

SCHOOL HEADSHIP

Present and Future

Alan Smithers and Pamela Robinson
Centre for Education and Employment Research
University of Buckingham

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Executive Summary

The Centre for Education and Employment Research at the University of Buckingham has been commissioned to conduct interviews with representative samples of headteachers of maintained primary and secondary schools, and independent schools, in England and Wales on the nature and likely future of school leadership.

Key Findings

- In describing what they did in a typical week headteachers listed 30 types of task.
- Both primary and secondary headteachers regretted the extent and pace of the changes imposed upon them. They were able to recall 58 externally-imposed initiatives while they had been headteachers, many of which did not seem to have been fully thought through or backed up.
- Secondary heads were dismissive of the notion that the job had become potentially too big for one person. It was for them to organise and delegate. Primary heads, especially of small schools, were more likely to say the demands had become too great.
- There was near unanimity that headteachers must be drawn from those with classroom experience since the special features of schools far outweighed any commonality with other organisations.
- Most headteachers wanted to retain the title since it underlined the centrality of teaching and learning to their role.
- There is evidence of an impending shortfall in the recruitment of headteachers in the maintained sector. Since the ratio of teachers to headteachers in the secondary phase is 53: 1 this is surprising, though perhaps less so in the primary phase where the ratio is 8:1.
- Three-quarters of primary schools reported having teachers with the qualities to become heads but who did not wish to do so. The main reason was that the pay differential was insufficient for the extra responsibility.
- Salary did not seem to be a major issue for secondary headteachers. Recruitment difficulties in the phase stemmed from the increased workload and vulnerability to sacking through bad Ofsted reports.
- The headteachers described various ways in which they nurtured future headteachers and they were generally accepting of the need for a qualification but thought the present NPQH too paper-based.
- It was accepted that headteachers were not representative in terms of gender or ethnic background, but the headteachers thought that the balance was improving and they were strongly opposed to positive discrimination.
- The headteachers were unclear whether the School Improvement Partners (SIPs) were mainly to help or check on them, and there were concerns over whether it would be possible to recruit sufficient experienced heads.

- Primary headteachers turned readily to colleagues for advice and support, but in the secondary phase competition for parental preferences tended to get in the way.
- Independent schools did not seem to be experiencing the same recruitment difficulties and they attributed this to freedom from government interference.
- Although independent schools are businesses their organisational and governance structures are designed to stress the primacy of teaching and learning led by the headteacher.

Methods

Samples of 1 in a 100 secondary schools, 1 in a 1,000 primary schools and 1 in 33 independent (HMC and GSA) schools were drawn and the headteachers interviewed in depth. In the case of the maintained schools the conversations covered: establishing details; present role and responsibilities; changes during the head's time as a headteacher; recruitment and succession; qualifications and training; remuneration and support; and the future. The independent heads were interviewed mainly from the perspective of what light their experience cast on the running of maintained schools: how they operated as businesses with particular reference to the role of the bursar and the governors; headteacher recruitment; qualifications and training in the independent sector; any differences and similarities they had noted between running a maintained and an independent school; whether there was anything that they were doing that they thought had application in the maintained sector; and how they saw headship in the independent sector developing in the future.

Findings

Current Role and Responsibilities

Asked to describe what they did in a typical week the headteachers came up with a range of activities that took 30 categories to classify. Both primary and secondary heads said that it was the people aspects of the job - teaching and learning, and leading and developing the staff - they most enjoyed and it was the bureaucracy, external interference and excessive regulation that they found irksome. Both secondary and primary heads identified work/life balance as a concern and attributed this mainly to the external impositions on them. Finances were more of a concern in primary schools, probably because of less flexibility in their smaller budgets.

Changing Role and Responsibilities

When asked how their role had changed during their time in post the headteachers responded with 58 types of externally-imposed initiatives, but were hard put to think of any tasks that had been taken away from them other than those they had delegated. Their length of service ranged from two terms to twenty-two years. The major changes identified by the longer-serving headteachers were financial delegation and the national curriculum and these were generally welcomed, but even those in post for only a year could list initiatives that they had to take on board. The changes most welcomed by the headteachers were the greater autonomy and the new inspection framework. Both primary and secondary headteachers regretted the extent and pace of change which to them didn't seem to have been fully thought through or backed up.

Too Big for One Person?

Secondary heads were mainly dismissive of the notion that the job had become too big for one person. Extra tasks were coped with by appropriate organisation. Specialist help from finance officers and premises manager should be in support roles. Primary heads, however, were more likely to say the demands had become too great, probably not unconnected with school size and fewer opportunities to delegate. Whereas secondary schools tended to have extensive leadership teams, in a small primary school the head could be both the leadership team and a classroom teacher. There was near unanimity that headteachers should be drawn from among those with classroom experience. Schools were like other organisations but the similarities were outweighed by their special features. Most of the headteachers wanted the name to remain on the grounds that it was well known to the public and it emphasized the centrality of teaching and learning. A minority wanted titles like chief executive, principal, school leader, or head of teaching and learning either because the role had broadened or because they felt they could no longer lay claim to be the best teacher.

Alternative Models of Leadership

A variety of new ways of leading schools have emerged driven by pressures and ambitions. Among those we have considered are the business model, a hard federation under a chief executive, a soft federation of collaborating schools, co-headship and changes associated with the Private Finance Initiative. The National College for School Leadership and the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust are encouraging the development of federations, and the government hopes that the opportunity to achieve Trust Status, enabled in the latest Schools Bill, will pave the way for the establishment of independent foundations. The great majority of the headteachers in our samples remained sceptical. *“At the end of the day who really is in charge - is it the person who is overseeing the federation or is it the person who is actually looking after the school itself?”*

Recruitment

There is evidence of an impending shortfall in the recruitment of headteachers in the maintained sector. On the face of it, this is surprising since in secondary schools the ratio of teachers to headteachers is 53:1. It is perhaps more understandable in primary schools where the ratio of teachers to headteachers is only 8:1 and three quarters of the schools reported having teachers with the qualities to become a headteacher but who did not want to move up. Nearly two-thirds of the primary heads thought that this was because the pay differential was not a sufficient incentive. The heads of small schools complained that at the top of their scale they would be receiving less than a deputy of a larger school or the second in department in a secondary school. Overall, workload was the main reason the heads thought there were recruitment difficulties, with accountability a close second, particularly the vulnerability of the heads to sacking in the light of a bad Ofsted report. Why should a comfortably placed teacher want to put his/her head above the parapet? They recognised that headteachers were not necessarily representative in terms of gender or ethnic background though the balance is improving. They were strongly opposed to positive discrimination.

Succession

The heads reported considerable efforts to secure succession through identifying those with leadership potential and encouraging them, giving them extra responsibilities, supporting them to take national qualifications, mentoring and providing opportunities to widen their experience.

Training

The heads were generally supportive of there being a national qualification for headteachers, but ambivalent about the NPQH on the grounds that it was paper-based rather than practical. They had various suggestions for supplementing or replacing the NPQH including shadowing successful headteachers, accepting MBAs and other qualifications as an alternative, residential courses and systematic mentoring.

Remuneration

The headteachers recognised that there was a degree of flexibility in their salaries, but governors were not always able within the budget or willing to exercise that flexibility. There was also a feeling that higher salaries for staying in the classroom were making it more difficult to recruit people to their ranks. There was no great pressure for other incentives. They were mainly interested in changes that would enable them to do their jobs better like secondments and sabbaticals, and mentoring and support. One novel suggestion was that headteachers and senior staff should have more flexibility in when they took their holidays.

Support

Four means of support were considered: SIPs, LEAs, other heads, and professional associations. With SIPs the general reaction was that these are early days and the role needs clarifying: are they there primarily to help or report? Concerns were expressed as to whether it would be possible to recruit sufficient active headteachers to serve as SIPs. About two-thirds of the heads thought that the role of the LEA is diminishing. For primary schools this was almost always a matter of regret, whereas the more common response from secondary schools was to welcome it. Another difference between primary and secondary heads was in the extent to which they relied on the informal help of other heads in the area. Most primary heads readily turned to their colleagues for advice and support. But their secondary counterparts were much more conscious of the competition between them. “*Dog eats dog*”, as one of them put it. As support from LEAs has weakened the headteachers have been turning more to their professional association. These provide valuable legal advice and support, update the heads on recent developments and convene local meetings where they can get together in more relaxed circumstances.

Independent Schools

Independent schools are of interest to us in this context because they are at heart businesses. They have to draw in income to survive. That income, however, depends crucially on the quality of teaching and learning as perceived by parents and universities. It is this that underpins the power of the headteacher. In some schools the bursar operates in parallel with the headteacher as clerk to the governors and that is a crucial relationship which can be difficult. Unlike the state sector most independent schools did not seem to be experiencing difficulty in filling headteacher posts though there was some suggestion of this in girls’ schools. The heads in our sample said that the heads had to have classroom experience and to have come up through schools to have credibility with parents, teachers and pupils. One of our heads had been appointed from a university, but was teaching in his school. Our heads could not readily call to mind any examples of successful heads being appointed to independent schools from outside the world of education. The heads blamed the lack of classroom experience and understanding of schools among politicians and civil servants for the poor decisions affecting their state-school colleagues.

The heads were not generally in favour of a change of title because the current one emphasised teaching and learning as the number one priority. Heads saw it as part of their role to nurture future headteachers among their staff through experience and training on the job. A common view was that the NPQH is symptomatic of the top-down culture in the state sector and was a box-ticking exercise. The heads of independent schools thought that any difficulty in recruiting headteachers in the maintained sector was due to the directive stance adopted by central government. It was described as “*independence with a big thick collar and chain.*” Rather than changing the nature of headship by splitting the role or having “*a Tesco general manager, as it were, going from branch to branch*”, their advice to government was that “*the things that need doing would be matters of undoing.*” In other words, it is for the style of government rather than the nature headship to change.

Conclusion

The key question facing policy makers would seem to be: do the present difficulties in recruiting headteachers for maintained schools entail radical changes such as recruiting from outside the profession, federating schools and new forms of leadership, or is it mainly a matter of addressing what is currently putting off potential headteachers from applying? What is it that is putting them off? In the case of primary teachers it appears to be an insufficient salary differential commensurate with the demands of the post. In the case of secondary teachers it was increased workload from too many initiatives and vulnerability to sacking for bad Ofsted reports.

Given that in maintained secondary schools there are over fifty teachers for every headteacher post there should be no difficulty in recruiting sufficient good heads from within the profession. This is important because the necessary experience to lead the core function of learning and teaching is best obtained in the classroom. Recruitment to headships in the independent sector is still healthy and this is attributed to much less interference from government. In maintained primary schools there are eight teachers for every headteacher. The schools are much smaller than secondary schools and, therefore, have lower income and smaller leadership teams, but the responsibilities borne by the headteacher are almost as wide-ranging. There is a case for looking at new forms of organisation in the primary phase though this needs to be tackled with sensitivity and understanding.

Our evidence suggests that any current difficulty in recruiting headteachers for maintained schools does not demand a massive change in the nature of headship. The government should look to itself and ask whether its reforming zeal and policy of pressure from the centre is in the best interests of our schools. The crisis, if there be one, seems to us to be government made.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The government through the Department for Education and Skills has accepted a recommendation from the School Teachers' Review body in its Fifteenth Report (STRB, 2005) that "the Secretary of State remit us to look fundamentally at the leadership group and how its changing role and responsibilities should be reflected in its future pay structure", and this will form a major part of the STRB's work in 2007. As a basis for its submission the National Union of Teachers has commissioned the Centre for Education and Employment Research at the University of Buckingham to conduct a survey of the views of the headteachers of maintained primary and secondary schools, and independent schools, in England and Wales on the nature and likely future of school leadership, and this report sets out the findings.
- 1.2 The STRB's inquiry is timely since the job of the headteacher has changed dramatically in the past two decades - so much so that even the title is increasingly being questioned. The changes have come about for three main groups of reasons. First, the relationship between central government and schools has been deliberately and radically changed in the past two decades. Secondly, successive governments have been laying increasing obligations on schools. Thirdly, there have been important changes in society. The first two have been explored in some detail in Smithers (2001 and 2005).

Changing Relationship Between Government and Schools

- 1.3 Until 1988, governments largely contented themselves with setting the legislative framework in which schools were to operate. The schools were largely run by local education authorities (LEAs) whose power came from raising much of the money for maintained education through the rates. Headteachers were responsible for the day-to-day running of schools, but the funding, staffing, sites, and advice and inspection, were mainly in the hands of the local authority. LEAs could often choose whether to implement the wishes of central government. Grammar schools still survive in some parts of England because a number of authorities, notably Kent, Buckinghamshire, Lincolnshire and some outer London boroughs, declined to accept the 1965 Circular recommending reorganisation to comprehensive provision.
- 1.4 The Thatcher governments became increasingly frustrated by the LEAs, particularly the largest, the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA). The Conservative manifesto for the 1987 election promised major reform with funding delegated to schools and the break-up of ILEA. The responsibilities of all LEAs were systematically stripped away with polytechnics, training and later the further education and sixth form colleges taken from their control and placed under agencies. But even with a massive majority central government did not feel strong enough to abolish LEAs – a step which it feared would be interpreted as fundamentally undermining local democracy. Instead, it hoped that if it progressively took away their responsibilities they would wither on the vine. It thought it had found the key when it enabled schools to opt out of local authority control and receive their funding directly from central government. Since they would receive not only the school's allocation, but also the money the LEA would have received, there was a not inconsiderable cash inducement as well more autonomy. So confident was John Patten, the Secretary of State at the time, that he made the unwise boast that "I will eat my academic hat garnished if by the time of

the next general election we haven't got more than half of England's secondary schools grant-maintained" – a promise that was never honoured when schools proved rather reluctant to accept the Government's shilling.

- 1.5 Nevertheless, Conservative reforms in the 1988 Act had impacted considerably on the headteacher's role. They had been given a degree of independence through financial delegation. But this was counterbalanced by increased accountability through a beefed-up inspection service in which the infrequent visits from Her Majesty's Inspectors were replaced by a regular cycle of inspections from the new Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). Schools were assessed, among other things, against the newly introduced National Curriculum and the new national tests at ages 7, 11 and 14, as well as national examinations.
- 1.6 When Labour came to power in 1997 it inherited a partial transformation. The old order of the government legislating, the LEAs managing and the schools complying had gone. But the LEAs were still there, though with a diminished role. It looked at first as if the new government would row back from Conservative reforms when it re-absorbed grant maintained schools into local authorities as foundation schools though retaining some of their privileges, for example, control over admissions.
- 1.7 But it soon became clear that the Blair government had a radically different view of running the education system going way beyond what even the Conservative governments had envisaged. It took upon itself responsibility for delivery, in effect treating the education system as a large company producing goods. For this it needed a measurable product and it chose to regard test and examination results as the equivalent of the barrels of oil extracted by a petroleum company or the cars produced by vehicle manufacturers. Targets were set for test and exam scores against which the performance of schools would be judged, with the obvious corollary that unproductive units in these terms became candidates for closure.
- 1.8 The first Blair government also adopted with enthusiasm the innovations of his immediate predecessors whereby parents are treated as customers who choose schools. Money would follow these choices so that, in theory, popular schools would be able to expand and replicate while schools which could not recruit would go out of 'business'. As a guide to parents the test and examination results were published and the media happily turned these into league tables. Targets and league tables have become an enormous pressure on headteachers.
- 1.9 This would perhaps be justified if it genuinely improved the quality of education. But while target-setting and competition for customers have proved very successful in sharpening the effectiveness and efficiency of businesses, one wonders if education is directly comparable. The purpose of schools is crucially to benefit the children in them. While tests and examinations can embody the measurable aspects of education, once treated as the product of education determining the future of the school they become liable to manipulation and distortion. It is another instance of Goodhart's law (1975) that "when a surrogate measure is made a target for conducting social or economic policy, then it loses the information content that would qualify it to play such a role". In other words, "when a measure becomes a target, it ceases to be a good measure." (Strathern, 1997). In the case of schools, the same test will provide different results when it is used for assessing a school

compared with when it is used for diagnosing pupils' achievement because the motivations to succeed will be different.

- 1.10 To turn schools into producers of test and examination results represents a fundamental reconfiguration with far-reaching consequences for those leading them. Since the very survival of the school could depend on the way the numbers come out the emphasis has had to be on the results themselves rather than the personal development for which they are supposed to stand. It also greatly increases the load on schools since targets are necessarily accompanied by "a bureaucracy of form-filling, reporting and inspection." (Institute of Directors, 2003). Further, it leads to the view that schools are like any other business and just as business leaders seem able to swap fields so successful managers could be brought in from a variety of backgrounds to run schools.
- 1.11 Having appointed itself to be Chief Executive of the schools system, though it must be said mainly without inside knowledge of schools, the government issued through the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE, 1998) as it was then, a Vision Statement declaring that its purpose was "to give everyone the chance, through education, training and work, to realise their full potential, and build an inclusive and fair society and a competitive economy." For their part in achieving this, the LEAs were required to have Education Development Plans and schools, School Development Plans. Within this framework governors were given an enhanced role analogous to the board of directors of individual companies within a large organisation.

Extra Obligations

- 1.12 Having given itself responsibility for running the education system, the Blair governments have brimmed over with ideas for increasing 'delivery'. A Standards and Effectiveness Unit was established in the Department for Education and Employment and this soon grew to employ over a hundred people. But this was not the only wellspring. Both Number 10 and the Treasury chipped in. So many have been the government's initiatives in the past decade that it has been hard to keep track of them. The difficulty is exacerbated by the manner of presentation. So keen was the first Blair government to be seen to be doing good that when there was nothing new to announce old stories were recycled. Some of the initiatives, like the Education Action Zones, have also been relatively short-lived. But amongst the plethora of changes it is possible to discern some pattern. It is possible to group the initiatives under seven main headings: the curriculum and assessment; school organisation; a social agenda; staffing; funding; accountability; and agencies.

Curriculum and Assessment

- 1.13 The first Blair government concentrated on improving primary education. It had been shocked when the new tests for 11-years-olds introduced by the Conservatives revealed that less than half could handle words and numbers to the standard expected. It took over and expanded from the Conservatives a literacy strategy and developed a numeracy strategy, which set in the context of targets, have changed the landscape of primary education and the demands on its leaders.
- 1.14 Secondary schools have come in for similar scrutiny. Prompted by a report from Ofsted about a dip in performance post primary education a Key 3 strategy

accompanied by targets has been developed. Results of secondary schools have been reported in terms of a GCSE target and 'value added'. Pupils are set individual goals and individually tracked. The first Blair government also carried through to completion the Dearing review of 16-19 education introducing, under the grandiose title of Curriculum 2000, a half-way house to A-levels which changed sixth-form studies. More recently, it has sought to introduce a 14-19 strategy providing personalised learning and involving schools, further education and employers working together to provide a range of opportunities (which is not always easy because the management strategy had set schools in competition with each other and also the colleges).

- 1.15 In 2003 in the wake of failing to reach its targets the government rowed back from a narrow emphasis on literacy and numeracy in primary schools, issuing a strategy seeking to achieve excellence and enjoyment (DfES, 2003). It broadened out to include programmes for developing modern languages in the primary school, music, the arts, creativity, PE and school sport. Schools are also being asked to identify 'gifted and talented pupils' for master classes without a secure basis for doing so.

New Forms of Organisation

- 1.16 In paving the way for parental choice the Blair governments have encouraged the school system to become more diverse. A Conservative initiative essentially aimed at developing technology schools has been expanded into a specialist schools programme. Schools have been given the opportunity to bid for extra funding to embrace one of a range of specialisms. The city technology college concept of publicly-funded independent schools has also been taken over as the city academy scheme which hangs like the sword of Damocles over poorly performing schools. Schools also have been encouraged to enter into federations. Further, they are having to consider whether to become trust schools either on their own or in partnership. Recently, schools have been invited to apply for 'early-adopter' funding to help with the costs involved.

Social Agenda

- 1.17 Alongside educational excellence, the Blair governments have sought to enhance social justice. A cross-departmental Social Exclusion Unit reporting to the Prime Minister was launched and it embarked on a 'ConneXions' (sic) initiative to keep more young people in education and training to age 18. In the face of widespread truancy, it introduced a raft of measures involving Learning Mentors, Learning Support Units, Pupil Referral Units and the short-lived 'Truancy Buster' awards. Inclusion became a buzzword, with special schools for those with disabilities often shut down in favour of incorporation into mainstream schooling.
- 1.18 More recently, the social agenda has sought to set the role of schools in a wider context. In 2003, the horrific death of a child, Victoria Climbié, prompted the government to embark on a new integrated approach to the well-being of young people from birth to age 19. It declared its aims as providing the support for every child to be healthy; stay safe; enjoy and achieve; make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being. A Children's Act requires all organisations involved in providing services to children, including schools, hospitals, police, and voluntary groups, to work together in achieving these aims. In response a number of local authorities have been merging their education and social service departments (which

have tended to talk different languages) frequently under the former head of social services. The Act also gives children more say in their futures and, in 2005, the first Children's Commissioner for England was appointed.

- 1.19 As part of its programme to deliver the Every Child Matters agenda the government has encouraged the development of Extended Schools which provide what it terms 'wrap-around childcare' from 8.00am to 6pm all year round. This includes parenting and family support, study support and clubs, swift and easy referral to specialist services such as speech therapy and community use of facilities. Schools are also being encouraged to open Sure Start Children's Centres bringing together early education, childcare, health and family support. The aim is for 3,500 to have been opened by 2010 so that every family has access to integrated services. The government's concern for pupil welfare has extended to setting up the School Food Trust which has seen into law recommendations on healthy eating made in the wake of Jamie Oliver's television programme. Headteachers have had to cope with falling demand for school meals, localised opposition from parents, some school meals providers withdrawing and loss of revenue from snacks.

Staffing

- 1.20 The first Blair government was faced with a severe shortage of secondary school teachers partly because the pay and working conditions were not good enough, but also because a not inconsiderable number had found more rewarding employment as one of the army of consultants brought into being by the various initiatives. Attempts to improve pay and condition have further increased the demands on head teachers. The salary structure was revised with a threshold to a higher tier which could only be crossed if justified by appraisal and performance management. In order to reduce the workload on teachers a major remodelling of the workforce has been undertaken whereby a number of tasks have been transferred from teachers to assistants whose numbers have increased enormously representing a major shift in school staffing. The system of management allowances has been replaced by Teaching and Learning Responsibility payments which have necessitated headteachers reviewing their staffing structure, perhaps having to deprive some teachers of their previous allowances and status. An Excellent Teachers Scheme is also coming on stream. Headteachers themselves have also been subject to change. Secondary schools now have appointed to them, and primary schools will soon have appointed to them, Improvement Partners (SIPs) who advise the governors on headteachers' performance management as well as helping to set targets and identify support.

Funding

- 1.21 Over the ten years of tenure, the Blair governments, after two years of severe constraint, have been generous to education with funding rising in real terms by nearly 40 per cent. Schools have also welcomed the promise of three-year budgets since with a settlement on an annual basis, perhaps made part way through the financial year, they could find themselves lurching from relative comfort to crisis or vice versa. Not all of this new money has found its way to the front line. A lot has been held back to fund initiatives and pay consultants. The Blair governments has also wanted to fund on a 'something for something' basis with schools bidding for money from various pots for specific projects and against agreed outcomes. Some schools now employ full-time bid writers. Government funding for school buildings

has more than doubled with the rolling out of Building Schools for the Future Programme – again subject to bidding. New school buildings have also been provided through the Private Finance Initiative scheme whereby the public sector rents on long leases premises built by the private sector. In PFI schools the headteacher has to liaise with the premises manager over the use of the buildings, access to which will be limited by contract.

Accountability

- 1.22 More frequent inspections were brought in by the Conservatives and have become a central plank in the Blair governments' approach to managing schools. The process has been revised over time with first a four-year cycle, then a six-year cycle, and now a New Relationship with Schools. This turns on a detailed Self Evaluation Form (SEF) which the school is responsible for updating and having ready as a basis for Ofsted inspections which are held at short notice. The schools' method of reporting to parents has also been modified with an annual meeting and a governors' annual report to parents no longer necessary. These have been replaced by a School Profile to be completed and published online and covering a school's progress, priorities and performance. Although it is a statement by governors, it can fall, as so many things, to headteachers to complete.

Agencies

- 1.23 The Blair governments have continued the Conservative policy of setting up agencies. The remit of body overseeing teacher supply has been extended and it has been renamed the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA). A General Teaching Council (GTC) has also been established. But the body with potentially the most impact on the nature of headship is the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) set up in 2000. It got off to an uncertain start and a government review in 2004 found that the NCSL needed to achieve, "greater role clarity, outcome focus, goal clarity and efficiency" (DfES, 2004). Both the Chairman and Chief Executive left and those who have replaced them have been galvanised into seeking to satisfy expectations.
- 1.24 The source of the NCSL's power resides in the fact that its main qualification the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) will be a requirement for new headteachers appointed in the maintained sector from 2009. But it has introduced a whole raft of courses for emergent, established, advanced and consultant school leaders as well as entry to headship. It has promoted the ideas of succession planning and the leadership journey. It has made projections and formally advised the Secretary of State (NCSL, 2006b,c) that on the basis of headteacher retirements there would need to be a 15-20 per cent increase in the number of appointments made by 2009. In further advice it solicited funding to establish a network of Leadership Advisers "to help school groups to integrate their talent management."
- 1.25 The energy with which the NCSL has promoted itself has led to the perception that the requirement for headteachers cannot be met. Support has come from the General Teaching Council which found in a survey (GTC, 2006) that 34 per cent of head wanted to retire in within five years and it has projected that four out of ten headteacher vacancies will be unfilled by 2011. NCSL believes that radical solutions will have to be pursued such as drawing in leaders from other fields and

federating schools under one overall leader (NCSL, 2006a). This theme has been taken up by Ofsted whose new head, Christine Gilbert, in launching her first annual report said that schools may have to look outside the profession for their leaders (Frean and Blair, 2006).

Changes in Society

- 1.26 There have been numerous changes in society which will have had a bearing on the way schools operate. This is such a vast topic that it deserves several books to itself and it will probably be better understood in a historical perspective than it is now. But it is possible to identify a number of trends chief among which are; the fluidity and variety of family life; the loss of deference; the changing script for women; alternative forms of employment; and immigration leading to multiculturalism and multi-faith communities. There has also been a revolution in information technology.
- 1.27 These will have impacted on headship in a variety of ways. Not all children have a stable family behind them and this has led the government to extend the school's role in social welfare. Loss of deference has meant that headteachers have had to face more challenges to their authority from pupils and parents. Poor pupil behaviour and unsupportive parents can lead to difficulties in teacher recruitment and retention. The opening up of the script for females has been accompanied by major increases in their educational performance particularly in secondary education (previously their good start tended to die away knowing that their post-school education and employment opportunities were limited). In contrast, opportunities for men have contracted as the world of work has changed and the educational under-performance of males has become a major issue for schools and those who lead them.
- 1.28 Alternative forms of employment through illicit activity (for example, drug dealing), the black economy, football and the pop scene means that many young people, particularly males, do not share in educational goals and from the school's point of view have a poverty of aspiration. Immigration has led to increased demands on schools in, for example, teaching pupils whose first language is not English and in providing for a variety of faiths. The information technology revolution may have reduced the amount of paper landing on the headteacher's desk, but through its speed and ease will have increased the amount of 'paperwork', with the school office not only receiving numerous communications but having to print them. School will also have to be continually keeping pace with advances in technology and securing the funding, for example, for whiteboards.

Methods

- 1.29 In a report of this kind we have only been able to touch on the numerous recent changes in the way the education system is run, the many new and extended obligations that have been laid upon schools and the upheaval in society, but it is obvious that headteachers will have been at the sharp end of a dramatically changed landscape. In this report we let representative samples of the heads of primary, secondary and independent schools in England and Wales speak for themselves.
- 1.30 Samples of 1 in a 100 secondary schools, 1 in a 1,000 primary schools and 1 in 33 independent (HMC and GSA) schools were drawn and the headteachers interviewed in depth in autumn 2006. In the case of the maintained schools the conversations

with the headteachers covered: establishing details; present role and responsibilities; changes during the head's time as a headteacher; recruitment and succession; qualifications and training; remuneration and support; and how they saw the future. The independent heads were interviewed mainly from the perspective of what light their experience cast on the running of maintained schools: how they operated as businesses with particular reference to the role of the bursar and the governors; headteacher recruitment; qualifications and training in the independent sector; any differences and similarities they had noted between running a maintained and an independent school; whether there was anything that they were doing that they thought had application in the maintained sector; and how they saw headship in the independent sector developing in the future.

- 1.31 The methods are fully described in the Appendix where we show that the samples, although necessarily small for a study based on in-depth interviews conducted by ourselves assisted by a former head and former deputy head, are representative of the population of schools in England and Wales by region, size, type, funding method, age range, and in the case of secondary schools by their specialisation. Included in our sample were schools run by executive heads, those planning for hard federations and actively considering trust status, those who were part of soft federations, those whose schools had been built under the Private Finance Initiative, and schools in special measures, in addition to a wide range schools with conventional headships. The samples are small and haven't been submitted to statistical analysis, but some quantitative data is provided to show the patterns in the responses. In identifying schools we have not given the schools' specialisms in case this makes them too easy to identify and we have given our usual guarantees of anonymity and confidentiality.

The Report

- 1.32 In this report we present eight chapters of evidence. In the next chapter, Chapter 2, the current roles of primary and secondary headteachers are described in their own words. Our representative samples gave personal accounts of a wide range of responsibilities and activities which needed 30 categories to classify. This is followed by a chapter in which we examine the changes our respondents could recall as having to take on board while they had been headteachers. Their experience ranged from two months to twenty-two years and over that span they could call to mind no less than 58 'initiatives'.
- 1.33 In Chapter 4 we examine the proposition that all the changes may have made the job too big for one person. Secondary heads rejected the notion arguing for delegation of responsibilities, but heads of primary schools, which are much smaller and, therefore, with fewer hands to help, were more likely to agree. In Chapter 5 we present pen portraits of five alternative forms of headship and school organisation that emerged in the samples: chief executive of business-type model; hard federation; soft federation; co-headship/associate headship; and PFI schools.
- 1.34 In Chapter 6, we discuss with the headteachers whether they think it is becoming more difficult to appoint heads and, if so, what is it that is putting people off? We also discuss what attracted them to headship in the first place, and whether they thought there were reasons for looking outside the teaching profession either because of a shortage of suitable applicants or for some other reason. We then turn to training and ask the heads' views on the NPQH and whether there should be

alternatives. In the final part of Chapter 6 we ask whether the heads thought that, as a group, they should reflect the population more in terms of gender and ethnic background.

- 1.35 In Chapter 7, we turn to questions of salary and other incentives. While recognising that governors had flexibility to set remuneration within national scales it was thought that they were not always in a position to do so. The lack of a differential between their salaries and those of their staff was offered as a major reason why insufficient were coming forward. They suggested that there should be a recommended minimum percentage above that of the highest paid member of their staff. There was little pressure for perks. It was more a case of help in doing their jobs better. One possibility would be more flexible holidays during the year. In Chapter 7 also we explore what the heads made of the forms of support that were available to them – the School Improvement Partners, the local authorities, other headteachers and their professional associations. Other heads were the strongest form of support for primary headteachers, but secondary heads frequently mentioned that cut-throat competition between them tended to get in the way.
- 1.36 Chapter 8 offers the independent schools' perspective. They are businesses and we were keen to explore the relative power of the headteacher and bursar. There was still stiff competition for headships in the independent sector. Our sample told us that recruiting from outside education had not proved a great success when it had been tried. Most were not in favour of a change of title. We also explored, as we had done with the state school heads, issues of succession and training. In general, the independent heads sympathised with their state counterparts in the amount of government interference to which they were subject and they were inclined to see this as a major factor in any recruitment difficulties.
- 1.37 In the final chapter we draw the threads together examining in turn: the reasons for any reluctance to become a headteacher; why people take on headship; the developments that have been mooted such as casting the net more widely for headteachers; federating to reduce the numbers of headteachers required, and new forms of headship; and consider the arguments for delegated leadership. We also suggest that any shortfall in headteacher recruitment can be viewed from a different perspective. We conclude with a question for policymakers: is the way forward to accept the present situation as a given and remodel headship around it, or more, fundamentally, should the nature of the relationship of government to schooling be revisited?

2. Current Role and Responsibilities

- 2.1 In seeking to build a picture of exactly what it is that a headteacher does we asked those in our representative sample to tell us the main ways in which they had spent their time in the past week (or the last typical week). They were also asked whether there were any normal tasks for them that had not cropped up in that particular week. Box 2.1 shows the replies grouped by us. Their tasks fall into no less than 30 categories ranging from strategy and policy to dealing with the unexpected.

Box 2.1: Headteachers' Responsibilities and Activities

- strategy and policy
- assemblies and presentations
- meeting(s) with leadership team(s)
- admin and paperwork
- development plans
- pupils, including discipline
- staff individually, staff meetings and briefings
- parents and prospective parents
- teaching own timetable and cover including for PPA
- support staff
- pastoral
- interviews and appointments
- initial teacher training/CPD/INSET/work experience
- finance
- bids and awards
- personnel
- CRB checks
- premises
- health and safety
- meetings outside school/partnerships/networking
- meetings with the community
- appraisal and performance management of teachers
- preparing SEF
- liaising with local authority
- liaising with governors and attending meetings of governing body
- preparing school profile
- admissions
- organising and attending events including sporting fixtures
- meeting with the SIP
- dealing with the unexpected

- 2.2 In order to see what this means in practise we highlight in Boxes 2.2 and 2.3 a week in the lives of a secondary headteacher and a primary headteacher. The secondary

headteacher has been in post seven years, all at a large (over 1,600 pupils) coeducational comprehensive in the South East. She is supported by a leadership group of nine in addition to herself comprising two deputies, six assistant heads and a bursar. There are about 130 teachers in the school, around 25 teaching assistants and 70 administrative and support staff. Catering and cleaning are contracted out. There is a line management tree in which the headteacher appraises and performance manages senior staff including the bursar and personnel officer.

- 2.3 The headteacher arrives about 7.00am every morning and does about an hour of paperwork. About one week in three she takes assembly. The week described to us includes assembly. After dinner most evenings she does another couple of hours paperwork. She doesn't work on Friday evenings or Saturdays. On Sunday she spends the equivalent of half a day (4/5 hours) catching up on paperwork and preparing for Monday. Plays golf on Sunday afternoons. She takes the view that "things will always get done in the end, so there is no point in getting stressed about it. The way I operate I don't think anybody could do more so I don't feel too guilty when I come back in on Monday after my weekend."

Box 2.2: A Week in the Life of the Headteacher of a Secondary School

Female Head, Community, Coeducational, Comprehensive 11-18, South East, 1,600+ pupils, 3-5% FSM, 70-80% Good GCSEs, 2-3% SEN with statements.

Monday: 8.00-8.45 Meeting with deputies – planning for the week, current issues. Assembly. Meeting with PA and assistant PA for about 1 hour. Break time in staff room, always tries to get there every Monday. Fortnightly meeting with head of sixth form (400 in sixth form). Meeting with temporary assistant head responsible for Charter Mark development and website.

Lunchtime met member of staff to award certificate for driving school minibus. After lunch one hour meeting with member of staff needing support, included subject mentor in meeting. One hour meeting with Deputy Head to conduct annual subject review (English department). After school met with member of staff (about 15 mins) needing advice about career development. 4.00-5.30pm meeting with leadership group. Paperwork 5.30-6.30pm then home.

Tuesday: 8.00-8.30 meeting with staff trying to set up a link with a school in Ghana. 8.30 short verbal staff briefing. Assembly. One hour community meeting (once per term with residents living in nearby roads) especially important at the moment since school applied for planning permission for a new building. Then met ex-member of staff who is a consultant to sort out complaints procedure for Charter Mark. 11.00am met interviewees for post in finance. Re-integration meeting with pupil and parents who was suspended for drugs offence, parents appealed, won, so school has to have the pupil back. Difficult meeting. Doesn't usually get involved with discipline matters unless extreme cases like this one.

Lunchtime met applicant for head of music who couldn't attend with other applicants. Cancelled meeting (usually about 90 mins lunch time) with Rotary club, very supportive of the school, but couldn't make it because of interviews for finance officer. Headteacher is involved in every single staff interview, as is chair of governors, because believes appointing staff is the most important thing she does. Short meeting with chair of governors. Paperwork to 6.30, then home.

Wednesday: 8.00am leadership group meeting. Assembly. Meets and greets candidates for head of music. Meets with member of staff on a personal issue. At break every Wednesday has cup of coffee and biscuit with head boy and head girl. Free slot until lunch so meets PA and assistant PA. After lunch interviews for head of music. 4.30 phones round to de-brief unsuccessful candidates for finance post. Bursar was going to do it, away ill so head has to step in. Head believes debriefing important even though a bit over the top. Finds people appreciate it and they have given up time to the school so the least she can do is provide them with some feedback. Paperwork until 6.30. Then cheese and wine evening for new parents of year 7. This is followed by a PTA meeting. Leaves school about 10.00pm.

Thursday: -8.00 Meeting ICT staff about phased development plan, making sure ICT provision up to scratch. Meet and greet candidates for head of modern languages post. 10.00 meeting with county personnel officer and school's personnel officer for about two hours discussing competency case and picking up on new legislation and pension arrangements. After lunch modern languages interviews. 4.00pm governors' finance sub-committee meeting. Head attends all meetings of governors. Then straight into meeting with a charitable body until 7.15. Home by 8.00. Usually eats out with husband on Thursdays. Getting near to needing the weekend break so doesn't work on Thursday evenings.

Friday: This is a school INSET day on academic monitoring, usually attends all the INSET days but this morning is due at a governors meeting at a local special school where she is a governor. Back for lunch. Attends afternoon INSET session. Aims to leave no later than 6.00pm on Fridays.

- 2.4 The primary head has been in post for six years plus two terms as acting head at a voluntary controlled infant and junior school in the North West with about 200 pupils, only a tenth of the size of the secondary school. There are seven teachers and the leadership group consists of the deputy and a foundation/KS1 leader in addition to the headteacher herself. There is support from a finance officer and three admin staff who do the equivalent of 37 hours between them. There are seven FTE teacher assistants (although many more bodies). The head line-manages the admin staff, with the deputy and foundation/KS1 leader supervising the teaching assistants in their stages. Altogether there are 32 people working in the school. The head is in school every day by 7.30am and works a minimum of 60 hours per week. In addition to being head she has taken on the roles of assessment and science co-ordinator. She no longer has a regular teaching commitment, but does teach booster groups.
- 2.5 Although there are differences in scale, with the secondary head having a senior management team larger than the primary heads' entire teaching staff the similarities in their working lives are much greater than the differences. The over-riding difference, of course, is that the primary head is more hands-on - taking classes, running clubs and acting as her own assessment and science co-ordinators, while the secondary head can only lead through extensive and effective delegation. But beyond that they have many things in common.

Box 2.3: A Week in the Life of the Headteacher of a Primary School

Female Head, Voluntary Controlled, Infant and Junior (5-11), North West, 101-200 pupils, 2-4% FSM, about 85% at level 4, 0.5-1.5% SEN with statements.

Monday: A local school closed on the previous Friday, so I had ten new children starting in the morning. That was a bit untypical, but they had previously visited so it was a case of settling them in. Lunchtime we had the church providing lunch for teachers and the TAs. On Monday afternoon the advisor was in to observe an NQT. That took up a lot of time because this NQT had come from the school that had closed and there were issues about her performance. That actually took two and a half hours. Then at home time it was seeing parents and I ran the after school athletics club and left about 5.30.

Tuesday: Did some paper work in the morning but there were continual interruptions. It's really frustrating. For example the first thing on my list was to get my performance information together for my annual review and it still didn't get done. Then there was assembly just before play-time. Because the school is growing significantly, at 1 o'clock I had an appointment with people from county admissions to come and look around. They spent an hour here looking at the site and buildings to see what improvements could be made. After that I was available for any parents of the children that had joined us. Apart from that, it was a reasonably quiet day. But being a smallish school I do have multi-hats, you do have to try to keep so many balls in the air – curriculum, premises, finance, personnel.

Wednesday: A young lady who's doing work experience came in first thing and I gave her an induction tour. This was followed by a meeting for the reception and nursery teachers, because we have a partner nursery and we run it from here. After lunch I had a long meeting with a parent. This was followed by our weekly staff meeting from 3.30 to 5.00 pm and then there was an after school dance class in the hall, so I stayed to see some of that until quarter to six.

Thursday: In the morning there was an unexpected crisis. The child protection officer rang. There had been an allegation against a family member. The parents had to be brought in and the child was interviewed. This took up the whole morning. In the afternoon I had a meeting about two new pupils who are being adopted, which lasted for a couple of hours. This was followed by a 4 o'clock governors' meeting, which went on for about an hour and a half. I am trying to resist the governors who want to put back the start of meetings in future to six o'clock. I'm really against this, given my early start and the fact that I am putting in a sixty-hour week minimum. The full governors meet termly and the four sub-committees also, so that's a meeting every two or three weeks. It's not just the time spent in the meetings it's all the preparation required. Originally I met with the SMT every alternate Thursday after school, but with after school clubs and other events it was just not possible to sustain. So now we have a formal management day once a month. Of course we meet informally on a daily basis.

Friday: We had a meeting of the primary headteachers in the area, which is once every half term, so I was out at that all day but it was really useful. It keeps us all sane. When I came here six years ago I had never worked in the county and felt really isolated. We as a group do joint training and organise joint INSET. Sometimes we bring in outside speakers. We organise our own agenda.

- They have very long working days beginning typically at 7.00 am or 7.30 am and running on into the evenings sometimes as late as 10 pm.
- Their leadership depends crucially on being involved with teaching and learning, and the pleasure they take in being with pupils and seeing their achievements. The secondary head speaks of talking with and working with the children and getting “*that buzz of enjoying lessons and telling me what they are doing.*” Superficially, it might be thought that the secondary head’s leadership depended on her skill at managing people rather than her knowledge of the classroom. But she makes it clear that she is involved in every new appointment because she regards this as the most important thing she does. Having the people skills alone would just not be enough. Elsewhere in the interview she says, “*I talk to a lot of people, staff, and they need to know that the person in charge of them has got a handle on what the decision is about.*”
- Both heads have a heavy load of administration and paperwork imposed from outside, and although both delegate, they nevertheless are ultimately responsible. In both cases, it is striking how the office work is fitted in around the life of school and is not allowed to close the head off from it. In both cases the early start is to get some of the paperwork done before school gets going and it is continued in the evening perhaps at home. Even where time during the school day is pencilled in for paperwork, this is set aside if people come to them for decisions or support.
- The sheer range and variety of the activities of both heads is impressive. The task in hand seems to change from hour to hour and no two days are alike.

2.6 The people and teaching and learning aspects of headship also came through strongly when the heads were asked to say what they ‘most enjoyed’ and ‘least liked’ about being a headteacher. Charts 2.1 and 2.2 summarize their responses.

Chart 2.1: Secondary Heads ‘Likes’ and ‘Dislikes’

‘Most Enjoyed’	%	‘Least Liked’	%
Being involved with the development/ achievement of pupils	80.6	Bureaucracy/external interference/ excessive regulation	53.1
Leading a team/working with people/developing staff	72.2	Work/life balance	50.0
Making a difference	38.9	Initiatives: no consolidation/ lack of time to implement	31.3
Strategic planning and development	30.6	Difficult parents	21.9
Variety	27.8	Vulnerability/Ofsted	21.9
The challenge	19.4	Disruptive pupils	9.4
Other ¹	24.9	Other ²	40.6

1. representing school, teaching, relating to parents, linking with the community.

2. difficult staff, funding, league tables, inclusion, lack of co-operation from neighbouring school, building problems.

- 2.7 The message that comes through clearly is that the things which headteachers of secondary schools found most attractive about their jobs were those relating to the intrinsic purposes of the school. The most frequent responses to the open-ended question were ‘the development and achievement of the pupils’, ‘leading a team/working with people/developing staff’, and ‘making a difference’. Over eighty per cent said, in effect, it was overall responsibility for the teaching and learning of the pupils.
- 2.8 The other side of the coin was reaction against the extrinsic impositions of government. The things they least liked, were ‘the bureaucracy/external interference/excessive regulation’, the initiatives with insufficient time to implement or consolidate, and the effects these had on their work/life balance. Many of the impositions will have been a direct consequence of the government’s taking upon itself responsibility for ‘delivery’ in the maintained education system.
- 2.9 The words behind the numbers are shown in Boxes 2.4 and 2.5 with an example from each region. The reply which best encapsulates the attractions of being a headteacher is that from a female head of a coeducational comprehensive 11-18 school in the South East – in fact the same head whose working week is set out in Box 2.2:

First of all it has to be the children and their enjoyment of school. I talk with them a lot, I work quite closely with some of them and just that buzz of enjoying lessons and telling me what they are doing. Secondly, staff development, I really enjoy giving people the opportunity to get involved in new things and helping their career. The third thing I enjoy, I suppose, if I’m being honest is the public nature of the job. In such a large school I have a lot of contacts with the community. It’s just a nice feeling that people regard this as an important place. I do enjoy that communication with outside agencies and being respected for what I stand for in my school.

- 2.10 The downside of being a headteacher of a secondary school at the present time is brought out by the male head of a coeducational comprehensive 11-18 school in the East Midlands:

External interference or requirements from the local authority or the government, for example, in target-setting. Then they send people into the school judging us against the targets but actually not looking to meet the needs of the children. This is particularly so with people who are external to the school but involved in education. They tend to value what they can measure, not measure what is of value.

- 2.11 The views of the headteachers of secondary schools as expressed in Chart 2.1 and Boxes 2.4 and 2.5 prompt the thought which we explore in succeeding chapters: that if half of the headteachers are finding it difficult to maintain a work/life balance with which they are comfortable does this mean we should be searching for new forms of headship or is the source of the problem external to the school with the solution to be found in changes there? This thought is further prompted by the views of the representative sample of primary heads recorded in Chart 2.2 and Boxes 2.6 and 2.7.

Box 2.4: Most Enjoyable Aspects of Being a Secondary Headteacher

“Working alongside colleagues. Talking to children; being part of their growing up, being involved in their lives is great. I’m an ex-maths teacher so I love financial management, boring old chap I am! Many heads don’t like crunching numbers but I grew up with algebra.”

Male, Community, Coed, Middle, North East

“Positively affecting young people’s lives, teaching and the variety of the work.”

Male, Community, Coed, Comprehensive, 11-16, North West,

“I enjoy the variety and range of things I do. I enjoy being with the students and spend a lot of time talking to them, and I enjoy the chess-like manoeuvring of things in order to get what you need. It is a question of adjusting things on a daily and almost hourly basis.”

Female, Community, Coed, Comprehensive, 11-16, Yorks & Humb

“I like making a difference, I like engaging with young people”.

Female, Community, Coed, Comprehensive, 11-18, East Midlands

“Seeing children achieve, introducing new ideas and developing staff.”

Male, Voluntary Controlled, Coed, Comprehensive, 11-18, West Midlands

“Seeing students being successful in broadest sense, collegiality of working in a team, teaching.”

Male, Community, Coed, Comprehensive, 11-18, East

“My colleagues, the children, and thirdly I enjoy a lot of the events, you know watching the achievements of the girls. The girls are a delight and you forget when you’re in the office all day why you’re doing it but you’ve only got to walk out in the corridor and they’re absolutely delightful.”

Female, Community, Girls, Grammar, London

“First of all it has to be the children and their enjoyment of school. I talk with them a lot I work quite closely with some of them and just that buzz of enjoying lessons and telling me what they are doing. Secondly staff development, I really enjoy giving people the opportunity to get involved in new things and helping their career. The third thing I enjoy, I suppose, if I’m being honest is the public nature of the job in such a large school I have a lot of contacts with the community. It’s just a nice feeling that people regard this as an important place. I do enjoy that communication with outside agencies and being respected for what I stand for in my school.”

Female, Community, Coed, Comprehensive, 11-18, South East

“The strategic direction of the school, looking where I want to take the school. Working closely and having an impact on their learning. The staff support side, we run a lot of our own CPD.”

Male, Community, Coed, Comprehensive, 11-16, South West

“One of the most important things is being in a position to make a difference. I am certainly enjoying the responsibility of leading. Being able to go out and fight the corner for the school - though I find it a little bit frustrating at times.”

Male, Foundation, Coed, Comprehensive, 11-18, Wales

Box 2.5: Least Liked Aspects of Being a Secondary Headteacher

“I find the attitude of some parents disappointing in that they’re anti-school and I just can’t understand why they should be anti us. A tiny minority of staff who don’t share my view of teaching as being a vocation. Fortunately this is minute and it’s getting smaller. I think as far as this particular school is concerned it’s the uncertainty of the future. There’s a very poor proposal for an academy to replace us.”

Female, Community, Coed, Comprehensive, 11-16, North East

“There are too many initiatives, overload of staff, not just heads and leadership teams. There are more challenging pupils now, and an increasing minority of parents who are uncooperative. A lot of social problems are being forced on to schools.”

Male, Community, Coed, Comprehensive, 11-18, North West,

“Government initiatives and their never-ending stream. No one seems to understand the word consolidation really. You know, just let something settle for a year and see how it works before you get another load of stuff coming on stream. The amount of time it takes dealing with governors. The reading coming in from government and the LEA. I’ve always prided myself on knowing know most things that are happening but its not easy.”

Male, Community, Coed, Comprehensive, 11-16, Yorks & Humb

“External interference or requirements from the local authority or the government, for example, in target-setting. Then send people into the school judging us against the targets but actually not looking to meet the needs of the children. This is particularly so with people who are external to the school but involved in education. They tend to value what they can measure, not measure what is of value.”

Male, Community, Coed, Comprehensive, 11-18, East Midlands

“The paperwork and the government initiatives which are too many, and the whole issue of league tables has become farcical.”

Female, Community, Girls, Comprehensive, 11-16, West Midlands

“DfES initiatives, health and safety regulations, and uncooperative parents.”

Male, Voluntary Aided, Middle, East

“A lot of regulation by government. Too many forms, and bureaucracy. The local authority.”

Female, Community, Girls, Grammar, London

“The workload in which the most exacting and time consuming are the most challenging children and families as well as personnel issues as in a recent dismissal of a teacher. Some of the paperwork is tedious eg response to the LEA about floor sizes. Newer challenges such as restructuring the TLRs and completing the School Profile - an absolute waste of time and very irritating. It should be the governors’ job but I am having to do it. The DfES thinks governors will do all sorts of things but they don’t always have the time.”

Female, Community, Coed, Comprehensive, 11-18, South East

“Government bureaucracy. There’s far too much and I spend far too much time answering it.”

Male, Voluntary Aided, Coed, Comprehensive, 11-18, South West

“A feeling that schools are responsible for absolutely everything.”

Female, Community, Coed, Comprehensive, 11-18, Wales

2.12 The things which the heads of primary schools ‘most enjoyed’ and ‘least liked’ about being a headteacher are summarized in a similar form to that of the secondary heads in Chart 2.2. Overall the pattern is remarkably similar given the differences in scale of the operations. Both found it easier to find things they liked than they disliked.

Chart 2.2: Primary Heads ‘Likes’ and ‘Dislikes’

‘Most Enjoyed’	%	‘Least Liked’	%
Being involved with the development/ achievement of pupils	73.6	Bureaucracy/external interference/ excessive regulation	47.4
Leading a team/working with people/developing staff	63.2	Work/life balance	42.1
Strategic planning and development	36.8	Financial constraints/fund raising/LEA demands	36.8
Making a difference	31.6	Vulnerability/Ofsted	36.8
Working with community	26.3	Initiatives: no consolidation/ lack of time to implement	31.6
Relating to parents	20.1	Difficult parents	15.8
Other ¹	31.6	Other ²	31.6

1. teaching,, variety, representing school, challenges.

2. difficult children, premises, negativity, the unexpected.

2.13 The most frequently enjoyed aspects came out the same for both primary and secondary heads – the children, leading the staff and making a difference. The primary headteachers responses across the regions, the basis of the analysis in Chart 2.2, are shown in Boxes 2.6 and 2.7. The joy of working with children and seeing them learn is encapsulated in the response from the female head of a first school in the North East:

I enjoy the children, I love seeing it when they are doing some tangible learning and they can express their enthusiasm about what it is they have found out. I enjoy it when parents give good feedback. I also enjoy doing work with the community as well.

2.14 Bureaucracy and work/life balance also emerged at the two major concerns of the primary headteachers, but financial matters loomed larger for them than their secondary counterparts, perhaps because they have to manage on much smaller budgets. This comes through strongly in the response from a headteacher in Wales:

It is definitely the increased paperwork and having to prioritise within financial constraints as we only have a small budget. It means making unpalatable decisions on how to spend that money. I have had to make teachers redundant in the past and that is the worst thing of all.

2.15 A the headteacher of primary school in London expressed her concerns about the demands of fundraising:

I am also charged with fundraising because we are a voluntary aided school and I have to raise 10% of the £2m that we have been given and I do not think it is moral to ask a school to come up with that kind of money.

Box 2.6: Most Enjoyable Aspects of Being a Primary Headteacher

“I enjoy the children, I love seeing it when they are doing some tangible learning and they can express their enthusiasm about what it is they have found out. I enjoy it when parents give good feedback. I also enjoy doing work with the community as well.”

Female, First, North East

“Working with the children. I like analysing where we are up to and what needs doing next. Coaching colleagues – preparing them, some observation, a lot of talking with them.”

Female, Community, Infant and Junior, North West,

“On good days it’s the best job you can have. You never look at your watch and find time dragging. You have a great deal of control over your own and other people’s destinies.”

Male, Community, Infant and Junior, Yorks & Humb

“Being able to provide a good quality of education for children. Being able to shape what we are doing. Working with good teachers.”

Female, Voluntary Controlled, Infant and Junior, East Midlands

“The children, they keep you young. The variety, no day ever being the same. New ideas, new ways of doing things and working with like-minded colleagues.”

Male, Community, First, West Midlands

“I enjoy the role of the headteacher that takes me close to the children. I enjoy promoting the good name of the school within the school, the community, the county and beyond, absolutely vital, and this is reaping rewards because numbers are flying. I enjoy working with other schools in the community and meeting with county officials.”

Male, Community, First, East

“I enjoy the autonomy. I enjoy being able to have an impact on peoples’ lives, the children, the staff, and the community, the aspirational part as it were. It gives me a sense of excitement when I go into the school each day”.

Female, Community, Junior, London

“It is seeing the children develop and move forward. This is a very deprived area so we do social and emotional work with families and I enjoy seeing the benefits.”

Female, Community, Infant, South East

“Children; interaction and seeing them develop. Seeing progress despite what Ofsted says. Working with people.”

Female, Community, Middle, South West

“I am a teaching headteacher and I particularly enjoy the teaching. As a headteacher I do enjoy being able to choose some of the things the children do to give them some valuable experiences. You can ensure that all children can be involved with certain things. It is good working with so many good staff.”

Female, Infant and Junior, Wales

Box 2.7: Least Liked Aspects of Being a Primary Headteacher

“Negativity. In its broadest sense from negative vibes you might get from staff and parents and negative vibes about what goes wrong in the community.”

Female, Community, First, North East

“The rate of change is absolutely crazy. There are too many either local authority driven or government initiatives that are thrown at you and have to be introduced overnight. That really, really frustrates me”.

Female, Voluntary Controlled, Infant and Junior, North West

Bureaucracy – it time wasting and intrusive. I’d rather be working with people. IT and computers have not reduced bureaucracy. They have increased it since more tasks, eg target-setting, are added because they now can be done.”

Male, Community, Infant and Junior, Yorks & Humb

“Constant government initiatives. Threat of Ofsted over your head all the time. The very poor funding situation in the county.”

Male, Voluntary Controlled, Infant and Junior, East Midlands

“Paperwork and bureaucracy and things being imposed on us with very tight deadlines. Then you get into overload and you have your own path you are following with your own initiatives, and you get dumped on, and that makes life quite stressful.”

Female, Community, Infant, West Midlands

“Most of the paperwork is rubbish, because the same information is being requested in a slightly different form, eg the detailed demands made by the authority regarding the two-year budget.”

Male, Community, First, East

“Paper work really is ridiculous, for instance today I have done the CRB checks which are completely mindless. I am also charged with fundraising because we are a voluntary aided school and I have to raise 10% of the £2m that we have been given.”

Female, Voluntary Aided, Infant and Junior, London

“I get frustrated with the electronic paper work. I dislike the pace of change because we like to do a good job and things don’t happen overnight. And at the end of the day we are hacked off with the tests.”

Male, Community, Junior, South East

“The traffic that comes into my room – every one wants a piece of me. So many silly things we are expected to do. The expectation is that we know everything –support staff, drains, fire regs the whole lot.”

Female, Community, Middle, South West

“It is definitely the increased paperwork and having to prioritise within financial constraints as we only have a small budget. It means making unpalatable decisions on how to spend that money. I have had to make teachers redundant in the past and that is the worst thing of all. I also think some of the things we do are pretty futile.”

Female, Infant and Junior, Wales

2.16 And the male head of a first school in the Eastern region linked the finances with the bureaucratic demands of the local authority:

Most of the paperwork is rubbish, because the same information is being requested in a slightly different form, eg the detailed demands made by the authority regarding the two-year budget.

Résumé

2.17 The current role and responsibilities of headteachers are explored in in-depth interviews with representative samples. Asked to describe what they did in a typical week the headteachers come up with a range of activities that took us 30 categories to classify. Both primary and secondary heads said that it was the people aspects of the job they most enjoyed, the children's teaching and learning and leading and developing the staff, and it was the bureaucracy, external interference and excessive regulation that they liked least. Both secondary and primary heads identified work/life balance as a concern and attributed this mainly to the external impositions on them. Finances were more of a concern in primary schools, probably because of their smaller budgets having less flexibility.

3. Changing Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1 The headteachers in our representative samples were asked how their role had changed during their time as a headteacher. Altogether they mentioned 58 things that had been added to their responsibilities or changes with which they had had to cope during their time in post. These are listed and grouped in Chart 3.1. Changes in the nature of headship, school organisation, staffing, curriculum and assessment accountability, funding arrangements, responsibility for premises, the social agenda and in society itself immediately came to their minds.
- 3.2 Conversely, the headteachers were hard put to come up with anything that had been taken away. The female head of a secondary school in the South East said, *“You’re joking aren’t you?”* The male headteacher of a secondary school in London said, *“Nothing, except my teaching which is a big regret.”* The male head of a secondary school in the North West said, *“No, the responsibilities are increasing all the time and I believe the bureaucracy is increasing not decreasing.”* The female head of a primary school in Wales said, *“Due to the constraints of the curriculum some of the fun has been taken away and there is no time to do interesting things anymore. Things have been added in rather than taken away.”* The female head of a primary school in the East Midlands said, *“No – nothing. Giving teachers PPA has made it better for teachers but worse for the head. This means that either more finance is required or the head has to teach more.”* And the male head of a primary school in the South East agreed, *“No. PPA has helped reduce pressure on teachers but has increased the burden on headteachers.”*
- 3.3 Where headteachers were able to identify reductions in workload this was mainly through delegation. The male head of a secondary school in Yorkshire and Humberside said: *“I keep trying. Hopefully the new Business Manager will achieve a lot. Taking on IT and personnel as well as finance.”* The male head of a secondary school in the South West:

We have learnt to be smarter with the Governors. They are comfortable with me not attending every committee meeting and so on. Both the deputies also work with the governors but we have shifted time in the meetings from admin to training the governors.

The male head of a primary school in Yorkshire and Humberside:

Nothing has gone away as the result of outside changes but I have changed people’s roles, especially those of the administrator (who is long standing and has adapted and been rewarded appropriately) and the site manager (whose role was modified as a result of the massive building work that we have had, especially as this aspect of the LEA was quite weak).

The female head of a primary school in London had *“Only what I have delegated by employing a bursar.”*

- 3.4 The length of service of the headteachers in our samples ranged from a half a term to 22 years (in three schools with two acting headships). Their experience therefore encompasses all of the changes which have occurred since the 1988 Act. Interestingly, the longer serving headteachers were all male and those more recently appointed mainly female.

Chart 3.1: Changes During Time as Head

Headship	
<input type="checkbox"/> More autonomy	<input type="checkbox"/> Greater accountability
<input type="checkbox"/> Constant initiatives	<input type="checkbox"/> Increased bureaucracy
<input type="checkbox"/> Greater external role	<input type="checkbox"/> SIPs
<input type="checkbox"/> New forms of headship	<input type="checkbox"/> Annual performance review
<input type="checkbox"/> Extra teaching to cover PPA etc	<input type="checkbox"/> Vulnerability to sacking
<input type="checkbox"/> Having to wear numerous hats	
School Organisation	
<input type="checkbox"/> More independence	<input type="checkbox"/> Separation from LEA
<input type="checkbox"/> Enhanced role for governors	<input type="checkbox"/> Specialist schools
<input type="checkbox"/> Control of admissions	<input type="checkbox"/> Competition with other schools
<input type="checkbox"/> Collaboration with other schools	
Staffing	
<input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring and appraisal of teachers	<input type="checkbox"/> Workforce remodelling
<input type="checkbox"/> Upper pay scale	<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher recruitment and retention
<input type="checkbox"/> TLRs	<input type="checkbox"/> Teaching assistants
<input type="checkbox"/> CRB checks	<input type="checkbox"/> More involvement in teacher training
<input type="checkbox"/> Personnel regulations	
Curriculum and Assessment	
<input type="checkbox"/> National Curriculum	<input type="checkbox"/> Constant curriculum changes
<input type="checkbox"/> Literacy, numeracy and KS3 strategies	<input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum 2000
<input type="checkbox"/> Data management and pupil tracking	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellence and Enjoyment
<input type="checkbox"/> Modern languages in primary schools	<input type="checkbox"/> Vocational diplomas
Accountability	
<input type="checkbox"/> Ofsted	<input type="checkbox"/> League tables
<input type="checkbox"/> Confusion of accountabilities	<input type="checkbox"/> School profile
<input type="checkbox"/> SEF	<input type="checkbox"/> Pursuit of awards like Charter Mark, Investors in People etc
Funding	
<input type="checkbox"/> Devolved budgets	<input type="checkbox"/> Bidding culture
<input type="checkbox"/> Budget constraints and cuts	
Premises	
<input type="checkbox"/> More stringent health and safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Building projects
<input type="checkbox"/> Control of site and property	<input type="checkbox"/> Service level agreements
<input type="checkbox"/> Access to building	
Social Agenda	
<input type="checkbox"/> Social agenda	<input type="checkbox"/> Healthy eating requirements
<input type="checkbox"/> ECM	<input type="checkbox"/> Extended schools
<input type="checkbox"/> Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/> Autism Centre
Society	
<input type="checkbox"/> Increased litigation	<input type="checkbox"/> Less respect
<input type="checkbox"/> Parents encouraged by government to be more demanding	<input type="checkbox"/> Electronic communication

3.5 The main planks of the Conservative reforms were the introduction of the national curriculum, national tests at the end of key stages, financial delegation and a regular cycle of inspections. All, but especially financial delegation, had impressed

themselves on the minds of the headteachers whose experience went back that far. The male head of a school in London who had been a headteacher for 17 years in four schools identified as the main changes during his time in post as:

Way back it was the whole financial management thing plus the introduction of national curriculum teaching and learning which hit me as a new head and they have gone through various phases since then. Workforce remodelling is one we have just had to deal with. What I have tried to do is cherry pick the ones which are best for the school.

A colleague in Yorkshire and Humberside who has served for 17 years in two schools also homed in on funding, but while appreciating it was more stable now regretted what he saw as the waste on consultants and advisers:

Funding is a lot more stable now, so if you don't get it you know why you are not getting it. What really gets me is the appalling waste after you have saved all this money with it spent on consultants and advisers. What I feel at the moment I am surrounded by loads of people who are telling me how to do it but nobody wants to do it or they can't do it. They are not at the front line. If they were then the job would be a lot easier. In other words the amount of funding is a lot better, but the amount of people telling us how to do it is a lot worse.

- 3.6 Two long-serving male colleagues in the primary phase also picked out as the main changes those stemming from the initial reforms. The head of a primary in the East Midlands who has served 22 years in five schools identified, *"Pressure of Ofsted and implications of heads being sacked easily. The National Curriculum has changed things generally for the better but there are too many changes without the capital to make them work as well as we would all want them to."* A primary school head in the South East who has been a head for 17 years in two schools also harked back to financial delegation, but regretted what he saw as the excessive initiatives of recent years:

I became a head when Local Management of Schools was just coming in. There has been an expectation to take on so many initiatives outside just leading the curriculum, and the totality of that seems to have increased year on year. There has been a tendency more recently for a number of initiatives coming at a tremendous pace. We like to do a good job but it seems we are not allowed the time to do things properly.

- 3.7 The headteachers who have been in post only a short time provide an interesting contrast. They had no difficulty in coming up with changes in what was required of them during their short time in post emphasizing that the pace of change has not slackened. The female head of a secondary school in Yorkshire and Humberside who had been a head for less than a year referred to three changes: *"Self evaluation has been a major feature particularly with the financial standard to meet this year, and preparing and writing the SEF was a big piece of work. We still have some issues hanging over from remodelling. The visits from SIPS are new this year"*. A female colleague who has been a headteacher of a secondary school in the South East for two years offered, *"The school profile is one. The restructuring for teaching and learning responsibility payments and the requirement to engage in partnerships for extended schools 14 to 19 are others."* Another female headteacher of a secondary school in the South East who has been in post two years volunteered:

Only in post 2 years but I only ever seem to see things added. One of the biggest things has been the restructuring through the TLRs. As I have been pushing the raising achievement agenda and saying we are not quite as comfortable as perhaps was imagined, I made a strategic decision not to be too controversial with the TLRs. I could not afford not to take staff with me.

- 3.8 Their counterparts new to being headteachers in the primary phase also were able to identify changes even after a very short time in post. The female head of a primary school in the East who had been in post for just over a year picked out the SEF and Every Child Matters:

One thing is the new Ofsted framework. It really seems as though they are doing things with you as opposed to you. There was more taken on faith that you were on top of things rather than having to produce all the paper to prove it. It was a lot of work though and took from September to Easter. Every Child Matters is useful – as much to educate the governors as anything else.

- 3.9 A female colleague who had been a headteacher in London for approaching two years also identified the SEF as a major change, but took a different view of it:

I don't agree with the SEF form and all of that I think we are in danger of gazing at our own navel. Although I like the shorter notice of the new inspection system I preferred the older model. It gave a more rigorous assessment. Certainly when I came here as the new and inexperienced head we were inspected seven weeks after I arrived. It provided me with a very rigorous and objective view of the school and of the staff and also as far as the staff were concerned it was a great help saying 'yes this is good keep on doing it'. Under the new arrangements they could very well make a judgement about the school and not even know it.

- 3.10 The male head of a primary school in the East in post for three years commented that he had been taken by surprise by the responsibility to secure disabled access to the buildings.

This came out of the blue. We had a survey done and did the short-term things. We have improved building accessibility, but some things we cannot get round. We have got involved in remodelling and we have a change team and we have managed to cover the changes within our resources.

- 3.11 So far we have been considering the number and range of the changes with which the headteachers have had to take on board during their tenure. In Charts 3.2 and 3.3 and Boxes 3.1 to 3.4 we explore their views on those changes. As we have seen the headteachers have served for very different lengths of time and the individual circumstances of their schools differ considerably. The size of the 'other' category in Charts 3.2 and 3.3 shows that a wide range of answers were given to the question what are the changes you have most welcomed. But in so far as there is consensus it seems that secondary schools are generally agreed that the delegated funding giving greater autonomy was welcomed, and both secondary and primary schools thought that the new inspection framework was a change for the better. Boxes 3.1 and 3.2 illustrate the responses across the regions on which the analysis is based.

- 3.12 Both welcomed the Every Child Matters agenda in principle but had reservations about the practise. The head of a secondary school in the East said, "*The intention of Every Child Matters was a good idea, but at the moment the whole thing looks like a mess.*" The head of a first school in the North East also embraced the idea but had

concerns about implementation, *when we get through the barriers of language and communication that could be a positive change, but not at the moment.*” These reservation have been so strong they have also resulted in the ECM coming up among the most regretted changes, *“It is a nightmare with Social Services; they don’t tell you stuff but phone and expect immediate verbal reports on children which can’t be done when the teachers are in class”* (Head of a primary school in the North West). *“The way government finds good practice, as with ECM, brings it together as a single national structure which is then imposed on everybody.”* (Head of secondary school in East Midlands).

Chart 3.2: Changes Most Welcomed

Secondary	%	‘Primary	%
Delegated funding/ more autonomy	46.9	New inspection framework	52.9
New inspection framework	40.6	ECM (in principle)	47.1
Workforce remodelling	18.9	Extended schools	23.5
ECM (in principle)	15.6	Working more closely with governors	23.5
TLR	12.5	Excellence and Enjoyment	17.6
Other ¹	71.9	Other ²	57.9

1. collaboration with other schools, improved curriculum, extended schools, SIPs, national strategies, performance management, specialist schools, Curriculum 2000, application of ICT, data tracking, 14-19, increased governor involvement, risk assessment.

2. workforce remodelling, the national curriculum, literacy and numeracy strategies, LMS, PPA, school profile.

3.13 When it came to changes which the headteachers regretted, Chart 3.3 shows it was less to do with specific initiatives than with their number and the speed of their introduction. The head of a primary school complained, *“It’s the dropping in and the speed of initiatives, often without them being properly thought through and often without the back up information.”*

Chart 3.3: Most Regretted

Secondary	%	‘Primary	%
Too many initiatives	37.5	Too many initiatives	47.1
Ofsted	34.4	Targets, tests, league tables	29.4
Increase in external agencies and advisors	18.8	PPA not working	17.6
Government/LEA interference	15.6	Government/LEA interference	5.9
14-19 Curriculum	12.5	School profile	5.9
Other ¹	43.8	Other ²	41.2

1. workforce remodelling, health and safety regs, style of governance, blame culture, expectation that can solve all social problems, changed attitude of parents, new nutritional standards, reliance on data, inclusion, performance management.

2. extended schools, ECM, annual performance review for heads, less contact with children, SEF, learning financial management.

Box 3.1: Changes Most Welcomed by Secondary Heads

“Delegated budget has been a major plus. I’ve been able to do things at this school that I wouldn’t have dreamed of 10-15 years ago. I’ve been able to access funding for a brand new library, a new ICT suite, and I don’t mean just in the school, I mean a new building. I got half a million. I’ve just been able to access another million and a half pounds to have an extension built with five classrooms and a new science lab.”

Male, Community, Coed, Middle, North East

“Funding arrangements are better and the new Ofsted seems much more professional and their Self Evaluation is an excellent tool that we can use for ourselves and show to others.”

Male, Voluntary Aided, Coed, Comprehensive, 11-18, North West

“The self evaluation in the long term will be extremely good. It is very, very coherent and makes sense of a lot of things that went before.”

Female, Community, Coed, Comprehensive, 11-16, Yorks & Humb

The ‘School Self-Evaluation’ is really good. It has been a welcome culture shift, but the protocols that go with it are really bad, like the online system doesn’t work properly. The TLR review is exactly the same. The teaching and learning idea was really helpful but it was given to the heads with such an impossible timeline. Headteachers wouldn’t have been able to get away with it regarding their own staff.

Female, Community, Coed, Comprehensive, 11-18, East Midlands

“Working with other schools in our collaborative collegiate work, lots of good things have been coming out of that.”

Male, Voluntary Controlled, Coed, Comprehensive, 11-18, West Midlands

“The workforce reform has been quite helpful because it gave a bit of support to what I was trying to do since it had become virtually impossible to get teachers. The intention of Every Child Matters was a good idea, but at the moment the whole thing looks like a mess.”

Female, Foundation, Coed, Secondary Modern, 11-16, East

“I think we positively welcomed having our own budget and anything that’s given us greater freedom. Freedom to be creative because if you’re regulated you spend your life trying to get round the regulations anyway to do what you want to do”.

Female, Community, Girls, Grammar, London

“The staff are very pleased with the transparency of the TLRs. I actually showed that TLRs in a department are related to the size of the department, the number of lessons taught, how many people there are to line manage and so on. I came up with a formula as the basis for negotiation. So in the end not a bad thing but an enormous amount of work which could only be done by the head.”

Female, Community, Coed, Comprehensive, 11-18, South East

“The idea of Self Evaluation is good. I like the short notice and the cutting down of paper. There is a danger that they will miss things in two days and they could rely too much on data but those issues will get ironed out over time.”

Male, Foundation, Coed, Comprehensive, 11-18, South West

“Getting our own budget, that was absolutely great.”

Female, Community, Coed, Comprehensive, 11-18, Wales

Box 3.2: Changes Most Welcomed by Primary Heads

“The one I would embrace is the extended school family. Our children’s services have changed and we are now meant to be embracing Social Services and when we get through the barriers of language and communication that could be a positive change, but not at the moment.”

Female, Community, First, North East

“I think the SEF actually. Although it was a pain to do initially, I think it’s good in that it does keep you up to date. It’s a useful tool I think, however it was introduced far too quickly and it has to be done overnight. That’s been the most useful”.

Female, Voluntary Controlled, Infant and Junior, North West

“I quite like the new SEF for Ofsted. It is a useful process to go through even though it is not clear whom it is actually for. It is too long and the headings don’t fit. There is also the question of do you tell the absolute truth?”

Male, Community, Infant and Junior, Yorks & Humb

“The National Curriculum has generally changed things for the better providing more focus and enabling average teachers to improve. ECM in principle. Working in partnership with governors.”

Male, Voluntary Controlled, Infant and Junior, East Midlands

“Although it was a difficulty at the time, PPA because it has made a real difference to my staff in terms of morale, and that has impacted on the classroom in terms of their demeanour. I also welcome the Extended School agenda, particularly the common assessment framework, because that has been a big issue for us, for example, when we have not known that Social Services were involved with a child.”

Female, Community, Infants, West Midlands

“The new framework because the original framework was a straightjacket but we have moved away from that. The changes in the powers of the governing body are also welcome. The new inspection regime is also a positive. The actual 2 day inspection is far less stressful and the whole thing works well.”

Male, Community, First, East

“I don’t have a problem setting targets for children as long as they are realistic and improve the children’s learning. I am happy with the level of challenge that has been introduced. Excellence and Enjoyment was welcome as it put back what many people felt was missing.”

Female, Voluntary Aided, Infant and Junior, London

“I like the Every Child Matters Agenda as we are already doing some of it as a RC school. Also we have many special needs children, we are inclusive but it can be a problem getting all the agencies working together.”

Male, Voluntary Aided, Infant and Junior, South East

“PPA time has got good and bad bits. I teach to provide the cover for that as neither the TAs or even the HTAs are in a position to take a class of children.”

Female, Community, Middle, South West

“The fact that the Ofsted model has changed and it does seem to be a little bit fairer now.”

Female, Community, Infant and Junior, Wales

Box 3.3: Changes Most Regretted by Secondary Heads

“The idea that government has that schools can solve social problems, with things like drugs education, extended schools programme, multi-agency working. Also the continual pressure put on parents by government to complain if they don’t feel they’re getting their just desserts, to blame the school all the time. The blame culture that we have in other areas of society now has impinged very badly on schools.”

Male, Community, Coed, Middle, North East

“There are too many changes. There has got to be some understanding of what schools are going through. We are dealing with students and parents on a day to day basis and the powers that be just sit in their offices coming up with extra things for us to do.”

Male, Community, Coed, Comprehensive, 11-18, North West,

“The single thing that has got to me over the last five years, which is quite upsetting, is the way parents have intervened to try and support their kids when the kids are obviously in the wrong. It’s the lack of parental control and the fact that parents are quite aggressively challenging the school.”

Male, Community Coed, Comprehensive, 11-18, Yorks & Humb

“The way government finds good practice, as with ECM, brings it together as a single national structure which is then imposed on everybody.”

Male, Community, Coed, Comprehensive 11-16, East Midlands

“Remodelling and Ofsted and all the work it took getting them off the ground. Also the behaviour of the pupils has changed and become more difficult, reflecting changes in society.”

Female, Girls, Comprehensive, 11-18, West Midlands

“Constant government initiatives, and the bloody email; 5000 things every week all of which is difficult to sort. The LEA used to filter a lot of it out. The bidding culture is particularly irksome.”

Male, Community, Coed, Comprehensive, 11-18, East

“I do not like that part of being accountable that rewards you for being critical about your problems. Why should that be regarded as good leadership –getting brownie points by baring your soul?”

Male, Foundation, Boys, Grammar, London

“The new nutritional standards for schools for the children are causing a real worry because the company who used to manage the catering have withdrawn from all secondaries, leaving me with a £100,000 deficit. Now we are responsible for managing it ourselves.”

Female, Community, Coed, Comprehensive, 11-18, South East

“There are more quango type organisations around education which seem to bleed off even more resources from schools.”

Male, Foundation, Coed, Comprehensive, 11-18, South West

“I think the sort of constant changes of the last few years have been a total distraction. One minute you’re going down this route, then there’s tinkering with it and it’s this route and so on. It doesn’t allow people to get on top of things and move the agenda forward as it should.”

Male, Foundation, Coed, Comprehensive, 11-18, Wales

Box 3.4: Changes Most Regretted by Primary Heads

“I think that initiatives foisted on you with only a couple of weeks to get them in place, for example, putting together the school profile.”

Female, Community, Coed, First, North East

“I hope Every Child Matters will help us in our dealing with other agencies. It is a nightmare with Social Services; they don’t tell you stuff but phone and expect immediate verbal reports on children which can’t be done when the teachers are in class, and their resources are tightly stretched. I have had to take on a lot of this from my SENCO so I have had to become Child Protection Co-ordinator which she was previously. It is distressing to see the lack of follow up so I now have to record every phone call etc. There is also the Extended Schools Agenda. I am concerned about the implications of Extended Schools. My local colleague who is already doing this complains about the hours because the parents assume and expect that she will be there all the time for the extended hours. Any problems, even from other agencies using the premises before and after school, all these come back to her.”

Female, Community, Infant and Junior, North West,

“The bureaucracy.”

Male, Community, Infant and Junior, Yorks & Humb

“The difficulty is we seem to be responsible for everything - health, everyone’s well-being, keeping parents informed, working with the community, and fund raising - and it difficult to find the right balance.”

Female, Voluntary Controlled, Infant and Junior, East Midlands

“The School Profile is a waste of time because no parents have asked to see it, and it took an absolute age to prepare.”

Female, Community, Infants, West Midlands

“Every Child Matters, although we have always thought that every child matters!”

Male, Community, First, East

“I am unhappy with the results of PPA. I have not seen any reduction in sickness for example and I have noticed a deterioration in pupils’ behaviour. Remodelling is based on an economy measure because we pay teaching assistants less. We have not been given any additional money to cope with this. With Every Child Matters, we have always believed in this, so I regret the making of things new when they aren’t new.”

Female, Voluntary Aided, Infant and Junior, London

“Having to do things in a certain way as directed by government and LEA because this takes away from the needs of the children.”

Female, Community, Infant, South East

“It’s the dropping in and the speed of initiatives, often without them being properly thought through and often without the back up information (we should have started the new curriculum this term; the book only arrived this week.)”

Female, Community, Middle, South West

“Probably it is having to meet all these targets and I don’t think the children get the best deal by doing this.”

Female, Community, Infant and Junior, Wales

3.14 The head of a secondary school in the North West summed up the schools difficulties with the initiatives in this way:

There are too many changes. There has got to be some understanding of what schools are going through. We are dealing with students and parents on a day to day basis and the powers that be just sit in their offices coming up with extra things for us to do.

3.15 The head of a school in Wales agreed and used almost the same form of words:

I think the sort of constant changes of the last few years have been a total distraction. One minute you're going down this route, then there's tinkering with it and it's this route and so on. It doesn't allow people to get on top of things and move the agenda forward as it should.

3.16 Beyond the general agreement about the extent and rate of change, the headteachers also regretted aspects of the accountability that had been imposed upon them. Ofsted came out as the least liked specific change among secondary headteachers, although as we saw in Chart 3.2 there were hopes for the new inspection framework. Among primary heads it was the targets, tests and league tables that were regretted most. Secondary headteachers also complained about the increase in the number of advisors with which they had to deal, consuming resources and drawing expertise away from the classroom. There was, however, a great range of specific discontents and Boxes 3.3 and 3.4 give their general flavour.

Résumé

3.17 When asked how their role had changed during their time in post the headteachers responded with 58 types of task that had been added, but were hard put to think of any that had been taken away other than those they had delegated. Their length of service ranged from two terms to twenty-two years. The major changes identified by the longer-serving headteachers were financial delegation and the national curriculum and these were generally welcomed, but even those in post for a year or so could list new additions like SIPs, SEF, TLRs, ECM and 14-19 consortia. The changes most welcomed by the headteachers were the greater autonomy and the new inspection framework. Both primary and secondary headteachers regretted the extent and speed of change which to them didn't seem to have been fully thought through or backed up.

4. Too Big for One Person?

4.1 The extra responsibilities given to headteachers prompts the question: has the job come to be too big for one person? It drew some trenchant responses from our representative sample of secondary headteachers:

No that's absurd – look at all the other organisations of size that have one leader. It is up to leaders to organise institutions how they wish; set up leadership teams to do the job, whatever it is. (Male, Foundation, Boys, Grammar, London)

We do ourselves a real disservice when we say it is too big because there are chief executives of multi-national companies who manage it by having leadership and management systems that run throughout the organisation and that is what we have to do. (Female, Community, Comprehensive, 11-18, South East)

4.2 But primary headteachers were more likely to agree:

The short answer is yes. That's why I come in early to get quality time before others come in with their demands on my time. Work/life balance is virtually non-existent. We don't get PPA! I would love to have a curriculum manager, but we cannot afford one. (Male, Community, First, East)

I have definitely come to that conclusion as I have just spent four days of half term catching up on paperwork; one day in school, three at home. Once my office manager is trained up I will give her many of those things that I shouldn't have to deal with. She will go up to full time; there are budget issues but they can be dealt with. (Female, Community, Infant and Junior, North West)

Chart 4.1: Too Big?

	%Yes	%No	%No Response
Primary	57.9	42.1	nil
Secondary	27.8	69.4	2.8

4.3 These particular replies are borne out by the overall pattern of responses shown in Chart 4.1. A secondary head not giving a response declined because she did not want to open the way to changes with which she profoundly disagreed:

I would not like to go to the American system of superintendent with headteachers reporting to that publicly elected person. It is clear this is what the government wants to do so that is why I have not answered yes to the question. (Female, Community, Comprehensive, 11-16, South West)

4.4 The key to the different replies from the primary and secondary phases is in their scope to delegate. Secondary schools are generally large enough for the headteacher to be able to distribute the tasks and there is usually room in the budget to employ specialised staff to deal with finance and premises:

I share it out and I don't think there is anything stopping you doing that. You have to delegate the responsibilities in such a way that people are free to carry them out. (Male, Community, Comprehensive, 11-16, North West)

Although the head has ultimate responsibility many tasks can be delegated. We have a finance manager, and the deputy head (curriculum) takes responsibility for all the data including target setting. Another deputy is responsible for the historically delegated tasks such as pastoral care and the timetable. Many of the things are done as a team, for example, the School Improvement Plan. (Male, Voluntary Aided, Middle, East)

- 4.5 Primary heads would like to be able to delegate more and bring in more expertise, but in small schools particularly it is not affordable:

I would prefer to have a larger leadership team so that the deputy could be a real deputy, but we cannot afford the non-teaching time. I have gone through a long, difficult time with a failing deputy (not the current one) and this affected results and I am very aware now of how much this affected my work. (Female, Infants, South East)

I think you need an excellent school secretary. Headteachers are not trained to do a lot of the things they are asked to do. If we could spend more time with the children I think it would benefit their education. (Female, Community, Infant and Junior, Wales)

Leadership Teams

- 4.6 The amount of leadership support a head has depends crucially on the size of the school. In the small primary school portrayed in Box 4.1 the headteacher runs the school of four teachers by herself, as well as teaching. All the responsibilities fall on her shoulders and a particular concern is health and safety which she says could take up all her time.

Box 4.1: Leadership Team in Small Primary School

Female Head, Community First, North East, 101-200 pupils, 30.0% FSM, 0.5-1.5% SEN with statements.

There are four teachers in addition to the head in this small village school. The head herself is the senior management team and she also teaches. The teachers are supported by two higher level teaching assistants, one of who is a qualified nursery nurse, three other teaching assistants and a learning support assistant. Is she expected to do too much? *“I think if you have due regard to everything you do, yes, but the fact is you become quite pragmatic, concentrating on your priorities. For example, over health and safety I could be spending every minute of every day going through health and safety in school, but I choose not to.”*

- 4.7 The primary school illustrated in Box 4.2 is four times as large and the head has the support of five senior staff including an admin officer. The head doesn't think that leading the teaching and learning core has become too big for one person, but recognises there is a need for more managers to free him up for this central role. It's vital, in his view, that the person at the top has come up through the classroom ranks.

Box 4.2: Leadership Team in Large Primary School

Male Head, Voluntary Aided, Infant and Junior, South East, 301-400 pupils, 6.0% FSM, 2.0-3.0% SEN with statements.

The senior management team consists of the head, deputy, two key stage co-ordinators, a special needs co-ordinator plus an administrative officer. All are qualified teachers except the admin officer who deals with finance and premises. There are twenty teachers in the school for 14 classes and 26 teaching assistants and other support staff. The teaching assistants are line managed through a higher level teaching assistant who, in turn, is responsible to the special needs co-ordinator. Has the job become too big? *“It depends on how you define the core of headship. We will have to have more business managers in schools to allow me to get on with my job’s core of the Teaching and Learning. That bit is not too big; it is everything else that goes with it. The person at the top has to have a classroom background.”*

- 4.8 The head of the small secondary school in Box 4.3 compares himself to the head of a large primary school in that he also has to be hands-on.

Box 4.3: Leadership Team in Small Secondary School

Male Head, Community, Coed Comprehensive to 16, North East, 401-700 pupils, 25% FSM, 35-45% Five Good GCSEs, 3.0-4.0 % SEN with statements.

There are 34 teachers in the school of whom four (plus the head) are in the SMT. There are two deputies, one is in charge of personalised learning and the directorship of specialist status. The other one has responsibility for teaching and learning and staff effectiveness. There is also an assistant head who is responsible for learning support and inclusion, and another assistant head who’s responsible for curriculum and assessment. Also on the team is the director of administration who is the bursar, really the head’s PA, who runs the support side of it. There are 35 support staff including cleaners and caterers (the school employs it’s own caterers). The director of administration is responsible for the support staff, but there is a director of premises and someone in charge of catering. There are four FTE learning support assistants plus two supervisors who are line managed by the assistant head for learning support.

“We’re probably not typical because we are a small school, so the head has to be much more hands on. I’ve found myself to some extent actually sort of modelling myself on primary headteachers who I’ve seen at work who do have to get involved. I could give you a whole list of things that I’ve done that you wouldn’t normally associate with a secondary head. For example, at the moment I am the literacy co-ordinator. I do things that are not even that high up in the pecking order. One of the things I did when I got here was to redesign the display- very primary isn’t it! But it needed doing and there wasn’t anybody else to do it so I thought well, and because it was a bit like a strategy/management thing I thought well I can send some school messages through this even, though it meant being here on a Saturday morning.”

“The essential part of my role, quite apart from what we do for kids, which we take as read, is bringing out the best in staff because that’s how I influence the outcome for the kids. The thing about this job is when its going well it’s the best job in the world and that’s how I feel at the moment.”

- 4.9 The head of the small secondary school said that, in some ways, he is like the head of a primary school in that he is the literacy co-ordinator and takes responsibility for the wall displays. His leadership team is the same size as that of the large primary school including a director of administration who is, in fact, his PA. He sees the children's progress as the essential part of his job. When it is going well as it is at present it is the best job in the world he does not think it is too big for one person.
- 4.10 The large secondary school in Box 4.4 is similarly organised, but with the leadership group scaled up to eight, and in addition administrative back-up. The head who has been in post 17 years recognises that he can't do it all on his own, but doesn't think the job is too big for one person if leadership is distributed through the school. He lays great emphasis on team philosophy and keeping the running of the school firmly in the hands of the teachers.

Box 4.4: Leadership Team in Large Secondary School

Male Head, Community, Coed Comprehensive to 18, North West, 1,601+pupils, 40-45% FSM, 45-50% Five Good GCSEs, 2.0-3.0 % SEN with statements.

There are 102 teaching staff and 75 non-teachers. There are eight staff in the senior management team including the head. One deputy looks after key stage 3, one looks after key stage 4 and another key stage 5. There are four assistant heads, one is responsible for data and specialist school status, one for CPD and vocational status, one for primary liaison and child protection, and the fourth for the site and some pastoral responsibilities. There is admin back up on finances and premises, but the managers are not part of the SMT.

"I certainly don't think a head can do it all on their own. I am against the idea of a 'superhead' that was mooted a few years ago. You are only as good as the people you are working with and you have to have good staff around you. It is all tied up with the team philosophy here, we are not afraid to empower the people and give them responsibility. Schools in this day and age are very much a business and you have to attract money in from outside so there is a place for non teaching staff, such as the bursar, who are talented and influential people, but the head has to be in charge."

Heavy Load

- 4.11 Even with delegation, a heavy load falls on the headteachers' shoulders. For the parents and the community, the headteacher embodies the school as the **figurehead** and this generates a burden of **expectations**. They tend to be very disappointed when the head does not attend an event, and teachers, governors and parents all want to deal personally with him/her even though another member of the leadership team could perfectly well deal with the matter:

Can I say why the job is too much for one person? It is the importance and power that is invested in the headteacher. I have staff here that could go and see a deputy about something but it has got to be the head. Parents will phone my PA and say, 'I don't want to be fobbed off with anyone else, I want to see the head.' I have meetings we go to and it has to be the head. All this takes time. But you almost have to be part of these things. It's that insistence that it has to be the head that is making the job undo-able. My two deputies are brilliant, they could run this school, that is not the problem. They even say to me, 'You'd better do that. We think people would like to see the head there'. Parents are quite disappointed

when you don't know their child. It's about the expectation. Having said all this I am doing the job, I am coping and I enjoy my work. (Female, Community, Comprehensive, 11-18, South East)

I have delegated as much as I can through the SMT and I have a business manager, but there is still a lot where only I will do. We've just had a discussion in SMT about letters of thanks. The troops want a letter from the head. This is impossible for one person to do. So the deputies do it and a copy comes to the head, but it doesn't mean the same to the recipients. When there is a function they want the head there to see it. There are eight other SMT, but they really rate it when the head walks in. It's not the sheer physical work it's the hours. I'm always the last to go – captain of the ship type thing, a bit bloody pathetic, but they notice. Parents notice when I am not at parents' evenings even if they don't want to talk to me. It's very difficult as a head not to be there. (Male, Community, Comprehensive, 11-18, Yorkshire and Humberside)

4.12 Other headteachers highlighted the need to be **hands on** to turn things around and the **legal requirements**:

My biggest anxiety is I don't know how long I can keep doing the job I'm doing, because I start at 7.30, and every night this week there has been a meeting including two full evenings. There has to be a balance between being able to do the strategic things and being hands-on where needed. This school needed me to be phenomenally hands-on when I arrived to pull up the exam results, but every school will vary in its needs. It can be difficult to pull back from being hands-on because people expect you to carry on doing what you have been doing. (Male, Voluntary Aided, Comprehensive, 11-18, North West)

The challenges are both stimulating and overwhelming. Socio-economic issues and the needs and challenges of filling the gaps created by the shrinking of LEAs can make the job next to impossible. There is a major barrier to heads' abilities to delegate and that is the level of legal requirements placed upon heads. (Male, Community, Comprehensive, 11-16, West Midlands)

4.13 But there is an acceptance that there will have to be changes, especially in the light of the social agenda, with the school premises being used for longer as with **Extended Schools** and for a wider range of activities, for example, in **Children's Centres**:

If the government is serious about Extended Schools are they still expecting the same person to run the organisation? I am not saying I'd be unhappy to do that, but I would be unhappy to run it within the current framework. If they want schools to be open all summer, just closed on Christmas day (and it looks as though that is what they want) it is going to require a new approach. The expectation of the head being there for everybody becomes even less realistic and there will have to be an incredible cultural shift. It could be quite exciting running an organisation like that. The same principles are behind it: providing for your community of which the students are a part. There would have to be a look at Terms and Conditions, altering the traditional breaks and so on. But is anyone going to be happy if the head vanishes for a while in October in the middle of say, target setting? (Female, Community, Comprehensive to 16, South East)

The problem is the public's perception of what the head's job is and how you are going to manage it. If you have wraparound care for the children it is completely unfair to expect the headteacher to be there all the time. You are not required to be there all the time, but to ensure that the organisation is being managed if you are not there. (Female, Community, Comprehensive, 11-18, South East)

Who Should be in Overall Charge?

- 4.14 We asked the headteachers to consider the possibility that their increased responsibilities and new tasks might mean that the traditional role would have to be split between and educational leader and a business, and in this eventuality who should be in overall charge? Boxes 4.5 and 4.6 show that our representative samples were almost unanimous in saying that it had to be someone with classroom experience. To the cries of 'they would wouldn't they' because that would be someone in their own image, we would say that what also came through very clearly was a reasoned case.
- 4.15 Their argument was that education is not just any business. As the head of a primary school in the East region put it: *"My husband is in telecommunications and is a brilliant manager, but we couldn't swap jobs, neither of us would have a clue."* Or again the head of an 11-18 comprehensive in Wales: *"It has to be someone with classroom experience otherwise it would just be like running a factory wouldn't it. Here are your targets for this year, get on with it!"* Teaching and learning is at the heart of education and the person in charge must understand this through experience: *"I talk to a lot of people, staff, and they need to know that the person in charge of them, telling them how things must develop, what must happen, that this person has got a handle on what the decision is about."* (Female, Community, Comprehensive, 11-18, South East).
- 4.16 The police service where senior officers including chief constables come up through the ranks is contrasted favourably with recent developments in the health service where outside managers have been brought in. Their experience of people in charge of education from other fields also makes them highly sceptical. The head of a primary school in the North East recounts her difficulties with the manager of social services in charge of children's services where they speak different languages and in her view what is good for the children tends to be less important than delivering outcomes. One mischievous independent school head suggested that many of the current difficulties in the maintained sector came from the self-appointed managers in the DfES having no classroom experience.
- 4.17 The response of our heads was almost unanimous but not quite. There were four exceptions. The head of the primary school in Wales in Box 4.6 has seen some excellent classroom assistants from other fields who she feels could run a school. The head of a middle school in the North East who is working towards setting up a vertical federation of schools from 3-18 in a small market town says that the chief executive, *"would not necessarily have to be a teacher. It could be somebody who had a background in public administration, not necessarily private business, but somebody who's an effective and efficient manager."* The head of a secondary modern 11-18 in the South East took the view that the background couldn't just be management but: *"The key is relationships. If you brought in someone who has a background of working with people rather than systems it could work."*

Box 4.5: Secondary Heads' Views on Who Should be in Overall Charge

"It has to be someone who will put the kids first. You've got to be able to show that you understand what happens on the ground and be there."

Male, Community, Coed, Comprehensive, 11-16, North East

"I do think the person at the top has to have classroom experience. I have seen things go wrong and it is often when the decision maker has not been someone from education. They think things will work, but you can't do it like that."

Male, Voluntary Aided, Coed, Comprehensive, 11-18, North West,

"I've always thought a strength of the police force is that the chief constable has come up through the ranks. You have to have done the job at ground level before you start managing people to do it."

Male, Community, Coed, Comprehensive, 11-18, Yorks & Humb

"I think whatever you do you have to have somebody in charge who knows what needs to go on in the classroom, and the driving force for what happens in the school has to be the teaching and learning of the pupils. A very efficient administrator and a good personnel manager who has no concept of the demands of teaching and learning and achievement of the children would be a disaster. I think that is probably where it has gone wrong in the health service."

Male, Community, Coed, Comprehensive, 11-16, East Midlands

"If there were to be an education leader/business manager split, the education leader must be in charge."

Female, Girls, Comprehensive, 11-18, West Midlands

"Some people say the head should be strategic and the deputy day-to-day, but if you have not got a handle on the day-to-day it is difficult to do the strategic thinking because you don't know where the issues are. I do not think a manager/ headteacher split would work."

Female, Foundation, Secondary Modern, 11-16, East

"You've got to have somebody who understands children, parents and teachers and I don't think unless you've been a teacher and come up through the ranks you understand teachers. Look at what has happened to the NHS now that it is no longer run by doctors."

Female, Community, Girls, Grammar, London

"I really think they need to be a teacher. I talk to a lot of people, staff, and they need to know that the person in charge of them, telling them how things must develop, what must happen, that this person has got a handle on what the decision is about."

Female, Community, Coed, Comprehensive, 11-18, South East

"Teaching and learning have to be the main focus for any school. As a headteacher if someone hands their notice in, for example, you can assess the impact, ask if you have got the structures right, do you need to replace like with like. Would someone in charge of say six schools understand the needs of the local context and would it be possible to take an immediate decision."

Male, Community, Coed, Comprehensive, 11-16, South West

"It has to be someone with classroom experience otherwise it would just be like running a factory wouldn't it. Here are your targets for this year, get on with it!"

Male, Foundation, Coed, Comprehensive, 11-18, Wales

Box 4.6: Primary Heads' Views on Who Should be in Overall Charge

"Given that is the pattern with our Children's Services, where the manager of Social Services is in overall charge, frankly there is such difficulty with language, that I would rather it be an educationalist. We are talking about what is good for children rather than delivering an outcome."

Female, Community, Coed, First, North East

"I think you need to have in charge someone with classroom experience and who is there for parents to talk to. Children aren't a business, although in reality we have to run a school like a business."

Female, Community, Infant and Junior, North West,

"As long as headship stays, I don't think it sensible to bring in people from the outside."

Male, Community, Infant and Junior, Yorks & Humb

"It needs to be a teacher. It is difficult to be credible and realistic if you have not actually come up through the system. It would make a difference to the decisions if the managers have come from business."

Female, Voluntary Controlled, Infant and Junior, East Midlands

"The head has got to be in overall charge as he is in charge of the children's education and that has to take priority over everything else. There could be more support eg a bursar who could be from outside but they will have to be responsible to the head."

Male, Community, First, West Midlands

"However good a manager might be, to take on education leadership without having been in the classroom is wrong. They won't have the experience and you can't teach that. My husband is in telecommunications and is a brilliant manager, but we couldn't swap jobs, neither of us would have a clue."

Female, Voluntary Aided, Infant and Junior, East

"The person in overall charge of would always have to have a teaching background because of the type of job they would be requiring others to do since it is all about the development of children. You can reduce the burden and workload by having a tier of managers below for finance, personnel etc."

Female, Community, Infant and Junior, London

"They need to have been a teacher to have seen the ups and downs of working with children and with families. Teaching is not just about standing up in front of children but about the whole family and teachers are best placed to know how to develop education further."

Male, Community, Junior, South East

"The top people in education have got to have an education background. People out of it just do not understand do they? There has got to be an interest in children's well being."

Female, Community, Middle, South West

"At first I would have said yes it should be a person with teaching experience but I have changed my mind because some excellent people working as classroom assistants who have had experiences working outside education who have proved to be very good and very enthusiastic so with the right sort of person it could work."

Female, Community, Infant and Junior, Wales

4.18 The head of another secondary modern, this one to age 16, in the South East did not see why two people couldn't run a school, "*someone out of business and someone out of education*. He goes on that, "*maybe the business person would want overall charge*." But he doesn't commit to whether this would be a good or bad thing.

Should the Name Change?

4.19 In view of the increased responsibilities, we asked the headteachers whether they thought there was a case for retitling the role. The majority of the headteachers either rejected the idea or could not see any reason for it. Chart 4.2 shows that only a third of the primary headteachers and a quarter of the secondary headteachers were in favour of a name change.

Chart 4.2: Change the Name?

	%Yes	%No
Primary	33.3	66.7
Secondary	24.2	75.8

Secondary Schools

4.20 Most secondary headteachers were reluctant to change their title. They felt that this was how the public **perceived** them to be:

Public perception is important. They think of us as headteachers and that defines what they want us to be, the person in charge of the school. (Community, Comprehensive, 11-16, North West)

4.21 But a more frequent response was that there would be **dangers** in changing since it could open the way for a shift from the central task of teaching and learning:

My worry would be that you lose the visionary leadership for teaching and end up with someone coming in who is finance based and looks at financial issues and not teaching issues. There has to be something in there about learning so I always say the school is a curriculum led school and the curriculum determines the budget and not the other way round." (Community, Comprehensive, 11-18, London)

The danger is that it could be construed that it would be the managers who are in charge of everything as opposed to the person who is the headteacher. (Community, Comprehensive, 11-16, Yorks & Humb)

I think if you call people chief executive that would be a shame because it would lose the fact that our core business is about teaching and learning. I am happy with being called the headteacher. (Community, Comprehensive, 11-18, South East)

4.22 The minority who wanted to change either made the point that the title implied that they were the **best teacher** which they could not claim to be or that the **role** had **broadened** out to the point that the title was no longer appropriate.

I don't want to be called headteacher, let alone headmaster. They no longer have meaning. I am a school leader. You don't have to be the best teacher. (Voluntary Aided, Comprehensive, 11-18, Yorks & Humb)

- 4.23 One of our sample from a traditional background had widened his activities as the person in charge of a foundation, comprehensive 11-18 in the East region, and become the executive head:

I am a Chief Executive. The role of the CEO is much, much wider: I haven't taught for fifteen years. I don't do headteacher work anymore, only CEO work. Having a head of school means I can be out delivering primary care with the police, social services, the voluntary sector and working on Every Child Matters in a far more grown up manner. I network 50 per cent of my time, pressing the flesh or whatever to bring in resources and funding. (Foundation, Comprehensive, 11-18, East)

Primary Schools

- 4.24 Most primary school heads did not want to change, largely for the same reasons as their secondary counterparts:

All the neighbouring high schools have Principals but it's a bit too American for me. Changing titles wouldn't make any difference to the job. (Community, Primary, North West)

- 4.25 But a third did. One was already called **principal**:

Names do matter as they should reflect the job done. My role is ever expanding and evolving. But if you have the principal of a federation of several schools you have got to be very careful to retain in each school people who maintain that traditional education knowledge and skills. (Voluntary Aided, Primary, South East)

- 4.26 There was a strand in their thinking that as they were no longer teaching, they could no longer claim to be the **headteacher**:

I think that headteacher now is a bit of a misnomer because I don't teach and maybe Head of Learning would be more apt a term. I am a bit sceptical about name changes because the name changes but nothing else does. (Community, Infant, West Midlands)

I have thought for some time that 'headteacher' is the wrong word. It needs to be Chief Executive, Director or whatever. It might help people not misunderstand the role. It is the 'teacher' part that no longer applies as it used to. (Community, Primary, Yorks & Humberside)

Résumé

- 4.27 Secondary heads were mainly dismissive of the notion that the job had become too big for one person. The answer to the extra tasks and responsibilities, in their view, was to organise the school properly. Approaching 60 per cent of primary heads, however, did say the demands had become too great, since as much smaller institutions there were fewer opportunities to delegate. Whereas secondary schools tended to have extensive leadership teams, in a small primary school the head could be the leadership team as well as teaching.
- 4.28 The headteachers recognised that increased independence meant they had to call on specialised help of various kinds, but they saw the finance officer and premises manager as being in support roles. The primary and secondary heads were almost unanimous in their view that headteachers should be drawn from among those with

classroom experience. They argued that education is not just any business and leadership skills were not interchangeable. Of the four who were open to the possibility, two thought that others, for example, teaching assistants, had the necessary people skills, one was working to set up a federation with a chief executive in charge, and the other thought there could be joint leadership. Most of the headteachers wanted to retain the name on the grounds that it was well known to the public and it emphasized the centrality of teaching and learning. A minority wanted titles like chief executive, principal, school leader, or head of learning either because the role had broadened or because they felt they could no longer lay claim to be the best teacher.

5. Alternative Models of Leadership

- 5.1 A number of alternative models of headship and school organisation have been emerging in response to a variety of ambitions and pressures. Among the examples captured in our representative samples were a business model, a hard federation, clusters, associate headship and implications for headship of the private finance initiative.

Business Model

- 5.2 Our best example of the application of a business model is a comprehensive school of about 100 teachers where the headteacher – from a conventional classroom background – has recreated himself as the Chief Executive. Box 5.1 gives the details. Below him is a person who is carrying out most of the teaching and learning functions associated with headship, but in parallel with three other heads of equivalent status responsible for finance, personnel and facilities. Underlining the business approach an obligation to improve test and examination results is laid upon the head of the education division and *“failure to raise standards is a dismissible offence.”* The school does regularly achieve an 80-85 per cent pass rate with five good GCSEs, but this is from a background of low eligibility for free school meals and special needs.
- 5.3 Reorganising the school in this way does free up the headteacher for a national role of publicising the arrangement and networking. He is also working with the headteachers of two other schools to help them to raise the performance of the pupils. *“I look at each section’s statistics. They have to give me a ‘traffic lights report’ on their staffing, with amber for people who aren’t too good and red for those we are going to get rid of, develop or put into ‘Capability’.”* He explains his CEO role in these schools as *“working from the shadows. Anything coming out of the school does not bear my name. I am irrelevant at that level, although we work together, share everything, challenge each other, but it is just one of three departments of the business I run around the country.”*
- 5.4 Other headteachers are deeply sceptical of this kind of approach. The head of a community 11-18 comprehensive in the East Midlands argued for education on a human scale, implying that if the job has become too big the way forward is to reduce the demands and think about the size of schools:

I personally wouldn’t want it to go that way even though the role has become massive. I don’t think the sort of models described would serve the needs of the kids properly. If you have one head who is driving the ethos of the school, that is so important. What you need is to have education on a human scale in terms of relationships. What we should be thinking about is what can we do to make schools nice places to work in, manageable places to work in, productive places to work in and keep them on a human scale. Keep schools small, but not too small and a much greater shared responsibility amongst all the staff. That things don’t just pass up to one person. Mustn’t fall in with the business model because it just won’t work.

Box 5.1: Business Model

A large comprehensive school in the East region (1,301-1,600 pupils, 100 teaching staff and as many support staff) has adopted a business model of leadership. At the apex is the principal, also called the chief executive, who has been in post for twelve years. Below him is a team of four divisional leaders. Each has a specific area of responsibility: the Head of College (education); the Head of Education Support (personnel); the Head of Finance; and the Head of Facilities. All have equal status, meet regularly and report directly to the CEO. The Head of College, whose job it is to drive forward teaching and learning in the school, does so in collaboration with the other three divisional leaders through service level agreements. A third tier in the leadership structure is made up of six vice-principals who are answerable to the Head of College not the CEO. Their designated responsibilities are: ITT; Student Progress; Human Resources; Teaching and Learning; Assessment, Recording and Reporting; and Curriculum.

The CEO explained that he and his team 'have to run an effective business' and that they had abandoned the idea long ago of deputies responsible for areas of the school, such as the premises, that they knew nothing about. The CEO and Head of College have QTS, the Heads of Division have professional qualifications according to their areas of responsibility, such as in accountancy and human resources.

The nearest equivalent to the headteacher in this structure is the Head of College, but under the CEO who accepts, "*the moral purpose of the school is my problem, the moral fibre of the school is my problem, the work of the community is my problem.*" On the other hand, "*accountability for what happens in the classroom rests with the Head of College,*" and in this business-type model "*failure to raise standards is a dismissible offence.*"

The role of the CEO is much, much wider: "*I haven't taught for fifteen years. I don't do headteacher work anymore, only CEO work. Having a Head of College means I can be out delivering primary care with the police, social services, the voluntary sector and working on Every Child Matters in a far more grown up manner. I network 50 per cent of my time, pressing the flesh or whatever to get resources, funding. We have to get the community on board.*" He also describes himself as '*an interventionist CEO.*" In addition to his role as principal and CEO of the school, he works with schools that are judged to be failing, to turn them around. Currently he is dividing his time between his own school and two others making seven in all with which he has had some involvement.

- 5.5 The head of another community comprehensive 11-18, this one in London, agreed, "*I would never go for the latter. Grafting a business package into schools does not work because it is a completely different ethos and direction, not the atmosphere and what schools are about.*" The head of a community comprehensive to 16 in the North West stressed the links between the head and the local community:

You know you've got to belong to the community. You've got to be - it's taken me five years to get to know my community. If you have an executive head how are they going to work with the community? I don't mind losing the title 'headteacher'. I'm not bothered about that too much, but I think an executive head who doesn't know the children, who has no educational background, who doesn't work in the community, just wouldn't be suitable, not in a very difficult, challenging area, because they'd bring in ideas that just don't suit.

- 5.6 The head of a community comprehensive to 16 in London had reservations from what he had seen elsewhere in education, "*What I see of FE colleges is of principals increasingly divorced from what is happening on the ground. Even if they have a teaching background they get sucked into other agendas very quickly.*"

Hard Federation

- 5.7 The proposed federation outlined in Box 5.2 seems to have come about through a wish to streamline education in a small relatively isolated town in the North East so that the years 3-18 are covered on different campuses of the one organisation. It may have been prompted in part by the local authorities decision to phase out middle schools anyway threatening the existence of some of the schools. The 12 schools from secondary to first have worked together in close partnership for a number of years and are now examining the practicalities of a more formal arrangement. The new option of trust status is being seriously considered.

Box 5.2: Hard Vertical Federation

Schools in a former mining community in the North East have been working together for some time in a cross-phase partnership comprising the 13-18 secondary school, two middle schools and ten first schools. The 12 schools are now investigating the practicalities of formalising the partnership to create a federation to serve the town. The head of one of the middle schools who was drawn in our sample thinks this type of structure is particularly appropriate in this rural part of the county, where communities tend to be fairly isolated, with little seepage out of the catchment area. The children tend to stay within the pyramid of schools.

The proposed federation would be led by a chief executive, probably based in the secondary school. The federation envisages appointing someone who is an effective and efficient manager, who has a background in public administration, though probably not from business and not necessarily a qualified teacher. Each institution would be managed or led by a curriculum leader. At first this would be the incumbent head but as they moved on or retired, the idea of 'headship' and the structures associated with it, as it is in his own school now, would change. The headteacher might be replaced on the same salary level but their role might be that of 'Teaching and Learning Manager' for a particular institution. The idea is that they would all be working for the same over-arching school across the whole of the area of one town and six surrounding villages. *"We would call it the (Name of Town) Learning Village' or the (Name of Town) Education Institution, something like that and make everybody part of the same system. The idea is very attractive."*

- 5.8 Schools in other areas are also exploring vertical federations. The head of a community infant and junior school in Yorkshire and Humberside described how he and neighbouring primary schools together with a comprehensive school (which he refers to as the local pyramid of schools) were exploring with the National College for School Leadership the possibility of closer co-operation along the lines of a federation. His own job had changed considerably recently with the construction on the school site of a Children's Centre which among other things would be providing adult literacy classes and advice on good parenting. The Centre, which is expected to be self-financing, will enable the school to take forward the Every Child Matters Agenda. It had taken up a considerable amount of his time and that of both the site manager and senior administrator, and this had led him to think that if the federation takes shape it should be run by a chief executive not necessarily from a school background.
- 5.9 Other headteachers could see problems with a hard federations run by a chief executive perhaps with no classroom experience. The head of community comprehensive to 16 in the South West was concerned at the potential effects on the speed and relevance of the decision taking:

You are likely to have to wait for a decision from a chief executive of, say, five or six schools who might not know the exact situation. As a headteacher, if someone hands their notice in, for example, you can assess the impact, ask if you have got the structures right, do you need to replace like with like? A member of staff, who was our primary liaison left and he was a member of the senior team. We looked at it and said, OK, we can cover the teaching commitment elsewhere, so let's do something slightly different. We appointed a member of staff from the primary sector to do intervention work in the school. In effect I had understood the needs of the school in the local context and I am not sure a chief executive would.

- 5.10 The headteacher of a community grammar school in London could see problems with appointing someone with no classroom experience:

To juggle all of that if you're not a professional who has enjoyed teaching and who's run a department could mean that you did not have the 'feel' for it. Administrators and accountants are not necessarily good 'people people'. They might be wonderful on the money, but I can do the money, that's the easy bit, it's the people who bring the problems.

Clusters

- 5.11 The head of a junior school in the South East outlined the advantages of a cluster of mutually supportive schools. It allowed the schools to retain their identity and autonomy, but issues affecting them all can be settled collaboratively. Box 5.3 gives a brief description.

Box 5.3: Clusters

In our part of the world the schools encouraged by the LEA work closely together. In the town there is cluster of 14 primary and 5/6 secondary schools. We meet twice a term as a group. They are very frank, open and honest exchanges. For the last two years we have been running a collaborative leadership programme. It is all about working together and setting up projects on assessment and well-being. It creates a responsible relationship between all the headteachers. For instance in setting up a protocol about admissions that we will all follow. Very intelligent way of dealing with for instance the falling rolls situation. It cost money to set up and operate but the county has been prepared to fund it.

Associate or Co-Headship

- 5.12 Our sample also included a headteacher who specialises in rescuing schools in difficulties. A pen portrait is provided in Box 5.4. She is currently in a large community comprehensive in the East Midlands where less than 40 per cent achieve five good GCSEs, but has served in three schools in the past five years. Her approach is based on distributive leadership even to the point of having two headteachers either with one senior to an associate head (a role which she has occupied) or two headteachers in job share. *"I am great believer in co-headship, it can halve the stress and double the capacity. It is no longer wrong to ask for support and advice"*. She believes that the nature of headship is changing to a much more collegiate, distributive and facilitative style. *"It is much more about helping each other and that is going to reduce competition between schools in an area."*

Box 5.4: Co-Headship

One of the heads in our sample is a specialist in trying to rescue difficult schools and has held three such posts in five years. Prior to her present post she was an Associate Head put in place to support the headteacher in a failing school. Her role was to work with the head and to share the responsibility. They were able to play to their strengths, her hands on and his strategic skills to turn the school around. Her present school is in special measures.

In tackling the inadequacies the head is assisted by a Senior Management Team of four other people, two deputies and two assistant heads. Their roles are flexible and are apportioned on an annual basis according to what needs doing, the importance of the job, workload and personal preferences. This is done to maximise efficiency and to further professional development. *“I believe totally in distributive leadership and I only work in difficult schools, so we all support each other, build up structures and enable someone to step into our shoes if we are not there.”* All the SMT have QTS. Until recently the SMT also included a Business Manager. But the school’s budget deficit meant the post had to be moth balled. One of the main tasks of that job was to oversee the completion of a new building financed under PFI. That task is now shared by SMT.

The head teacher is a great believer in co-headship, *“it can halve the stress and double the capacity. It is no longer wrong to ask for support and advice.”* She believes that the nature of headship is changing to a much more collegiate, distributive and facilitative style. *“It is much more about helping each other and that is going to reduce competition between schools in an area.”* In her opinion, *“heads of the old model who just sat in their room and got on with it are going to be phased out.”*

Private Finance Initiative

- 5.13 Among those we interviewed was the headteacher of a primary school in the East Midlands region whose school had recently been built under the Private Finance Initiative whereby the local authority takes out a long lease with the private developers. It is included here because it vividly illustrates the impact on headship of the changed relationship with the facilities manager. The school in question is one of several primaries run by the premises manager on behalf of the developers.
- 5.14 The headteacher had over ten years experience when appointed and, as we can see in Box 5.5, she is very appreciative of the new building and equipment. But her frustration is in not having full control. She does not even officially hold a key. The school is only open from 8.00am to 6.00pm after which time application has to be made for a limited number of ‘after-school-periods’ so *“we cannot operate as a proper community school.”* On an occasion when there was a break-in she did not hear until the facilities manager asked her to check if anything was missing.
- 5.15 The relationship can also impact directly on the teaching and learning. During a very cold spell a classroom got unbearably uncomfortable and she asked the facilities manager for the heating to be turned up. *“They came in with a probe and took the temperature several times and declared the room was above the threshold in the contract, but I had children whose fingers were turning blue. Could I get that over to them. Apparently the minimum temperature specified was that for adults in the workplace. Eventually I had to close the classroom to get anything done. It was quite a battle!”*

Box 5.5: PFI School

The school has been built by a developer and is leased under contract by the local authority for 30 years. During this time the school, via its devolved budget from the local authority, pays an annual 'unitary charge' based on pupil numbers to the management company set up by the private provider. *"The charge covers all sorts of things to do with the running and maintenance of the buildings, including cleaning, insurance, health and safety and so on, for which the school no longer has to fork out separately."*

"The school has certainly got a 'wow' factor." As well as a high quality building, the school has state-of-the-art ICT facilities, renewable every three years, provided by another national company. The headteacher sees it as a potentially excellent springboard from which to raise standards. Her main reservation is that she no longer feels in total control of what is her main task, the education of the children.

"I have found myself in a situation here with this beautiful new school and fantastic facilities. I am so privileged to be in the job I am in, super supportive parents, lovely children, what more could you wish for? But then I haven't got total control. There are some things I don't want to know about, like boiler rooms and so on. It is great that I have somebody to do that. I just want to make decisions based on the needs of the children and staff. I don't want to jump through hoops in order to provide what I know we need to provide. We have got lots of lovely ideas, which I want to take forward. If this were an ordinary school I could just do it."

But in the PFI school she has to operate under a number of restrictions. Her access to the building is limited because of insurance stipulations. She doesn't officially have a key. The school is opened at 8.00am and closed at 6.00pm by the caretaker, who was appointed and is employed by the management company. Any meeting she wants to have outside these hours she has to apply to the management company for permission. A system of ASPs (after school periods) operates. There are only so many ASPs available per term. *"They come in blocks of two hours. All meetings have to start by six and end by half seven or so, otherwise I have to book two ASPs. They have to be booked at least a fortnight in advance."*

Any fault or problem to do with the premises has to be reported to the helpdesk which oversees a number of PFI schools and it is the facilities manager who decides whether to give the go ahead or not. His decision is not necessarily based on educational need. *"I cannot ask and expect something being done in the best interests of the children. The company decides and if it's not part of part of the contract or the company thought it wasn't in the interests of the lifecycle of the building then it is likely that I would be turned down."*

"There have four different caretakers in the last three years. That says something. They feel between the devil and the deep blue sea. They are in a difficult position. I can't just ask, 'Can you put that picture up for me or clean up the dog poo on the climbing frame?' it has to go through the central helpdesk. In fact, I didn't report the dog poo. The caretaker did it as a favour before he left in the morning. Otherwise, I would have had to put the frame out of action until he had been officially given the job. There are so many grey areas."

The head feels she is not carrying out the role of the head in traditional terms. She believes there is not much joined-up thinking nationally about PFI. There is no network of PFI heads in the country. She is not aware that the DfES provides any sort of co-ordinating role. *"Everything I have found out I have done through my own contacts and getting in touch with the private provider, asking advice from people involved with their other school projects."*

She thought that overall the experience had made her a better head. But the staff had found it difficult. *"I haven't got such a close relationship with my staff. It has distanced me from them. I am out far more."* A lot of the difficulties in her view could be traced back to inexperience in drawing up the original contract. *"Certain aspects have to be rethought. The key issue is about developing and sustaining the ethos of the school. The vision thing is not understood by the providers."*

- 5.16 In some ways the headteacher of the PFI school is in an enviable position. She has a fine new building whose upkeep is taken off her shoulders. Cleaning and other services are provided for her. But she has to operate in parallel with a facilities manager whose first concern is fulfilling the contract and maintaining the building, not serving the needs and interests of the children and the community. It is something of a warning as to what can happen when the person leading a school does not have full authority.

Résumé

- 5.17 A variety of new ways of leading schools have emerged driven by ambitions and pressures. Among those we have considered are the business model, a hard federation under a chief executive, a soft federation of collaborating schools, co-headship and changes associated with the Private Finance Initiative. The National College for School Leadership and the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust are encouraging the development of federations, and the government hopes that the opportunity to achieve Trust Status enabled in the latest Schools Bill, will pave the way for them establishing independent foundations. The great majority of the headteachers in our samples remained sceptical. As the headteacher of a foundation comprehensive to 18 in Wales put it: *“At the end of the day who really is in charge - is it the person who is overseeing the federation or is it the person who is actually looking after the school itself?”*

6. Recruitment, Succession and Training

- 6.1 In its Fifteenth Report, the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB, 2005) concluded with regard to the leadership group in schools "that there may be problems of recruitment and retention building up for the future. In particular, it noted "a striking demographic consideration in that a considerable number of heads, deputies and assistants will be coming up to retirement in the next few years." Since then both the General Teaching Council (2006) and the National College for School Leadership (2006b) have come up with somewhat alarmist predictions with the GTC suggesting that 40 per cent of headteacher vacancies will be unfilled by 2011 and the NCSL advising that there will need to be a 15-20 per cent increase in the number of appointments by 2009.
- 6.2 Even so, on the face of it, a crisis in headteacher recruitment would seem unlikely. We saw in Chapter 3 that there has been a very considerable increase in the demands made upon headteachers in recent years. But the latest statistics on the school workforce in England show that full-time teachers outnumber headteachers by over 15 to 1. In the case of secondary schools the ratio is 53 to 1. It seems highly unlikely that less than two per cent of secondary teachers would aspire to lead schools. Primary schools, where the ratio is eight to one, could be more vulnerable if headship isn't sufficiently attractive.

Recruitment

- 6.3 It does look as though it is becoming more difficult to recruit headteachers. All of the primary headteachers agreed that this was the case and 89.9 per cent of the secondary heads assented. The pattern of responses is shown in Chart 6.1.

Chart 6.1: Reasons for Head Recruitment More Difficult

Secondary	%	Primary	%
Workload	44.4	Insufficient financial incentive	63.2
Stress/pressure	30.6	Workload	52.6
Vulnerability to sacking	27.8	Accountability	31.6
Accountability	27.8	Perception of Job	26.3
Wide range of skills	22.2	Stress/pressure	10.5
Insufficient financial incentive	13.9	Detached from teaching	10.5
Other ¹	5.6	Interfering parents	5.3
Difficulty exaggerated	11.1		

1. selection process, loneliness.

- 6.4 The reasons given are broadly similar between the phases. But, interestingly, the major one identified by primary headteachers is that the **pay differential isn't sufficiently great** for teachers to want to take on the extra responsibilities:

The pay differentials are the key, especially now we have the Children's Centre which has put some extra pay the way of the deputy. I am not that far ahead of any of my SMT. (Community, Infant and Junior, Yorks & Humb)

Pay is an issue, especially in a small school. Once I am at the top of my scale I will still be on less than some deputies. It is those differentials that are part of the problem not enough extra rewards for the extra responsibilities. (Voluntary Aided, Infant and Junior, East)

Ordinary teachers are quite well paid but it can be argued that heads' and deputies' pay hasn't quite kept up. If I were younger with a family and a mortgage I would question whether the extra responsibility was worth the small differential. (Voluntary Aided, Infant and Junior, South East)

6.5 Concerns about salary came through in a somewhat different form from secondary headteachers who felt that since they were now almost as **vulnerable to sacking for poor results** as business leaders perhaps their pay and compensation packages should reflect this:

If you work in a school which all of a sudden becomes difficult - by that I mean you're not meeting your targets - as a head you are very, very vulnerable aren't you. In industry you're not secure, but one big difference of course is that if you are blamed you normally walk away with a nice little handout; you don't have that here. You can just have your livelihood taken away. Many people just see that as a risk that they're not prepared to take which is unfortunate. But you can't blame people with young families not wanting to take that risk on board. (Foundation, Comprehensive, 11-18, Wales)

Future heads know they are going to get a lot of flak. They also know that they can get ditched very quickly and people won't put their head in the noose. It's partly the government's fault, it's partly that's what life is like these days. Schools are being treated like supermarkets where you can buy some GCSEs off the shelf without having to take any part in it. If something happens you don't like, you'll fight your corner. There is almost a feeling that anyone in a position of authority is not doing what they are supposed to be doing rather than working for the general good. (Voluntary Aided, Comprehensive, 11-18, South West)

The vulnerability puts people off. Also the workload and pressure but that is related to the vulnerability. That is the biggest reason to stay safely in the second tier. (Community, Comprehensive, 11-16, North West)

6.6 Overall the **increased workload and stress** came out as the major reasons:

It may be that the job of the head is just becoming too big. I am constantly juggling balls in the air so the demands of the job are much greater. The pressure on heads is much greater because you feel you have to succeed on examination results. It is just external pressures and I can understand people who do not want to do it. It encompasses such a wide variety of things not just about learning and teaching. (Community, Comprehensive 11-18, North West)

I talk to a lot of my assistant heads about this and they just say 'I wouldn't want your job.' They see the job as either too big or with too many hours to work. Obviously, if they've got families that's a disincentive. I was lucky in that my wife wasn't working and by the time I became a head the kids were all at secondary school. (Community, Comprehensive, 11-18, Yorks & Humb)

People do no longer want the responsibility or workload. A new governor said to me after his first meeting, 'I never realised you were responsible to so many

people', and that is part of the problem. What's more not all of them are to do with educating children. The increase in pay is not worth it for all the extra work. It is also important to look at what support is offered, almost like a headteacher's package, not just pay but resources to pay for more admin time so that the head doesn't have to do all the crappy jobs. In a primary school there is often no one else. (Community, First, West Midlands)

There are a few reasons. I think accountability is one. People do not want to be so accountable that they feel vulnerable. I think they are fearful of the workload and bureaucracy. Pay is inadequate for the responsibilities. In the secondary school down the road a second in department is paid as much as I am. (Community, First, North East)

6.7 A range of other reasons were advanced including, in the case of secondary schools, **excessive accountability, wide range of skills involved** and in one case **loneliness**:

It is the level of accountability and responsibility that heads are carrying from simple health and safety to examination results. People do not want to do it. (Foundation, Secondary Modern, 11-16, East)

The job is all consuming. The level of accountability has increased significantly. The range of skills and competencies you need as a head is wider than it has ever been and it reduces the number of people who feel they can do it all. It's an amazingly wide-ranging job, and when you look at it the salary does not compare with what you'd get in industry for it. (Community, Comprehensive, 11-16, London)

It's also very lonely being a head. Everybody's pleasure or displeasure rests with you at the end of the day. You have got to have a massive support mechanism at home. (Community, Comprehensive, 11-18, East Midlands)

6.8 In primary schools becoming **distanced from teaching** and **the changed relationship with parents** were suggested as further reasons:

I think from my own point of view I didn't want to leave the classroom because I enjoyed being a teacher. I know, for example, my deputy here (he's been here a year) now says 'I don't want your job'. I think he sees that you're not with the children, which is why he came into teaching in the first place and you have to wear so many hats. (Voluntary Controlled, Infant and Junior, North West)

Another off putting factor is dealing with parents who feel they have a right to an input as to what should go on in a school. I still feel that pressure even with many years experience. For a head new to the job that is an area of great concern. (Voluntary Aided, Infant and Junior, South East)

6.9 But a minority of the headteachers felt the recruitment difficulties were greatly **exaggerated**: the head of a voluntary aided boys grammar in London said: *"I do not see much evidence of the problem. Members of my team will probably want headship – 'my deputy has already got his knife in my back' – and one of the assistants will be a very effective head."* The head of a community 11-16 comprehensive in the North West remarked, *"I don't think it is as bad as it is painted to be, but unfortunately a lot of people are painting that picture."* The head of a voluntary aided 11-16 comprehensive in the North West agreed, *"It is not a problem in this area; there are a number of people keen enough and this is fostered. However people are leaving early."*

Attractions

6.10 The sheer quantity and force of the potential drawbacks raised by the headteachers prompts the question: what drew them to take the job in the first place? Their responses are very revealing.

6.11 The heads were remarkably consistent across both the primary and secondary phases. The head of a community comprehensive to 16 in the South West said:

I feel I have been very fortunate to have the opportunity to work with a great group of staff and kids and parents. But more important is being allowed to stamp my vision on education and hopefully to have had an impact on the kids' lives. It's not just about exam results. It's about the experiences you can give kids.

The head of a community comprehensive to 18 in Yorkshire and Humberside expressed the same devotion to enhancing children's lives:

I think it's been personally enormously challenging and rewarding. I have been able to establish myself in one school and to see generations of kids go through. To watch them grow and develop has been very personally fulfilling for me and it's given me a lot of job satisfaction and it's outweighed any of the negatives. You do get irritations but I just enjoy the job.

6.12 There were many similar comments from other secondary headteachers and also the primary headteachers:

It is an opportunity to play a hugely important role in children's lives and to set them on the path to lifelong learning. It is also an opportunity for myself to be creative and to have job satisfaction through that creativity and the impact it is having on other people. (Community, First, North East)

The opportunity to work with all the people; working with staff at a highly professional level, to induct new staff, to see children go from birth to secondary transition and develop relationships with networks of families. (Voluntary Aided, Infant and Junior School, London)

6.13 It is evident that the motivation for entering teaching and leading teachers is par excellence 'people' values. The weight and consistency of the responses hints at a clash between the attractions of teaching and the business model of test and examination outputs that the present government has imposed on them. It could be, therefore, that any impending shortage of headteachers for our schools is government made. We shall consider this further in our final chapter, 'The Future'.

Succession

6.14 Although drawn to the profession by similar values an important difference emerged between primary and secondary schools with regard to the likely future recruitment of headteachers. Chart 6.2 shows that all the schools in our sample said they had staff who they thought would make good headteachers. But three-quarters of the primary schools said some or all of the likely candidates just weren't interested. In contrast, only about one in eight of the secondary heads said they had potential headteachers who were reluctant to apply for promotion. The reasons are implied in the 'Recruitment' section of this chapter (see Chart 6.1)

Chart 6.2: Future Heads Among Staff?

	%Yes	%No	%Yes But Not Attracted
Primary	100.0	0.0	76.5
Secondary	100.0	0.0	12.9

6.15 But what comes through clearly in response to the direct question is an insufficient salary differentiation commensurate with the responsibilities carried. The point is made most frequently by primary headteachers, but it was also something secondary raised:

There are more now who do not see the point of taking on more responsibility and pressure for very little by way of pay differential. If there an issue or problem (eg with Ofsted) it falls on the head and it is the head who goes. It has happened locally with at least six heads after unfavourable Ofsteds. (Voluntary Controlled, Infant and Junior, East Midlands)

My deputy is very good (better than she thinks) but actually resigned at one stage and had to be talked back into it. She has the NPQH and has had adverts put in front of her but has taken no action. She is even questioning again what she wants. She says she will not be applying for my job – a big not! It would be too much else as well as carrying that ultimate responsibility. There is one person looking at NPQH but the rest are content that they can do what they do and still have a life. (Community, Middle Deemed Primary, South West)

I have people with the potential but who have decided not to, despite my trying to put a gloss on the job. One issue is that middle managers have been granted more time now to do their jobs. It is not only expensive but it leads to them liking having only half a timetable and that makes it more difficult to persuade them to move up. (Voluntary Aided, Boys, Comprehensive, 11-18, Yorks and Humb)

6.16 The seeming reluctance of many potential future headteachers to put themselves forward does point to an emerging difficult situation that will require intervention. The difficulties are likely to be much greater in the primary phase than the secondary since not only is the ratio of teachers to headteachers much lower, but it is also the primary teachers who seem much more disinclined to take on headship. The head of a junior school in the South East does, however, hold out the hope that, *“the younger generation may come forward because they see the job as what it has become and they accept that.”*

6.17 But any reluctance on the part of the staff to take on headship is not for want of the heads trying. The saw it as an important part of their role to identify and help develop the headteachers of the future. They described to us the steps they were taking to secure succession. Teachers who in the view of the headteachers showed the potential to lead schools were, among other things:

- given verbal encouragement to raise their aspirations;
- given extra responsibilities in addition to their roles on the SMT or in middle management or even as a relatively new teacher, for example, as appropriate by chairing a governors’ sub-committee, leading mini-projects, delivering INSET, taking Assemblies, speaking to parents;

- encouraged to go on courses to take national qualifications like the NPQH, NCSL's 'Leading from the Middle', the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust's 'Developing Leaders for Tomorrow' and MAs/MBAs;
- mentored often through discussions with the headteacher about career development, and coached in the school;
- encouraged to visit other schools to widen their experience, to be involved in outreach work like presentations to the local heads' group and to network generally.

From Other Organisations?

6.18 Given the apparent difficulty of recruiting sufficient headteachers we asked our samples if there was a case for bringing in people with successful experience of running other organisations. Consistent with their responses to a somewhat similar question on 'who should be in overall charge of a school?' (discussed in paragraphs 4.14-4.18 and illustrated in Boxes 4.5 and 4.6) they were virtually unanimous in rejecting the idea. They often did so with some strength of feeling:

No I don't. I really resent this assumption that other areas of work somehow know better. I know that there's a recruitment crisis but the quality of people coming into teaching these days is higher than it was certainly when I was training because people know what the pitfalls are in teaching. If they're coming into teaching now they've got their eyes open, they should have anyway, and they know it's a tough job. But with the right attitude it's rewarding. I think that if we've got a coherent programme of development, then we should be able to train really good headteachers from within our own ranks, except on the financial side and for the premises. I cannot see any advantage in bringing somebody in who doesn't know what it's like to teach. You know bottom set, year nine, on a Friday afternoon. You really have got to have that empathy. (Community, Comprehensive, 11-16, North East)

I think 'how successful would I be if I went in to try and run a hospital?' I have a sister working for a hospital trust and I see what clinical knowledge and expertise she brings to that role; it means the decisions she makes are better decisions as a consequence. I like to think the decisions I make at my school are better because I understand about teaching and learning, about the job of the teacher, about what it is like to work with young people all day. In education there isn't the bottom line you get in a baked beans factory where it is about how many baked beans tins you produce and how much profit the company makes. But you cannot boil it down in a school to what is that bottom line. That is why it isn't like going from chief executive of Network Rail to being chief executive of British Aerospace. (Community, Comprehensive, 11-18, South East)

I do not think there is a place for people from other walks of life, you have to know about teaching and learning first and foremost if you are going to be a successful headteacher. There is a perfect example in the health service where the introduction of administrators has had a negative effect. People do not understand the work and in a people's industry like ours you cannot measure everything. I tend to believe you have to come from the bottom upwards. (Community, Comprehensive, 11-16, North West)

6.19 Only four headteachers were prepared to allow exceptions. A primary school in Wales thought that business people who had served as teaching assistants could progress to become headteachers. The head of a secondary modern 11-18 school in

the south east accepted that there were people with the necessary people values who could become heads from outside provided that gained some school experience:

You don't have to have had an educational background to be driven by the same set of beliefs that have driven me. They'd have to obtain some school background but the requisite is more to do with values and beliefs than educational knowledge. You can help people acquire knowledge and skills; it's a damn site more difficult to change hearts and minds.

6.20 Two other heads could see a case especially when it came to a chief executive of a federation. But in their various ways the other heads made the point that schools are not businesses, but are there for the benefit of the pupils in them. In many ways they are unique and it is important that the leaders should have come up through the ranks so that they both demonstrated that they understood this and also had credibility with those who they were leading. Headteachers could learn from the leaders of other organisations but not be replaced by them.

Training

6.21 The national route to the training of headteacher is through the NPQH a qualification that this be compulsory for appointment as head of a maintained school from 2009.

NPQH

6.22 Most of the heads in our samples had some experience of the qualification either from having taken it themselves or through having sent one or more members of their staff to take the award and hearing what they had to say about it. We asked them the three questions shown in Chart 6.3 and it is fair to say that their responses were ambivalent.

Chart 6.3: Views on the NPQH

	%Yes	%No	%Ambivalent
Primary			
Should NPQH be compulsory?	83.3	0.0	16.7
Will it be a barrier?	33.3	41.7	25.0
Is it the best way of training future heads	7.8	7.8	84.6
Secondary			
Should NPQH be compulsory?	66.7	22.2	11.1
Will it be a barrier?	42.1	47.4	10.5
Is it the best way of training future heads?	4.4	16.7	83.1

6.23 Most of the heads recognised the need for a national qualification, but many had doubts whether the present version is it. A minority were outspoken in rejection of it:

If you pass the driving test it doesn't make you a good driver. Getting NPQH doesn't necessarily make you a good head. People can have the right language to talk themselves into a headship and with quite bad consequences. It's the ticking boxes thing again just because they know what to say but actually it's not part of their practise. So I don't see the point of NPQH becoming compulsory. (Community, Comprehensive, 11-16, East Midlands)

Two of my deputies went through the first round, and it was ludicrous the amount of paperwork, and essays they had to do. What I've always said to mine is get the

experience in school and go for the shorter route. (Community, Girls, Grammar, London)

It is not a good way of training or assessing future heads. It should be more school-based on things you are doing day-to-day and assessed practically in the school. (Community, Infant, West Midlands)

- 6.24 But as the figures show most heads were ambivalent seeing some good points, but having reservations. These mainly related to the qualification being predominantly paper-based rather than centred on training on the job:

They should have things like secondment or exchanges so they experience more than one way of leading and managing. I think heads could validate some of the things they have done rather than producing huge amounts of paper. I think the training is varied. Some of the sessions they find very good indeed and some of them they are quite alarmed at as examples of good practice. So where the training is very good it is valuable. (Community, Girls, Comprehensive, 11-16, West Midlands)

I don't think NPQH can make you a head, but it gives you a lot of information to think about yourself and your skills. The best training is working in a variety of situations and working with an impressive head is the best training. (Community, Comprehensive, 11-18, East Midlands)

It has its points but in this part of the world they also pair up new heads with older serving heads in a mentoring capacity and this gives you someone locally who knows the ropes. It is comforting to have someone locally because it is a steep learning curve. (Community, First, East)

Other Possible Routes

- 6.25 Given the ambivalence of existing heads to the NPQH we were interested in what other ways they envisaged for the preparation and training of headteachers. They had four main suggestions: school-based training; alternative qualifications; residential courses; and mentoring.

- 6.26 The most frequent proposal was **school-based training shadowing the head**:

People should be trained to become heads locally along the lines of the successful Graduate Teacher Programme. Why can't that be extended to develop the next generation of school leaders? Local areas could become satellites of NCSL and develop practically-based courses the equivalent of the NPQH. (Community, Junior, South East)

I would like to see people seconded when they are really ready for it and come and work with you on a 12 months secondment. (Community, Comprehensive, 11-16, South East)

What I'm doing with one of my assistant heads is that she's working more and more closely with me and I'm training her over two or three years to enable her to be in a position where she could quite easily step into my shoes and take over. And I'm doing that with a number of different people in the school. This within-school training is crucial. Some of the external stuff from the NCSL is good, but the quality of the trainers has been variable. (Community, Comprehensive, 11-18, Yorks & Humb)

- 6.27 The headteachers also thought **alternative qualifications** like MBAs, MAs or PhDs should be acceptable either instead of or alongside a slimmed-down NPQH:

There is such a variety of masters courses available now that there is a case for a compulsory further qualification, but not necessarily the NPQH. (Voluntary Aided, Middle, East).

In the early headship programme we are given up to £2,000 to spend on training. But unfortunately it is hugely restrictive. You can spend it only with certain providers. So I can't spend it on my doctorate fees. To be honest it's not that high quality, it has become something of 'jobs for the boys' type of thing. (Community, Comprehensive, 11-16, East Midlands)

6.28 Two other suggestions were for **residential courses** and **systematic mentoring**:

I think you've got to give people residential courses and say the work will be done there and then. To expect people to do it at home after a long day or at a weekend is not going to enthuse them. (Community, Girls, Grammar, London)

NPQH is good for awareness training but what needs to go alongside that is for someone to offer good mentoring. I think it is really important that people have a good mentor, someone they can talk to. I don't know about it being a lonely job, but it is a solitary job. You do make decisions that can't please everybody even among the senior leadership team. (Community, Comprehensive, 11-18, South East)

Representativeness

6.29 Aside from any difficulty in recruiting headteachers, we asked how important the heads thought it was that headteachers should be representative of the community they served. In particular, did they think there was a case for more female or ethnic minority headteachers. The head of an infant school in the South East spoke for many when she said: "*Headteachers must relate to the community but do not need to be a member of that community. No one should be excluded but there should be no positive discrimination.*" One of the ethnic minority teachers in our sample had not experienced any difficulty herself: "*The governors wanted a significant leader with the right sort of skills and were prepared to provide the necessary remuneration. They said they wanted one with at least two years of experience, but appointed me even though I didn't have that*". (Community, Junior, London)

6.30 The headteachers agreed there used to be a problem:

When I came to the North East as a middle school head in 1993 there were 46 middle schools but there was only one female head. It's almost 50/50 now. It's changed dramatically. When I left headship in Yorkshire and Humberside there was only one Asian headteacher in the LEA, amazing as the population was half Asian. (Community, Middle, North East)

And may be there still is in some parts of the country: "*Out of 15 local heads, 3 are female and none are from ethnic minorities. But I am not a believer in positive discrimination.*" (Female, Community, Comprehensive, 11-16, Yorks & Humb)

6.31 Since teaching "*is not inherently a racist or sexist profession*" (Community, Middle, North East), the heads were inclined to put any imbalances down to **women taking time out, training and expectations** or **governing bodies**:

Like me, many women have taken time out to bring up children and have catching up to do when they return. That is their choice and so it is difficult to resolve. (Community, Infant, West Midlands)

I think the problem may lie in training issues and issues around expectations. (Community, Comprehensive, 11-16, Yorks & Humb)

I think people should get headship on merit. But there are governing bodies who may have their own opinions and may be more conservative or be very political in their appointments. (Community, Comprehensive, East Midlands)

- 6.32 Overall the headteachers were firmly of the opinion that: *“There is only one criterion, you appoint the best. You hope in appointing the best you get a range, but I don’t think you should positively discriminate”* (Community, Comprehensive, 11-16, South East).

Résumé

- 6.33 There is evidence of an impending shortfall in the recruitment of headteachers. On the face of it, this is surprising since in secondary schools the ratio of teachers to headteachers is 53:1. It is perhaps more understandable in primary schools where the ratio of teachers to headteachers is only 8:1 and three quarters of the schools reported having teachers with the qualities to become a headteacher but who did not want to move up. Nearly two-thirds of the primary heads thought that this was because the pay differential was not a sufficient incentive. The heads of small schools complained that at the top of their scale they would be receiving less than a deputy of a larger primary school or the second in a department in a secondary school. Overall, workload was the main reason the heads thought there were recruitment difficulties, with accountability a close second, particularly the vulnerability of the heads to sacking in the light of a bad Ofsted report. Why should a comfortably placed teacher want to put his/her head above the parapet?
- 6.34 Nevertheless, the heads reported considerable efforts to secure succession through identifying those with leadership potential and encouraging them, giving them extra responsibilities, supporting them to take national qualifications, mentoring and providing opportunities to widen their experience. They were strongly opposed to heads being recruited without classroom and management experience in schools, mainly on the grounds that although schools shared some characteristics with other organisations these were far outweighed by their special features which had to be understood. The heads were supportive of there being a qualification for headteachers but ambivalent about the NPQH on the grounds that it was paper-based rather than practical. They had various suggestions for supplementing or replacing the NPQH including shadowing successful headteachers, MBAs and other higher degrees to be accepted as an alternative, residential courses and systematic mentoring. They recognised that headteachers were not necessarily representative in terms of gender or ethnic background though things had got a lot better. They were strongly opposed to positive discrimination, believing that if you appoint the best you will get a range of social characteristics.

7. Remuneration, Incentives and Support

- 7.1 Salary emerged as the major reason why primary headteachers thought it difficult to recruit at the present time, particularly the lack of an insufficient differential to make it worthwhile to take the top position. Salary was less of an issue for secondary heads, though some suggested that their increased vulnerability to sacking should be matched by an improved compensation package. In our in-depth interviews we explored further the questions of salary and incentives, and also the related issue of what support was available to them in their roles.

Salary

- 7.2 We asked, ‘do you think there is sufficient flexibility in the salaries of headteachers to attract and retain?’ Chart 7.1 shows the pattern of responses. In the case of secondary schools only a quarter of the heads thought there was sufficient flexibility and over two-thirds thought there wasn’t. In primary schools the difference was not quite so great, but again a substantial majority thought there should be more flexibility.

Chart 7.1: Sufficient Salary Flexibility

	%Yes	%No	%Unsure
Primary	35.3	58.8	5.9
Secondary	25.0	68.8	6.3

- 7.3 In terms of the actual replies there wasn’t the stark difference which the chart would seem to imply. The heads agreed that governors did have a large measure of flexibility, but they differed in their views on the way that it was operated. The heads who thought there was sufficient flexibility often qualified their assent:

The pay structure is more flexible and better than when I became a head. I actually took a drop in salary in moving from a large school in London. But I have been lucky in having governors who have used that flexibility. Other heads have not been so fortunate and one reason is that the flexibility and governors’ freedom are not well publicised by the DfES. Basing salaries on school size does not reflect the demands of a particular job. A school like this serving a deprived area is very different from the school that I came from which was very settled and a genuine comprehensive. The demands were very different yet the pay structure was determined entirely by size. Do we really think that running a large school is more demanding than leading a smaller school in much more challenging circumstances? (Community, Secondary Modern, 11-18, South East)

Governors can decide how much they want to pay the headteacher so there is sufficient scope in the pay and conditions document. That does mean they need to be properly advised on the situation. (Community, Comprehensive, 11-18, South East)

I think it’s about right. There is flexibility for governors so I am fairly happy with the way we have it at the moment. A lot of heads don’t understand what they can ask for when they go for jobs. (Voluntary Controlled, Infant and Junior, East Midlands)

Governors have got all the flexibility they need. The main issue is how much money there is. (Community, Comprehensive, 11-16, London)

- 7.4 This was a point also made by heads who didn't think there was enough flexibility. May be it was there in theory, but there was **not enough money coming into the school for the governors to be able or willing to exercise that flexibility**. Lack of affordability was more frequently mentioned by the primary heads though raised by some secondary heads also:

You control the budget and the school relies on you to manage the budget. I know some heads who have refused to take the extra point in a particular year because the school cannot afford it. There are people working on the cheap. Because of special measures this school found it a struggle to recruit. The finance committee of the governors offered an attractive package for me to come here and they have maintained it. They say that was a good business decision and they have had value for money. Artificially depressing the value of the job, even with the best of motives, aggravates the succession problem. (Voluntary Aided, Infant and Junior, South East)

We had a whole review of my pay. The job is not the same as I inherited. I have a budget to support that but it is unfair that governors are stuck within a band, when the post and demands are constantly changing. It is wrong that governors are stuck with what a school can afford. It is not right to have to make decisions like sack a teaching assistant in order to pay the head more. It is not a flexible as it seems. (Community, Infant and Junior, North West)

The problem is that governors are reluctant and also heads are sometimes reluctant to go to governors to ask them for a pay rise because the budget is so tight. I think you've almost got to direct governors to say look at the size of the school; you should be paying people more. There is a tendency with a pay range for governors to pay at the bottom. What happens every year is that heads go to the governors and say 'well actually the budget is tight so I don't think I should be getting a pay rise this year.' There's this awful dilemma between paying people what they deserve and heads' consciences. (Community, Comprehensive, 11-18, Yorks & Humb)

- 7.5 In so far as salaries were constrained by national scales the heads reiterated their concerns about the **flattening of the pay structures and lack of differentiation**:

Flattening the pay structures worries me in terms of encouraging people to take on new roles and responsibilities. There is more of a sense now that you can be quite comfortable in your departmental area, doing what you've always done. It was right to pay people more for concentrating on their classroom and improving their classroom skills. But it has been a double-edged sword. (Voluntary Aided, Comprehensive, 11-18, South West)

You're relying on governors to take a hell of a decision. If they were paying me £20,000 more per year that means there's £20,000 less for other things in the school isn't there? That is a difficult issue for them. My own view is that I think there should be a system where governors are advised to pay the headteacher at least an agreed percentage more than the highest paid teacher. Similarly for deputies and assistant heads. It's about differentials. (Foundation, Comprehensive, 11-18, Wales)

Market forces do have some effect and governors can do something but the FTCP guidelines are not helpful. Differentials as they now are inadequate, especially for smaller schools. (Voluntary Aided, Comprehensive, 11-16, North West)

- 7.6 The headteachers also thought that their increased vulnerability should be reflected in the flexibility of their salary scales. There were also concerns that salaries could

be affected by the idiosyncrasies of school funding which could lead to a perverse market.

Salaries aren't sufficiently flexible. The pay of headteachers should reflect both the challenge of the job and the vulnerability of the position. If heads can lose their job at the drop of a hat and all that goes with that this should be reflected in the pay. (Community, Comprehensive, 11-16, North West)

The salary structure should be reviewed as part and parcel of looking at the way schools are funded. If this school was in an adjacent LEA the budget would improve by half a million pounds per year and it would be able to provide a lot higher salary package to attract applicants for headship. So some schools are disadvantaged in this way. (Community, Comprehensive, 11-16, South West)

There has been a market operating, but it is perverse. The difficult, more challenging schools are not paying beyond the bog standard whereas more privileged schools can pay above the board. (Foundation, Boys, Grammar, London)

Incentives

- 7.7 The headteachers were modest in their proposals when asked what should be added to the recruitment package to make taking the post more attractive. They offered several suggestions, but none were pressed strongly underlining that headteachers are mainly motivated by people values not extrinsic rewards. Several suggested perks common in industry such as **private health care, removal allowances and subsidised accommodation**, but most proposals centred on making it possible to do the job better. The most original and interesting response came from the head of a community, 11-16 comprehensive in the South East:

Two things I would change. One would be the resignation period. I don't see why we just have to resign at certain times. It would be better to be short term as in industry. Also it would be useful for me and my senior team to be more flexible with our holidays. A long weekend might be better for us than trying to soldier on for long periods of time becoming second rate at what we are doing.

One wonders why headteachers do not have **more flexibility when it comes to breaks and holidays**. Other suggestions to enhance performance were guaranteed **secondments and sabbaticals** and more **support and mentoring**.

Support

- 7.8 It is to the extent of the support currently available that we now turn. In our conversations with the headteachers we focused on four aspects: what they made of the newly-introduced School Improvement Partners; what part the local authorities now played; what support was available from other heads in the area; and how they rated the help available from their professional association.

School Improvement Partners

- 7.9 As part of the government's 'New Relationship with Schools' each school will have appointed to it a School Improvement Partner or 'critical friend'. The intention is that a current or recent head will spend the equivalent of five days a year (three days in the school) working with a school helping set targets, identifying support needed and advising the governors on the headteacher's performance management taking over this role from the present External Adviser. The government portrays the role

of the SIP as a conduit between itself, the local authority and the school. The SIPs are qualified and accredited to a national standard and are employed and allocated to the school by the local authority.

- 7.10 So far the programme has only been rolled out in secondary schools and SIPs have not been introduced in Wales so our analysis is based on the 1 in 100 sample of 34 schools in England. Asked what their view of SIPs was, 37.9 per cent of our headteachers responded positively, 17.2 per cent negatively and 44.8 per cent said it was too early to say. Some were **enthusiastic**:

Absolutely excellent. Best support that I've had since I have been a head. I am now into the second year of it and I have found it really helpful. My SIP is a headteacher from a nearby town which is what I really like. We are able to share stories and appreciate each other's issues. She is more experienced than I am and she can help me. (Community, Comprehensive, 11-16, South West)

I have a great SIP this year who cares about me, the school and where we are. I have no complaints but I am worried they have been asked to do too much in too many schools. (Community, Secondary Modern, 11-16, South East)

- 7.11 But others had had very **negative experiences**:

"We've got a SIP. He's been once, he took the stuff away with him and said he'd get back to me within a month or so to give me some advice on it. I'm still waiting four months later. I'm not very impressed really but he seems a nice enough chap. He's an ex-head. (Community, Comprehensive, 11-18, Yorks & Humb)

The school's SIP is a retired head from a neighbouring authority. She's very nice but she keeps saying that I've got to do this, and I keep saying it's all very well but you're actually, with respect, creating more work. The value she gives us, although she tries very hard, is minimal. But she does have a time implication, so she's one more, hate to say it, cross, that we're bearing. Other heads are so much more important to me than inspectors and advisors and SIPs because we are in the same boat. Somebody usually, if you've got a problem with a parent or a teacher or disciplinary case or disability, somebody's usually done something similar and they'll talk it through with you. I think our SIP did suggest one thing about our SEF. She suggested that we numbered it in a particular way which was helpful and that was about all. (Community, Girls, Grammar, London)

- 7.12 The main response was, however, that these were early days and **the role of the SIP needs clarifying**:

We need to be clear about the role of the SIP. It will take them time to get to know the school and understand the context of the school and then two years down the line they will change again. The concept of working with another professional, to talk to them, to share the data, to draw on their expertise, that concept is very good. Where it becomes a little bit difficult is if there is a conflict between the school and the SIP on some aspect of data. The SIP won't always be acting in the role of critical friend because they are going to have to report back to the LEA and the governors. (Community, Comprehensive, 11-16, South West)

The jury is out on this. In theory it could work if you have a good SIP who is supportive. If on the other hand it becomes a punitive attitude it is not going to be effective and could undermine the work of the headteacher. (Community, Comprehensive, 11-16, North West)

7.13 There were also major concerns about where **enough SIPs** of appropriate background and quality were going to come from:

The unfortunate thing of course is that there's a massive shortage of SIPs. Now when the primary schools come into the programme this year, they're going to need thousands and thousands. God knows where they're going to get them from because it's not just a half-day visit twice per year, it's a massive commitment of about four days a year. I won't do it while I'm a headteacher here. (Community, Middle, North East)

“Looking at where your school is, coming from a peer, is one of the most important things about it. That means more heads have got to be persuaded to do it. (Community, Comprehensive, 11-18, South East)

7.14 It is early days and there is a wide variety of responses but what seems to bind them together is that it can work if the SIP is a headteacher who understands the school and works with it. Otherwise the visit of the SIP becomes just one more chore. Since as we have seen headteachers are already enormously busy it is unlikely that many will be prepared to take this on so there must be serious concerns about where the SIPs are going to come from. The official documentation refers just to ‘relevant experience’ and if this is interpreted too liberally the scheme could founder.

Local Authorities

7.15 Since the SIPs, although appointed through the LEAs, seem to be replacing yet another of their functions, we were interested to discover whether the perception of the heads was that their role was diminishing. Over two-thirds thought it was. But the reaction to this differed sharply between primary and secondary schools.

Chart 7.2: Role of LEAs Diminishing?

	%Yes	%No	%New to LEA
Primary	61.1	38.8	0.0
Secondary	65.5	24.1	10.3

7.16 In primary schools the reaction was almost always of regret:

Sadly we cannot get the old levels of support and advice from the county in its new set up; we cannot get hold of officers; we don't know who are the relevant people to talk to; it's become a bit faceless. (Voluntary Aided, Infant and Junior, South East)

The role is diminishing and I regret this because as a small school we need access to more expertise than there is in the school and we relied on the LEA for support. (Community, Infant and Junior, Wales)

I would regret very much any diminution in the role of our authority because they are very, very supportive and proactive and always trying to be ahead of the game and we get very good support from the advisers. (Community, Infant, West Midlands)

7.17 Among secondary schools, there were some whose comments were tinged with a certain sadness:

They seem to be out of the loop for me, especially as I resisted their nomination as my SIP. It will take time for this to bottom out. Many heads are almost beginning to hark back to the good old days of the LEAs. (Voluntary Controlled, Comprehensive, 11-18, West Midlands)

I regret that we don't have the depth of subject advice that we used to get and that is a major loss. I don't think at the moment my LEA gives me anything useful. (Community, Comprehensive, 11-16, North West)

7.18 But a much more common response was to welcome the change:

I think the LEA role is diminishing but their perception is that it isn't. I would welcome it." (Community, Comprehensive, 11-16, South East)

I do not rate the local authority very highly in this respect, especially the almost non-existent support for me as a new Head. (Voluntary Aided, Boys, Comprehensive, 11-18, Yorks & Humb)

I deal with them as little as possible and find them an irritation that put up barriers to prevent me doing my job. (Community, Comprehensive, 11-18, South East)

7.19 Not all headteachers thought the influence of the LEA had lessened. The headteacher of a community, comprehensive 11-16, in the South West thinks, "*the LEA is just as good as it has always been, and I welcome that.*" The head of a community primary school in the North West said, "*I am impressed with my LEA's level of support. They have a good team of consultants and we as heads support them as well.*" Nor did all schools think LEAs were playing a smaller part. Another community, comprehensive 11-16 in the South West said: "*The LEA has improved over the last few years because it was in a poor situation. But it is a small unitary authority and therefore there isn't the support in depth. Because the school has been in special measures we have been working with the regional advisers on school improvement.*" Overall, however, headteachers tended to think the LEAs had been weakened. While this was a source of concern to primary schools who saw themselves as reliant on LEA support, the majority of the secondary heads welcomed the prospect of extra freedom.

Working With Other Heads

7.20 A difference also emerged between primary schools and secondary schools in the extent to which they drew on other headteachers in the area for support and advice and whether they did so informally or in formal settings. Chart 7.3 shows that all the primary heads said they interacted a lot with their colleagues as did three-quarters of the secondary heads. But as we shall see secondary heads were much more affected by being in competition.

Chart 7.3: Support from Other Heads

	%Lot	%Little	%None
Primary	100.0	0.0	0.0
Secondary	75.0	14.3	10.7

7.21 Primary headteachers seem to use other heads as their main source of support: "*There is a lot of picking up the phone and seeking a colleague's advice. There are so many problems.*" (Community, First, West Midlands); "*One thing I was*

impressed with when I came here was the tremendous support heads give each other.” (Community, Infant, South East); *“There is a great informal network that I could not manage without. There is no real competition in this rural area.”* (Voluntary Controlled, Infant and Junior, East Midlands); *“We mainly are in informal contact. People are supportive and quite strong relationships have developed. There is no competition in the area.”* (Voluntary Aided, Infant and Junior in London).

- 7.22 But there is a hint in the responses that where schools are in competition for parental preference this has to be overcome. An infant school was more explicit:

A lot of informal networking but also the schools in this part of the West Midlands are organised in clusters around the local secondary schools, led by advisers discussing common issues. There is pressure from parental choice and historical reputation is a factor. The competition has not created a barrier between the headteachers.

- 7.23 The pressure from competition is intensified by falling pupil numbers which can put the future of a school at risk:

The LEA has falling rolls and are doing an area by area review. Local heads do work closely together and help and support one another, even though some are clearly under threat of closure or amalgamation. (Voluntary Aided, Infant and Junior, East)

- 7.24 Among secondary schools some find the competition so intense that they do not share informally with other secondary headteachers in the area: *“It is dog eat dog! We cannot work collaboratively because of parental choice competition. Everything we do we do with that in mind.”* (Foundation, Secondary Modern, 11-16, East); *“Competition is cut-throat around here.”* (Foundation, Boys, Grammar, London); *“There is competition at the moment and we also have a falling demographic, which is a huge issue.”* (Community, Comprehensive, 11-16, Yorks & Humb); *“We do work together but the competition around here is very, very severe and that has made the 14-19 curriculum agenda so hard.”* (Voluntary Controlled, Comprehensive, 11-18, West Midlands).

- 7.25 Most secondary heads say that they try not to let this affect them, but they are aware of the tension:

The choice agenda does have an impact. There are two schools in the town and we are in competition. We try not to let this affect the way we work together. We work very closely and do joint bids but we are also in competition so it is a bit of a strange tension. (Community, Comprehensive, 11-16, South West)

We are in a very competitive situation within the LEA – falling roles, several schools with long-lived good reputations, the ethnic mixes etc. However there is a lot of partnership and co-operation between the heads – a sense of shared problems. This is so despite the LEA’s plans to reduce the number of schools. (Voluntary Aided, Comprehensive, 11-18, North West)

- 7.26 Whether because of the competition or because they are much larger contacts between secondary schools seem to be on a more formal basis than those of primary heads:

We have a formal relationship because we are a 14 to 19 partnership. Also I am a member of the local Secondary Headteachers Association. We try to resist the competitive element though it is quite difficult. There is a common timetable 16 to 19 across the three secondaries and the local college so we are used to working together. (Community, Comprehensive, 11-18, South East)

We have a meeting, probably once every half term, and I meet with the other secondary heads in the county once every half term and I meet with our consortium heads of secondary schools every half term as well, so yes there's a quite a few collaborative meetings. (Community, Comprehensive, 11-18, Yorks & Humb)

7.27 Nevertheless many heads reported support from active local groupings:

We have an association of secondary heads in the City and we meet every fortnight and that is very, very useful. We do two residentials a year. The network is very strong. Parental choice puts us in competition to some degree, but there are lots of different types of schools so there is a lot of choice on offer. (Community, Comprehensive, 11-18, North West)

Lots of cooperation. In a large rural area competition between secondary schools is not usually a problem but that is balanced by distance and travel time in getting to meetings. (Voluntary Aided, Comprehensive, 11-18, South West)

I meet with the area heads' group twice per term and constantly with the other two secondary heads in the town and I also meet with primary heads at least twice in the term. There is a good network of local support. Similarly the ASCL gives good support and I go to their training and briefing sessions. (Community, Comprehensive, 11-18, East Midlands)

7.28 Working with other heads is, therefore, an important source of support to the headteachers of secondary schools, though perhaps less so than their primary colleagues. Meetings tended to be on a more formal basis, but as the quote above indicates the professional associations play an important part in bringing headteachers together.

Professional Association

7.29 Most of the headteachers in our sample belonged, in the case of secondary schools to the Association of School and College Leaders and, in the case of primary schools, the National Association of Headteachers, though some were members of the National Union of Teachers. The professional associations are a very important source of support to headteachers in at least three ways: there is the insurance cover and legal advice, there are the local groups and there are the explanatory materials.

Chart 7.4 Professional Associations

	%Yes	%No
Primary	100.0	0.0
Secondary	95.8	4.2

7.30 Chart 7.4 shows that all the primary headteachers derived support from their professional association as did the great majority of the secondary heads. The few exceptions were planning to switch. A head in London said, *“I was a member of the ASCL. As a deputy in Yorks & Humb it was great, but here it is paltry and I*

switched to NAHT and found it no better.” Moving in the opposite direction was a head in the South West, “I am a member of the NAHT, but I am thinking of moving because it would be better than I have got now.”

- 7.31 But these comments were very much the exception. A number of heads spoke warmly of the legal advice and support they had received:

The ASCL is very good and I probably find once or twice a year I have to phone them on their hotline and usually what I’ve got is a particular problem and I’ll have taken advice from some head and I’ve had to take some legal advice and I just go to them to as it were triangulate. I get a lot of legal threats here from parents and threats of litigation and you don’t want to get trapped into it because its so time consuming and expensive. They rarely come to fruition but the fear, you know, the files get so big. (Community, Girls, Grammar, London)

I’m in the National Association of Headteachers and I do ring them from time to time for help and guidance on legal issues. I’ve had occasion to ring them twice this year about issues dealing with parents, for instance about banning somebody from the site, and another one where there could have been a major claim made against the school. That’s the sort of thing that you would expect but there was also a person issue and the NAHT were superb, very, very helpful. (Community, Middle, North East)

- 7.32 The head of an infants school in the South East contrasted the support from the NAHT with what she feels she is getting from the LEA: *“I get help as and when I need it from NAHT. I use the documentation and updates - they are particularly good on staffing. There is a lack of support from the LEA when accusations are made, and this is where the association is particularly good”*. The head of an infants and junior school in Yorks & Humb is also very appreciative of the range of support, *“I use the NAHT a lot. The materials and training sessions are high quality, for example, on the new school profiles. But they are also good for advice. I had to go through redundancies almost immediately after taking the job and the NAHT was very useful there.”* A secondary headteacher in the South East is similarly complimentary about the ASCL, *“Its support is excellent – very considered. I have used part of my Headteachers Induction Programme money to purchase some consultancy from them.”*

Résumé

- 7.33 The headteachers recognised that there was flexibility in their salaries, but that their school’s income was not sufficient for governors to be able or willing to exercise that flexibility. There was also a feeling that higher salaries for staying in the classroom were making it more difficult to recruit people to their ranks. In terms of incentives beyond salary there was no great pressure for improvement although some mention was made of those available in industry like private health and help in moving. They were mainly interested in changes that would enable them to do their jobs better like secondments and sabbaticals, and mentoring and support. One novel suggestion was that headteachers and senior staff should have more flexibility in when they took their holidays.
- 7.34 Four means of support were considered: SIPs, LEAs, Other Heads, and Professional Associations. With SIPs the general reaction was that these are early days and the role needs clarifying: to what extent are they to be a critical friend and to what extent are they to be reporting on the headteachers? Some had had very good experiences

and others very poor. An important factor is the SIP's experience. There were doubts that, given all the other demands upon them, serving headteachers would be able to find the time to serve. About two-thirds of the heads thought that the role of the LEA is diminishing. For primary schools this was almost always a matter of regret, whereas the more common response from secondary schools was to welcome it.

- 7.35 Another difference between primary and secondary heads was in the extent to which they relied on the informal help of other heads in the area. Most primary heads readily turned to their colleagues for advice and support. But their secondary counterparts were much more conscious of the competition between them. 'Dog eats dog' as one of them put it. The intense competition for parents to send their children, particularly where pupil numbers are falling, could make even formal co-operation difficult. As support from LEAs has weakened the headteachers have been turning more to their professional association. These provide valuable legal advice and support, update the heads on recent developments and convene local meetings where they can get together in more relaxed circumstances.

8. Independent Schools

- 8.1 Independent education is not the cosy privileged boarding-school world of popular conception. It is very varied. The head of a boys' day school (School K) in a city in the north of England described the sector:

The reality is there are a dozen big boarding schools that operate as they did and it's reasonably competitive for a child to get in, but not difficult. They look to pursue 9/10 GCSE programme, A levels, and good university entrance etc. There are probably upwards of 50 boarding/day schools from a past tradition who try to imitate this image but are far from it. But I think the real weight in the independent sector is now around the old independent day schools or the old direct grant schools. In many cases they are quite close to their local communities and the government and LEAs need to start to look at those schools as part of the national provision as opposed to being associated with the academically privileged. My own school has a wide social mix. About 15 per cent would qualify for free school meals if the school was in the state sector, which is higher than in the maintained grammars.

- 8.2 It is also highly competitive not only within itself, but also with the state sector. The head of a coeducational day school in London (School E):

I am competing with a number of other independent schools and twelve grammar schools are in easy reach. I have to work pretty hard to convince parents it is a good idea to spend £11,000 per year here. The independent sector is a lot more competitive than the genteel impression it gives might suggest. If the Conservatives get in and turn the academies into grammar schools the independents would really be in trouble.

- 8.3 We have sampled across that varied and competitive world and talked in depth to twelve headteachers from HMC and GSA schools spread through England and Wales. Of the schools, three were boys, four girls and five coeducational. Seven were day and five boarding and day. All but one were selective. Our chief interest was in what light they could shed on the current debate about headship in the maintained sector from their perspective of having the independence, more of which the Blair government have said they wish to bestow on maintained schools. Although that independence in the maintained sector may be as the head of an independent boys', day school (School H) characterised it: "*independence with a big thick collar and chain round it.*"

Schools as Businesses

- 8.4 The true independence of independent schools comes at a price – literally. They are businesses. It is not a matter of running up a deficit and having your knuckles rapped by the government or local authority. If they do not turn a profit then that's it. Having to survive in the market place has a number of consequences for their leadership and governance. The headteacher has to have particular regard to attracting pupils, the finance/director is a key person within the organisation with the potential for a power struggle, and governors are, in effect, a board of directors.

Role of Headteacher

- 8.5 Independent schools are often organised in many ways like most maintained schools with leadership and management responsibilities devolved through a senior team with the head taking a strategic view. But the independent heads were much more

concerned with admissions which, in effect, became the intrinsic test of how well they were running the school. They expressed this in a variety of ways. The head of a boarding school (School G) put it this way, *“My main job is in profiling the school, seeing prospective pupils and keeping the current ones happy. If I can keep the school full then that’s the job half done.”* The head of a coeducational day school (School E) similarly cut to the chase: *“The forces I need to respect most are the market forces, what the parents are saying about us at their dinner parties, not to put too fine a point on it, and the requirements of the universities. These are far more powerful than a government White Paper.”* The head of a girls’ day school (School I): *“We are running a business and it has to be run in a business-like way. We are very aware of customer service. Meeting with prospective parents is one of my most important meetings of the year.”*

- 8.6 Genuine parent power has a number of consequences. The head of a girls’ day school (School J) emphasised the high expectations, *“Parents put us under quite a lot of pressure, because they are paying for it their expectations are higher and they are more demanding.”* The head of a girls’ day and boarding school (School A) pointed out that parents liked the personal touch: *“They expect to have a figure, somebody they can contact, go to see, that their child sees regularly and somebody in charge of the school whose values they will buy into.”* She suggested that this meant that, *“the idea of an executive head roving around several schools is an absolute non-starter in the independent sector.”*

Bursar

- 8.7 Managing the money is vital to independent schools and one wonders where the power really lies: with the headteacher, the bursar or indeed the governors? Moreover, in a number of schools the bursar also serves as clerk to the governors and answers direct to the chairman. What is to stop management and money taking over from teaching and learning as the central concerns of the school? The short answer seems to be that the school generates income on the basis of the quality of its teaching and learning and *“the governing body wouldn’t let it happen”*:

They are in no doubt the head is the main man and though the bursar is of major significance, the core purpose is about teaching and learning. The bursar is there to provide the staffing implications and costs. Our numbers for German, for example dropped, and I worked out with the bursar how to retain it as extra lessons out of timetable. (School C)

- 8.8 Nevertheless, *“it is a crucial relationship and in a school like this where the turnover is £8m and a large estate to manage the bursar is important and has a substantial staff.”* (School H). *“There are schools where you can have a real gap, with different mentalities between the Head and the Bursar, if they have different values and aims. There are schools where the dividing lines between the head and the bursar are very grey and there are tensions. ”* (School L). *“They need to get on otherwise problems arise. The previous head did not and things were not done that should have been done because the bursar just wouldn’t provide the money because she said she couldn’t justify the expense and she had a hotline to the governors as their clerk.”* (School I).

- 8.9 Sometimes the power of the headteacher is underpinned by appraising the bursar. The head of a coeducational day school explained, *“the Bursar is also the clerk to*

the governors. She answers to me, but in matters of direct relevance to the governors she answers to the chairman. We appraise her together. But in the end the relationship has to be one of mutual trust." (School E). It can, however, take a lot of tact and skill. *"I try very hard to be as consensual as I can be when you are actually meant to be leading them and to get the response I want. If I don't I have to contrive it so that we both seem to be right."* (School I).

Governors

- 8.10 Ultimately the head's power depends on the governors who are more powerful in independent schools than state schools.

Their role is critical in the success of the school, how interested they are, how supportive of the head and the team. How knowledgeable they are and ultimately the buck stops with them. They are making very important decisions. If things are going well they are very supportive. When you are in difficulties they become the line-managers. It's an interesting relationship. (School J)

- 8.11 They can sometimes have difficulties in understanding how schools work:

People who are not in schools don't understand how schools work. Business people sometimes think we are not desperately efficient organisations. I have had to educate one governor on what line management means in a school. The fact that you can have two or three including the person who works out your terms and conditions, an academic one and one who looks after the pastoral side. (School G)

- 8.12 Governors bring a lot to a school and are one of the ways in which it can maintain continuity and pre-eminence. Many governing bodies are stacked with successful former pupils:

The role of the governing body in a school like this is absolutely crucial with a representative spread of professional abilities. The output of the school is such that we have some pretty high-powered people who left the school 20-30 years ago and a healthy number are very happy to give their time and experience freely. (School H)

Headteacher Recruitment

- 8.13 The nature of headship in the maintained sector has come under scrutiny, in part, because of the apparent difficulties in recruitment. In the independent sector there was something of a split between the HMC and GSA schools. The HMC heads were generally bullish. *"No shortage is apparent in the independent sector and there seems to be quite a number of potential heads coming through the system. This is probably partly to do with the independence the heads enjoy."* (School D). *"I applied for about 20 jobs before getting this one a couple of years ago and was competing with some very impressive candidates."* (School E). *"There is still plenty of competition for headship. Being a head in the independent sector is a great job. You have control over the organisation, you have some creative input, and you have options and freedom to do things."* (School C).

- 8.14 But there were more concerns some of the girls' schools. *"I have been headhunted a few times so I presume schools are finding it difficult to get the right people."* (School I) *"There are fewer people coming through they see it as a very demanding and stressful job. A deputy head's post is a very good position and you can enjoy many aspects of the job without having all the burden of responsibility."* (School J)

This was echoed by the head of a the head of a boys' day school: "*There are far more applying for assistant head and deputy-type roles than there are going on to apply for headships. Ultimately there is a sense that heads are very vulnerable people, legally and so on.*" (School K).

- 8.15 But the general view was that leading an independent school is a very attractive job and the schools were still able to secure very good heads and they themselves had not had difficulty in replacing their senior staff who had moved on.

Recruitment from Outside

- 8.16 Independent schools seem to have no great problem in appointing to headships. But given that they are businesses should they be looking for someone with classroom and management experience in schools to run them or should they be looking more widely to bring in business expertise?

- 8.17 To a person the heads of the twelve schools we interviewed thought that the person should have a background in education, "*to have credibility with parents, pupils and teachers. Although the school is a business it is not just a business.*" (School C). "*You have to ask what a school is for and one is there to teach children and then to be a head you have to have the knowledge of what makes a child tick, and that invariably is a product of the classroom engagement.*" (School K). "*They have got to be teachers. I don't think you will find most staff rooms supporting anyone from outside of the profession.*" (School A). One head went further and said that the headteachers ought to continue to teach:

It is very important, *primus inter pares*, you can't understand the school unless you have been in the classroom and I would go further. It's pretty important that you teach as well. I take one of the bottom sets here. It means no one else has to and no one complains. You get a feel for the pace of the school and the attitudes. (School G)

- 8.18 Lack of credibility with parents, teachers and pupils was matched by concerns about the sort of job and externally appointed person would do. "*I would worry that business, commercial reasons might dictate decisions which weren't maybe the best educationally.*" (School I). "*They would do a different job. I spend as much of my week as I can in the company of children. I enjoy the company of children. I think to take a purely administrative approach to the job could probably work for a year or two, but not indefinitely.*" (School E). "*If I were a teacher in such an institution I would see parallels with the NHS where the status of administrators as a doctor might see it has become disproportionate in an organisation which is about healing people.*" (School H).

- 8.19 The heads were hard put to think of successful examples of heads being appointed to independent schools from outside teaching. One had actually worked in a school where the head had been appointed from outside. "*It was a disaster. There was a sense among the teachers that she didn't really understand education.*" (School I). They each had some notable examples of failures, but only one could recall that a former diplomat had made a success of the job. As the head of a boarding school (School B) put it: "*Independent schools have tried it but it hasn't always worked. You have to know how teachers think and appointing people from other fields is a risk.*"

- 8.20 The head of a coeducational boarding school (School G) spoke for most of the group when he said that the heads of independent schools should learn from the heads of other organisations but not be replaced by them. *“Heads would benefit from shadowing people from outside education as part of their training. Done it with two guys in the army. Appraisal in the armed services is much more concise and effective compared to the independent sector’s paper heavy one.”*

New Models

- 8.21 Neither were most of our headteachers in favour of a change of title. *“The head will have teaching and learning as the number one priority. I reckon a chief exec would not be like that and would regard teaching and learning as just one of the things that has to be done.”* (School G) *“I don’t see any need. I wish people wouldn’t chop around like that. Some do feel a change of name or image can give a certain thrill but people know what a headteacher does.”* (School F).
- 8.22 But in a sample of twelve one was a chief executive and one was being re-titled as principal. This name changes had come about as the structure of the schools had changed. The chief executive had been appointed from within education but with no classroom experience (*“the governors took one hell of a punt and vice versa”*) though he teaches in the school now. He is overseeing the bringing together of a girls’ school and a boys’ school which are part of the same charitable foundation:

I am actually called both head and CEO (of the charitable foundation) which sometimes causes comment. At least it means there is no doubt; I have overall responsibility. I am regarded by the governors first and foremost as CEO of the charity yet they also have a clear understanding of what is the first and foremost objective of the charity. They know I have to do ‘head teacher’ things. Members of the SMT do not attend governors’ meetings except by agreement on specific questions, as to do so would create confusion and multiple accountabilities. The governors set this up to have one person responsible to them. It enables a unified approach to the school’s aims. However when the others do attend that is as much about getting the governors to focus on educational issues as opposed to listening to me all the time. Governors are absolutely clear, as are the senior management, as to who carries the can. If there is a potential conflict then I step in and pick up the can. (School L)

- 8.23 The headteacher who is being re-designated as principal has taken a school into the next stage of its development. A girls’ school, it had reacted to the nearby boys’ school becoming coeducational by opening a new sixth form centre on a nearby campus. This is to be run by its own director and will offer distinctive courses recruiting at 16 as well as from the school. The junior school already has someone in charge, so it is a logical step to appoint a head for 11-16, with the present head being elevated to principal with overall responsibility for education 3-19.
- 8.24 Changed structures may require new models of leadership. But like the maintained school heads the independent heads make a very strong case from first principles for the leader coming from a classroom background. The one successful example of a chief executive successively running several schools that a number of the heads cited was the Haberdashers’ Aske’s Federation in Lewisham under Dr Elizabeth Sidwell which is part of the state sector (the merger which the CEO in our sample was overseeing is not yet up and running). But in their view this was a special case. It wasn’t someone from outside with managerial skills who had been parachuted in but a person who had grown with it:

The reason it works there is because of Liz. She has been there through every stage of its evolution. The people she has put in post were her deputies anyway. The schools are in close proximity. You need a very special person to lead with a deep knowledge of the circumstances and the staff. She is now just responsible for the strategic running of the schools rather than the day-to-day issues. The deputies have worked alongside her as she has built up the group of schools. (School A).

Succession and Training

8.25 The headteachers strongly believed that they had a duty to nurture the future of their profession. *“It behoves present school leaders to give opportunities to gain experiences to those staff who could go to headship levels. We have to generate our leaders from within by giving them the right experience”* (School B). *“You have a sense of the people, that they will be good at it. I bring them into senior management positions and send them on HMC courses. I make sure they don’t specialise too much and that they have a width of experience.”* (School G). *“There are staff with the potential. I support them with extra experience and responsibility, and encourage them to undertake INSET.”* (School I). *“The police model is a good one. We need to identify potential heads early and develop them through experience and training.”* (School D). *“The school has a good appraisal system and this gives the opportunity to identify and nurture talent.”* (School C).

8.26 The headteachers recognised the need for training, but seem unlikely to embrace the NPQH. The head of School G said:

I thought I could do it as an amateur, until I got the training and then realised what I didn’t know. I did an MA in educational management run by HMC. I had been a head for about three years then. I discovered all sorts of things that in theory I was doing wrong. My deputy has done NPQH. He thought the whole thing was very anodyne, a lot of box-ticking. People matter much more than qualifications. It might give a sign that someone is committed to being a head, but it would be awful if a school didn’t pick someone because they didn’t have a qualification.

8.27 His deputy’s experience of the NPQH seems to have been a general one. *“I see the NPQH as a box ticking exercise. My deputy got little out of it and the advice I received was that it was not of any great value. Training on the job is the best way. Being a deputy head is good training.”* (School G). *“I looked at the course and was not impressed. I think you are going to squeeze the life out of it. Prospective heads should spend time with someone who has walked the pathway and learn the pitfalls and successes.”* (School B).

8.28 The overall view seems to be that *“the National College for School Leadership fails in part because of the directive culture by which education has been controlled in the last ten years. It is associated with another directive. It has not sprung from a general sense of headteachers needing this body.”* (School K).

Contrast with State Sector

8.29 This directive culture the independent heads suspected was at the root of any difficulties the state sector was having in recruiting headteachers. The differences between independent and state schools have been well rehearsed, but were pithily summarized by the head of one of the boarding schools in our sample:

I suspect the differences are significant and probably growing. We are not subject to what appears to be the remorseless pressure of targets, Ofsted regimes, the bidding culture and all the other government initiatives. There is the very serious pressure to recruit in my sector, the competitive pressure, which the maintained sector does not have in the same way. But we are independent in that we can choose how to spend our fee income. We are not tied in to all the legislative commitments. Our ability to recruit and retain good teachers because of our ethos alone gives you a much more stable school. Then add in the fact that we can afford small classes, select our pupils and wave goodbye to the disruptive ones. That makes our life so utterly different. (School C).

8.30 But above all our sample of independent heads saw the contrast with their state counterparts most sharply in terms of the burden of government interference the maintained schools had to bear. *“I have recently done the NPQH and there was a grimness about the state school people – all the accountability and worry about the next initiative that was going to land on the desk.”* (School F). *“An awful lot of people I know in the maintained sector seem to exist in a state of barely controlled paranoia about where the next raft of legislative punishment is coming from and what they might have forgotten that is going to get them into trouble.”* (School H) *“I sat down with a couple of local state heads to discuss co-operation over sixth form provision, for example, using specialised diplomas. They said it wouldn’t work because ‘whose results will they be?’ They are totally driven by results and league tables. They are so, so answerable. I think it is more cold-bloodied. It ceases to be about people and starts being about statistics. It is not why people are in education I am sure.”* (School G).

8.31 They felt privileged by their own freedom and flexibility. The head of School B expressed it thus:

Independent school heads feel they can fulfil a vision because they have the scope to make their decisions and not to have the LEA breathing down their necks. I do not have to ask permission to introduce Mandarin or the Baccalaureate. I present it as a business case to my governors to see if we can afford it and a quick response from them means we can make decisions faster and be more effective as an institution.

8.32 Similarly the head of a School F:

Frankly local and government initiatives are frequently out of touch. We can do long term financial planning better. We are precarious being dependent on fees, but we do have much more autonomy. I have been working with a state head locally on an initiative and I am amazed that he has appointed someone just to deal with bids.

Implications for State Sector

8.33 The heads of the independent schools were hesitant about drawing direct implications from their experience for headship in the state sector. They recognised that they had things to learn from the state sector: *“We will have to face the fact that we may be at the cutting edge for ‘roundness and feel’, but not always in effective teaching and learning. We have been complacent about that for too long.”* (School L). They were acutely aware that their abilities and skills are not those required in some state schools.

8.34 But there was a consensus that the great advantage they had over their state colleagues was their freedom from government interference. They were conscious of the welter of initiatives that had descended on their state colleagues in recent years which were sapping in terms of the time they had to run their schools. The head of School K had heard from the heads of nearby state schools *“that many of the directives and many of the inputs both locally and nationally are at a distance from what is required at the chalk face. These directives are often designed to be cosmetic and many of them for PR purposes to cover, for example, some young people not seeing any point whatsoever in being in school.”* It was not surprising that recruitment and retention should have become something of a problem.

8.35 Harking back to the need for headteachers to have classroom experience the head of School H attributed the plethora of initiatives to central government’s lack of understanding: *“That is the source of some of the nonsense that comes out of the DfES. Politicians and civil servants with no background or understanding of teaching, try to impose policies that certainly seem to work on paper but take no account of the realities on the floor. Serious misjudgements have been made.”* Another head thought that the initiative overload betrayed the lack of a coherent philosophy:

You can bring in initiatives about inclusion, self-assessment, school dinners and so on, but until a government has a kernel of understanding of what schools are about, what they can do and what they cannot do, I don’t think that initiatives of any sort are going to meet with wholehearted, transforming success, particularly at a time of teacher shortages. Until there is that honesty and an engagement with society about what schools should be and following that an embracement by society about what schools are designed for then I don’t think dividing headship and introducing this that and the other is going to achieve a great deal. (School K)

8.36 The blunt message from the head School H to the government was that if you want it to become more attractive to become the head of a maintained school: *“Get out of their face. The things that would need doing would be matters of undoing.”*

Résumé

8.37 Independent schools are of interest to us because they are at heart businesses. They have to draw in income to survive. That income, however, depends crucially on the quality of teaching and learning as perceived by parents and universities. It is this that underpins the power of the headteacher. In some schools the bursar operates in parallel with the headteacher as clerk to the governors and that is a crucial relationship which can be difficult.

8.38 Unlike the state sector most independent schools did not seem to be experiencing difficulty in filling headteacher posts though there was some suggestion of this in girls’ schools. The heads in our sample said that the heads had to have classroom experience and to have come up through schools to have credibility with parents, teachers and pupils. One of our heads had been appointed from a university, but was teaching. Our heads could not readily call to mind any examples of successful heads being appointed to independent schools from outside the world of education. The heads blamed the lack of classroom experience and understanding of schools among politicians and civil servants for the poor decisions affecting their state-school colleagues.

8.39 The heads were not generally in favour of a change of title because the current one emphasised teaching and learning as the number one priority. Heads saw it as part of their role to nurture future headteachers among their staff through experience and training on the job. They thought the NPQH was symptomatic of the top-down culture in the state sector and was a box-ticking exercise.

8.40 The heads of independent schools thought that any difficulty in recruiting headteachers in the maintained sector was due to the directive stance adopted by central government. It was described as “*independence with a big thick collar and chain.*” Rather than changing the nature of headship by splitting the role or having “*managers as it were driving from Tesco to Tesco*”, their advice to government was that “*the things that need doing would be matters of undoing.*” In other words, it is for the style of government rather than the nature headship that should be revisited.

9. The Way Forward?

- 9.1 The School Teachers' Review Body (2005), the General Teaching Council (2006) and the National College for School Leadership (2006b) have all warned that a serious shortfall is looming in the recruitment of headteachers for maintained schools. The government views the situation so seriously that it has commissioned a report (PriceWaterhouseCoopers, 2006) which implies that it is considering fundamental changes to the nature of headship itself such as recruiting from outside the profession, federating schools and new forms of leadership.
- 9.2 However before contemplating radical change it is necessary to ask: how is it that this presumed crisis has built up? There are over fifty times as many full-time secondary teachers as are required to fill all the headteacher posts. While in the primary phase the ratio at 8:1 is nowhere near as large, there has never been great difficulty in the past in finding excellent headteachers. How is that now not enough are coming forward? What has changed?

Reasons for Reluctance

- 9.3 The evidence from our representative samples of primary and secondary headteachers is that there has been massive change in state education. Asked what extra tasks they could recall having been expected of them during their time in post – which ranged from two months to twenty-two years – the headteachers had no difficulty in reeling off 58 'initiatives'. These external impositions have greatly increased the demands on headteachers. Asked about how they spent their working lives they came up with such a variety of activities that it took 30 categories to classify them.
- 9.4 Some of our headteachers thought that the recruitment crisis had been greatly exaggerated, but most accepted it was becoming more difficult to fill posts. When asked what they thought might be putting their colleagues off, 'workload' was the main response overall, given by 52.6 per cent of the primary heads and 44.4 per cent of the secondary heads. Even so, it wasn't the top response from the primary heads. Nearly two-thirds thought that the salary differential was not commensurate with the extra responsibilities. They accepted that school governors now had discretion within national scales, but found that there wasn't always the money within the school's budget to be able to bring the upper part of the scale into play. In small schools even if the headteacher were at the top of the scale their salary could be less than that of a deputy in a larger school or second in department in a secondary school.
- 9.5 Salary differential was also an issue in secondary schools. While the heads welcomed the enhanced salaries for teachers generally, they felt there was no longer sufficient incentive for many teachers to want to put their heads above the parapet. They had seen headteachers lose their jobs because of poor pupil test and examination results and critical Ofsted reports. They have become as vulnerable to results as business executives and football managers. But whereas these leaders generally got handsome pay-offs headteachers could just find themselves out of work. Why then if you are comfortable in the classroom or in a deputy's or assistant-head's post take the risk?

- 9.6 But our headteachers are not mainly motivated by extrinsic rewards. When asked about whether other incentives would make becoming being a headteacher more attractive very few mentioned perks such as private health insurance and housing subsidies. They were mainly interested in things that would help them do their jobs better, like provision for sabbaticals and secondments, and mentoring and support. For them teaching and leading teachers is above all a ‘people’ profession. At its core is learning and teaching

Motivation for Headship

- 9.7 The intrinsic motivations of headteachers shone through when we asked them ‘what being a headteacher meant to them.’ *“Being a head is having a job that has given me the opportunity to make a major contribution in a very important way to the life chances of young people and in doing that it gives me a great degree of enjoyment.”* (Community, Comprehensive, 11-16, North West). *“I see it as an opportunity to really make a difference. For me that is a vocation and also a huge responsibility.”* (Community, Comprehensive, 11-18, Yorks & Humb). *“I feel I have been very fortunate to have the opportunity to work with a great group of staff and kids and parents. It’s not just about exam results. It’s about the experiences you can give kids.”* (Community, Comprehensive, 11-16, South West). *“It’s my life! For me it brings all the aspects I would want in a job – working with children, vision, leadership, being able to make decisions and seeing the impact of them.”* (Community, Comprehensive, 11-18, London).
- 9.8 Their primary colleagues were similarly eloquent: *“It is an opportunity to play a hugely important role in children’s lives and to set them on the path to lifelong learning. It is also an opportunity for myself to be creative and to have job satisfaction through that creativity and the impact it is having on other people.”* (Community, First, North East). *“The opportunity to work with all the people; working with staff at a highly professional level, to induct new staff, to see children go from birth to secondary transition and develop relationships with networks of families.”* (Voluntary Aided, Infant and Junior School, London). *“It is the opportunity to really make a difference to people’s lives, parents and staff as well as children. I think we play a really important role in society and in shaping the future.”* (Community, Infant, West Midlands).
- 9.9 It is these intrinsic motivations that have been cut across by the government’s approach to running education with test and exam scores as the products. It could be that it is the perception that it is not longer possible to satisfy these intrinsic satisfactions to the same extent that is leading to difficulties in headteacher recruitment and retention. One wonders whether radical changes need to be made to headship to fit the business model or is it necessary to question the appropriateness of the business model.

Radical Reforms

- 9.10 On the basis that the government’s business model is a given at least radical changes to headship have been mooted: recruiting from outside education, federating schools under chief executives and encouraging new forms of headship.

Classroom Experience

- 9.11 Headteachers in both the maintained and independent sectors argued strongly that headteachers should be recruited from among those with classroom experience. Since all had, themselves, taught an understandable response as reader would be, ‘well they would wouldn’t they’. But that would be to ignore the force of the argument. It stems from the intrinsic and people motivations discussed above. As one head succinctly expressed it, *“You have to ask what a school is for and one is there to teach children and then to be a head you have to have the knowledge of what makes a child tick, and that invariably is a product of the classroom engagement.”* Although schools are like other organisations they are also different, and these special features require particular experience. As another head said *“My husband is in telecommunications and is a brilliant manager, but we couldn’t swap jobs, neither of us would have a clue.”* Even in the independent sector where schools are after all businesses the headteachers could think of very few schools where successful appointments had been made from outside education.
- 9.12 It does not seem to us, therefore, that the most appropriate response to any shortfall in headteacher recruitment is to bring in managers from elsewhere. We agree with the independent headteachers who said, *“They would do a different job”* and *“I would worry that business, commercial reasons might dictate decisions which weren’t maybe the best educationally.”*

Federations

- 9.13 The government seems attracted by the idea of federations, perhaps to replace some of the support previously given by local authorities with mutual support between schools. A number of schools are now engaging in soft federations based on informal links. But the government seems keen to encourage, as for example through trust status, hard federations in which schools form themselves into one organisation led by a chief executive.
- 9.14 How this might work was described to us by an executive running several secondary schools who was kind enough to participate as part of the secondary sample in the study. He explained how one of the schools was organised. There are four equivalent heads, one each for teaching and learning, finance, premises and educational support, answerable to him. It was written into the head of teaching and learning’s contract that she would raise standards. The chief executive spent his week travelling between the schools collecting the performance data and challenging and motivating the school leaders. He had come up through the ranks in school teaching, but felt his skills were transferable, *“I reckon I could walk into a hospital, do a lot of listening and talking and after a while say there’s something wrong. I don’t know what the answer is but you do, you are the workers. So I will work with you to identify it and put it right.”* His own children are in private education, and his ambition is to make all schools like the best of private schools.
- 9.15 But for our independent heads the idea of a chief executive roving between schools was an absolute non-starter. Here the very survival of the school depends on reputation among parents and they demand the personal touch. *“They expect to have a figure, somebody they can contact, go to see, that their child sees regularly and somebody in charge of the school whose values they will buy into.”* The head of a comprehensive school in the South East thought the chief executive of federations

might be brought in from outside education and doubted whether the management skills as interchangeable as the chief executive in our sample believed:

I think 'how successful would I be if I went in to try and run a hospital?' I have a sister working for a hospital trust and I see what clinical knowledge and expertise she brings to that role; it means the decisions she makes are better decisions as a consequence. I like to think the decisions I make at my school are better because I understand about teaching and learning, about the job of the teacher, about what it is like to work with young people all day. In education there isn't the bottom line you get in a baked beans factory where it is about how many baked beans tins you produce and how much profit the company makes.

- 9.16 Where there were examples of successful chief executives these came from educational backgrounds. In the widely cited Haberdashers' Aske's Federation in south east London the chief executive is the immediate past head of the lead school and she promoted those presently in charge of the individual schools so they, in effect, serve as her deputies. The chief executive in our sample of independent schools was also the headteacher of a boys' school which he was merging with the associated girls' school.
- 9.17 We do not think there is a good case for sharing a head between secondary schools on supply grounds (though there may be other reasons). But a stronger argument could be made in the primary phase. It would seem important that for small children it is necessary to have the schools close to where they live so that they don't have to travel too far. The primary phase therefore consists of numerous small schools, 17,504 compared to the 3,117 secondaries or 5.6 times as many. Each of these at present requires a head and each head carries more or less the same range of duties as the head of a large secondary school. It is more difficult to attract heads to primary schools partly because the pool is not relatively as big and partly because the incentives in many cases are not sufficient to attract teachers to a role beyond the classroom. In the circumstances it would be worth exploring whether primary schools could be brought together to form one school under the one headteacher, but consisting of a number of campuses. An alternative form of federation being explored is a vertical federation where schools come together to create a school providing for children from age 3 through to age 18. The advantages and drawbacks of the different options need to be carefully assessed. But if any do proceed our representative sample of headteachers would want the heads of the new schools to have come from a classroom background.

New Forms of Headship

- 9.18 Federations do prompt the thought of changing the title headteacher into executive head or chief executive, and others have been suggested such as principal and school leader. But most of the maintained and independent heads in our sample wanted to retain the title because it underlined the centrality of teaching and learning to their role. This comes under threat not only from the government treating schools as businesses (for which it is the monopoly customer), but also because of the way it has been seeking to extend the social responsibilities of schools. This will entail the premises being open longer than the school day and the school terms and it raises the question of whom is going to be in charge of the building for all this time.
- 9.19 One model would be to have a chief executive with leaders for teaching and learning, the children's centres and extended provision. This runs the risk of

subordinating the teaching and learning. We saw in our case study of a PFI school the restrictions encountered impacting on the educational experience the headteacher was able to provide through having to deal with the premises manager of the owners of the site.

Delegation

- 9.20 The evidence of this study is that headteachers would be very reluctant to split their role, hiving off finance, premises and personnel, since this would open the way for a split between teaching and learning on the one hand and management on the other. And they feared that from the experience of the National Health Service the managers would take over. They recognised that they were now expected to take on a wider role and welcomed the greater degree of autonomy that financial delegation gave them. They were fully aware that leading a school now involved skills they did not necessarily have.
- 9.21 Their preferred model for handling all the extra responsibilities was through appointing staff with specialist skills in finance, premises and personnel in support roles. These staff would not be expected to hold qualified teacher status. In some schools the finance manager at least was a member of the senior management team, but in others they were answerable directly to the head. In some ways this put the maintained heads in a potentially more powerful position vis-à-vis the business managers than their independent counterparts where the bursar in some schools operates in parallel as clerk to the governors. But the heads' position there is underpinned by the parents' impression of the quality of the education on offer and this has sharp teeth because the school's income and survival depends on it. This is also true, to some extent, in the maintained sector where the government regards itself as the schools' main customer.
- 9.22 The heads of secondary schools in the present study rejected the notion that the job of headteacher was too big for one person at the same time as giving workload as the main reason why fewer people were now applying. This apparent contradiction can be understood in terms of delegation. If the heads have the opportunity to delegate to skilled teams then, of course, in theory the job is not too big. One of the heads points out the leaders in industry can be responsible for multinational companies with the turnover of small countries and with a staff to match. But within financial constraints it is not always possible to delegate or find people with the skills. The reality at the present time is therefore too heavy a workload and difficulty in getting an appropriate work/life balance. The major cause of this excessive workload is the numerous initiatives which central government piles on to them.

An Alternative Perspective

- 9.23 If our assessment of the evidence is that there is no need to radically change the nature of headship on the grounds of supply, then how is the shortfall to be made good? Here the contrast between the maintained and independent sectors is important. There is still strong competition for the headship of most independent schools. Why the difference? The heads of independent schools in our sample attributed it to the lack of government interference. Their schools have been affected by government policies, changes to the national examinations, withdrawal of assisted places and moves on charitable status among them, but they have been largely free of the

welter of initiatives that have landed on the desks of their state counterparts. They felt that these were sapping both of morale and energy. Moreover, many were of questionable value. The head of an independent boys' day school in a city in the north of England summarized the views of the surrounding state school heads:

Many of the directives and many of the inputs both locally and nationally are at a distance from what is required at the chalk face. These directives are often designed to be cosmetic and many of them for PR purposes to cover, for example, some young people not seeing any point whatsoever in being in school.

9.24 This is borne out by what the maintained heads in our samples told us. Two secondary headteachers put it this way:

It's difficult isn't it, because they came in saying they're not going to over-regulate and we're going to be hands-off and according to needs, and then they over-regulate and do the exact opposite. The problems with the job are centrally and local authority imposed. So you've got to free schools up. If you free heads up I think more people will want to be one, creativity in leadership is of the essence and we're not allowed to be creative.

We are told how powerful headteachers are and as you go on in headship you become more of a risk taker. I think that makes you better. But government is forever trying to clip our wings. Just this week I wanted someone to take on the Duke of Edinburgh's Award but that post doesn't appear in my TLR structure plan. I am constrained whereas before I could recognise talent and nurture it. I haven't got that total flexibility now.

And two primary heads expressed similar sentiments:

I am still hoping the message will get across that they should trust us more. The pressure would then be relieved. I hope there is a realisation that there are sensible hoops to go through and not so sensible hoops to go through.

There has got to be some intelligent and reasoned evaluation of what is happening in schools at the moment. It is all about meeting a narrow band of targets, everything is target-led and that is dangerous for the primary curriculum. Headship is being measured by public results. Someone has to take a good look at what is happening. It is being done on the hoof and if it will make the news.

9.25 The alternative is for the government to look to itself. The present administration has consciously adopted a particular approach to schooling. It has taken upon itself the running of the education system and sought to apply methods which have enjoyed great success in the business world. These require a product. Once there is measurable output, there can be targets, monitoring and efficiency savings. But education is crucially about enhancing children's lives. Test and examination results are *not* the equivalent of barrels of oil or tins of baked beans. Treating them as such leads to distortion. The official School Achievement and Attainment Tables (DfES, 2007) show just how easily we can fool ourselves. In response to targets and pressure the educational achievement of 16-year-olds appears to have risen dramatically, but when English and maths are taken into account it is clear that much of the improvement is illusory as far as the core of education is concerned.

9.26 From its business perspective, the government can be led into thinking that the key to raising a school's performance is to bring in a new manager who has proved himself/herself in another organisation, however remote from education. But, as we

have seen, it would be perfectly possible for someone who is product-oriented to devise ways of pushing up test and examination outputs without improving the education for which they are supposed to stand, and to conjure up apparent effectiveness and efficiency gains which are a chimera.

9.27 It may be hard for the government to accept, but pressure from the centre and reforming zeal could be the nub of the problem. There are signs that it is not unaware of this. It continually speaks of more independence for headteachers in the maintained sector. But the headteachers (cf para 9.24) complain that the government has done just the opposite. One of the independent heads describes it as, *“independence with a big thick collar and chain round it.”*

9.28 Thus before setting in train further upheaval the government should ask itself whether there is really a crisis in headship. Is finding more and better headteachers mainly a matter of accepting the business perspective as given and modelling new forms of leadership around it, or should the nature of the government’s relationship to schooling be re-thought? Our view is that any shortfall stems from the government’s stance and that is where to start.

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Appendix: Methods

- A.1 The evidence presented in the report is based on interviews with headteachers in a representative sample of maintained primary and secondary schools in England and Wales conducted in the second half of the autumn term 2006. In addition, headteachers in a sample of independent schools were consulted.

Samples

- A.2 The population frame from which the sample of maintained schools was drawn was established from the Statistical First Releases 19/2006 (Pupil Characteristics and Class Sizes in England, January 2006 (Provisional) and SFR 38/2006 (Schools and Pupils in England, January 2006 (Final) issued by the DfES, and for schools in Wales, from the provisional results of the January schools' census 2006, published by the National Assembly for Wales in the Statistical First Release, SDR 100/2006. The selection of independent schools was taken from the mailing list of the Independent Schools Council supplemented by the ISC Guide to Independent Schools 2004 and the ISC website.
- A.3 These sources showed that in England, in January 2006, there were 3,367 secondary maintained schools, of which 250 were classified as middle deemed secondary, and there were 224 secondaries in Wales, giving a total population for this study of 3,591 maintained schools. In the primary phase there were 19,059 schools of which 17,504 were in England and 1,555 in Wales. The ISC database yielded a total population of 598 senior schools of which 403 were members of HMC and GSA. The sample fractions decided upon for the in-depth interviews were 1 in 100 secondary schools which yielded 36 and 1 in 1000 primary schools yielding 19, making 55 in all. In addition 12 interviews were conducted with headteachers of HMC and GSA schools, a sampling fraction of 1 in 33.
- A.4 The samples of maintained schools were chosen from CEER's own database of schools using random number tables. CEER's database was originally purchased from Edubase and it is regularly updated from the DfES website. The samples drawn were five times the actual number of schools needed in order to allow for non-response.

Contacting Schools

- A.5 Letters setting out the context and purpose of the research were sent to headteachers towards the end of September 2006 asking if they could find the time to talk with us over the telephone for up to 45 minutes. The letters to the headteachers of maintained school explained that the conversation would centre on how they spent their time and how saw their role evolving, and those to the headteachers of independent schools on what lessons there might be for the maintained sector.
- A.6 A reply slip with a return envelope was included with the letter asking headteachers to let us know whether they would be willing to help with the research, explaining that those who indicated they would, would be contacted by telephone in a few days to arrange a convenient time for the interview to take place.

Chart A1: Maintained Secondary Schools by Region

Region	%National ^{1,2}	%Sample ³
North East	5.0	3.1
North West	15.2	15.6
Yorks & Humber	10.1	12.5
East Midlands	9.2	9.4
West Midlands	11.9	9.4
East of England	10.9	9.4
London	12.9	12.5
South East	15.3	18.8
South West	9.5	9.4
Total	3,117	32

1. England only. In addition there are 224 secondary schools in Wales.

2. Excluding 250 middle deemed secondary schools in England.

3. Actual sample also includes in proportion 2 schools in Wales and 2 middle deemed secondary schools in England.

Chart A2: Secondary Schools in England by Size

Pupil Numbers	%National ¹	%Sample ¹
Up to 400	5.3	5.9
401 to 700	17.2	23.5
701 to 1000	31.4	29.4
1001 to 1300	26.1	17.6
1301 to 1600	14.6	17.6
1601 or more	5.4	5.9
Total	3,367	34

1. Includes middle deemed secondary.

Chart A3: Secondary Schools in England by Type

Type	%National ¹	%Sample ¹
Comprehensive	90.3	84.3
Grammar	5.3	6.3
Secondary Modern	4.4	9.3
Total	3,117	32

1. Excludes schools middle deemed secondary.

Chart 4A: Secondaries in England by Funding

Funding Category	%National ¹	%Sample ¹
Community	64.2	67.6
Voluntary Aided	16.5	17.6
Voluntary Controlled	3.5	2.9
Foundation	15.7	11.8
Total	3,367	34

1. Includes middle deemed secondary.

Chart A5: Secondaries in England by Age Range

Age Range	%National ¹	%Sample
Up to 16	47.8	47.1
Up to 18	52.2	52.9
Total	3,367	34

1. Includes middle deemed secondary.

Chart A6: Secondaries in England by Specialism

Specialism	%National ^{1,2}	%Sample ²
Technology	18.7	21.9
Sports	11.5	12.5
Arts	13.6	9.4
MFL	7.1	3.1
Sciences	9.3	9.4
Business & Enterprise	7.3	3.1
Maths & Computing	7.7	9.4
Other ³	8.5	6.3
Non-Specialist	16.3	25.0
Total	3,130	32

1. Classification based on status July 2006 as given on www.dfes.gov.uk specialist schools site (December 2006).

2. Excludes middle deemed secondary.

3 'Other' for national population includes 49 Engineering, 81 Humanities, 20 Music, 26 SEN and 90 combined specialisms; for sample other = 1 humanities, 1 combined specialism.

Chart A7: Maintained Primary Schools by Region

Region	%National ¹	%Sample ²
North East	5.3	5.6
North West	14.7	11.1
Yorks & Humber	10.8	11.1
East Midlands	9.8	11.1
West Midlands	10.6	11.1
East of England	11.8	11.1
London	10.5	11.1
South East	15.4	16.7
South West	11.2	11.1
Total	17,504	18

1. England only. In addition there are 1,555 primary schools in Wales.

2. Sample includes in addition 1 school in Wales.

Chart A8: Primaries in England by Funding

Funding Category	%National	%Sample
Community	62.0	61.1
Voluntary Aided	21.4	22.2
Voluntary Controlled	14.6	16.7
Foundation	2.1	0.0
Total	17,504	18

Chart A9: Primary Schools in England by Size

Pupil Numbers	%National	%Sample
Up to 100	14.8	5.6
101 to 200	29.4	38.9
201 to 300	30.7	16.7
301 to 400	14.4	27.8
401 to 500	8.3	11.1
500 or more	2.4	0.0
Total	17,504	18

Chart A10: Primaries in England by Age Range

Age Range	%National	%Sample
Infant (5-7)	10.0	5.6
First (5-8/9/10)	7.2	16.7
Infant + Junior (5-11)	73.0	61.1
Junior (7-11)	9.2	11.1
Middle (8-12)	0.5	5.6
Total	17,504	18

Response

- A.7 In response 120 headteachers out of the 335 contacted sent back a reply slip, a response rate of 38.0 per cent. Of these 16 were unable to help. Most took the trouble to tell us why, in the main because their diary was full until next term, or because of insufficient experience of headship as they had only been in post a few weeks. In one or two cases the school office kindly replied to let us know that the head was absent through illness.
- A.8 Excluding the replies from headteachers unable to help, 104 schools, just under one third, (31%), sent back a positive response. The response rate from primary, secondary and independent school headteachers willing to participate was about the same. For secondary it was 30.0 per cent (54 out of 180), for primary 30 out of 95 (31.6%) and for independents 20 out of 60 (33.3%).

Structured Samples

- A.9 The number of headteachers willing to be interviewed was greater than the target number of interviews required. In order to arrive at a structured and representative sample of primary and secondary schools, the responses were compared to the national distribution on two main variables, regional distribution and number on roll and also for secondary, type of school. Where more schools were available than required in any one cell then the schools to be included were selected randomly by computer. Where too few schools were available in any one cell, compensation was allowed from neighbouring cells keeping the row and column totals the same.
- A.10 Charts A1 and A2 show that the secondary school sample compares well with the national distribution by region and school size. Charts A3 to A6 show that the

secondary sample is close to the national distributions in terms of type of school, funding category, age range, gender and specialism. For primary schools Charts A7 to A10 show there was a close match between region and funding category and an acceptable correspondence with size of school and age range. The independent schools selected for study took into account whether they were single sex or co-ed, day and or boarding, number on roll and geographical location.

Independent Schools

A.11 The sample drawn for independent schools included three boys schools, four girls schools and five coeducational. The eight boys and coeducational were members of HMC and the four girls schools were members of the GSA. Seven were day only and five boarding and day. Eleven of the twelve reported themselves as selective and one non selective. The schools were from a wide geographical spread including Wales. For reference in the text the schools have been designated A to L as in Chart A11:

Chart A11: Designation of Independent Schools

Designation	Gender	Type	Location
A	Girls	Day and Boarding	West
B	Both	Day and Boarding	West
C	Both	Day and Boarding	West
D	Both	Day and Boarding	South
E	Both	Day	South
E	Girls	Day	South
G	Both	Day	East
H	Boys	Day and Boarding	East
I	Girls	Day	East
J	Girls	Day	West
K	Boys	Day	North
L	Boys	Day	North

A.12 Independent schools are more distinctive than state schools and in order to protect their identity which give only a general indication of location and have also changed some small peripheral details.

The Interviews

A.13 An initial draft interview was arrived at through discussions in the team of four comprising ourselves and a former headteacher and a former deputy headteacher. This draft schedule was taken to three schools and discussed at length with the headteachers. The three schools were a large comprehensive in the North East, a primary school in the North West and a new primary school in the East Midlands. Based on their advice the structure and content of the interview schedule was extensively revised.

Schedules

A.14 The interview schedule for maintained schools first asked some establishing questions, for example, how long they had been a headteacher and in how many schools and then explored six aspects of headship in detail:

- present role and responsibilities,
- changes during the head's time as a headteacher;
- recruitment and succession;
- qualifications and training;
- remuneration and support;
- and the future.

A.15 The schedule for independent schools asked the same background questions and then explored in detail:

- how they operated as businesses with particular reference to the role of the bursar and the governors;
- headteacher recruitment, qualifications and training in the independent sector;
- any differences and similarities they had noted between running a maintained and an independent school;
- whether there was anything that they were doing that they thought had application in the maintained sector as the latter were given greater independence;
- how they saw headship in the independent sector developing in the future.

A.16 With the headteachers' permission all the interviews were taped. On average each conversation lasted up to an hour and in some cases longer. The interviews were conducted and transcribed by the two main researchers assisted by researchers, both with experience of senior leadership in schools.

A.17 The interviews with headteachers in maintained schools were carried out immediately before and after the autumn half-term break in 2006. Those with independent school heads followed towards the end of term. In a handful of cases heads agreed to talk to us from home after their term had finished. A debriefing was held in December with the two external interviewers to discuss the findings and to consider the shape of the report.