodically to discuss common issues:

“Quite a number of that group still meet every year for a two-day conference, which is a self-perpetuating thing. But we set ourselves an agenda and that’s really useful because it covers heads in different kinds of schools all over the country.” (SF020)

Academic courses of study and qualifications

A minority of respondents had acquired professional development by pursuing a programme of academic study at higher education establishments.

“I had done an MBA ... and that was brilliant professional help.” (SF029)

“I’m undertaking at the moment an MA in Leadership and Management and I prefer education to training.” (PM122)

Professional associations

Several respondents stressed the importance of being up to date and alert to new local and national initiatives. Some secondary headteachers found that membership of a professional association offered them this facility.

“Every year I try to go to the SHA conference, or ASCL as it is now, and I find that invaluable, not only for the training but also for alerting me.” (SM050)

Coaching and mentoring

There was quite widespread acknowledgment of the value of mentoring and, to a lesser extent, coaching in enhancing the knowledge, skills and understanding of the headteachers surveyed:

“The skills of my first head in acting as a coach and understanding what a coach was – very often just sitting down together and talking through step by step.” (SF016)

“I had a mentor in my first year – a very, very experienced head from another secondary school. He was very comforting to me in the sense that I would run things I was worried about by him and he would say ‘yes, you are doing the right thing’ and ‘yes, do this’ or whatever and so that was very useful and also knowing I could always ring him with a problem. I think that it is very important for heads to have at least someone who they feel comfortable in saying, ‘This might sound stupid but...’.” (SF023)

“I had a very good mentor. That was really useful. It was a nice process, quite relaxed and she gave me a lot of support not in an overbearing way.” (PM093)

By way of a contrast, some headteachers found it less easy to access the skills of a mentor:

“I really wanted a mentor – I wanted somebody that I could ‘phone and say ‘I don’t know how to do this – can you throw some light on it for me?’. I didn’t get anything.” (PF124)

“Only when I kept nagging and asking. It wasn’t offered. And I nagged and nagged until they gave me somebody.” (PF016)

“The LA gave me a mentor for my second headship who was less experienced than me and still in his first headship from a school so completely different that, to be honest, I was mentoring him.” (PM093)

Links with performance management

In only two cases – both secondary – was a connection made between meeting needs identified through the performance management review through professional development:

“When I had my last performance management review, it [LPSH] was a suggestion at that stage.” (SF005)

“I’ve actually written into my performance management that I should make at least three what I call extensive school visits and that is to go to another school and to go with a particular focus and to meet with key personnel and to talk through the issues from their perspective and to try to learn from them to identify what good practice is in a number of areas.” (SM061)

Other sources of professional development and support

Usefully, respondents volunteered a small number of other ways in which their professional learning had been enhanced:

“The Investors in Excellence was I thought tremendous – one of the best bits of INSET that I’ve had.” (SM071)

“I have taken a far more general approach to my CPD [continuing professional development] – visiting schools, reading – I’ve read a lot of Michael Fullan.” (SM071)

“There is a private regional college which I think offers a better training than the LA, so I would use them.” (PF060)

“Headstart was good – a good ten days of good professional development.” (PM078)

“I’ve done Ofsted Head First training, I’ve been part of the Primary Leadership Programme and a five-day Ofsted self-evaluation course. I’ve also done the SLICT programme.” (PM089)

“What I’ve done in the last year/eighteen months is to take part in the New Visions programme for heads in early headship.” (PF080)

Some experiences had an international dimension, such as the headteacher who secured a place on the British Council’s Teachers’ Professional International Development (TPID) programme.

“I went to the Ukraine and looked at teaching practices that that’s been really valuable at looking at our practice here and other people’s practice of what could actually help to improve the quality of learning for children.” (PF009)

Schools with specialist status commented that the support provided by the Specialist Schools Trust was of a very high quality:

“The Trust offer a lot of good support ... they gave me a sports college head as a mentor. Their meetings and conference opportunities are very good as well.” (SF023)

Some of the headteachers surveyed described opportunities offered to them through secondments to their local authorities:

“That was a one-year secondment and there was a possibility of it being extended. I had really enjoyed working for the school improvement team as an associate inspector/adviser.” (PM008)

A small number of headteachers pointed out that they had been appointed as mentors to other headteachers. They remarked that this had been a valuable learning experience for them, hopefully as much as for their mentees:

“I’ve been a mentor as well – I was mentor to another head that came to another small school.” (PF052)

“I’m actually mentoring a head in ... at the moment and that’s working well. Feedback needs to be regular anytime that you’re working together, then we both benefit.” (SM097)

Preparation and development for second headship

When asked whether there should be any specific forms of training or preparation for those moving to second headship, the majority of respondents were unable to identify anything specific, as reflected in the following comment:

“I don’t know really. That’s a really difficult one. Every school is so different.” (PM093)

Other observations and suggestions included the following:

“I think there certainly should be a dedicated handover time. At the moment it is very ad hoc – a casual arrangement really and it’s something I didn’t get here. I think that

would be very, very useful and should be something that ought to be built in and become the norm.” (PF030)

“If you’re moving to a school that’s very different – then perhaps you should start looking at opportunities to fill in gaps in your knowledge beforehand – an audit that could perhaps be done with the link inspector.” (PF030)

“The most important thing about headship is the reflecting and having thinking time – so courses that cause me to think outside my box and to try and look at things anew.” (PF062)

“I would say that if they haven’t done LPSH, they must do it. And certainly to look at other training opportunities run by the National College, without any question.” (PM066)

“Everybody should do the LPSH before they go into second headship because it would give you such a clear idea as to your strengths and weaknesses and that would be so helpful.” (PF058)

“Being aware of the different leadership styles – that really helped me in adapting to how I was dealing with things. Otherwise I might just have come in and done exactly the same as I was used to doing.” (PF016)

“I think the best kind of support I get in my situation is actually talking to other heads, networking, visiting other schools. And when I had to put in a new TLR structure, those were the people I turned to.” (PF125)

“I think that is quite difficult because it would vary with the individual and his/her experiences. I think it would depend perhaps on the nature of the school.” (SF005)

“If you are going for a second headship, go and talk to other people who have done it, but above all go and research the school you are going to.” (SM042)

“It’s having time to get to know and understand your institution and a lot of it is people and how they operate and it’s being able quickly to get your hands on good internal data.” (SF016)

“Every headship will offer different experiences and I think the most important thing is to know your school, your community and finding out what the needs of the school are and what therefore your needs are.” (PF052)

‘Learning by doing’ and ‘learning on the job’ were cited by some headteachers as inevitable approaches to tackling the challenges presented by headship:

“There are so many things you have to do that really it is very much learning on the job ... you just think of all those different things you have to do. I’m not so sure there was anybody who could have given a lot of help.” (SM082)

“One of the things I have done that has been a terrific piece of professional development was national chair of a programme that was funded jointly by the DfES [Department for Education and Skills] and the Health Service on raising the attainment of boys. Being part of that was terrific for me because I got to see a lot of practice in a lot of different schools. And it also did me good in having to chair a lot of conferences with 300 delegates. That was very useful, and yet I did something useful for the school as well.” (SM082)

“I did LPSH in the first tranche when it came out and then I became a trainer. So all my professional development if you like was at the cutting edge because I was actually training other headteachers and I was also training senior management teams at FE [Further Education] colleges, and principals and working for Hay McBer. And I thought that was the best sort of professional development for myself.” (SM097)

The career of headship

Introduction

Other scholars have pointed out that headship does not exist in isolation. It is connected to an earlier career in teaching and increasing levels of responsibility on the one hand, and also to a career through and out of headship on the other. This section interprets these ideas in the light of what second heads said about their earlier career, their time in headship and their future intentions. Such ideas began to be mapped out in *The Headship Game* (Fidler and Atton 2004) but now there is more data to substantiate this thinking.

Table 8.1: Possible routes through a senior leadership career

Period	Description
Early formation	This is the period of childhood and character formation
Early teaching career	This is the teaching career to a middle leadership/management position
Senior leadership and management	Whole school responsibility as a member of the senior leadership team
(Acting headship)	There may be a period of acting headship before permanent headship
First headship	First permanent headship phases/stages of development
Second headship	Second headship phases/stages of development
Further work in education	Part-time work alongside headship or full or part time after headship
Retirement	Leisure

This is not intended to be prescriptive and to suggest that this is the route through a senior leadership career in schools, but it is intended to identify periods within such a career where there is evidence from others about the influence of their work during these periods on their subsequent work in second headship. In the interviews only some of these periods received comment, as the focus of the interviews was not on the career route to headship but on features of second headship. However, in describing and explaining their experiences in second headship some heads mentioned episodes from these periods.

Early teaching career

It was the number of posts, the sequence of posts and the types of schools that received comment. Some heads mentioned that they had taught in up to 10 schools by the time they became headteachers. This wide experience of different schools had helped them develop their knowledge, particularly of children. The sequence of posts came up when looking back and heads could identify a series of posts in particular types of schools that had begun to identify them with those types of school. This was most often mentioned after a series of single-sex schools. Finally, types of school that received comment were a series of posts in small schools, particular

types of schools such as grammar schools and schools with particular types of catchment areas.

Senior leadership and management

This was a particularly formative time for many heads. They spoke of the influence and role modelling of the headteacher leading the team, the responsibility they had been given and the encouragement that they had received in their career development.

Some mentioned taking senior leadership experience in more than one school where they wished to broaden their experience because they initially served in a relatively small school or a post that might appear limited in some way. Sometimes this was part of longer-term plans to increase their scope for obtaining either first or second headships. They wished to be able to demonstrate to selectors that they had appropriate experience and also they wished to prepare themselves to make a success of the job when they were appointed.

Acting headship

Not all second heads had served a period as acting head but many had and had found the period formative. Some had periods of acting headship in the school where they were members of the senior leadership team but others were also invited to be acting headteachers in schools other than their own. While this was a somewhat different experience from permanent headship – the period has been likened to acting as caretaker – it does provide many of the experiences of substantive headship that can guide first headship. One head that had ceased to aspire to headship when she was a deputy became sure that she wanted to be a head after a period as acting head in a school other than her own.

First headship

Almost all the second heads that responded had had successful periods of first headship and had demonstrable achievements to substantiate this. They had learned about what it meant to be a headteacher and many spoke of their surprise at their realisation of just what this involved. And this was often despite good preparation in terms of training and experience before headship. There are countless examples of their learning in first headship in the earlier sections of this chapter.

After a period of successful headship some heads had begun to take on part-time consultancy roles that involved them assisting or giving advice in schools other than their own. This tended to be mentioned as confirming their assumptions that they had the leadership skills to seek a second headship. More often the motivating factor that was mentioned that was the spur for seeking a second headship was a wish for a fresh challenge.

Almost half of primary second heads and 44% of secondary second heads said that they had intentions of seeking second headship when they began their first headship but, for about a third of both primary and secondary second heads, it was only a relatively narrow range or specific schools that they were interested in. The great majority of both primary and secondary heads were more selective in their choice of second school than their first.

While some heads were reluctant to generalise, and thought it depended on the headteacher and circumstances, most had clear ideas about how long a period of first headship should last. All were clear that the period should not be as short as two or three years unless something external precipitated a move. The time for children

to move through the particular school was one yardstick that heads used and, when translated into a period of time, five to seven years was the optimum period. Certainly some second heads that had spent longer than this in first headship regretted it.

While the reasons that individuals sought second headship were complex, they usually consisted of a combination of personal reasons why they desired a new challenge and a firm view that their first school needed a new impetus. Some identified phases in the development of their schools and considered that a phase had been completed and a new leader for the next phase was desirable. Most were very aware of the dangers of complacency and its consequences for both their schools and themselves.

About 9 out of 10 second heads moved directly from first to second headship but the others undertook a range of activities from acting headship to consultancy of some kind on school improvement or other LA work. A few had undertaken this as a way of investigating careers in education other than seeking a further headship but most concluded that they preferred headship. Most second heads chose to take a second headship voluntarily. Only a very small number of heads were affected by some school reorganisation that meant that their first school would not exist in the future, although there were others who feared for the security of their first school and so looked for a second school rather than await events.

It is important to remember that these are the experiences of those who went on to second headships and not all first heads. The cross-sectional surveys of headteachers (Earley et al 2002; Stevens et al 2005) indicate that up to one third of primary heads are second heads and around a quarter of secondary heads, but the response rate for these surveys was less than half the targeted heads and so the non-response heads could affect these figures considerably.

Second heads did not generally have clear ideas about any general form of preparation that would be useful for those who might intend to apply for a second headship. There were individual cases where specific knowledge would have been valuable. In our pilot studies of secondary second heads, those heads thought it would be useful to know about the experiences of other second heads before they took up such a post as they thought it might be instructive to hear about what might go wrong. They had recognised that coming from a successful first headship to a second school carried some potential risk, however small, that they might be less successful in a second school. They saw value in being forewarned about potential problems rather than being less well prepared. That is why we have tried to include a full account of the issues that this much larger sample found challenging, particularly in the early stages of second headship. We consider that a number of the examples show that some familiarisation with experiences of existing second heads would be valuable for prospective second heads and also some development of the personal analytical techniques that heads could use to aid their organisational diagnosis before and after taking up their new post. This might include time formulating development strategies that would work in a range of internal situations and external contexts.

Second headship

The accounts given here by the 164 questionnaire responses and 42 telephone interviews from second heads give a very frank and balanced picture of their experiences. They describe the challenges that they have experienced in second headship particularly in their early years and they warn prospective second heads to take this into account in their plans. But there is no doubt that almost all do not regret taking a second headship and indeed the vast majority are enthusiastic about their

new challenge. In many cases their renewed enthusiasm for the task of headship echoes through the quotations from them that we have included.

Their main task in their new school was one of organisational socialisation, as might have been expected (Fidler and Atton 2004). They needed to understand the new external context and internal situation of their second school. In quite a number of cases this was different from what they expected either in comparison with their first school or the expectations that they had built from the information they had been sent and visits to their second school. While the great majority say that had they known the real situation they would still have taken the job, the surprises they experienced, however, come through very clearly.

There are also some examples of further professional socialisation where they have a more developed understanding of what it means to be a headteacher. In a number of cases they are more critical of their work as a first head and have an increased understanding of leadership and its differences from management. Many have developed their understanding of what leadership means in different internal situations when staff expectations in their second school are very different from those they experienced in their first headship.

This is the first substantial investigation of the experiences of second heads. Our findings reveal that the 40% of primary heads who have gone on to a headship beyond their first are in a third or fourth headship. Since there are no previous findings with which to compare, we do not know whether there is a trend to move to this number of headships or whether this has been the situation for some time. When we asked about future intentions, one third of our sample of primary heads in no more than their second headship said that they were considering a further headship.

Further work in education

When asked about future intentions on the questionnaire and also in some interviews heads mentioned that they would like some further part-time involvement in developing other schools. Various suggestions were made such as school improvement partners, school improvement consultancies and executive headships. This was particularly the case where they had no thoughts of a further headship and would spend considerable time as head of their existing school.

9 Policy implications

Headteachers

Keeping options open: this research suggests that second headship can reinvigorate and excite heads that feel that they need a fresh challenge. This suggests that more heads and prospective heads should consider second headship as part of their career planning. Much evidence shows that to increase their chances of being appointed to a second headship of their choice they need to keep their options open by their choice of post before first headship and their professional development in first headship. The evidence on this is particularly clear for heads of small primary schools but there are also many examples from other groups of heads.

Length of time in first school: if second headship is to have a benefit for a first school the heads need to remain in post long enough for them to make demonstrable improvements and leave a school in a stable state for the following headteacher. In this way a first school can benefit from a new impetus from an incoming headteacher. The most common view was that a period of about five to seven years was a suitable length of time. While much would depend on the state of the school and longer-term developments the general view was that the period was ripe for change when there was a danger of settling into too much of a routine and complacency was beginning to feature in planning.

Choice of school: there was much advice from second heads about choosing a school that individuals felt comfortable in and ones in which they could make a difference. While this might not be very different to advice from that on choosing first headship, potentially this choice is even more important since it is a choice that involves moving from success in a first headship. After their experience of first headship heads should be in a more informed position to make such judgements than when choosing first headship and in any case second heads said they were more selective in their choice of second school.

Workload expectations: most second heads warned prospective second heads about the dangers of underestimating the workload of beginning work in a new school. Establishing one's position in a new school, even as an experienced head, would require more time initially than would be needed in spending a further year at an existing school.

Transferring practice: the issue of how to make use of the valuable learning from first headship without assuming that similar practices would be appropriate in a different school was acknowledged by many second heads to be a very knotty problem. Those who had reflected on their two experiences were aware that although they knew that their two schools would be different and that they should not try to replicate their previous first school practices, they found that they appeared to have been trying to do so. They concluded that there were two issues. First, they had not sufficiently understood the differences between their first and second schools, but, second, they had found it very difficult to approach their new school without the expectations that they had developed from their experience in their former school.

Governors

Selecting heads: governors have the major role in appointing headteachers. While some second heads had detected some large and prestigious schools where governors appeared to seek second heads, others detected some wariness from governors about appointing a second head. Governors need to appreciate what advantages there may be in appointing an experienced headteacher and also the

more discriminating approach to posts that are likely to be shown by those who are already headteachers. Part of the planning for any appointment might be some consideration of how long they would like a headteacher to stay at their school and how they would ensure the CPD of heads who they expect to stay for a very long time.

Salaries: some primary second heads reported that they had moved without any salary increase. This was because they were well rewarded by their existing governing body in recognition for their contribution, and governors hoped to make a new appointment at a low point on the salary range for the school. Where governors wish to acquire the experience that existing headteachers can bring, they need to ensure that the salary they offer is commensurate with what such skills can command elsewhere.

Schools needing a second head: second heads of schools that displayed some particular form of challenge were of the view that they were only able to deal successfully with the issues because they had previous experience of headship. In some cases where the second head was following another second head that was leaving prematurely, it was clear that previous headship experience alone was not enough; it was about having the particular skills to succeed in that environment. Such a challenging environment needs to be adequately recognised by governors when seeking to make an appointment and to appoint a sufficiently experienced person with a previous track record of success in similar circumstances.

Local authorities and diocesan authorities

Information: those who play any part in managing headteachers and encouraging their professional development can have a role in making second headship more widely known. This should be for those who are aspiring headteachers in addition to existing headteachers. If such people know about the experiences of existing second heads they are in a better position to plan their own development that takes account of such possibilities.

Providing opportunities: a number of second heads were aided and encouraged to seek second headship because they had the opportunity of acting as a consultant to other schools. This both broadened their knowledge of other schools and also allowed them to assess their own leadership and management skills against other heads that they assisted. An experienced first head acting as a mentor to an inexperienced head could be viewed as a developmental experience for the former as well as the latter. This could be used to encourage them to think about the leadership of a school other than their current one if they have been in post for some time and need a new challenge.

Induction and mentoring: induction is needed for all new heads whatever their experience. Experienced second heads, particularly in primary schools, found that the practice of LAs varied so much that if they were new it took some time to find their way to sources of support and assistance. Where their school was a challenging one, this delay could prove a handicap. Mentorship could also be valuable for second heads but the mentor has to be a suitably experienced sounding board. An example quoted of a first head acting as a mentor to a second head is not likely to prove successful.

Government

Making headship attractive: in view of the expected retirements of so many headteachers over the next few years it is vitally important that the post of headteacher is seen as an attractive one by potential heads. The challenge of

second headship can play a part for those who do not envisage a long stay in one headship as being attractive. However, second heads that had been reinvigorated by second headship still made very cogent pleas to reduce the pressures on heads to more manageable levels. They considered that the expectations placed on what headteachers could achieve were at a level that could not be sustained by good headteachers. While resourcing plays some part in making the task manageable, particularly in smaller primary schools and schools not in receipt of any special funding, the issue is deeper than only resourcing. It is the expectations of all the things that headteachers should be able to control that was so daunting.

Expectations of headship careers: second headship has a part to play in providing career development and reinvigoration through a fresh challenge for many headteachers. But this needs to be built into the expectations of headship careers rather than left to the individual initiative of headteachers.

NCSL

Information and publicity: NCSL has a vital role to play in providing information about the experiences of second heads and circulating publicity so that heads are aware of this career option after first headship.

Career planning before and during headship: as we have discovered, career options can be curtailed by the particular choice of posts before headship that a prospective head makes. Thus it is important that at a fairly early career stage prospective senior leaders are aware of such issues so that they can take it into account in their personal career planning. As we have also discovered, undertaking appropriate forms of development while in first headship can increase the chances of securing a desirable second headship. Such information can be included in the various training and development activities that NCSL run for leaders at a range of career stages.

Awareness raising: NCSL could run awareness-raising activities for experienced heads that are at a stage in their headship that a second headship might be appropriate. This should include inputs from existing second heads that can give a first-hand account to the difference that moving to a second headship can bring. Our report can set these individual experiences in the context of those of a larger group of second heads.

Training and development: although there was no clear direction from second heads about any general training that they would have found valuable, there is a case for considering courses that help to assess how various case study schools work. This could involve analytical instruments to help heads to pick up more quickly and accurately the culture of their new school. Exercises to plan change strategies in some exemplar schools would help heads deal with some of the challenges that they found in practice and reported in this research.

Further research: clearly there is much further research that could be carried out on second headship. Work with second heads also gives additional insight into experiences in first headship, as second heads are able to compare one set of experiences with another. The transfer of learning from first to second school is clearly a very complex issue. If studied this may also facilitate learning in first headship. There are further particular groups that could be investigated such as the under-representation in second headship of internally appointed first heads.

10 Conclusions

This research has shown that second headship is quite popular among primary and secondary headteachers. Headteachers surveyed saw second headships as a legitimate means of enhancing their career development and of revitalising their professional energy to do the job. The rise in numbers of headteachers taking up second headship has yet to be fully acknowledged and there are significant implications for further research in this area, particularly if heads are appointed at a younger age.

We conclude from our research that second headship has the potential to extend and widen the career of headship, although we would wish to stress that undue pressure on heads to do so should be avoided. There are implications for the length of time a head might reasonably spend in each headship. It is conceivable that some heads that gain early first headship might acquire three, four or more headships in a career span.

Analysis of the data also points to implications for leadership careers before second headship. Those who take a range of posts in schools of different sizes and types are likely to find that more opportunities will be open to them in terms of choice of headships than those who have taken a narrow path with a limited range of experience.

All of the headteachers surveyed were reinvigorated by second headship. We view this as a mutual benefit for the individual, as well as the school. Our findings showed that the greater competency acquired by second heads was, in no small part, the result of successful senior leadership experience, first headship and ongoing professional development and support. Many, if not all, of the more challenging headships might well be attractive to second heads – a point that governing bodies and local authorities may wish to contemplate as part of their recruitment and selection policies.

Significantly, second heads reported a need to secure personal challenge and, at the same time, to make a difference in the second school of their choice. Headteachers reported that there were still surprises in second headship and so how to use learning from first headship but without just trying to repeat practice is obviously a rather tricky task. We believe that much can and should be done to suggest second headship to first heads and to explore formal and less formal development opportunities to increase the skills and confidence of headteachers to benefit from the professional learning opportunities offered by a period of second headship.

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Appendix 1: Advisory Committee membership



Second headship Advisory Group members

Name	Job title	Organisation
Geoff Southworth (Chair)	Deputy CEO and Director of Research	NCSL
Jane Doughty	Acting Director of Leadership Programmes	NCSL
Andy Coleman (Deputy Chair)	Senior Research Officer	NCSL
Michael Bristow (NCSL Project Manager)	Research Officer	NCSL
Brian Fidler (Project Lead)	Professor of Education Management	University of Reading
Jeff Jones (Project Lead)	Principal Adviser: Training and Consultancy	CfBT
Andrew MacKenzie	Headteacher	Broad Oak High School
Mazda Jenkin	Headteacher	Moorside High School
Rosemary Saunders	Headteacher	Downley Primary School
Pauline Round	Senior Inspector	Worcestershire LEA

Appendix 2: Questionnaires

Questionnaire for second heads (primary phase)

No

Section 1: General information

1.1 Your gender	MALE		FEMALE		(Please ✓)
-----------------	------	--	--------	--	------------

1.2 Your current age range	30 AND UNDER		36–40		46–50		56–60	
(Please ✓)	31–35		41–45		51–55		OVER 60	

1.3 How many <i>permanent</i> headships have you held? (Please ✓ one box only)	2		3		4		MORE	
--	---	--	---	--	---	--	------	--

1.4 Did you move <i>directly</i> from first to second headship? (Please ✓ one box only)	YES		NO	
---	-----	--	----	--

If 'NO' please give details.

Section 2: Your first headship

2.1 When you started teaching, did you intend to become a headteacher at some point? (Please ✓ one box only)	YES		NO		NOT SURE	
--	-----	--	----	--	----------	--

2.2 What was your age on appointment to your <i>first</i> headship?		Years
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2.3 When you took your first headship, did you intend to go on to a further headship? (Please ✓ one box only)	YES		NO		NOT SURE	
---	-----	--	----	--	----------	--

2.4 For how many years did you hold your <i>first</i> headship?		Years		(If 2 years or less, please give number of terms as thirds)
---	--	-------	--	---

2.5 What were the characteristics of your first school? (Please ✓ for each)

▪ Location	INNER CITY		URBAN		SUBURBAN		RURAL	
▪ Type of school	INFANTS		JUNIOR		PRIMARY		FIRST	OTHER
▪ Denominational allegiance	C of E		CATHOLIC		OTHER		NONE	
▪ Your <i>regular</i> teaching load	NONE OR OCCASIONAL ONLY		UP TO 2 DAYS PER WEEK		3–4 DAYS PER WEEK		5 DAYS PER WEEK	
▪ Number of children	Please state approximate number							

2.6 What was the gender of the previous headteacher? (Please ✓)	MALE		FEMALE	
--	------	--	--------	--

2.7 How long had s/he been in post? (Please ✓ one only)	0–5 YEARS		6–10 YEARS		11–15 YEARS		15+ YEARS	
--	-----------	--	------------	--	-------------	--	-----------	--

2.8 Were you an internal candidate for the post? (Please ✓)	YES		NO	
--	-----	--	----	--

2.9 Were there (other) internal candidates for the post? (Please ✓)	YES		NO	
--	-----	--	----	--

2.10 What were your results when you began and left headship there? (Please place one ✓ only in each column)

	On taking up post	On leaving post
Substantially below comparable schools		
Below comparable schools		
About the same as comparable schools		
Above comparable schools		
Substantially above comparable schools		
No data published at the time		

2.11 When you began your first headship, which of the following best describes YOUR assessment of its performance?

HIGH PERFORMING		SATISFACTORY		COASTING		STRUGGLING		FAILING/SERIOUS WEAKNESSES	
-----------------	--	--------------	--	----------	--	------------	--	----------------------------	--

(Please ✓ one only)

2.12 When you began your first headship, how did you rate the following areas in terms of requiring management action? (Please ✓ one box for each issue)

	Not a major issue	Serious issue	Very serious Issue
Pupil numbers/public image of school			
Pupil attendance and behaviour			
Recruiting and developing staff competence			
Relationships with and between governors			
Balancing budget			
Improving premises			
Parental satisfaction and support			
Curriculum, teaching and learning			
Test results			
Other (please give details)			

Section 3: Your second headship

3.1 What were the characteristics of your second school? (Please ✓ for each)

▪ Location	INNER CITY		URBAN		SUBURBAN		RURAL	
▪ Type of school	INFANTS		JUNIOR		PRIMARY		FIRST	OTHER
▪ Denomination	C of E		CATHOLIC		OTHER		NONE	
▪ Your <i>regular</i> teaching load	NONE OR OCCASIONAL ONLY		UP TO 2 DAYS PER WEEK		3-4 DAYS PER WEEK		5 DAYS PER WEEK	
▪ Number of children	Please enter approximate number							

3.2 What was the gender of the previous headteacher? (Please ✓)

MALE		FEMALE	
------	--	--------	--

3.3 Was s/he in a second headship? (Please ✓ one only)

YES		NO		DON'T KNOW	
-----	--	----	--	------------	--

3.4 How long had s/he been in post? (Please ✓ one only)

0-5 YEARS		6-10 YEARS		11-15 YEARS		15+ YEARS	
-----------	--	------------	--	-------------	--	-----------	--

3.5 What were your results when you began? (Please ✓ tick one box only)

	On taking up post		On taking up post
Substantially below comparable schools		Above comparable schools	
Below comparable schools		Substantially above comparable schools	
About the same as comparable schools		No published data at the time	

3.6 When you began your second headship, how did you rate the following areas in terms of requiring management action? (Please ✓ one box for each issue)

	NOT A MAJOR ISSUE	SERIOUS ISSUE	VERY SERIOUS ISSUE
Pupil numbers/public image of school			
Pupil attendance and behaviour			
Recruiting and developing staff competence			
Relationships with and between governors			
Balancing budget			
Improving premises			
Parental satisfaction and support			
Curriculum, teaching and learning			
Test results			
Other (please give details)			

3.7 When you began your second headship, which of the following best describes YOUR assessment of the school's performance?

HIGH PERFORMING		SATISFACTORY		COASTING		STRUGGLING		FAILING/SERIOUS WEAKNESSES	
-----------------	--	--------------	--	----------	--	------------	--	----------------------------	--

(Please ✓ one only)

3.8 For how many years have you held/did you hold your second headship?

Years

(If 2 years or less, please give number of terms as thirds)

Section 4: Contributions to your decision to seek a second headship

4.1 Please assess the importance to you of each of the items in the list below by ticking one box. If you wish, please provide any further explanation on the back of this sheet.

PERSONAL	NOT IMPORTANT	QUITE IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT
Timing was right			
Personal circumstances			
Fresh challenge			
Use particular skills in new context			
Other (please specify)			

FIRST SCHOOL	NOT IMPORTANT	QUITE IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT
Timing was right			
Achieved aims there			
School needed fresh impetus			
Different skills needed at this stage of its development			
High personal teaching load			
Lack of on-site caretaker			
Insufficient leadership time			
Other (please specify)			

OUTSIDE INFLUENCES	NOT APPLICABLE	QUITE IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT
Headhunted/invited to apply			
School reorganisation			
Heard of another headteacher moving to second headship			
Particular headship advertised			
Other (please specify)			

4.2 From the above please indicate the group that best fits your MAIN reason for moving to a second headship? (Please ✓ one box only)

PERSONAL

SCHOOL

EXTERNAL

Section 5: Possible discouragements

5.1 Please identify below any factors that may have discouraged you when making your decision to move to a second headship (Please ✓)

	NOT APPLICABLE	NOT IMPORTANT	QUITE IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT
Recognised possible risk involved				
Personal circumstances made it difficult				
More to do at first school				
Other (please specify)				

Section 6: Choice of second school

6.1 In comparison with your first headship, how selective were you in applying for second headships?

LESS SELECTIVE		EQUALLY SELECTIVE		MORE SELECTIVE		(Please ✓)
----------------	--	-------------------	--	----------------	--	------------

6.2 When applying for second headships, did you have in mind? (Please ✓ one only)

ONLY ONE SPECIFIC SCHOOL		SMALL NUMBER OF SPECIFIC SCHOOLS		ONLY SCHOOLS OF A SPECIFIC TYPE		WIDE RANGE OF SCHOOLS	
--------------------------	--	----------------------------------	--	---------------------------------	--	-----------------------	--

6.3 When selecting your second schools, did you have in mind? (Please ✓ one for each criterion)

	NOT IMPORTANT	QUITE IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT
Geographical location			
Type of catchment			
Type of school			
Size of school			
Denominational allegiance			
Its current performance			
On-site caretaker			
Salary			
Parental perceptions			
Regular teaching load of head			
Size of leadership team			
Personal skills fitted current needs of school at that time			

What other particularly important criteria influenced your choice?

--

Section 7: Applications and interviews

7.1 Approximately how many applications did you make for second headships? (Please ✓ one only)	1		2-5		6-10		More than 10	
--	---	--	-----	--	------	--	--------------	--

7.2 How many interviews did you attend before securing your post? (Please ✓ one only)	0		1		2-5		More than 5	
---	---	--	---	--	-----	--	-------------	--

7.3 How many schools did you decide to withdraw from? (Please ✓ one only)	0		1		2		More than 2	
---	---	--	---	--	---	--	-------------	--

If you did, please give brief details of the reasons.

7.4 At your second school, were there any internal candidates for the post?	YES		NO	
---	-----	--	----	--

Section 8: Comparisons between your two schools

8.1 When you took your second headship, did you expect the two schools to be essentially similar or quite different? (Please ✓ one)	ESSENTIALLY SIMILAR		QUITE DIFFERENT	
---	---------------------	--	-----------------	--

Please briefly explain your choice

Section 9: Transfer of experience

9.1 What key <i>skills</i> and lessons did you learn in your first headship that proved to be particularly valuable in your second headship?
--

9.2 Were there more surprises in the early stages of your second headship compared to the first? (Please ✓)	MORE		SIMILAR		FEWER	
---	------	--	---------	--	-------	--

9.3 What have been the principal differences in your second headship compared to your first? What, if anything, was new and completely different about your second headship?
--

9.4 Have there been skills you have needed to acquire in your second headship that were much less important in your first? (Please ✓)	YES		NO	
---	-----	--	----	--

If 'YES', briefly indicate the nature of these skills

9.5 How do you rate your success in your second headship compared to your first? (Please ✓ one only)							
LESS SUCCESSFUL		EQUALLY SUCCESSFUL		MORE SUCCESSFUL		TOO EARLY TO SAY	

9.6 Have your criteria for assessing your personal success changed? (please ✓)	YES		NO	
If 'YES', in what ways?				

Section 10: Rewards of second headships

10.1 What have been the positive aspects of your move to a second headship?	
(a) for you personally?	
(b) for your first school?	
(c) for your second school?	
Any negatives?	

Section 11: Professional developmental activities

11.1 What courses or other professional developmental activities have been particularly influential for your headships?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were there differences between those in first headship compared to your second? Please say in what ways they have been influential.

Section 12: The future

12.1 At this point in time, what plans do you have for the future after this headship? (Please ✓ any that apply)							
ANOTHER HEADSHIP		RETIREMENT		OTHER WORK IN EDUCATION		WORK OUTSIDE EDUCATION	

Section 13: Advice

13.1 From your experience, would you recommend a further headship to those in first headship? (Please ✓)	DEFINITELY		PROBABLY		NOT SURE		NO	
13.2 What advice would you give to a newly appointed first headteacher contemplating a second headship in the future?								

Section 14: Follow-up

We shall be carrying out a small number of short follow-up telephone interviews. Please indicate if you would be willing to be contacted for further details and give a suitable telephone number.

15.1 Would you be willing to take part in a short, pre-arranged, telephone interview?	YES		NO	
---	-----	--	----	--

Name:		School:	
Phone number:		Email:	

Section 15: Final comments

16.1 Please use this space or overleaf to give any further information or explanation that might help us.

--

THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN THIS SURVEY.

**PLEASE RETURN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IN THE PRE-PAID
ADDRESSED ENVELOPE PROVIDED TO:**

Professor Brian Fidler
School Improvement and Leadership Centre
Bulmershe Court
University of Reading
Reading RG6 1HY
Email: f.b.fidler@reading.ac.uk

Questionnaire for second heads (secondary phase)

No

Section 1: General information

1.1 Your gender (Please ✓)	MALE		FEMALE					
1.2 Your current age range (Please ✓)	30 AND UNDER		31–35		36–40		41–45	
	46–50		51–55		56–60		OVER 60	
1.3 How many permanent headships have you held? (Please ✓)	2		3		4		MORE	
1.4 Did you move directly from first to second headship? (Please ✓)	YES		NO					
If 'NO' please give details.								

Section 2: Your first headship

2.1 When you started teaching, did you intend to become a headteacher at some point? (please ✓)	YES		NO		NOT SURE			
2.2 What was your age on appointment to your first headship?		Years						
2.3 When you took your first headship, did you intend to go on to a further headship? (please ✓)	YES		NO		NOT SURE			
2.4 For how many years did you hold your first headship?		Years		(If 2 years or less, please give number of terms as thirds)				
2.5 What were the characteristics of your first school? (Please ✓ for each)								
Location	INNER CITY		URBAN		SUBURBAN		RURAL	
Gender	SINGLE SEX		MIXED					
Type	COMPREHENSIVE		GRAMMAR		OTHER (Please state)			
Age range	11–16		11–18		OTHER (Please state)			
No of pupils	0–800		801–1,000		1,001-1,200		1,201+	
2.6 What was the gender of the previous headteacher? (Please ✓)	MALE		FEMALE					
2.7 Were you an internal candidate for the post? (Please ✓)	YES		NO					
2.8 Were there (other) internal candidates for the post? (Please ✓)	YES		NO					

2.9 What were your GCSE 5 A*–C results when you began and left headship there? (Please place one ✓ only in each column)

	On taking up post	On leaving post
Substantially below comparable schools		
Below comparable schools		
About the same as comparable schools		
Above comparable schools		
Substantially above comparable schools		

2.10 When you began your first headship, which of the following best describes YOUR assessment of its performance?

High performing		Satisfactory		Coasting		Struggling		Failing/serious weaknesses		(Please ✓)
-----------------	--	--------------	--	----------	--	------------	--	----------------------------	--	------------

2.11 When you began your first headship, how did you rate the following areas in terms of requiring management action? (Please ✓ one box for each issue)

	Not a major issue	Serious issue	Very serious Issue
Student numbers/public image of school			
Student attendance and behaviour			
Recruiting and developing staff competence			
Relationships with and between governors			
Balancing budget			
Improving premises			
Parental satisfaction and support			
Curriculum, teaching and learning			
Test and exam results			
Other (please give details)			

Section 3: Your second headship

3.1 What were the characteristics of your second school? (Please ✓ for each)

Location	INNER CITY		URBAN		SUBURBAN		RURAL	
Gender	SINGLE SEX		MIXED					
Type	COMPREHENSIVE		GRAMMAR		OTHER (Please state)			
Age range	11–16		11–18		OTHER (Please state)			
No of pupils	0–800		801–1,000		1,001–1,200		1,201+	

3.2 What was the gender of the previous headteacher? (Please ✓)

MALE		FEMALE	
------	--	--------	--

3.3 Was s/he in a second headship? (Please ✓)	YES		NO		DON'T KNOW	
--	-----	--	----	--	------------	--

3.4 What were your GCSE 5 A*-C results when you began? (Please ✓ tick one box only)

	On taking up post		On taking up post
Substantially below comparable schools		Above comparable schools	
Below comparable schools		Substantially above comparable schools	
About the same as comparable schools			

3.5 When you began your second headship, which of the following best describes YOUR assessment of its performance? (Please ✓)

High performing		Satisfactory		Coasting		Struggling		Failing/serious weaknesses	
-----------------	--	--------------	--	----------	--	------------	--	----------------------------	--

3.6 When you began your second headship, how did you rate the following areas in terms of requiring management action? (Please ✓ one box for each issue)

	NOT A MAJOR ISSUE	SERIOUS ISSUE	VERY SERIOUS ISSUE
Student numbers/public image of school			
Student attendance and behaviour			
Recruiting and developing staff competence			
Relationships with and between governors			
Balancing budget			
Improving premises			
Parental satisfaction and support			
Curriculum, teaching and learning			
Test and exam results			
Other (please give details)			

3.7 For how many years have you held/did you hold your second headship?		Years		(If 2 years or less, please give number of terms as thirds)
--	--	-------	--	---

Section 4: Contributions to your decision to seek a second headship

4.1 Please assess the importance to you of each of the items in the list below by ticking one box. If you wish, please provide any further explanation on the back of this sheet.

PERSONAL	NOT IMPORTANT	QUITE IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT
Timing was right			
Personal circumstances			
Fresh challenge			
Use particular skills in new context			
Other (please specify)			

FIRST SCHOOL	NOT IMPORTANT	QUITE IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT
Timing was right			
Achieved aims there			
School needed fresh impetus			
Different skills needed at this stage of its development			
Other (please specify)			

OUTSIDE INFLUENCES	NOT APPLICABLE	QUITE IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT
Headhunted/invited to apply			
School reorganisation			
Heard of another headteacher moving to second headship			
Particular headship advertised			
Other (please specify)			

4.2 Please indicate your MAIN reason for moving to a second headship? (Please ✓ one box only)	PERSONAL		SCHOOL		EXTERNAL	
--	----------	--	--------	--	----------	--

Section 5: Possible discouragements

5.1 Please identify below any factors that may have discouraged you when making your decision to move to a second headship. (Please ✓)				
	NOT APPLICABLE	NOT IMPORTANT	QUITE IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT
Recognised possible risk involved				
Personal circumstances made it difficult				
More to do at first school				
Other (please specify)				

Section 6: Choice of second school

6.1 In comparison with your first headship, how selective were you in applying for second headships?				
LESS SELECTIVE		EQUALLY SELECTIVE		MORE SELECTIVE (Please ✓)

6.2 When applying for second headships, did you have in mind? (Please ✓ one)							
ONLY ONE SPECIFIC SCHOOL		SMALL NUMBER OF SPECIFIC SCHOOLS		ONLY SCHOOLS OF A SPECIFIC TYPE		WIDE RANGE OF SCHOOLS	

6.3 When selecting your second schools, did you have in mind? (Please ✓ one for each criterion)

	NOT IMPORTANT	QUITE IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT
Geographical location			
Type of catchment			
Type of school			
Its current performance			
Personal skills fitted current needs of school at that time			
Salary			

What other particularly important criteria influenced your choice?

Section 7: Applications and interviews

7.1 Approximately how many applications did you make for second headships? (Please ✓)	1		2-5		6-10		More than 10	
--	---	--	-----	--	------	--	--------------	--

7.2 How many interviews did you attend before securing your post? (Please ✓)	1		2-5		6-10		More than 10	
---	---	--	-----	--	------	--	--------------	--

7.3 Were there any schools you decided to withdraw from? (Please ✓)	1		2		More than 2	
--	---	--	---	--	-------------	--

If so, please give brief details of the reasons.

7.4 At your second school, were there any internal candidates for the post?	YES		NO	
--	-----	--	----	--

Section 8: Comparisons between your two schools

8.1 When you took your second headship, did you expect the two schools to be essentially similar or quite different? (Please ✓)	ESSENTIALLY SIMILAR		QUITE DIFFERENT	
--	---------------------	--	-----------------	--

Please briefly explain your choice.

Section 9: Transfer of experience

9.1 What key <i>skills</i> and lessons did you learn in your first headship that proved to be particularly valuable in your second headship?

9.2 Were there more surprises in the early stages of your second headship compared to the first? (Please ✓)	MORE		SIMILAR		LESS	
--	------	--	---------	--	------	--

9.3 What have been the principal differences in your second headship compared to your first? What, if anything, was new and completely different about your second headship?

9.4 Have there been skills you have needed to acquire in your second headship that were much less important in your first? (Please ✓)	YES		NO	
--	-----	--	----	--

If 'YES', briefly indicate the nature of these skills.

9.5 How do you rate your success in your second headship compared to your first? (Please ✓)	LESS SUCCESSFUL		EQUALLY SUCCESSFUL		MORE SUCCESSFUL	
--	-----------------	--	--------------------	--	-----------------	--

9.6 Have your criteria for assessing your personal success changed? (Please ✓)	YES		NO	
---	-----	--	----	--

If 'YES', in what ways?

Section 10: Rewards of second headships

10.1 What have been the positives of second headship?	
(d) for you personally?	
(e) for your first school?	
(f) for your second school?	
Any negatives?	

Section 11: Professional developmental activities

11.1 What courses or other professional developmental activities have been particularly influential for your headships? Were there differences between those in first headship compared to your second? Please say in what ways they have been influential.
--

Section 12: The future

12.1 At this point in time, what plans do you have for the future? (Please ✓ any that apply)				
ANOTHER HEADSHIP		RETIREMENT		OTHER WORK IN EDUCATION
				WORK OUTSIDE EDUCATION

Section 13: Advice

13.1 From your experience, would you recommend a further headship to those in first headship? (Please ✓)	DEFINITELY		PROBABLY		NOT SURE		NO	
--	------------	--	----------	--	----------	--	----	--

13.2 What advice would you give to a newly appointed first headteacher contemplating a second headship in the future?

Section 14: Follow-up

We shall be carrying out a small number of short follow-up telephone interviews. Please indicate if you would be willing to be contacted for further details and give a suitable telephone number.

15.1 Would you be willing to take part in a short, pre-arranged, telephone interview?	YES		NO	
---	-----	--	----	--

Name:		School:	
Phone number:		Email:	

Section 15: Final comments

16.1 Please use this space to give any further information or explanation that you think might help us.

THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN THIS SURVEY.

**PLEASE RETURN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IN THE PRE-PAID
ADDRESSED ENVELOPE PROVIDED TO:**

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Appendix 3: Research methodology

Drawing up the sample

We wanted to obtain a representative national sample of second heads in English state primary and secondary schools. This was a major problem – there is no complete list of second heads and indeed any such information changes fairly rapidly as heads leave and are appointed. Three options were considered:

- a) Large simple random sample of schools and eliminating first heads
- b) Cluster sampling – random sample of local authorities (LAs) to obtain all second heads in these LAs
- c) Choosing representative LAs we hoped would cooperate and also have information on the second heads in their schools.

We chose (c) as the most feasible although there were risks if LAs would not cooperate or did not have full information on their headteachers. This was as a result of eliminating the other two possibilities. Option (a) required negative responses from about three quarters of schools so as to be confident that all second heads in the sample had been identified. In any case this would not be permitted with funding from official sources. We judged that although option (b) would give a defensible representative national sample, there were serious weaknesses. If some LAs were not able or willing to take part they would decrease the response rate, similarly if they did not have complete information on their heads.

Our proposal said that we would survey 120 primary and 120 secondary second heads and conduct 20 follow-up telephone interviews with selected heads from each group. From the number of secondary schools in England, and the proportion who were likely to be in their second headship, we knew that there would be less than 1,000 in the whole country and there might only be 850, so the pressure point would be obtaining our representative sample of 120 secondary school second heads.

We used personal contacts in LAs and also those on a list of recent attendees at a National College for School Leadership (NCSL) conference. We also approached most of the LAs and assembled the list. We prepared a list of as many second heads as we could identify by all means. Sixty-five LAs were approached and 40 provided as complete a list as they were able of heads that had had a previous headship. We had a sample of 140 secondary school and 775 primary school second heads.

From these lists we were able to eliminate any entries where we had doubts that the list from that LA or part of the LA was complete. We were at pains to try to ensure that from these LAs we had full coverage and not just a few high profile headteachers. On that basis we had usable data from 40 of the 150 English LAs. The longer primary school list was randomly sampled to select 122.

Our profile of responses from the four types of LA (counties, metropolitan boroughs, London boroughs and unitary authorities) was broadly in line with the proportion of schools in these types of LA nationally. Geographically, the sample was under-represented in the North. We took the opportunity to stratify the random sampling of primary schools from the four types of LA to reflect the national proportions.

Our final list was of 125 secondary second heads and 122 primary second heads. A great deal of work by one of our research assistants was required to obtain a list of heads, names, addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses from the sometimes scant information of only a school name from an LA. Only one mistake was made in including a school with the same name in a completely different LA.

Questionnaire survey

Although we were hoping to carry out the survey online, at the first meeting of the Advisory Committee where there were three second heads, it was made very clear that we were unlikely to be successful if we collected data in this way. Thus, while the survey was available online, the main medium was hard copy. As the Advisory Committee pointed out, this would mean that heads could carry it around and complete it without needing to be at a computer.

Establishing and ensuring a high response rate

In order to establish the response rate it was important to correct any inaccuracies in the list of heads that we had put together so the first stage was to email the selected schools to give advance notice that they would be sent a postal questionnaire and to ask them to inform us if the head was not a second head, or would not be around to complete the questionnaire. We emphasised that it was a transition between a first and a second permanent headship post that was the focus of our research and sample. Our lists came down to 113 eligible secondary heads and 117 eligible primary heads.

Postal questionnaires were sent out by first class mail with a reply paid envelope and a 14-day response period. There was a telephone number for queries but most communication was carried out by email. Those who responded were promised a brief summary of the findings in advance of the final report as were those in LAs who had cooperated. Extensive reminders were sent by email followed up by telephone calls by an experienced, persistent and resourceful research assistant.

Secondary school survey and interviews

Drawing up the questionnaire

The secondary school questionnaire was composed first. An uncertainty that made drawing up the questionnaire more difficult was the proportion of our sample who might be in a headship beyond their second. For this group, we could either ask about their most recent change of headship or their move from first to second headship even though this might be some time ago with attendant problems of accuracy of recall. We anticipated that the proportion in a headship beyond their second would be small and since our major interest was in the transition between first and second headships we chose this for all respondents.

The questionnaire included biographical information, detail of their first school and work carried out there. The reasons for moving to a second headship and the choice of second school were also probed. Corresponding detail of their second school and the work carried out there was collected leading to comparisons between the two headships in terms of success and surprises, among other issues. The questionnaire mainly consisted of closed responses but with many opportunities to volunteer further detail. Colour was used to make it more distinctive.

When it was piloted the recommendation was that it should be shorter in order to get a high response rate. Some questions were omitted and it was reduced to eight fairly detailed pages.

Responses

	Primary	Secondary
Final list	122	125
Eligible	117	113
Initial declines	0	4
Valid responses	86 <i>(71 hard copy, 3 emailed attachments; and 12 online)</i>	78 <i>(69 hard copy, 3 emailed attachments; and 6 online)</i>
Response rate	73.5%	69.6%
Offering telephone interview	84%	82%

Respondents were invited to volunteer for a short telephone interview.

Interviews

The questionnaires were analysed to identify the heads who were to be interviewed. Interviewees were chosen to illustrate the three main contributors to their decision to move – personal, school and external reasons. Other interviewees provided examples of moves between schools that were similar and ones that were different and also second headships that were more and less successful than first headships. Consistent with these criteria, we tried to choose interviewees who had most recently taken up second headships so that the change and their reasons were still fresh in their memories. Thus we included those who had been in their second post for between one term and three years. In this way we were particularly able to capture the early experiences of second headship.

Arrangements were made to hold interviews that lasted between 30 and 45 minutes. With permission, these were recorded and the recordings transcribed and analysed.

Primary school survey and interviews

Pilot interviews

In order to understand the position in primary schools, we conducted eight face-to-face interviews with second heads. From these we identified many similarities with moving to second headship in secondary schools, but also some differences. The size of primary schools varies more than secondary schools and there were other factors that influenced the choice of second school. Some of these were the extent to which heads were required to teach, the presence of a caretaker and the denominational character of the school.

The questionnaire

The secondary schools questionnaire had achieved a high response rate and much valuable information and so this successful format was modified to reflect the differences discovered in the pilot interviews and to improve two questions that had caused some misunderstandings for secondary respondents.

This questionnaire was sent out in a similar manner except that the timing brought it close to the spring half-term in 2006. This differed between LAs so we sent it out to approximately three quarters of the schools with an early half-term and the remainder a week later, just after half-term. This achieved an even higher response rate of 74%, of whom 84% offered a telephone interview.

The responses were similarly analysed and interviewees selected and interviewed.

Contributing and cooperating local authorities

Bracknell Forest
Brent
Brighton and Hove
Bristol
Buckinghamshire
Calderdale
Cambridgeshire
Cornwall
Coventry
Croydon
Cumbria
Devon
Dudley
East Riding of Yorkshire
East Sussex
Gloucestershire
Greenwich
Hammersmith and Fulham
Hampshire
Haringey
Harrow
Havering
Hillingdon
Islington
Lambeth
Lancashire
Leeds
Lewisham
Lincolnshire
Manchester
Newcastle upon Tyne
North Tyneside
Norfolk
North Somerset
North Yorkshire
Plymouth
Portsmouth
Reading
Rochdale
Sandwell
Sheffield
Slough
South Gloucestershire
Southampton
Staffordshire
Telford and Wrekin
Thurrock

Trafford
Walsall
Waltham Forest
Windsor and Maidenhead
Westminster
Wokingham
Wolverhampton
Worcestershire
York