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National College
for School Leadership

Schools and academies

Review of the school leadership landscape

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Resource

Contents

Authors	3
Acknowledgements	4
Foreword	5
Executive summary	6
Chapter 1: Introduction and research design	13
Chapter 2: A literature review of the school leadership landscape	20
Chapter 3: The demography of school leadership	31
Chapter 4: Responding to change and the current policy landscape	56
Chapter 5: Current models and future challenges	66
Chapter 6: The balance between operational and strategic leadership	81
Chapter 7: New leadership skills and capabilities: support, development and training	95
Chapter 8: Conclusion	109
References	113
Appendix: School Workforce Census	121

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Disclaimer

The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Education.

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Foreword

The English education system is experiencing an era of unprecedented change, at least as significant as the move to Local Management of Schools after 1988. Nowhere are these changes more keenly felt than amongst the leadership teams and governing bodies of the country's schools.

The most public manifestation of change has been the move to academy status for several thousand schools and the opening of new free schools. This brings both additional freedoms as well as increased responsibilities for the leadership teams involved. But other changes may prove to be equally far reaching: a new accountability framework; curriculum, assessment and qualification changes; new performance management arrangements; new funding models; and a fundamental effort to sweep away bureaucracy and free up schools to focus on their own priorities. Finally the establishment of a network of Teaching Schools, based upon the principles of Teaching Hospitals, is at the heart of the vision for a self-improving schools system, owned and driven by schools themselves.

This research therefore offers a fascinating and indeed timely consideration of the schools' landscape and clearly highlights how it has evolved over the 10 years since Peter Earley – the author of this report - led the first review of school leadership in England in 2002.

This report summarises the views of headteachers, middle leaders and chairs of governors across England on the changes they are experiencing. It shows clearly that change brings both opportunity and challenge in equal measure. It also offers the most detailed descriptions of the demography of school leadership ever possible, thanks to an analysis of the first two School Workforce Censuses.

A study of this ambition is never without challenge, not least in relation to convincing leaders of the value of contributing to it, given the range of other pressures on their time. However our wholehearted thanks as always goes to those many school leaders and chairs of governors who were so generous in the support they offered to this study. I would also like to thank Professor Peter Earley, Dr Rob Higham and their colleagues at the Institute of Education and NFER for their considerable work on this project.

Maggie Farrar
Interim Chief Executive
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Executive summary

The Institute of Education (IOE), together with the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), were commissioned by the National College for School Leadership to carry out a review of the landscape of school leadership in England, between October 2011 and September 2012.

The National College asked the research team to explore the following key issues concerning the developing school leadership landscape:

- the state of school and academy leadership in England, including its key demographic features
- the way in which leaders are responding to change across phases and contexts and across a range of fronts
- the extent to which leaders are successfully maintaining a strategic and operational focus
- the identification of key challenges, opportunities faced by leaders and their responses to change in this new landscape
- an exploration of new leadership models, trends and innovations with the potential to address current and future challenges
- emergent and effective behaviours, skills, knowledge and capabilities of leaders in the new landscape
- implications for the future direction and priorities of school and academy leadership and the National College

The research project consisted of four overlapping phases, conducted between October 2011 and July 2012:

1. an analysis of the leadership labour market/demographics using existing data sets, especially the School Workforce Census
2. interviews with stakeholders, and a literature review
3. a national survey of school leaders
4. the collection of qualitative data from 8 case studies, 20 telephone interviews with school leaders and 3 focus groups

The report presents a snapshot of a changing educational landscape, particularly in the case of academy status. The survey sample was drawn up in December 2011 when 6 per cent of all schools were academies (n=1,500 approx). Reflecting this, academy leaders constituted 8 per cent of the headteacher survey responses (n=58). In October 2012, however, there were 2,373 academies, representing 45 per cent of secondary schools and 5 per cent of primaries in England.

A detailed account of the research methodology is discussed in chapter 1. It is noted that the national survey response rate was lower than anticipated, despite considerable efforts to increase the response. Overall, a total of 1,949 questionnaires were returned from 1,006 schools (a response rate of 27 per cent). In each school, the headteacher, the chair of governors and two middle/senior leaders were asked to complete a separate questionnaire. The response rate was higher for headteachers (23 per cent) than for the other groups (9 per cent chairs of governors and 10 per cent middle/senior leaders).

The report then presents, in chapter 2, an overview of current school leadership research. The chapter considers three main themes.

First, it reviews the work of school leaders, the evidence of the effect leaders have on student outcomes and the actions leaders take to provide leadership for learning. A consensus is found to exist across a range of studies that school leadership is an important influence on student learning, second only to classroom

teaching as a school influence (Leithwood et al, 2008). This leadership influence is predominately indirect, in that it relates to influence on the school's organisation and the teaching and learning environment, rather than a direct influence on student learning.

The chapter considers, second, the impact that external factors, such as context, accountability and the quasi-market, have on school leaders, including how the latter have led to an intensification and distribution of leadership within schools and an uneasy tension between local leadership and central managerialism.

Third, the chapter considers the concept of a self-improving school system and the new forms of leadership and governance that may be needed to realise that vision.

Three earlier reviews of the school leadership landscape that were commissioned by the Department for Education and the National College since 2002, are also shown to act as a benchmark for this report. Three key conclusions from those reviews are highlighted in chapter 2:

- Schools have become more complex to lead and manage, especially in terms of budgets, human resources, professional development and administration. This has been the case particularly from the late 1980s, following Local Management of Schools and the creation of education markets, which have nearly always led to intensification in the work of school leaders.
- A combination of demographic pressures and a declining pool of middle leaders attracted by headship (due in part to workload and accountability pressures) have made the recruitment and retention of headteachers in particular more difficult (Earley et al, 2002).
- In part as a response to these challenges, a number of new models of school leadership have been identified. While the traditional model of a senior leadership team (SLT) comprising a headteacher and deputy and/or assistant heads was found to be the most common, new models were noted by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) (2007), including a managed model, a multi-agency model, a federated model, and a system leadership model.

Building on these earlier reviews, the findings of the current research are presented in chapters 3-7 under the headings: demography; the current policy landscape; models and challenges; operational and strategic leadership; and leadership support, development and training.

The main findings are summarised here in turn.

The demography of school leadership

The School Workforce Censuses for November 2010 and November 2011 (DfE 2010, 2011) are used to analyse the structure of leadership teams and demographic characteristics of school leaders and teachers across different types of state-funded schools in England. The job transitions of school teachers and leaders, their age, sex, ethnic and subject background, differences in tenure, promotion rates and choices of school are also analysed. Demographic findings include the following:

- Just under a third of all headteachers are aged 55 years and over. Almost half of those headteachers who reach the age of 55 then go on to take early retirement somewhere between the ages of 55 and 59 years.
- Compared to a decade ago, there are now more teachers achieving headship in their 30s, but also considerably more heads in their late 50s and 60s.
- The average age of first promotions to assistant, deputy and head was 39, 41 and 43 years respectively (the phase difference was small).
- Over 90 per cent of schools still follow a standard model of one headteacher (ie not shared and not executive).
- The typical structure for leadership teams in primary schools remains one head and one deputy. Secondaries are more variable but typically have one head, one or two deputies and three or four assistants.
- Academies have larger SLTs with more deputies and assistant heads.

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- Teachers with a background in humanities are still most likely to progress through to secondary headship. In primary and special schools, very few teachers have a maths or science qualification, although those that do often successfully progress to leadership positions.

The analysis of the quantitative data on school leadership demography and the labour market highlights three key observations.

First, although teaching clearly continues to be a female-dominated profession, it is striking the extent to which smaller proportions of women than men moved into each stage of senior leadership. The differences were particularly pronounced in the age range 30-39, where 88 per cent of primary classroom teachers and 64 per cent of secondary classroom teachers in this range were female, yet only 60 per cent of primary and 20 per cent of secondary headteachers in this age range were female. The census data shows that male teachers were more likely to make long-distance (ie regional) geographical job moves in order to achieve promotion, while female teachers choose to make far greater use of internal promotions at their existing school.

Second, the teacher labour market was segmented with relatively little movement between geographic regions or even between school governance types. Voluntary-aided schools displayed the highest likelihood of employing teachers who have previously worked within their sector. Senior leadership posts were far more segmented both regionally and by governance-type than classroom teacher posts, and senior leaders became increasingly constrained geographically by family and other considerations, compared with the relatively younger pool of classroom teachers. The data suggests that particular types of school have very strong preferences for senior leaders who share a religion, and previous work experience in schools with a similar ethos.

Third, the issue of deputy head turnover was important. The data suggests a reduction of such posts and little turnover and thus a degree of 'blocking' promotional opportunities. Turnover of such posts is important to ensure a pool of applicants for headship going forward to prevent possible future shortages, particularly important during a period of succession planning challenges and changes to the policy landscape. Currently about 1,500 heads retire each year (about 7 per cent of schools).

Responding to change and the current policy landscape

The survey of schools, the school leader interviews and the school case studies were drawn upon to consider the views of headteachers, middle/senior leaders and chairs of governors on a range of government policies and their potential impact on schools.

The survey data shows that, overall, there was a high level of confidence in managing current change. Most headteachers (84 per cent), middle/senior leaders (84 per cent) and chairs of governors (86 per cent) felt their school had the confidence to manage current policy changes. There was also, however, a diverse range of opinions on the aims and the potential impact of policy. For instance, while a third of headteachers agreed that they felt able to work with current policy to support their school's aims and values, another third disagreed. Similarly, while 20 per cent of headteachers agreed that students would benefit from current policy reforms, 41 per cent disagreed.

All respondents were most positive about policy where it focused on schools working collaboratively. The data indicated that 87 per cent of heads, 80 per cent of middle/senior leaders and 83 per cent of chairs of governor respondents believed that working in partnership with other schools was critical to improving outcomes for students. Survey respondents also saw opportunities and incentives in policy to engage in collaboration. Approximately 60 per cent of respondents felt that the current policy agenda encouraged their school to form collaborative partnerships with other schools. About half of heads and chairs of governors also felt that current policy encouraged them formally to support another school's improvement. Further, two-fifths (43 per cent) of headteachers and a third (34 per cent) of chairs of governors and middle/senior leaders felt encouraged to make decisions that would support the progress of other schools.

There was also evidence among interview and case study participants, however, of a range of local obstacles to realising aspirations for collaboration in practice. While some schools benefited from close, supportive local relations, others faced a degree of local distrust and/or competitive relations that were difficult to resolve. Schools previously in receipt of initiative funding, such as behaviour improvement partnerships, excellence clusters and training partnerships, had experienced a reduction in funding, in some cases a

significant one, that specifically supported collaboration. Perhaps most importantly, schools that might benefit most from collaborative working were not always well placed to engage with such work. For some this was due to a perceived range of time, capacity and pressure constraints. For others, a vulnerability to external intervention led to a wariness to engage with partnerships, given uncertainty over whether partnerships themselves might become new forms of intervention.

Headteachers were more positive than other survey respondents about the potential impact of school autonomy (52 per cent compared to 33 per cent of middle/senior leaders were positive). About one-half of heads had clear plans on how they would use greater autonomy, and about one-half of heads and chairs of governors felt greater autonomy would enable their school to use financial resources to support priorities better. However, just over half of heads did not think their institution would actually gain more autonomy and just over half of chairs of governors did not think their school should become an academy.

There were significant school-phase and school-type differences on these matters among headteachers. An overwhelming majority of academy principals (97 per cent) were positive about school autonomy. Among community school headteachers, however, 50 per cent were positive, but 36 per cent were negative. A majority of secondary school headteachers (68 per cent) were positive about school autonomy. Among primary headteachers, however, 49 per cent were positive but 37 per cent were negative.

The majority (79 per cent) of headteachers stated that their school did not currently plan to become an academy, but for 10 per cent academisation was already happening and a further 8 per cent were planning to become academies. These proportions are in keeping with the national proportion of schools that were academies at the time of the survey sample creation in December 2011. While 56 per cent of secondary schools had already become or had plans to become an academy, this was only true for 13 per cent of primary schools. Reluctance to become a 'converter' academy tended to rest on schools feeling that they already had sufficient levels of autonomy. Others wished to hold back and see the experience of early converters before they committed.

All groups of respondents but especially those from primary schools, were least positive about the changing role of local authorities, with two-thirds of headteachers and nearly three-quarters (73 per cent) of senior leaders and chairs of governors suggesting it would impact moderately negatively or negatively on their schools. Middle/senior leaders in particular (64 per cent), just under half of headteachers (45 per cent) and just over half of chairs of governors (54 per cent), also felt there would be a negative/moderately negative impact from fewer government-commissioned professional development programmes. The marketisation of school improvement programmes was also an issue.

On the local authority, there was a significant phase difference. Among secondary school headteachers, 41 per cent saw the changing role of their local authority having a positive impact on their school, while 49 per cent thought the impact would be negative. Among primary headteachers, only 23 per cent were positive and 72 per cent were negative.

On funding more generally, two-thirds of headteachers were positive about the impact of the Pupil Premium, and interview and case study participants had started to notice the Pupil Premium's redistributive effects. Unsurprisingly, schools serving a high proportion of students eligible for free school meals (FSM) said they had experienced an increase in funding. A number of schools, however, particularly those with lower proportions of FSM-eligible students, said they had experienced a reduction in funding and had already made staff redundancies in consecutive years. In part these decreases resulted from the end of a number of initiative-based funding streams.

On approaches to managing policy change, four main clusters of headteachers emerged through a latent class analysis (this searches for underlying types of individuals, known as latent classes, so that the key patterns among responses can be revealed).

- Just over a fifth of headteachers (22 per cent) were strongly positive about current policy and were actively pursuing new autonomies and system leadership roles.
- About a third (34 per cent) were more cautious about engaging with policy while being moderately positive about its potential impacts.
- Another third (32 per cent) were less positive, more apprehensive and hesitant about engaging with new policy opportunities, especially around school autonomy.

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- The smallest group, about 1 in 8 headteachers (12 per cent), viewed policy negatively and were relatively sceptical about its intentions and potential impact.

While there was a relatively even spread of headteachers (by school type, phase, Ofsted category and context/FSM band) across the four classes, there were more academy principals (both primary and secondary) and headteachers of 'outstanding' secondary schools in the first cluster: those most positive about and actively engaged in the new opportunities created by policy.

The qualitative data reinforced differences in terms of headteacher attitudes and sense of readiness to meet policy change. Overall, partnership and collaboration were viewed most positively but reforms to the inspection framework and curriculum change were perceived more negatively.

Current models of leadership and future challenges

On current models of school leadership, the vast majority of headteacher survey respondents reported being the sole headteacher of a single school (91 per cent). A further 7 per cent reported working as an executive head of two or more schools. (The 2011 School Workforce Census recorded 410 such heads.) The majority of headteachers worked with a single governing body (83 per cent), and 15 per cent worked within a collaborative governance arrangement, either as part of a hard federation (9 per cent), a soft federation (5 per cent) or an academy chain (1 per cent).

The average number of senior leaders serving in a school's core SLT was four (ranging from 0 to 15 members), with just under two-thirds, mostly primary schools, not having a bursar or school business manager currently on the leadership team. As well as staff on leadership scales as deputy or assistant heads, many SLTs included other teachers who were seen as key to improvements in teaching and learning, such as subject leaders for core subjects or advanced skills teachers (ASTs). The headteachers of schools with high proportions of FSM-eligible students were more likely to report 'very significantly' in relation to a lack of credible external middle leader candidates.

The average number of governors serving on a school governing body was 14. Over a third of chairs of governors and nearly one-half of headteachers reported experiencing difficulties in recruiting governors over the last 12 months. On the governing body's role, more than three-quarters of chairs of governors felt that they should play a major role in strategic leadership, whereas only 46 per cent felt they actually did play a major role. The comparable figures for headteachers were lower.

Headteachers, chairs of governors and middle/senior leaders were asked to describe the three most significant challenges they anticipated facing over the next 18 months. Across all three groups the main concern was financial, with 44 per cent of headteachers, 34 per cent of chairs of governors and 24 per cent of middle/senior leaders anticipating finance/budget issues and reductions in funding/austerity measures. This corresponds with the 69 per cent of headteachers who identified budget changes as a reason for difficulty with recruitment and retention of senior staff.

For primary school headteachers, a common main area for development related to the roles of support staff. In secondary schools, a common area of concern for headteachers was middle leadership, usually heads of department (or faculty), including the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.

The attitudes of chairs of governors towards the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) were generally positive with only 1 per cent noting that they would not expect candidates for headship to have the qualification. However, 40 per cent were not aware of the change to the requirement to possess NPQH and 89 per cent said they would support staff who wished to undertake NPQH for professional development.

The balance between operational and strategic leadership

Nearly two-thirds (62 per cent) of headteachers and just over one-half (53 per cent) of senior leaders surveyed felt they spent the right amount of time on leadership generally. Both groups were most likely to say that they spent too much time on administration (69 per cent of headteachers and 70 per cent of senior leaders) and notable proportions (38 per cent and 23 per cent) also said they spent too much time on management. They considered that they did not spend enough time on the leadership of teaching and learning (58 per cent and 49 per cent respectively) and a notable proportion also felt they spent too little time on their own teaching and professional development.

To help balance strategic and operational demands on leadership time, almost all headteachers (89 per cent) said they had encouraged and enabled other teachers to contribute to school leadership, and had been doing so either in the last year or for a year or more. Just over three-quarters of headteachers (78 per cent) had delegated or further embedded more strategic responsibilities across the senior team. Most headteachers (88 per cent) said that they had no plans to develop an executive head or head of school model to help balance demands on time.

Heads commented particularly on the pressure of increasing accountability. Strategic planning time, both individually and with senior teams, was difficult for many headteachers to fit in adequately.

One-half of heads, especially secondary heads, reported having appointed a school business manager (SBM) or bursar for a year or more. Primary school heads were more likely to report that there were no current plans to do so.

It was still considered a 'balancing act' on how much time to spend in working with and supporting other schools and partnerships as well as keeping the focus on maintaining success in one's own institution.

New leadership skills and capabilities: support, development and training

The research identified significant anticipated changes in the external sources of support accessed by headteachers. Currently, the local authority and the school improvement partner (SIP, no longer statutory) were reported to be the two most important sources of external support. It was among these two sources, however, that headteachers anticipated the greatest decline over the next 18 months. While 54 per cent of headteachers reported the local authority was currently one of their three most important sources of support, only 29 per cent anticipated it would remain so in 18 months' time. The equivalent percentages for SIPs were 52 per cent and 32 per cent respectively. Intriguingly, this degree of anticipated decline in support was comparable to the increase in support headteachers expected to access from other sources. What was striking was the nature of this change. Many headteachers predicted they would be using a wider range of providers in 18 months' time, including providers that few schools currently use or consider important. These included commercial organisations, national leaders of education (NLEs) and teaching schools. This suggested not only greater diversity in support but also uncertainty as schools anticipated moving away from the known and the well used.

These trends in support anticipated by headteachers were broadly consistent with the actions they reported undertaking or planning to undertake at a whole-school level. On local authority services, 41 per cent of headteachers had stopped or intended to stop using services provided by their local authority. A majority of schools (69 per cent), however, also reported that they were already collaborating or planned to collaborate with other schools to fund aspects of the local authority improvement service to ensure specific services were sustained.

On teaching schools, 2 per cent of schools in the survey sample reported that they were already in the process of becoming a teaching school and 9 per cent were planning to submit an application to become one. A further 10 per cent were already participating formally in a teaching school alliance (TSA), with about one-fifth (18 per cent) planning to do so in the future. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given that the first 100 teaching schools had only been designated a term before the survey was undertaken, 70 per cent of headteachers had no current plans to participate formally in a TSA and 61 per cent had no plans to work informally with a teaching school.

On continuing professional development (CPD) activity specific to their leadership role, 90 per cent of headteachers had undertaken some form of CPD within the last 3 years. Of these, the highest percentage (86 per cent) participated in activities provided by their local authority. Headteachers reported that the three most effective or beneficial CPD activities were local authority provision, attending conferences/seminars and leadership programmes or courses. Headteachers reported their greatest development needs included 'strategies for closing attainment gaps' and 'developing future leaders for succession planning'. They also identified 'leading curriculum change and innovation', 'modelling excellence in the leadership of teaching and learning' and 'forming partnerships with schools and agencies to improve outcomes' as significant development needs.

Concluding comments

In concluding, the final chapter suggests that the complexity of school leadership, and headship in particular, continues to increase with a consequent intensification of work. The need to develop internal school capacity and effective partnerships appear essential for schools as they navigate numerous national policy changes, within their particular contexts. There is a substantial risk however that the nature and demands of current policy change will disrupt the focus of schools and leaders from teaching and learning and their authentic improvement. The landscape is also uneven and there are signs that potential faultlines could be emerging between leaders across school phases, contexts and Ofsted gradings. These faultlines include not only school capacity, but also the ways in which school leaders view the potential impacts of and respond to new policies.

Chapter 1: Introduction and research design

In England currently, we have an education system in which schools are more autonomous than anywhere else in the world. However, the English system is also characterised by variations in pupil performance that are significantly worse than in many other comparable countries. This variation is a feature of the differences between schools and, even more significantly, within schools. Whilst some children receive the highest standards of education and teaching and learning, others experience an education far below that standard.

National College, 2012:1

As more countries require better achievement from their schools and grant greater autonomy to schools in designing curricula and managing resources, the role of the school leader has grown far beyond that of administrator. Developing school leaders requires a clear definition of their responsibilities, access to appropriate professional development throughout their careers, and acknowledgment of their pivotal role in improving school and student performance.

Schleicher, 2012:20

The points above from the National College and OECD give an indication of just how important education and educational leadership have become in the second decade of the 21st century. In England the schools white paper (HM Government, 2010) aspires to enhance educational outcomes and leadership by creating ‘a school system which is more effectively self-improving’ (HM Government, 2010:73). The success of such a project is predicated on high-quality leadership that is systematically focused on teaching and learning (Barber et al, 2010). Leithwood and colleagues (Day et al, 2010; Leithwood & Seashore-Louis, 2012) have noted how leadership is the second greatest school-based influence, after teaching, on student outcomes, noting that ‘school leaders improve teaching and learning indirectly and most powerfully through their influence on staff motivation, commitment and working conditions’ (Day et al, 2010:3).

The current context of education is therefore focused on developing a more diverse and autonomous system. There is a renewed imperative from government for schools to partner other schools through teaching school alliances throughout England, and other localised partnerships such as recently converted academies. There is emergent and established evidence highlighting the powerful learning and development opportunities inherent within such contextualised peer learning and partnership arrangements and through cluster models (Hill & Matthews, 2010; Hill et al, 2012; Matthews et al, 2011; Hargreaves, 2010; Hargreaves, 2011).

The sum of changes to the policy and leadership landscape has resulted in important shifts in many areas: inspection arrangements; new curricula; school funding mechanisms (including the Pupil Premium); varied school and financial models; further diversity such as free schools, and academy variations such as vocationally focused university technology colleges and studio schools. These new and autonomous models decentralise school improvement efforts with an opportunity to better focus teaching, learning and curricula to enhance outcomes overall, and close the gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged students.

This complex educational landscape and increasingly autonomous direction bring both challenges and opportunities and reconstitutes school, college and academy leaders’ relationship with local authorities as well as other local educational institutions in important ways. It was within this rapidly changing context that this research report – a review of the school leadership landscape – was commissioned by the National College for School Leadership (National College). It took place over 12 months from October 2011 to September 2012. It was undertaken by research teams from the London Centre for Leadership in Learning at the Institute of Education (IOE), University of London and the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER).

The National College asked the research team to explore the following key issues concerning the developing school leadership landscape:

- the state of school and academy leadership in England, including its key demographic features alongside issues raised, for example for succession planning
- the way in which leaders in maintained schools and academies are responding to change across phases and contexts and across a range of fronts
- the extent to which leaders are successfully maintaining a strategic and operational focus on the leadership of teaching and learning whilst managing wider change
- the identification of key challenges and opportunities faced by school and academy leaders in this new landscape, with specific examples of how such leaders are responding to change
- an exploration of new leadership models, trends and innovations with the potential to address current and future challenges
- emergent behaviours, skills, knowledge and/or capabilities of school and academy leaders, as well as system leaders, to lead effectively in the new landscape
- implications of the findings for the future direction and priorities of school and academy leadership and the National College

In order to provide multiple insights into the current educational landscape and leadership behaviours and challenges, a mixed-methods approach was adopted. This research design enabled the team to provide the necessary breadth and depth of data collection and analysis for meaningful and valid conclusions to be made. The research looked at leadership in a range of settings: schools and academies, pupil referral units (PRUs) and early years settings. The different data were triangulated to help provide a robust and comprehensive picture of the school leadership landscape. Data derived from the various methods were analysed using appropriate software.

The research project consisted of four overlapping phases conducted between October 2011 and July 2012.

Phase 1: An analysis of the leadership labour market/demographics using existing data sets

This analysis, which forms the substance of chapter 3, describes the structure, tenure, teaching hours, age, gender and ethnicity profile of schools across all senior leadership groups using data from the 2010 and 2011 School Workforce Census (SWC). (A short description of the SWC is given in the appendix.) The chapter describes how leadership varies by region and across school governance types. The new educational landscape, with significant changes in governance and tighter financial climate, can only fully be understood with longitudinal data. An analysis of the change in job roles between the November 2010 and November 2011 censuses gives an indication of current patterns of promotion, movement between schools and exits from the profession. The analysis took place at the start of the project (October 2011) and was repeated using the latest SWC data in July 2012.

Phase 2: Interviews with key stakeholders and a literature review

This phase commenced in the autumn term 2011 with a brief review of existing research on school leadership, especially the studies recently commissioned by the National College. This was later developed as a fuller literature review of which a short version is found in chapter 2. The selection of literature for review is also explained.

In-depth, semi-structured face-to-face and/or telephone interviews were conducted with senior staff from the National College (2), headteacher associations (2), local authorities (1), the Department for Education (DfE) (1), governors' association (1) and other key stakeholders to gain a high-level strategic view of the leadership landscape.

Phase 3: National survey of school leaders

The qualitative data and literature review from phase 2 were then fed into the design of the survey research instruments which were piloted with a small number of heads, senior leaders and chairs of governors. The survey sample, taken from the NFER school database, was a stratified random sample of nearly 3,700 schools with data collected from headteachers, deputies, middle leaders and chairs of governors using three questionnaires tailored to capture the views, experiences and aspirations of the different groups.

It is important to note that the survey findings present a snapshot of a changing educational landscape, particularly in the case of academy status. The survey sample was drawn up in December 2011 when 6 per cent of all schools were academies (n=1,500 approx). Reflecting this, academy leaders constituted about 8 per cent of the headteacher survey responses (n=67). In October 2012, however, there were 2,373 academies, representing 45 per cent of secondary schools and 5 per cent of primary schools in England.

A total of 3,692 schools were sent 4 questionnaires in January 2012. The survey response rate was lower than anticipated and despite putting numerous strategies in place to achieve a reasonably high response rate, the achieved sample was under 30 per cent. In each school, the headteacher, the chair of governors and two middle/senior leaders were asked to complete a separate questionnaire.

The questionnaires were available on paper and for completion online throughout the duration of the survey period (January to February 2012, a period of five weeks). During this period, two written reminders to all schools, three email or fax reminders to all schools and two targeted telephone reminders were conducted to try to maximise the response rate. This lower than expected response is perhaps a reflection of the times when completing questionnaires may not currently be a high priority for school leaders. It has become increasingly difficult to achieve high response rates from school-based surveys. It is a different educational climate following the new government and since the previous landscape survey was carried out (PwC, 2007). Schools are facing increasing challenges, including considering new structures (eg academies), and curriculum and inspection frameworks. It is unlikely that completing a survey is a high priority. In fact, feedback was received from a handful of schools who said they were sorry they could not complete this survey due to a lack of time or too many other pressures.

Nevertheless, overall, a total of 1,949 questionnaires were returned from 1,006 schools (an overall response rate of 27 per cent of schools). The response rate was higher for headteachers (23 per cent) than for the other groups (9 per cent for chairs of governors and 10 per cent for middle/senior leaders). The breakdown by type of school can be seen in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Number of each type of school returning at least one survey

Type of school	Number of each type of schools responding overall
Primary	499
Secondary	263
Academies	76
Nursery	36
Pupil referral unit	24
Special school	108
Total	1006

Source: NFER and IOE leadership survey for the National College, 2012

Note: Type of school is based on the information on the Register of Schools in January/February 2012 (the timing of the survey), not at the time of sampling.

The surveys consisted of some overlapping questions so that responses could be compared, but also other questions specifically relevant to each role. The questions in the surveys were grouped under the following headings:

- current policy landscape
- current models of leadership and challenges
- leadership tasks and use of time
- implications for leadership skills, qualities and support

Compared with the national profile of schools, the responding sample reflected a higher proportion of secondary and special schools; and a higher proportion of schools from the lowest quintile of FSM eligibility. (Academies, as noted above, were slightly over-represented for the number at the time.) To address this and ensure the robustness of the findings, weights were calculated using both school type and quintiles of FSM eligibility. Owing to the differences between the schools that were represented among the three respondent groups (headteachers, chairs of governors and middle/senior leaders), different weights were created for each of the three surveys. Further, large schools were over-represented in the sample of primary and secondary schools who responded to the middle/senior leaders surveys. Thus, in addition to school type and quintile of FSM eligibility, school size was also used to balance this sample.

A breakdown of respondent group by type of school can be seen in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2: Number of respondents by school type

Type of school	Number responding to headteacher survey	Number responding to chair of governor survey	Number responding to middle/senior leader survey
Primary	402	166	250
Secondary	221	109	173
Academies	67	28	52
Nursery	32	8	11
Pupil referral unit	19	2	14
Special school	92	34	71
Total schools	833	347	571

Source: NFER and IOE leadership survey for the National College, 2012

Note: Type of school is based on the information on the Register of Schools in January/February 2012 (the timing of the survey), not at the time of sampling.

Throughout the report, the key findings from all three surveys (headteachers, chair of governors and middle/senior leaders) are presented. Responses to common questions are compared across the three groups. Further analyses, including comparison of responses across types of schools, school context (FSM eligibility), Ofsted gradings and school phase are also included, especially on the headteacher data. These have only been reported where statistically significant (for those responding) and where cell sizes were considered sufficiently large to enable robust and valid analyses. Significance testing has been carried out at a value of $p < 0.05$ (which means the probability of this difference arising by chance is less than 5 per cent). Further, latent class analysis, a statistical method that searches for underlying types of individuals (known as latent classes) so that the key patterns across responses can be revealed, was undertaken to examine common patterns in headteacher responses to questions on school autonomy, impact of government policy on their leadership, and school improvement more widely (see especially chapter 4).

Phase 4: In-depth case studies and collection of qualitative data via interviews and focus groups

The survey results were used to help devise instruments for the qualitative phase of the research. This phase was made up of 8 case studies, 3 focus groups and telephone interviews with 20 headteachers.

a) Case studies: The case studies involved day visits to the schools and academies and were selected from

the survey respondents where 265 headteachers (32 per cent of the respondents) had agreed to be involved further in the research if approached. The case studies included different phase and type of institution (eg primary, secondary, special, academy, PRU, etc) and were of varying size, from rural, urban and suburban locations, different regions, Ofsted category, and context/student intake (as reflected by FSM). Further details are given in Table 1.3.

Table 1.3: Composition of case studies

	Phase	Type of school	Location (government region)	Size (number on roll)	Ofsted category	FSM quintile
School A	Primary	Community	South	420	Good	2nd highest
School B	Primary	Community	North	60	Good	Lowest
School C	Secondary	Academy	South	1,000	Satisfactory	2nd highest
School D	Secondary	Academy	South	1,250	Outstanding	Lowest
School E	Primary	Academy	East Midlands	320	Outstanding	Lowest
School F	Secondary	PRU	North	30	Outstanding	Highest
School G	Secondary	Community	North	1,110	Good	Middle
School H	Special (3-19)	Special	East Midlands	145	Outstanding	Highest

Of course at the end of the day the key deciding factor was the head's agreement to participate and availability in the requested time period. Before each case study visit, relevant documents were read and during each case study site visit, interviews were conducted with the headteacher, chair of governors, senior and middle leaders, and several teaching and support staff. Views and opinions regarding the changing school leadership landscape and its implications were sought from each interviewee. Short extracts from the case study visits inform the report at many points.

b) Telephone interviews with headteachers: 20 interviews were conducted using a similar set of questions to those asked of the case study heads. Most of the heads were selected randomly from the survey respondents but to make up the required number in the timescale (June 2012) it proved necessary to seek another two volunteers. The 20 telephone interviews included different phase and type of institution (eg primary, secondary, special, academy) and were of varying size, from rural, urban and suburban locations, different regions, Ofsted category, and context/pupil intake (decided by FSM eligibility). In all but one of the schools that volunteered for the telephone sample, the headteacher had been in post for at least two years and often longer. All were in post at the time of the most recent Ofsted inspection, where leadership was found to be at least 'good' and, in all cases, student outcomes were improving. Of the 20 schools, 6 had been classified by Ofsted as 'outstanding' (grade 1), 8 as 'good' (grade 2) and 6 as 'satisfactory' (grade 3). None of the interviewees was from 'unsatisfactory' (grade 4) schools or those in an Ofsted category such as notice to improve. The heads were from schools and academies from all over the country. Further details of the interviewees' schools are in Table 1.4.

Table 1.4: Interviewees' schools (n=20 headteachers)

	Phase	Type of school	Location (government region)	Size (number on roll)	Ofsted category	FSM quintile
School 1	Special	Community	West Midlands	80	1	Above average
School 2	Secondary	Community	South East	960	3	Above average
School 3	Special	Community	North West	90	1	Much higher than average
School 4	Primary	Community	North West	160	2	Average
School 5	Secondary	Community	East Midlands	1,000	3	Below average
School 6	Secondary	Academy	Yorkshire and the Humber	1,540	2	Much lower than average
School 7	Secondary	Community	North West	700	3	Much higher than average
School 8	Secondary	Community	West Midlands	470	2	Average
School 9	Special	Community	North East	130	1	Above average
School 10	Nursery	Maintained	East of England	70	2	n/a
School 11	Secondary	Community	North East	570	3	Much higher than average
School 12	Primary	Foundation	East of England	280	2	Below average
School 13	Primary	Community	Yorkshire and the Humber	30	1	Much lower than average
School 14	Primary	Community	London	430	1	Below average
School 15	Primary	Community	Yorkshire and the Humber	520	3	Above average
School 16	Primary	Community	East Midlands	320	2	Above average
School 17	Primary	Voluntary controlled	South West	280	2	Below average
School 18	Secondary	Community	North West	880	3	Above average
School 19	Secondary	Academy	London	1,060	1	Above average
School 20	Primary	Community	South West	470	2	Below average

c) Focus groups: three focus groups were conducted towards the end of the project in July 2012. They were held in the north, south and central areas of England. They consisted of groups of primary heads (north), secondary heads (central) and a mixed group (south). The primary heads' focus group consisted of five primary headteachers and one primary deputy headteacher, of which five were leaders in community schools and one was an executive headteacher of a three-school multi-academy trust. The secondary heads' focus group was made up of three secondary headteachers, one secondary chair of governors and two secondary deputy headteachers.

The mixed focus group consisted of seven people – three assistant heads (primary and secondary), a local authority primary adviser, a head of a children’s centre and two education business leaders. The focus group discussions, held in three locations, allowed the project’s emerging findings to be tested or validated with groups of experienced school leaders, including school business managers.

The approach taken to the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data helped the research team to achieve the aims of the project. The research reviews the school leadership landscape and has collected data about leadership skills, behaviours, knowledge and capabilities, including any new competencies and attributes needed by leaders in order to be effective as the system becomes more autonomous and diverse. It also explores how school leaders across phases and contexts are responding to changes in policy and the extent to which they are successfully maintaining a strategic and operational focus on the leadership of teaching and learning, whilst managing wider change.

Structure of the report

The report begins with a brief review of relevant recent literature (chapter 2), before focusing on the demography of school leadership using data from the latest School Workforce Census. Chapter 4 examines the current policy landscape and how schools are responding to change. Current models and future challenges form the basis of chapter 5, whilst chapter 6 examines the balance between operational and strategic leadership, and considers how school improvement is being led. The main sources of advice and support that leaders call upon both now and in the near future are considered in chapter 7 along with leadership skills, training and development. The final chapter offers some brief concluding comments as we move towards a self-improving school system.

Chapter 2: A literature review of the school leadership landscape

Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the current school leadership research field. It covers four main themes. First, it considers earlier reviews of the school leadership landscape covering prevailing trends and concerns from the year 2000 onwards that act as a benchmark for this current study. Second, it analyses the work of school leaders, focusing particularly on evidence about the effect leaders have on student outcomes and the actions they take to provide leadership for learning. Third, it reviews how the work of school leaders is influenced by external factors such as context, accountability and the quasi-market, and considers evidence that this has led to both an intensification and distribution of leadership within schools. Fourth, it analyses the concept of a self-improving school system and, in particular, the new forms of leadership and governance that may be needed to realise this vision.

Across these four themes, the overarching aim is to build an overview of the key issues and evidence in the field so as to support the wider analysis of this report. In practice, the literature review was guided by three objectives, to:

- inform and further conceptualise the commissioned research questions that are discussed in chapter 1
- build on earlier leadership landscape reports that have been commissioned by the Department for Education and the National College since 2000
- summarise key themes within the current school leadership research field

To fulfil these objectives within a limited space, the review sought to draw on research publications that reflected key evidence and arguments with the wider body of published work. An initial outline of the literature was developed and research publications were then categorised thematically to develop and refine the initial key themes. The review was undertaken between November 2011 and February 2012.

Reviews of school leadership

In 2002, Earley et al undertook a benchmark review of the current state of school leadership in England. The review, commissioned by the then Department for Education and Skills (DfES), considered leadership demography, career aspirations and professional development, approaches to school leadership and the concerns and challenges facing school leaders. On demography, among 758 headteacher survey respondents, the majority (about two-thirds) were in the 46-55 age range. A majority of primary headteachers were female (two-thirds) and a majority of secondary respondents were male (again two-thirds). The overwhelming majority of heads, deputies and middle leaders were of White ethnic origin, although a growing representation of Black and minority ethnic groups among NPQH candidates suggested a more diverse cohort of potential future leaders.

On career aspirations, a combination of demographic pressures and a declining pool of middle leaders attracted to headship were seen to be making the recruitment and retention of headteachers more difficult. About a quarter of deputy and assistant heads definitely wished to become a headteacher. About 4 in 10, however, said they had no plans to do so. Further, those with aspirations to headship preferred not to go to a school in a challenging situation. A career framework of leadership development was suggested as an important means to encourage preparedness, especially since only one in eight heads felt well prepared when they had commenced headship. It was also noted that school leaders looked chiefly to their peers, both within and outside their school, for ideas and inspiration, and many derived effective professional development from undertaking acting leadership roles but for most these had not been available.

On approaches to leadership, Earley et al (2002) argued there was no 'identikit' leadership style and rather a key dimension of school leadership was to interact sensitively with local contexts, people and communities. Two leadership approaches were found to be effective when combined.

First, transformational leadership, that included building a clear vision, establishing commitment to agreed goals, encouraging high expectations, being highly visible to reinforce expectations while developing a conception of leadership that was 'neither linked to status nor embodied in the actions of any single individual, but rather dispersed or shared throughout the school' (Earley et al, 2002:80). Given, however, that evidence on transformational leadership pointed to only a small impact on student attainment, it needed to be combined with an instructional, pedagogic or learning-centred leadership approach. This included a focus on the behaviours of staff that affect the quality of teaching and learning. For leaders it included action both on organisation matters (eg to control constraints on the amount of time students spend learning) and crucially on promoting and developing schools as learning-centred or professional learning communities by acting themselves as lead learners.

Finally, on concerns and challenges, school leaders reported a growing complexity and intensification in their work, coupled with continued external challenges such as staff shortages and bureaucracy. Following Local Management of Schools reform from the late 1980s, schools were seen to have become more complex to manage especially in terms of budgets, human resources, professional development and administration. The creation of education markets had also impacted, sometimes negatively, on school leaders and had nearly always led to an intensification in work. As a result, school leaders were working long hours, and longer than their predecessors. Many also felt they had to take a lead on things about which they felt uncomfortable – including on performance-related pay, aspects of target-setting and competitive external marketing. For some, the cumulative effects of socio-economic deprivation led to material shortages and other crises; while for a majority, bureaucracy, excessive paperwork and constant change made their jobs less do-able and less attractive (Earley et al, 2002:39).

In 2005, a follow-up study into the state of school leadership in England was carried out by MORI Social Research Institute (Stevens et al, 2005) for the National College and the DfES. This included a large-scale survey of headteachers, school leaders, governors, local authorities and NPQH candidates. The research concluded that headteachers are motivated:

by the dynamic and varied nature of their role and the opportunity to build shared values, whereas inspections, measures of accountability and administrative demands are most likely to demotivate headteachers.

Stevens et al, 2005:1

Half of the heads envisaged leaving their current school in the next three years, usually to retire or seek a headship in a different school. Shortage of time and budget restrictions were the key barriers to headteachers receiving the training and development they needed with regards to leadership and management. At the time of the research, 58 per cent of headteachers were satisfied with the overall training and support they received.

In 2007, the then Department for Children, Schools and Families commissioned a further review of school leadership from PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC, 2007). Drawing upon data from a variety of sources, PwC also found that school leaders worked long hours and had difficulty achieving a work-life balance. This was linked to an increasing number of tasks leaders were responsible for, although PwC argued that some leaders could better prioritise, 'let go' and delegate. Categorising the responsibilities of headteachers, PwC proposed six main areas: accountability; strategy and improvement planning; managing teaching and learning; managing staffing (recruitment and development); networking with other institutions; and day-to-day operations. Surveyed headteachers reported that accountability, improvement planning, managing teachers and implementing new initiatives were activities that took up a lot of time. They wanted to spend more time on strategic visioning, and less time on financial management, implementing initiatives and managing teachers. They said they would ideally delegate the management of buildings, budgets, staff development and special educational needs (SEN) to other staff.

The PwC report argued that five models of senior school leadership increasingly characterised the system, in part in response to workload pressures but also to wider government policies including Every Child Matters. First, a traditional model, with the senior leadership team (SLT) composed exclusively of qualified teachers including a headteacher and deputy and/or assistant heads. This was still the most common model, particularly among primary schools. Second, a managed model, with a flatter structure and specific roles allocated to senior support staff including directors of finance or human resources (HR). This was becoming

more common in the secondary sector with almost 1 in 10 schools reported to have 2 senior support staff on their SLT. The third model, a multi-agency managed model, had an inter-agency focus with both teaching staff and professionals from other agencies on the SLT. This remained uncommon. Fourth was a federated model, including confederations and joint strategic governing bodies with an executive head. About 1 in 10 schools reported having some form of federative arrangement. Fifth was a system leadership model, with the headteacher taking on a number of roles beyond the school to contribute to the wider system.

Continued growth of the newer models would require policy reform. PwC recommended individuals without qualified teacher status (QTS) or classroom experience should be allowed to run schools, provided this was in conjunction with a senior qualified teaching post on the SLT. There was also, PwC argued, an insufficient pay differential between headship and deputy headship and between senior leadership and the highest paid teachers. This, coupled with workload pressures, impacted negatively on the attractiveness of headship and could be resolved either by increasing pay or preferably by further distributing responsibilities among the SLT.

Two contemporary studies provided further detail on the declining attractiveness of headship. The National College (2006) found almost one-third of primary and secondary headships were readvertised because there was no suitable candidate. It suggested demographic effects for this with nearly a quarter of headteachers aged over 55 and predicted to retire over the next 5 years but also a lower than average number of teachers in the following generation from which new school leaders would normally emerge. Smithers and Robinson (2007), however, found evidence of a headteacher shortage surprising in secondary schools, given that the average teacher:headteacher ratio was 60:1. In primary schools it was 10:1 and hence a shortage was more likely. Beyond demography, they proposed a range of other significant factors including workload, too many government initiatives, excessive accountability, vulnerability to dismissal through poor Ofsted reports and insufficient pay differentials.

Difficulties in the recruitment and retention of school leaders, especially headteachers, has led to a number of initiatives and developments in talent management, accelerated leadership development and in succession planning – notably the National College’s local solutions approach (Earley & Jones, 2010; Davies & Davies, 2011; Fink, 2010). Research highlights the importance of action in showing how high headteacher turnover has a consistent and profound negative correlation with student outcomes (Macmillan, 2000; Fink & Brayman, 2006). Low turnover of headteachers might also impact on student outcomes and the issue of whether or not school leaders have a shelf-life has been discussed by Earley and Weindling (2007).

School leadership in action

The above reviews built on a rapidly growing literature on the work of school leaders. This included analyses of the importance to leadership of context, values, vision, professional learning and management. Day et al (2000), for instance, proposed the concept of ‘values-led contingency leadership’ as they sought to refine recognition that school leaders respond to context. School leaders, they argued, need to be skilled in reading and responding to context, but that is not sufficient. They also need to be values-led, and in particular student- and staff-centred, as this enables them to retain consistency and direction, while still responding to context.

Considering the importance of turning values into a communicable vision, Bush and Glover (2003) drew on Yukl (2002) to argue that leadership is a process of influence. Rather than commanding from a formal post, leaders seek the commitment of staff and stakeholders to a vision ‘of a better future’ for the school and its students. Recognising that this might be regarded as manipulative, they suggested Begley (1994) offered a means towards a participative vision-building process. At a basic level, vision and goals are derived by leaders from government policy. At an intermediate level, goals are consistent with the leaders’ own articulated vision. At an expert level, leaders work with teachers and the wider school community to develop goals that reflect a collaborative vision.

Lewis and Murphy (2008) reviewed the actions leaders then take to realise this vision. Building a learning organisation (Senge, 1990) or a professional learning community (Stoll & Seashore-Louis, 2007) is central so that professional learning and expansive thinking are encouraged and defensiveness reduced. Sergiovanni (1998) argued that leaders need to extend the intellectual and professional capital of teachers and this requires supportive social and academic relations within the school. This in turn may require, as Glatter (2004) argued, a deliberative/reflective dimension to leadership capable of listening to others, drawing out their strengths and pursuing organic change rather than provoking conflict. It will also require skills in

implementation, and hence effective management (as well as leadership) of people, systems and structures (Huczynski & Buchanan, 2001).

In seeking to summarise this emerging evidence on the work of school leadership, Leithwood and Riehl (2005) proposed four broad categories of practice. Leaders, they argue:

- build vision and set direction: by identifying and articulating a vision, creating shared high expectations and monitoring organisational performance
- understand and develop people: by detailing the knowledge and skills staff need in order to accomplish school goals, providing individual support, modelling good practice and rewarding personal development
- redesign the organisation: by building a collaborative culture, facilitating the work of teachers and building productive relations with parents
- manage teaching and learning: by staffing the curriculum appropriately, providing support for teaching and learning, buffering staff and students from distractions and fostering stability

Leithwood (2001:1) acknowledges that these practices are a 'necessary but not sufficient' part of an effective school leader's repertoire. Leaders need to also respond to context. Further, Hargreaves and Fink (2006) suggest that personal characteristics such as commitment, resilience, passion and understanding can affect the abilities and capacities of heads to apply these leadership practices successfully.

School leadership and student learning

Building on these analyses of leadership work, several recent studies have sought to refine what we know about leadership effects on student learning. Leithwood and Seashore-Louis (2012) argue there is a 'critical connection' between the headteacher and other formal leaders, radiating outwards across the organisation to classroom teachers, who have the most direct form of instructional leadership in their immediate contact with student learners. This connection between leadership and student outcomes is thus, they argue, not direct. It is mediated by home, school and classroom influences. It includes creating the conditions for learning and supporting instructional practices that affect student outcomes. This confirms a range of other studies that find a strong but indirect effect of school leadership on student outcomes (Creemers & Reetzig, 1996; Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2003; Robinson, Lloyd & Rowe, 2008; Robinson et al, 2009 & Hattie, 2009). Leithwood and Seashore-Louis summarise the consistency of these findings in arguing that:

To date, we have not found a single documented case of a school improving its student achievement record in the absence of talented leadership.

Leithwood & Seashore-Louis, 2012:3

Two recent studies have sought to provide detailed quantitative evidence on the leadership practices that constitute these effects. The first, Day et al (2010), researched the leadership of schools that had improved student learning outcomes over three consecutive years. Day et al reconfirm Leithwood et al's (2007) finding that effective school leadership is second only to classroom teaching as a school influence on student learning. The headteacher's leadership, in particular, can directly create and influence improvement in the school's organisation and in the teaching and learning environment, which in turn improves student outcomes. Improvement strategies, among the primary and secondary heads surveyed, included encouraging the use of data and research, designing teaching policies and practices, improving assessment procedures, strategically allocating resources and promoting professional development. Leaders also shared a common set of values (eg a commitment to equal opportunities), characteristics (eg resilience, optimism) and approaches (eg transformational and instructional leadership). However, reiterating Earley et al (2002), there was no single best-fit approach: effective headteachers were found to be sensitive and responsive to the school's development phase, the confidence of staff, the behaviour and attainment of students, and wider contextual constraints.

The second study also notes the importance of indirect leadership effects. Scheerens (2012) reviews the empirical evidence from meta-analyses conducted over the last two decades and reports the results of a new meta-analysis based on 25 studies carried out between 2005 and 2010. He notes that the older reviews and meta-analyses 'were largely based on so-called direct effects studies, while the majority of the more

recent studies looked at indirect effects of leadership, mediated by other school variables' (Scheerens, 2012:v). Scheerens argues that a relatively small total effect of leadership on student outcomes has been found but 'promising intermediary factors' can be identified. These are stimulated by specific leadership behaviours and impact on student performance:

Qualifying the potential of school leadership in this way does not mean that we can do away with school leaders. Schools, like any kind of organisation, need leadership.... [But in] 'normal' situations of average schools a 'lean' kind of management might be sufficient which would make maximum use of the available substitutes and self-organisation offered by the school staff and other provisions.

Scheerens, 2012:146

Scheerens equates this perspective on leadership and management to 'meta-control' which, he argues, can be interpreted 'as orchestrating the control by the other actors on the school scene' (Scheerens, 2012:146). In most cases, little monitoring or control of teachers and teaching is required and leaders create favourable conditions to enable teachers to do their work independently. This includes leaders protecting teachers from disturbing external influences, overseeing administrative tasks (buffering), whilst facilitating opportunities for professional development, staff alignment, feedback and resource provision. Meta-control also includes creating effective structures and core processes, upholding performance standards and agreeing core objectives of the school. In short, Scheerens argues:

school leaders as meta-controllers need to have a broad overview of key areas for organizational functioning, a keen eye for self steering and self organization and a detached attitude of taking matters in their own hands (diverting from meta- to direct-control).

Scheerens, 2012:147

While a different level of leadership might be necessary within 'failing' and low-performing schools, which require more directive leadership focused on basic school functioning (Slavin, 1998), a thinner or 'lean' form of leadership is appropriate, Scheerens argues, in 'average' and high-performing schools. He concludes that:

The school leadership literature in its zeal to underline the crucial role of leadership may have underscored the potential for efficiency in schools as professional bureaucracies. The view of a lean kind of leadership, defined in terms of meta-control, might be a perspective that could be helpful in the avoidance of 'too much management'.

Scheerens, 2012:150

Professional learning and leadership for learning

The importance of leaders leading professional learning has been highlighted by a further recent meta-review of leadership effects. Robinson, Hohepa & Lloyd (2009) found that the two largest leadership effects are achieved when leaders promote and participate in teacher learning and development and plan, coordinate and evaluate teaching and the curriculum. These actions, they argue, enable leaders to better understand what is needed for improvement, to provide formative feedback that teachers find useful and to support effective professional learning. Effective leaders also use resources strategically to prioritise teaching goals; establish clear goals and expectations; and ensure an orderly and supportive environment for teaching. Overall:

[the] more leaders focus their influence, their learning, and their relationships with teachers on the core business of teaching and learning, the greater is their influence and impact in terms of improved student outcomes.

Robinson et al, 2009:28

Given the importance of leading professional development within this model of instructional leadership, it is interesting to note that Earley et al (2002) found 'leading the professional development of others' was an area where further training would be welcomed by 49 per cent of primary and 30 per cent of secondary headteachers in England.¹

This reiterates the importance of instructional leadership, learning-centred leadership or leadership for learning – which implies a wider focus on professional learning and enquiry (Bubb & Earley, 2010; Townsend & MacBeath, 2011). Hattie (2002) argues that this involves identifying, valuing and esteeming high-quality teaching, with leaders creating a climate to talk about teaching and learning approaches and providing defensible methods to evaluate and improve school programmes. Hattie (2009) conducted a review of 800 meta-reviews on teaching and learning and argues a cumulative perspective emerges on effective teaching. To ensure cognitive progress, effective teachers 'see learning through the eyes of their students' (Hattie, 2009:22). They provide clarity on learning intentions and appropriately challenging experiences. They know when learning is correct or incorrect and when to try alternative strategies (so that neither direct instruction, collaborative, nor student-centred enquiry are sufficient, but rather need to be used reflectively in combination).

Feedback and challenge are also essential. When students face learning challenges, there is a higher probability that they will need and seek feedback to which teachers can provide direction. Classroom relationships need to support students to seek this feedback. Teachers, critically, also need to become 'learners of their own teaching', using feedback from students on what they know, what they understand and when they have misconceptions, in order to refine their teaching. School leaders in turn need to be 'as great a teacher [as] your teachers, as great a learner as your teachers, and the person who provides the goalposts for excellence' (Hattie, 2002:8).

There is a clear link between these actions and the concept of a learning organisation, popularised by Senge (1990, 2006), in which all members of the organisation engage in learning, rather than one leading strategist. For Senge, leaders need to maintain an overarching view but learning should be a collective effort. Indeed, collective learning across formal organisational roles and boundaries has been shown in schools to have a strong positive influence on classroom practice (Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005; Matthews, 2009; Southworth, 2009; Spillane, 2006). Related leadership actions include creating: a sustained professional dialogue around teaching (Hallinger, 2005); a professional 'developmental orientation' (Bruggenat et al, 2012); a positive whole-school learning environment (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008); and a focus on student engagement (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999, Leithwood et al, 2004).

Leadership for learning is concerned then with student outcomes, teacher development and professional motivation within a creative learning organisation (Marzano et al, 2005; Townsend & MacBeath, 2011). MacBeath et al (2008) suggest three key principles for leadership for learning, the:

- nurturing of a spirit of learning in an accessible and a safe environment
- socialising of learning through internal and external dialogue with researchers and practitioners
- sharing of leadership predicated on a notion that all staff, students and parents are learners, learning resources and leaders

MacBeath (2008) has also demonstrated the importance of self-evaluation and reflection, through which leaders guide effective instruction and help teachers to innovate and have a positive influence on the organisational environment (Leithwood, 2001; O'Donnell & White, 2005; Daniels & Edwards, 2012).

Leadership, accountability and the market

While there is a substantial evidence-base on effective school leadership (eg Earley & Weindling, 2004; Hargreaves & Harris, 2011; Matthews, 2009; Barber et al, 2010), a growing body of research has questioned whether school leaders can indeed fulfil the tasks recommended by educational effectiveness studies. A central argument is that significant constraints to local leadership exist within the education system and the autonomy of school leadership is relatively limited. Two constraints have been shown to be particularly significant: the internal market and the accountability culture in which school leaders work.

¹ The knowledge-base of the leadership of professional development and learning and what constitutes effective CPD is now quite extensive (eg see Bubb & Earley, 2009, 2010, 2011; Earley & Porritt, 2009).

The internal or quasi-market

In policy, competition in public sector markets has been seen to improve the quality, diversity and equity of services (HM Government, 2010). The 'contestability' and innovation enabled by new providers (such as academies and free schools) can also make markets more effective (Moe, 1994). Critical research, however, shows how markets accentuate both local school hierarchies and 'cream-skimming' in popular school admissions. Waslander, Pater & van der Weide (2010), for instance, show how local school hierarchies are well known to school leaders and at each level of the hierarchy leaders know both their competitors and their potential students and so market accordingly. The hierarchies can be described substantially by the socio-economic composition of schools. Similarly, Lubienski (2009) argues that new providers can bring more diverse programme offers but are more likely to focus on marketing innovations to target 'desirable' students rather than pedagogic or curriculum innovation where standardisation is in fact more likely. In this context, school leaders 'need to adopt a more business [-like] mentality [and] consider services they offer in relation to other providers and competitors in the area' (Lubienski, 2009:20).²

High-stakes accountability

The second constraint refers to the combination of national tests, published league tables of results, changing definitions of minimum standards, Ofsted inspections and intervention. Gillborn and Youdell (2000) argued that the combined effect in schools can be characterised as medical triage. Students able to achieve above the minimum standard are left to do so. Students deemed unable are not prioritised. Students that might achieve (classically at the grade C-D borderline) are subjected to a range of resource-intensive interventions. More recently, Vignoles, Foliano and Meschi (2010) found that students in schools achieving rapid contextual value-added (CVA) improvements had significantly lower emotional engagement with learning. Watkins (2010) found that teachers focusing on test performance could actually lower performance as their students developed less independent and strategic thinking skills and became less motivated. Smith and Bell (2011) also found a paradox in schools below national floor standards and in areas of high socio-economic deprivation. Despite knowing transformational leadership would be more effective in the longer run, school leaders felt 'forced' by external pressure to employ transactional leadership approaches that focused on immediate results and detailed supervision of staff performance.

The combination of market forces, accountability and associated central government policy leads Forrester and Gunter (2009) to question whether school leaders develop their own practices or are in fact 'local implementers of reform'. They argue that while school leaders are not naïve readers of policy, and have their own histories, values and interests, policy can constrain their choices in thinking and action. School leaders may talk the language of vision but in reality the space in which they can lead is narrow and in many cases may be at best, as Hartley (2007) argues, tactical interpretation rather than actual strategising. Lewis and Murphy argue that much of the school leadership literature seems to:

assume that the headteacher is in charge of the school's destiny.. Yet the reality is that, in some respects, many headteachers are more like branch managers than [chief executive officers]. They are handed down expectations, targets, new initiatives and resources – all of which may or may not be manageable in their context.

Lewis & Murphy, 2008:135-6

For Fink (2010), public policy for the last 15-20 years has been dominated by the standards agenda that has contributed to a model of leadership that is 'reactive, compliant and managerial' (Fink, 2010:x). This sets up a contradiction between the requirement for leaders to be visionary, creative and entrepreneurial, and the policy realities they live with. Thomson (2008, 2009) talks of dissatisfaction due to the disconnection between the job of the headteacher – defined in terms of the moral purpose of the profession – and the work, the reality of what they do on a day-to-day basis.

Wright (2001) has termed this 'bastard leadership'. While policy rhetoric on leadership remains strong, Wright argues, the morals, values and direction of schools have been removed from those who work there. These are located instead in central political management where there is little room for contestation or adjustment and so local visioning exercises become less meaningful.

² The OECD commissioned Waslander et al (2010) and Lubienski (2010) and both report on OECD countries.

Leadership, intensification and distribution

Not all see it so starkly (Gold et al, 2003 speak of ‘principled principals’), but there is widespread recognition that local leadership and central managerialism continue to be held in an uneasy tension in policy (Bottery, 2007; Bush & Glover, 2003). In this context, a certainty in policy that local leadership has the ability (and hence responsibility) to raise standards can place extra-ordinary [sic] demands on school leaders. Gronn (2003), following Grace (1995), terms this ‘intensification’ and suggests two resulting trends: first, that leadership has become ‘greedy work’ where governments and agencies place total claims on school leaders who are meant to work at a relentless pace and be always available and utterly committed.

The second trend Gronn (2003) identifies is distribution. Gronn traces distributed leadership back to the late 1980s and Local Management of Schools. The resulting workload pressures, that Earley et al (2002) recorded, led necessarily to a loosening of role boundaries, the widening of senior leadership teams and recognition of the importance of middle leadership. Dunford (2007) describes a similar trend, the transition during the late 1990s from a head-centric model of school leadership to a distributed model, citing a weight of workload for the rise in distributed leadership. Distribution has also been supported by workforce reform. Southworth (2010) shows the significance of school business managers (and bursars and finance directors), given that the management of finance, premises and buildings has been a key concern for school leaders.

Reviewing school leadership in the current era of distributive leadership, Forrester and Gunter (2009) find four approaches to be important and common. First is a ‘directive approach’ based on the headteacher’s strong sense of his or her own purpose and what he or she wants to achieve. Second, the ‘directed approach’ is one in which the headteacher is equally clear but the direction is influenced strongly by external groups such as governors, inspectors and officials. Both approaches have aspects of hero, transformational and inspirational leadership. Third is an ‘inclusive approach’, in which the school community, led by the head, but with active participation, develops a collective vision and contributes widely to school leadership. Fourth is a ‘distributed approach’ in which the headteacher delegates internal responsibility for specific tasks but the school closely follows policy definitions of good practice. A particular school’s approach will be influenced by a mix of factors including leadership values, the experience of leaders and staff and the school’s context.

How leaders respond to policy may also be important. Hoyle and Wallace (2005, 2007) argue that the English school system can be characterised by three main types of leadership response to policy. Leaders can be classified as:

- those committed to implementing external direction
- those uncommitted to external managerialism and who manifest this in minimal compliance, resistance or system exit
- ironists, who fashion their own commitment to policy whilst maintaining a steadfast focus on student interests

The ‘ironist’ leaders, Hoyle and Wallace (2005) argue, practise ‘principled infidelity’ by adapting policy to the needs of students while at the same time appearing to implement policy fully. Crucially, these are leaders principled by their focus on student need. Although local realities may often be more complex than this three-part classification, it does point to a potential segmentation in how school leaders understand, respond to and ‘enact’ government policy (Ball, Maguire, & Braun, 2012). Segmentation may also become apparent in the way in which schools respond to a new policy focus on system leadership, autonomy and the self-improving system.

System leadership, autonomy and the self-improving system

System leadership, or leading beyond one’s own school, has roots, in part, in responses to the challenge of leadership succession (Tunnadine, 2011). As the National College (2010) has shown, the executive headteacher role is most common in the primary sector as a response to a lack of recruitment and hence the appointment of one headteacher across two schools. However, system leadership also encapsulates a wider set of roles and philosophies. To a significant degree, the impetus stems from a school-led response to the limits of competition and top-down initiatives and approaches to school improvement (Hopkins, 2007). It is also informed by a long-held belief that collaboration serves both the moral purpose and professional enquiry that motivate many teachers and leaders. Indeed, the increased demand to work in collaboration

with other schools and other organisations is a key feature of school leadership today. This in turn places ever greater demands on school leaders to develop strong and productive relationships with others, based upon high levels of mutual trust (Coleman, 2011).

Higham, Hopkins & Matthews (2009) suggest there were at least three overlapping system leadership approaches:

- schools working to share and develop pedagogy and engage collaboratively in innovation and adaptation (Fielding et al (2004) termed this joint practice development)
- schools providing support to other leaders and/or intervention for school improvement, including leaders acting as mentors and consultants to other schools (Earley & Weindling, 2006) and more recently as executive heads, NLEs, local leaders of education (LLEs) and leaders of school chains
- schools working collaboratively to moderate the adverse effects of competition by agreeing policies on fair admissions, hard-to-place students, funding and mutual support, which has occurred in confederations as well as more loosely across informal partnerships

There is evidence that a widening engagement with system leadership has created a range of new models of school leadership and governance. Higham et al (2009) show that early NLE deployment took a range of leadership forms including consultants, executive heads and local system directors. Chapman et al (2009) show how new leadership roles and workforce remodelling have developed strategic connections between schools and other agencies and services.

There is also emerging evidence that system leadership can support school improvement, although longitudinal data to test the sustainability of such interventions is not yet available. Chapman, Muijs & MacAllister (2011) found that federations between schools focused on school improvement can increase student attainment after between two and four years. Hill and Matthews (2010) argue that NLEs can rapidly increase student achievement in previously low-attaining schools. Ofsted (2010) reports that school-to-school collaboration for improvement has benefits for outstanding schools as well as the schools they support. Hill et al (2012) argue that academy chains can raise attainment in deprived areas, but that the performance of weaker chains needs to be addressed. Curtis et al (2008) also note that admissions, exclusions and the power of sponsors in respect of local representation across chains will need to be monitored.

There is also an association between widening system leadership roles and the extension of distributed leadership. In part this is operational. Schools in which the headteacher and other staff engage in substantive external roles need to build new internal leadership capacity. But it can also be strategic. Matthews et al (2011) found that 'outstanding' schools involved in multiple school partnerships worked purposefully to identify and develop new leaders, including by constructing their partnerships to provide a range of hands-on experiences, acting roles and mentoring opportunities for future leaders. Working alone, the schools would have found these opportunities hard to provide.

Government commitment to formal system leadership roles has been renewed in recent policy. The Department for Education (HM Government, 2010), via the National College, plans to increase the number of NLEs from about 400 in 2010 to 1,000 by 2014, and the number of LLEs from 1,400 in 2010 to around 2,000 by 2014. A specialist leader in education (SLE) role will enable outstanding teachers to share knowledge and practice with colleagues in other schools. A teaching school designation has also been created with the aspiration that outstanding schools will lead local school alliances to co-ordinate the training and development of teachers and provide school-to-school support for improvement. The National College plans to designate 500 teaching school alliances by 2014/15 and announced the first 100 in July 2011. In November 2012, there were 217 designated teaching schools.

The government is also committed to rapidly increasing the number of schools that are academies, both through intervening in low-attaining schools to create more sponsored academies and by enabling schools to apply for academy status as converter academies. All schools can now apply (following an initial restriction by Ofsted grading). Academies are independent from local authority governance and management. They gain directly the funding their local authority received to support them as a locally maintained school. They become their own admissions authority and also gain freedoms including those related to the national curriculum and staff pay and conditions.

In October 2012, the Department for Education reported that there were 2,373 academies open in England, up from only 203 in September 2010, meaning 2,170 schools had become academies in 2 years. Over that period the number of sponsored academies has risen from 203 to 512 and the number of converter academies from 0 to 1,861. In October 2012, academies accounted for 45 per cent of all secondary schools and 5 per cent of all primaries in England. Academy-sponsored chains are a growing, if still small, part of the leadership landscape (see Hill et al, 2012).

Hargreaves (2010) has proposed a conceptual model of how schools might draw upon autonomy and system leadership to establish a 'self-improving school system'. At its centre is a 'local solutions approach' within clusters of schools that 'accept responsibility for self-improvement of the cluster as a whole' (Hargreaves, 2010:5) and work together to co-construct effective new practice. School clusters, Hargreaves argues, should develop social capital (trust and reciprocity), collaborative capital (joint analysis, investigation, innovation, evaluation), professional development and distributed system leadership (Hargreaves, 2011). The model has real strengths, not least in that schools are encouraged to conceive of autonomy collaboratively. They are also assumed to lead the process of change, rather than being driven by external compulsion, which has been shown to be an unsustainable substitute for professional leadership, ownership and participation (Bryk et al, 2010; Elmore, 2004; Fullan, 2004, 2010; Fullan & Boyle, 2011; Katz & Earl, 2010; Muijs, 2010; Leithwood, 2010; and Thomson et al, 2011).

There are, however, several potential constraints to the realisation of Hargreaves's model in practice. First, the workings of accountability, lingering competition and uncertainty may undermine a system organised around local clusters. Second, new autonomies for schools and a reduced role for many local authorities are also intended to stimulate a new school improvement market. Teaching school alliances and schools will increasingly compete with chains, consultants, companies and indeed local authorities to sell services to schools. Access to a wider pool of advice, including from other schools, may be welcome, but reconciling a market with social and collaborative capital may prove difficult, especially where knowledge is to be sold as well as shared.

There may also, in practice, be a segmentation of capacity and willingness to engage with and shape a self-improving system. The National College's 2012 annual survey indicated that a majority of schools were broadly positive about teaching schools (81 per cent), working in local clusters (83 per cent) and asking an NLE for support (70 per cent) (National College, 2012). There may be, however, some important subsets with lower enthusiasm. Primary schools, on average, were noted by the majority of our stakeholder interview respondents to have a closer relationship with local authorities, less capacity to influence external change and to be more apprehensive about current reform than secondary schools. As shall be shown later in this report, the survey data also supports this view. A slower engagement among primary schools with the NLE programme and currently with academy converter status also appears to confirm this. Capacity to engage may also be associated with deprivation. Lupton (2005) has shown how school leaders serving deprived contexts can face substantial additional pressures such as staff recruitment and retention, teaching and management tasks and a lack of resources to respond to more complex social problems. These present a concern that schools with potentially the most to gain from a self-improving system may also have the least capacity to shape it according to their own local needs and interests.

Leadership and governance

Given these current policy changes, school governance is also of increasing importance. The potential increase in school autonomy from local authority governance, through the adoption of academy status or through other clustering arrangements and formal federations, may well place new duties and pressures on school governors as well as potentially changing who is governing.

Research suggests that current policy change is adding new complexity to the governor role, with governors having to keep abreast of policy, legal duties and changing external landscapes that can affect the strategic direction of their school (Barton et al, 2006; James, 2011). This will test governing body capability. Policies that increase school autonomy in corporate matters also encourage the need for corporate capacity within the governing body, given the importance of raising issues relevant to probity and value for money in institutions without other local democratic oversight.

Governance has also been shown to be a key site where new actors such as businesses, charities and faith groups are working within the state and thus where the boundaries between the state, private and voluntary sectors are becoming increasingly blurred (Ball, 2009). In this context, monitoring and ensuring responsiveness to local needs and interests may also become more significant, especially where this has been a key concern for protests against adopting academy status (Curtis et al, 2008; Chitty, 2011).

Notwithstanding these rapid changes, the central role of school governors in England, regardless of their position in the sector, remains their responsibility for the school and school improvement (Earley & Weindling, 2004). Recent research suggests that the quality of the governing body is an important influence on school improvement trajectories (Balarin et al, 2008; Dean et al, 2007; Ranson et al, 2005). The chair of governors needs to be able to negotiate and manage a productive as well as challenging stance with the headteacher (James, 2011). However, evidence suggests that the governor role tends towards scrutiny activity rather than a sustained focus and appraisal of improvement and effectiveness in schools (James, 2011). Certainly an ineffective governing body does appear to have a demonstrable negative impact on outcomes, particularly where there are low levels of governor capacity and competence (Earley, 2003; Balarin et al, 2008; James, 2011; Ofsted, 2011).

The governor role is, then, significant to leadership both in terms of the scale of volunteering or sponsoring and the influence on school improvement, even though the traditional governor contribution is not always acknowledged (James, 2011). Concerns have been raised about the capacity of volunteers to rigorously defend the school, challenge for improvement and be a critical friend, especially with a self-improving school-led system (Barton et al, 2006; Balarin et al, 2008; James et al, 2011). The notion of system leadership has also recently been extended to governors, with chairs of governors being asked to put themselves forward for assessment as national leaders of governance (NLGs).

Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of current school leadership research. It considered three earlier reviews of the school leadership landscape that act as a benchmark for this report. It reviewed the work of school leaders and particularly evidence on the effect leaders have on student outcomes and the actions leaders take to provide leadership for learning. It considered the influence external factors, such as context, accountability and the quasi-market, have on school leaders and how this has led to both an intensification and distribution of leadership within schools. It also discussed the concept of a self-improving school system and the new forms of leadership and governance that may be needed to realise that vision.

Chapter 3: The demography of school leadership

In this chapter the School Workforce Census (SWC) for November 2011 is used to analyse the structure of leadership teams and demographic characteristics of teachers across different types of state-funded schools in England. The job transitions of teachers within and across schools between November 2010 and November 2011 are also examined. The SWC (see the appendix for a description) contains a basic record for every individual working in a school. In this chapter the particular focus is on senior leadership, ie headteachers, deputy heads and assistant heads. The age, sex, ethnic and subject background of senior leaders in schools are examined. Also explored are the differences in their tenure in their current school, promotion rates and choices of school to work in. This analysis of school leadership demography provides a description of the state of the current teacher labour market, relative to trends over the past decade or so.

The teacher labour market and school leadership teams

Table 3.1 shows the numbers of teachers within each post for 2010 and 2011. However, although this is a census, the data is not complete and it is not always possible to use the teacher numbers to link teachers across the two years accurately. This should be borne in mind throughout the chapter (see also the appendix).

Table 3.1: Post transitions between 2010 and 2011

	Post in Nov 2011 SWC					
	Head	Deputy	Assistant	Classroom	Not in 2011 data	Total
Post in Nov 2010 SWC:						
Heads	18,474	241	66	164	2,470	21,417
Deputy heads	1,190	14,880	379	673	1,861	18,983
Assistant heads	182	1,018	15,726	1,156	2,138	20,220
Classroom teachers	231	1,499	3,212	347,645	68,172	420,759
Not in 2010 data	959	874	1,108	69,283	0	72,224
Total	21,036	18,512	20,491	418,921	74,641	553,601

Table 3.2 shows the numbers of headteachers, deputy heads and assistant heads across secondary schools, primary schools and special schools in England, as at November 2011. Secondary school leadership teams tend to reflect a classic management hierarchy or pyramid, with more deputies than headteachers and more assistant heads than deputies. By contrast, primary school leadership structures are reversed because many small primaries have no senior leadership roles below that of headteacher.

Where leadership structures appear to be unusual in the SWC it is possible that this simply results from the misclassification of teachers to posts. For example, within the sample, 496 headteachers are not the highest paid person calling themselves a headteacher within their own school, so some of these may be incorrectly classified.

Data reliability is particularly low for middle and other management positions in schools, such as finance managers/bursars, heads of department or years, and special needs co-ordinators. For this reason this information is not used in the chapter.

From the November 2011 SWC data, 410 executive headteachers can be identified, which is fewer than a recent estimate of 450 executive heads based on a sample of data (National College, 2010). Where a school has an executive head, in the vast majority of cases (99 per cent) they are clearly also the substantive headteacher. According to guidance from the Department for Education, schools should only use this classification if the headteacher in question directly leads two or more schools in a federation or other partnership arrangement. It is therefore possible that the SWC is failing to count executive heads who are not directly employed by a school or local authority.

Table 3.2: Size of leadership teams by phase of schooling

Number of schools with an SLT size of:				
	0	1 or 2	3 or 4	5 or more
<i>Secondary schools (n=3,129):</i>				
Number of headteachers	129	2,982	14	4
Number of deputy heads	323	2,326	421	59
Number of assistant heads	252	826	1,161	890
<i>Primary schools (n=16,571):</i>				
Number of headteachers	833	16,132	9	0
Number of deputy heads	5,895	11,036	42	1
Number of assistant heads	11,980	4,641	325	28
<i>Special schools (n=942):</i>				
Number of headteachers	57	887	1	0
Number of deputy heads	181	747	17	0
Number of assistant heads	359	495	83	8

There is relatively little variation in the average structure of leadership teams by school governance type. However, Table 3.3 shows that academies do tend to have larger leadership teams overall and that voluntary-controlled schools tend to have the smallest leadership teams. In the latter's case this is because they include many small rural primary schools.

Table 3.3: Structure of leadership teams by governance type

	Academy		Community		Foundation		Voluntary aided		Voluntary controlled	
	Mean	sd	Mean	sd	Mean	sd	Mean	sd	Mean	sd
<i>Secondary schools</i>										
Number of heads	1.16	(0.79)	1.00	(0.31)	1.02	(0.34)	1.02	(0.39)	1.01	(0.23)
Number of deputies	2.40	(2.24)	1.60	(1.04)	1.75	(1.19)	1.56	(1.00)	1.49	(0.95)
Number of assistants	4.36	(3.81)	3.62	(2.37)	3.92	(2.56)	3.35	(1.91)	3.16	(2.09)
<i>Primary schools</i>										
Number of heads	1.25	(0.5)	0.97	(0.27)	0.96	(0.24)	0.97	(0.27)	0.97	(0.27)
Number of deputies	1.00	(0.82)	0.77	(0.57)	0.72	(0.58)	0.68	(0.54)	0.48	(0.56)
Number of assistants	4.50	(1.73)	0.50	(0.86)	0.58	(0.98)	0.36	(0.68)	0.26	(0.59)
sd = standard deviation										

Age profile of school leaders

The age profile of school leaders, relative to others in the teacher workforce, is now described along with the implications for future supply in the labour market. Studying the age of teachers is particularly interesting in the absence of a measure of years of teaching experience. The average age of headteachers at November 2011 was 50 years old (51 years for executive headteachers). Assistant and deputy headteacher average ages were 44 and 45 years respectively. The average age of classroom teachers was 39 years; those who appear for the first time in the 2011 SWC are younger at 35 years; and those who are paid at the lowest point on the pay scale are younger still at 34 years. Figure 3.1 shows the age profile for teachers by leadership grouping, separately for secondary and primary schools, with a clear bimodal distribution for most categories of teacher. The upper peak for all groups of teachers is in the late fifties, reflecting the final tail of the demographic bubble in teaching from those born in the first decade after the end of the Second World War.

After their mid-50s it is clear that large numbers take retirement from teaching, often before the official retirement age of 60. Just under a third of all headteachers are aged 55 years and over and the age distribution indicates that almost half of those headteachers who reach the age of 55 then go on to take early retirement somewhere between the ages of 55 and 59 years. This feature of early retirement has been noted in many National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) leadership reports (Howson, 2010, 2011). These reports suggest that early retirement levels seem to relate to factors such as salary levels and the challenges associated with the job in different types of school. In recent years, retirements at age 60 or above have represented a higher percentage than earlier. During the 1990s, premature and early retirement rates were on the increase and peaked in 1997 when the rules governing early retirement changed. For a period after 1997, rates of early retirement were low before increasing again during the early part of the century.

The age of the lower peak varies across leadership levels. For classroom teachers the peak is at age 31, after which some gain promotion into senior leaderships and large numbers of female teachers take time out of the labour market to have children. For assistant and deputy head posts, the lower modal ages are 39 and 40 years respectively, reflecting a large number of appointments into these posts during a teacher's 30s and large numbers of first promotions to headship from the late 30s onwards. A relatively large group of assistant and deputy heads who are in their 50s and so unlikely to achieve headship can be observed in both sectors. This is consistent with aspirations data published in 2009 (ICM, 2009) that reported one-third of deputy and assistant heads hoped to progress to headship in the next three years and another third had no plans to become heads.

Figure 3.1: Age profile of teachers

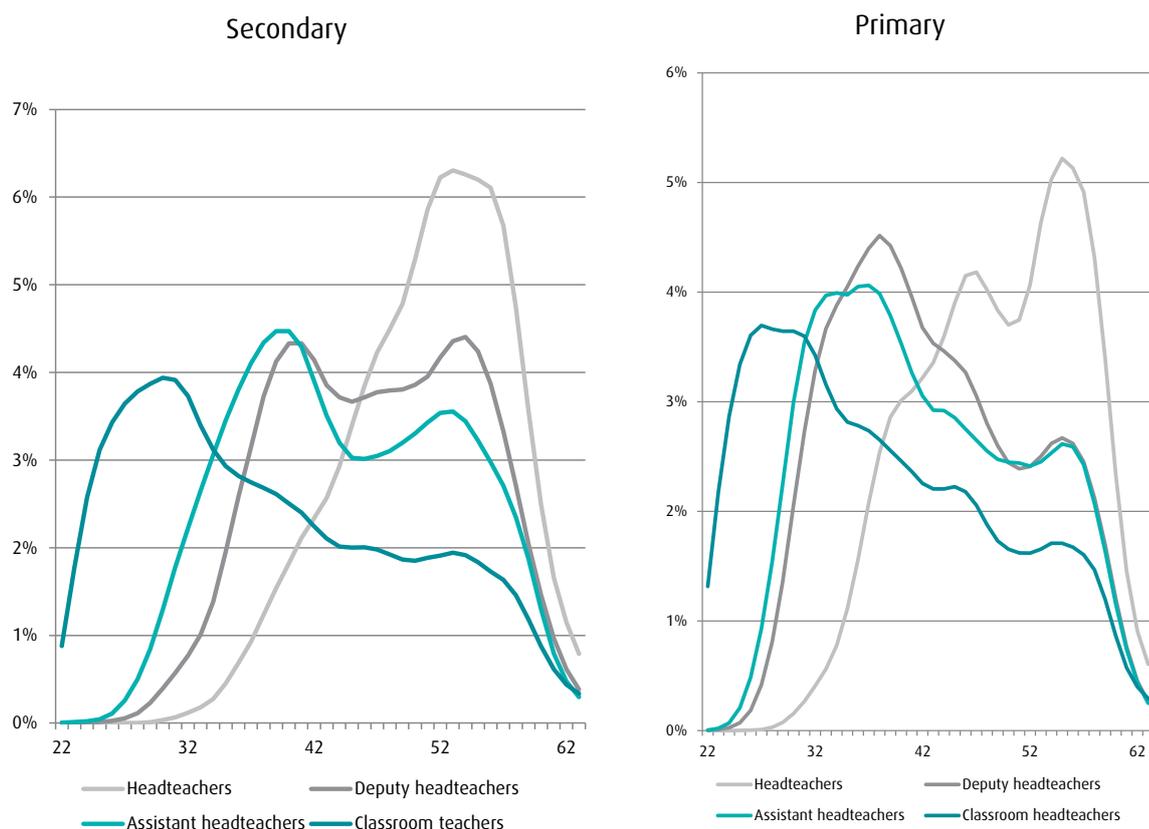


Figure 3.1 shows that the age profiles differ slightly across schooling phase, with primary school teachers reaching promotion to all leadership levels earlier in their career. This is confirmed in the summary statistics in Table 3.4 and reflects the shorter career trajectory necessary to lead a smaller primary school, compared to a larger secondary school.

Table 3.4: Age profile of teachers

	Secondary schools			Primary schools			Special schools		
	N	mean	sd	N	mean	sd	N	mean	sd
Headteacher	3,211	51.0	(6.4)	16,502	49.1	(7.5)	925	51.8	(6.3)
Deputy headteacher	5,314	47.0	(7.7)	11,988	43.2	(8.7)	930	49.1	(7.8)
Assistant headteacher	11,596	44.7	(8.5)	7,491	42.5	(9.2)	1,092	47.2	(8.8)
Classroom teacher	201,579	38.8	(10.9)	187,188	38.4	(10.9)	13,689	43.3	(11.1)

It might be expected to see slightly older headteachers leading the larger schools within each phase of education since these larger schools should offer higher salaries to reflect more complex organisations and greater financial resources. Surprisingly though, Figure 3.2 shows that the difference in mean average age of headteachers between the largest and smallest school is small, although statistically significant, at almost one year for both primary schools and secondary schools. The reverse is true for classroom teachers, who are younger on average in the larger schools.

Figure 3.3 shows the age profile of teachers by region. As expected, classroom teachers and assistant heads in inner London are younger than all other regions, but this trend is not significant for the more senior levels of leadership. This very slight difference between London and other regions is surprisingly small and may reflect the success in retaining teachers within the capital through the increasing generosity of the London-specific pay scales from 2003 onwards. There is also no difference in the average age of headteachers and deputy heads across school governance type or demographic of student intake, although sponsored academies and the most deprived schools have younger assistant heads and classroom teachers.

Figure 3.2: Age profile by size of school

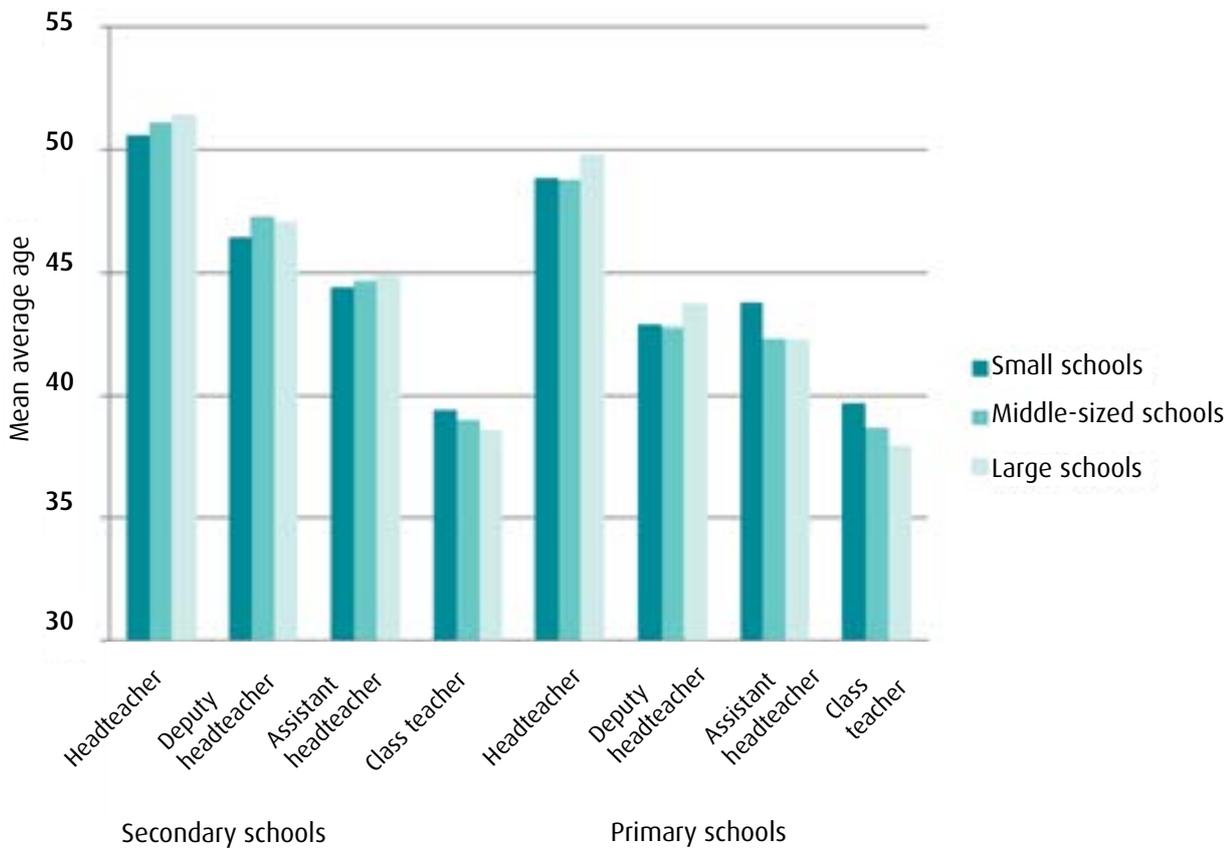
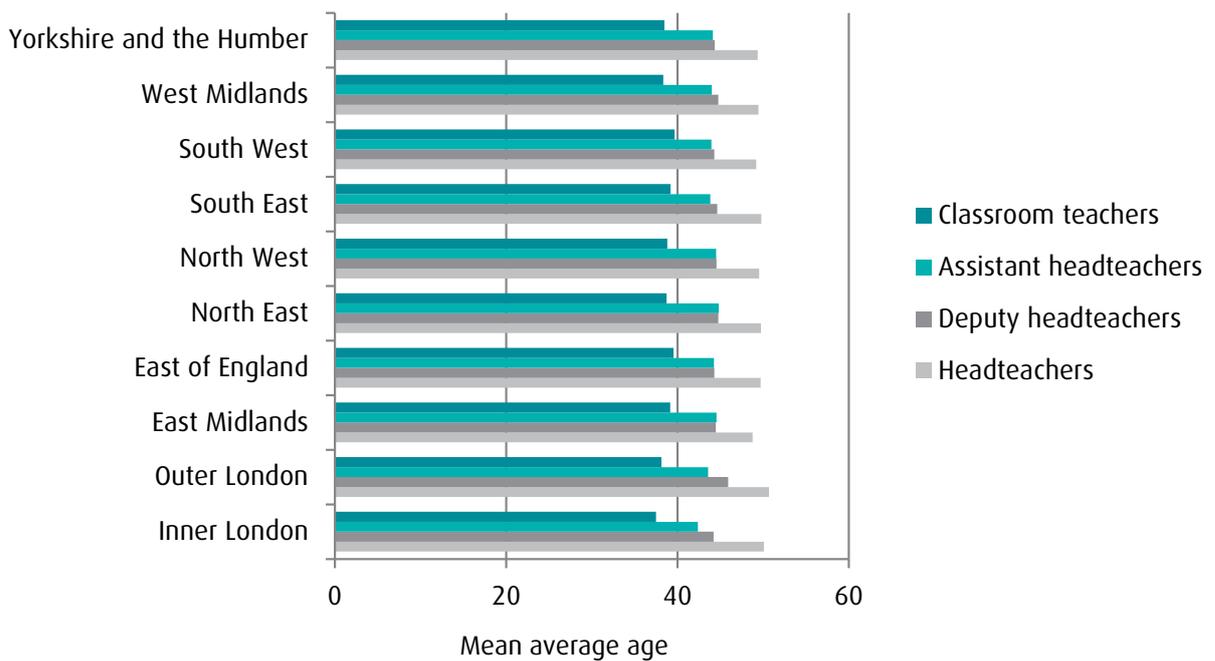


Figure 3.3: Age of teachers by region



The matched 2010-11 data is next used to analyse the type of job moves that take place over the period of one year. Each of the next four figures (Figures 3.4-3.7) compares the age distribution of teachers who are either promoted, remain in the same post or who appear to exit the sector, separately for headteachers, deputies, assistant heads and classroom teachers.

Figure 3.4 shows the age distribution for those who were headteachers in 2010. Clearly, there is no possible rank promotion from headteacher but a distinction is made between those who cannot be found in the 2011 data, those who remain at the same school and those who move schools to a subsequent headteacher role. Headteachers who make a sideways move to another headship position in a new school have the youngest age distribution, followed by those who remain as headteachers in the same school. The oldest age group is found in those headteachers from 2010 that are not found in the 2011 data, consistent with retirements from the profession by heads in their 50s and 60s.

In secondary schools the average age of first promotions to assistant, deputy and head is 39, 42 and 45 years respectively. Perhaps surprisingly, it is not much different for primary schools: the average age of first promotions to assistant, deputy and heads is 38, 40 and 42 years respectively.

Figure 3.4: Transition by age (for headteachers in 2010)

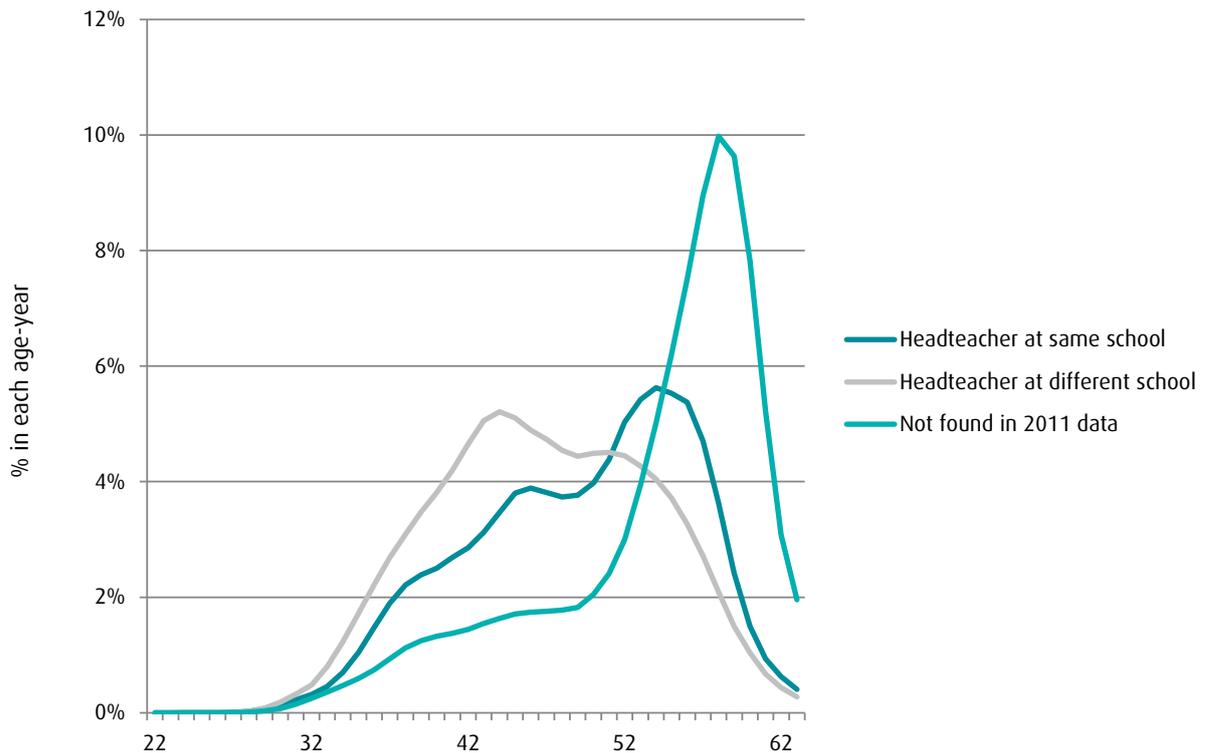


Figure 3.5 is more complex because it distinguishes between deputy head promotions to headteacher (light grey lines) and those who remain as deputies (black lines). Overall the peak age of promotion to first headship is from the late 30s through to the late 40s. Promotion to headteacher can happen well into an individual's 50s; more so for internal promotions than for external promotions. The fact that internal promotions dominate later in a career suggests these may be temporary appointments in the event of sickness/maternity cover or failure to appoint following advertisement. Where deputy heads choose to take on a second deputy appointment at a new school, this tends to happen relatively early in their career (in an individual's 30s to mid-40s).

Figure 3.6 illustrates the transitions of assistant headteachers according to age. Similar to other levels of leadership, it can be seen that a large proportion of transitions to other schools (be it promotions or sideways moves; both are shown as dotted lines) occur for those who are younger. For assistant heads, these moves to other schools peak at around the age of 35. Promotions to a new school tend to decline quite rapidly from this stage onwards, whereas there is a small peak during the mid-50s for internal promotions that may simply reflect large numbers of teachers who are currently of this age.

Figure 3.5: Transition by age (deputy headteachers in 2010)

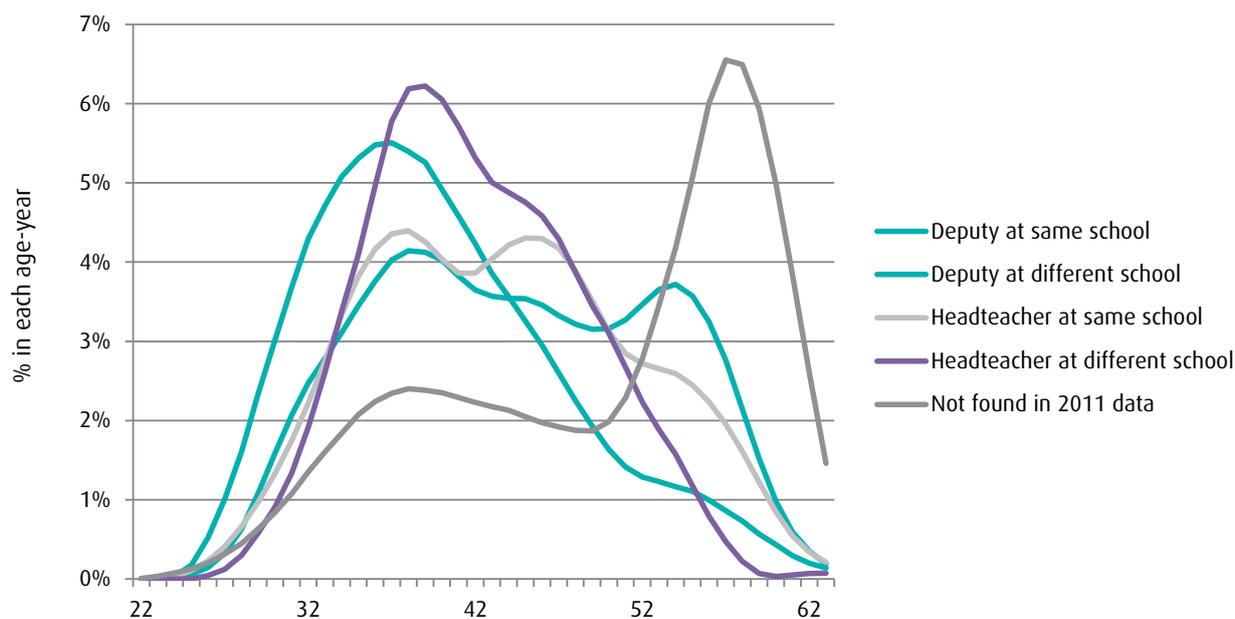
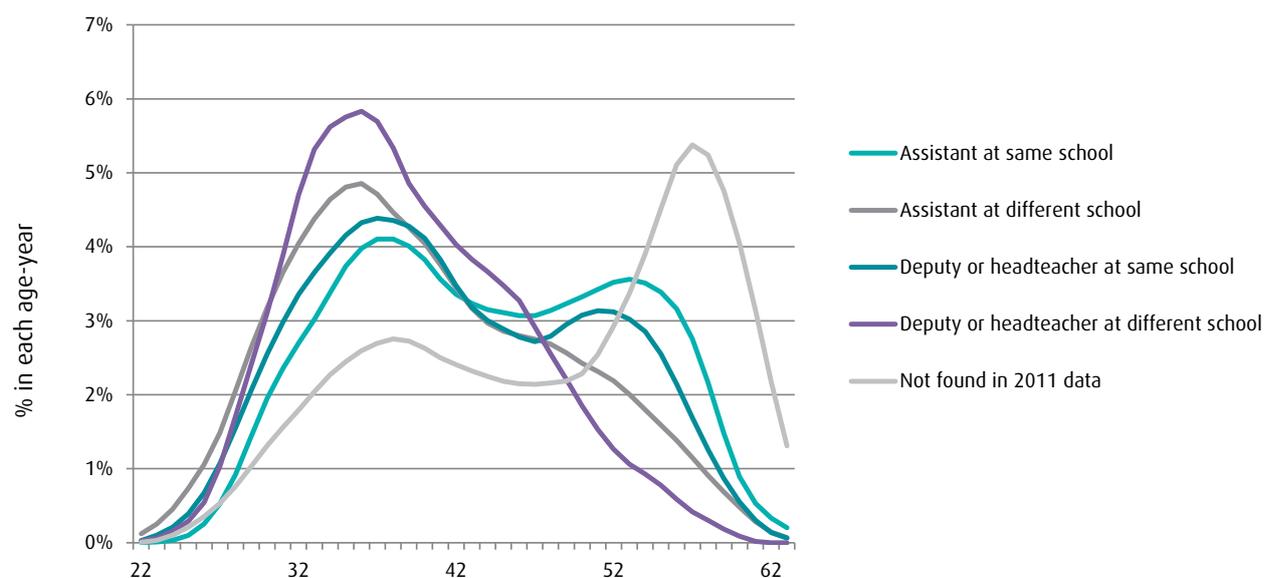
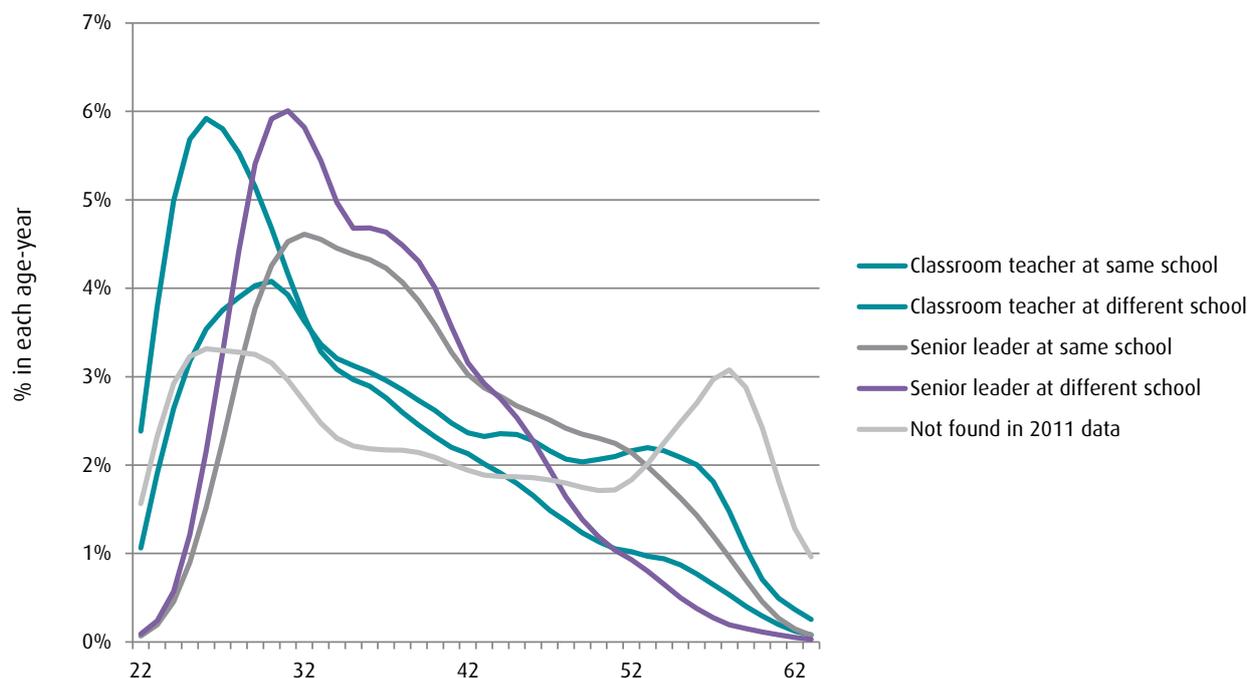


Figure 3.6: Transition by age (assistant heads in 2010)



A similar analysis is carried out for classroom teachers (as shown in Figure 3.7), in which it can be seen that large numbers of these teachers leave the profession during their 20s, either permanently or temporarily for family or other reasons. Large numbers of those in their 20s also move to become a classroom teacher at a new school. Promotions to assistant head generally take place during teachers' 30s, with external promotions at new schools happening earlier than internal promotions.

Figure 3.7: Transition by age (classroom teachers in 2010)



Gender profile of school leaders

Teaching remains a female-dominated profession – more so in the primary than the secondary sector. However, Table 3.5 shows that smaller proportions of women than men move into each stage of senior leadership. The differences are particularly pronounced in the age range 30-39, where 88 and 65 per cent of classroom teachers in this range are female, in the primary and secondary sectors respectively, yet only 60 and 20 per cent of headteachers in this age range are female. The early successful promotion of men within the profession may, in part, reflect women taking a slower career path during childbearing years since by their 50s they have caught up a little with 76 and 41 per cent of headteachers in this age range being female in the primary and secondary sectors respectively.

Clearly the data is limited in the extent to which it can explain why men achieve more successful career progression than women teachers. As well as time taken out of the labour market by women for childrearing, the behaviour of men may differ in other ways. For example, a survey by McNamara et al (2010) found that men apply for significantly more leadership posts than women before being appointed, feel less constrained by child care choices they have to make and are more prepared to move regionally for a new post than their female counterparts. School Workforce Census data confirms that male senior leaders do achieve promotion through a regional move more frequently than females at the same rank.

For those school leaders who are identifiable in both censuses, Table 3.5 indicates their post transitions in that one-year period. The vast majority of teachers remain at the same school without promotion each year. For those who achieve promotion at each level, females are consistently more likely to achieve it through internal promotion rather than external promotion. We do not know whether this is because female teachers have closer interpersonal relations with their colleagues that increase either their chances of or desire for internal promotion at the same school.

Table 3.5: Gender profile of teachers

	Age ≤ 29		Age 30-39		Age 40-49		Age 50-59		Age ≥ 60	
	N	% female	N	% female	N	% female	N	% female	N	% female
<i>Secondary schools</i>										
Head	0		161	20	1,033	35	1,808	41	206	36
Deputy head	15	53	1,024	41	2,114	41	1,985	50	177	38
Assistant head	170	52	3,600	49	3,952	48	3,573	55	301	54
Classroom teacher	48,817	69	66,578	65	43,950	62	36,419	62	5,818	54
<i>Primary schools</i>										
Head	14	64	2,054	60	6,074	69	7,447	76	919	75
Deputy head	276	79	4,523	75	3,996	79	2,900	86	291	87
Assistant head	360	77	2,994	83	2,176	84	1,832	92	173	88
Classroom teacher	48,961	88	59,486	88	42,270	90	31,426	92	5,049	88

Alternatively, women may be geographically constrained by family commitments so do not feel able to apply to other schools. Similarly, male teachers may seek promotion in new schools if they feel under pressure to move up through the pay scale quickly. Regardless of reasons, this greater propensity of women to wait for an appropriate internal promotion to arise is consistent with McNamara et al's (2010) observation that women apply for fewer jobs, and provides a further explanation as to why the careers of female teachers progress more slowly than those of male teachers.

Ethnic background of school leaders

Teaching remains largely a White-ethnicity profession, with 90 per cent of teachers reporting they are of a White ethnic background. These figures do represent a 5-percentage point decrease over official statistics collected between 2003 and 2008, which suggested that 95 per cent of teachers were of White ethnicity (McNamara et al, 2009), although the change may be greater in certain parts of the country. However, teachers are still not representative of the current student population, where around 80 per cent of pupils are of White ethnicity. This divide is particularly wide in some of the urban areas.

Over 95 per cent of headteachers report they are of a White ethnic background, which is clearly a higher rate than for teachers as a whole. In part this is not surprising given the age demographic of headteachers. Table 3.6 shows that the only other ethnic groups that are represented with over 100 headteachers are those of Indian and of Black Caribbean ethnicity. This apparent lack of minority ethnic groups in school leadership teams confirms that the findings of Ross (2003) over a decade ago still hold true today.

Ethnic minorities are clearly under-represented in SLTs, both relative to current student demographics and to the ethnic mix of teachers overall. How much this is due to the older age profile of senior leaders and how much is due to ethnic minority groups not gaining promotion, given promotion rates by White British teachers of the same age, is now explored. Formally, this is done by modelling the (log-odds) proportion of teachers who are senior leaders for each age, gender and ethnic group. The full regression is available on request and here the output is used to show the rates of promotion by ethnicity, age and sex in a chart (Figure 3.8).

Figure 3.8: Proportions who are senior leaders by age, sex and ethnicity

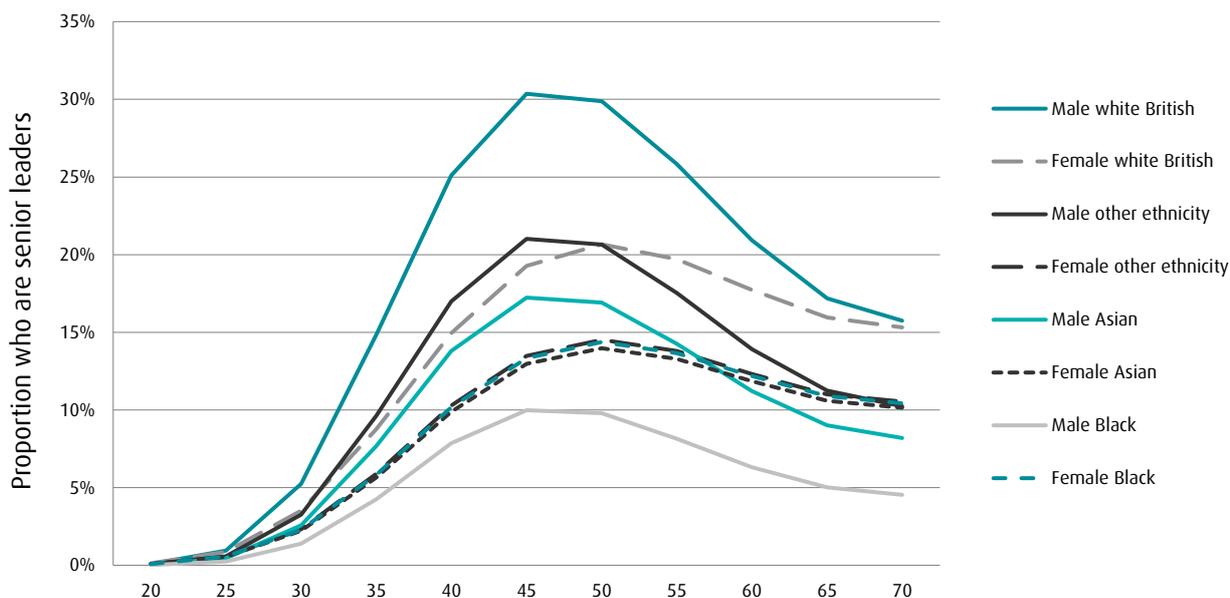


Figure 3.8 summarises the estimates from the regression by calculating estimated proportions who achieve senior leadership roles from the regression coefficients. It shows that overall the chances of being a senior leader is lower for all ethnic groups compared to the White British group. For women (dotted lines on the chart), it shows that the proportions who are senior leaders at each age group is the same for the White other, Asian and Black groups, but that all of these rates are significantly lower than for White British teachers. For men (solid lines on the chart), the differences across ethnic groups are very pronounced. White British men are by far the most successful at making it to senior leadership, followed by White other ethnicity, then Asian ethnicity. The male Black teachers are by far the most under-represented group within senior leadership roles in schools. Another interpretation is that the male-female promotional gap is much smaller for Asian and Black ethnic groups than it is for White British groups, suggesting a greater relative promotional disadvantage for male ethnic minorities.

Of course, this analysis is simply descriptive and says nothing about why this under-representation of ethnic minority groups occurs. For example, although age and sex are taken into account, any differences in age at entry into teaching or differences in qualification levels of these groups is not taken into account. Furthermore, for some teachers the decision to remain as a classroom teacher rather than move into management is a positive choice, and it is possible that this choice varies by ethnic background.

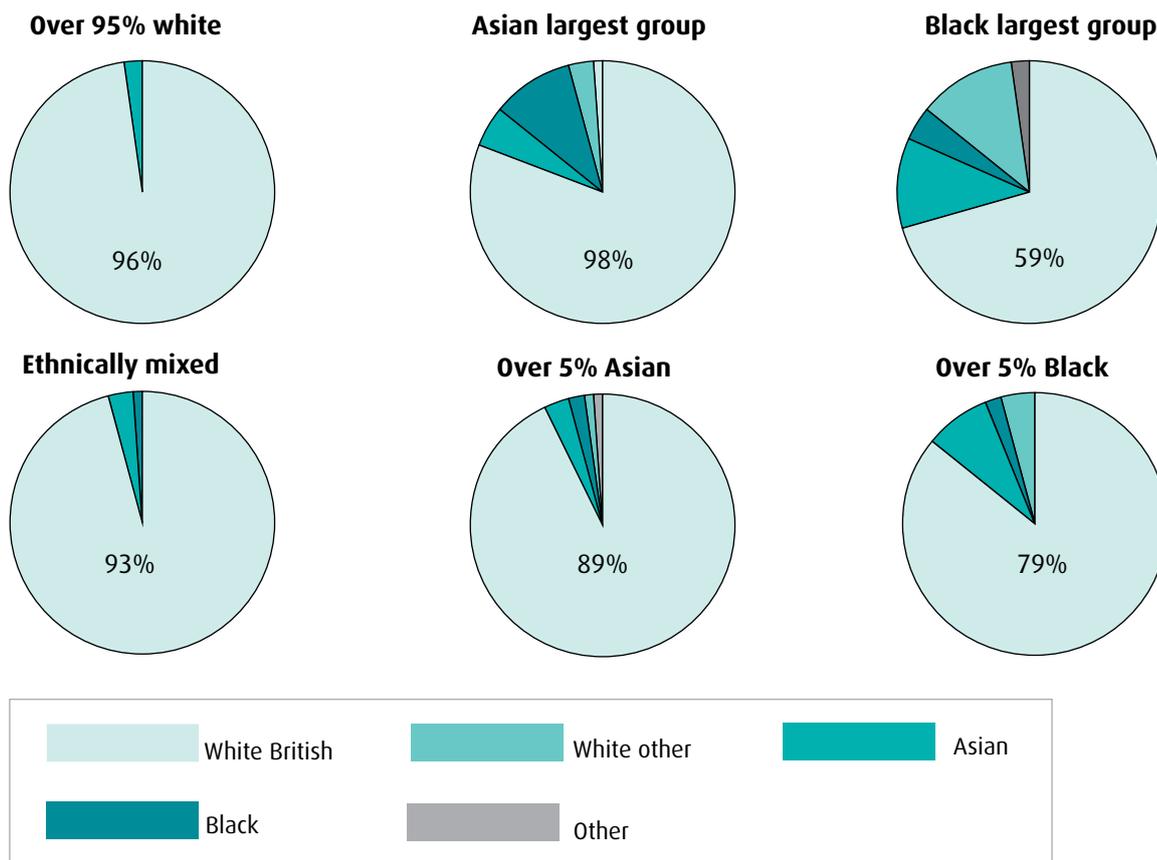
By contrast, those ethnic minority teachers who do make it to a senior leadership position do not significantly differ in their chances of gaining further promotion compared to their White British counterparts with similar characteristics. This contrasts with their lower likelihood of progressing into senior leadership for the first time.

Ethnic minority teachers and senior leaders have some tendency to cluster in schools with larger proportions of ethnic minority students. Figures 3.9 and 3.10 show pie charts reporting the ethnic profile of teachers across six different types of school:

1. schools where over 95 per cent of the students are of White ethnic origin
2. schools where Asian students form the largest ethnic group (ie larger than those of White ethnicity)
3. schools where Black students form the largest ethnic group
4. schools that are ethnically mixed with less than 95 per cent students of White ethnic origin but no minority group dominating
5. schools where over 5 per cent of pupils are of Asian ethnic background
6. schools where over 5 per cent of pupils are of Black ethnic background

Figure 3.9 shows that, although White British teachers continue to dominate in all types of schools, ethnic minority teachers cluster in schools where pupils share their own ethnic background. For example, 15 per cent of teachers are of Black ethnic origin in schools where Black students form the largest ethnic group, and 18 per cent of teachers are Asian in schools where Asian students form the largest ethnic group. This finding mirrors the findings of the smaller scale survey carried out by McNamara et al (2009) and may be positive if ethnic minority teachers act as role models for pupils who share their ethnic background. However, McNamara et al express concern that this clustering may not solely be the choice of ethnic minority teachers and that it may restrict their career opportunities if they perceive (or indeed find) that their progression into schools with other ethnic profiles is difficult.

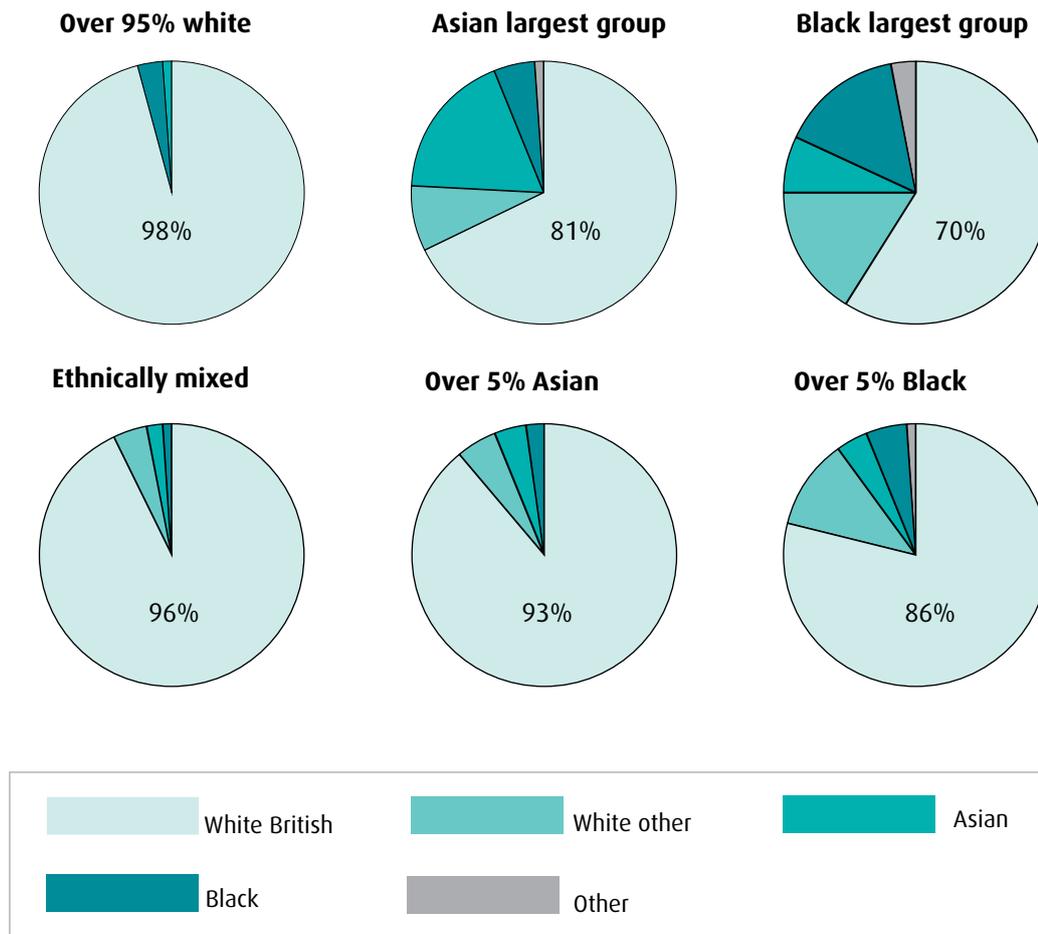
Figure 3.9: Ethnic profile of teachers by ethnicity of pupils



Graphs by ethnic mix of school

Since the previous analysis showed that ethnic minority teachers are under-represented at senior leadership levels, it is not surprising that these statistics deteriorate when replicated for senior leaders (ie assistant heads and above). Figure 3.10 shows that 12 per cent of senior leaders are of Black ethnic origin in schools where Black students form the largest ethnic group and 10 per cent of senior leaders are Asian in schools where Asian students form the largest ethnic group. For headteachers, the equivalent statistics fall again to 11 per cent and 8 per cent respectively.

Figure 3.10: Ethnic profile of senior leaders by ethnicity of students



Graphs by ethnic mix of school

Tenure of senior leaders

This section explores the tenure profile of senior leaders across schools, as measured by total numbers of years in their current school and total number of years under their current contract. Figure 3.11 reports these statistics across type of school and leadership post. Clearly, the average years under current contract is lower than the average years in school and differences between the two could indicate internal promotions. However, the number of teachers at each level that appear to be in their first year of contract is a little high, given the known job vacancy rates across the sector and so this variable has not been used for the remainder of this section. A 2011 NAHT survey (Howson, 2011) recorded 22 per cent internal appointments for permanent head vacancies in the primary sector, compared to the one-third implied in SWC; it is possible that the differences are explained by temporary and acting appointments.

Figure 3.11 shows relatively long tenures for secondary school deputy and assistant heads, which is suggestive of the extent of internal promotion into these positions. By contrast, average tenure for headteachers is significantly shorter. Tenure is shorter for all senior positions within primary schools, perhaps because their smaller size means that appropriate promotion opportunities arise less frequently within the school. The issue of 'post blocking' and its implications for promotional opportunities and the size of the potential headship pool have been discussed elsewhere (Howson, 2010).

Figure 3.11: Average tenure in school versus current contract

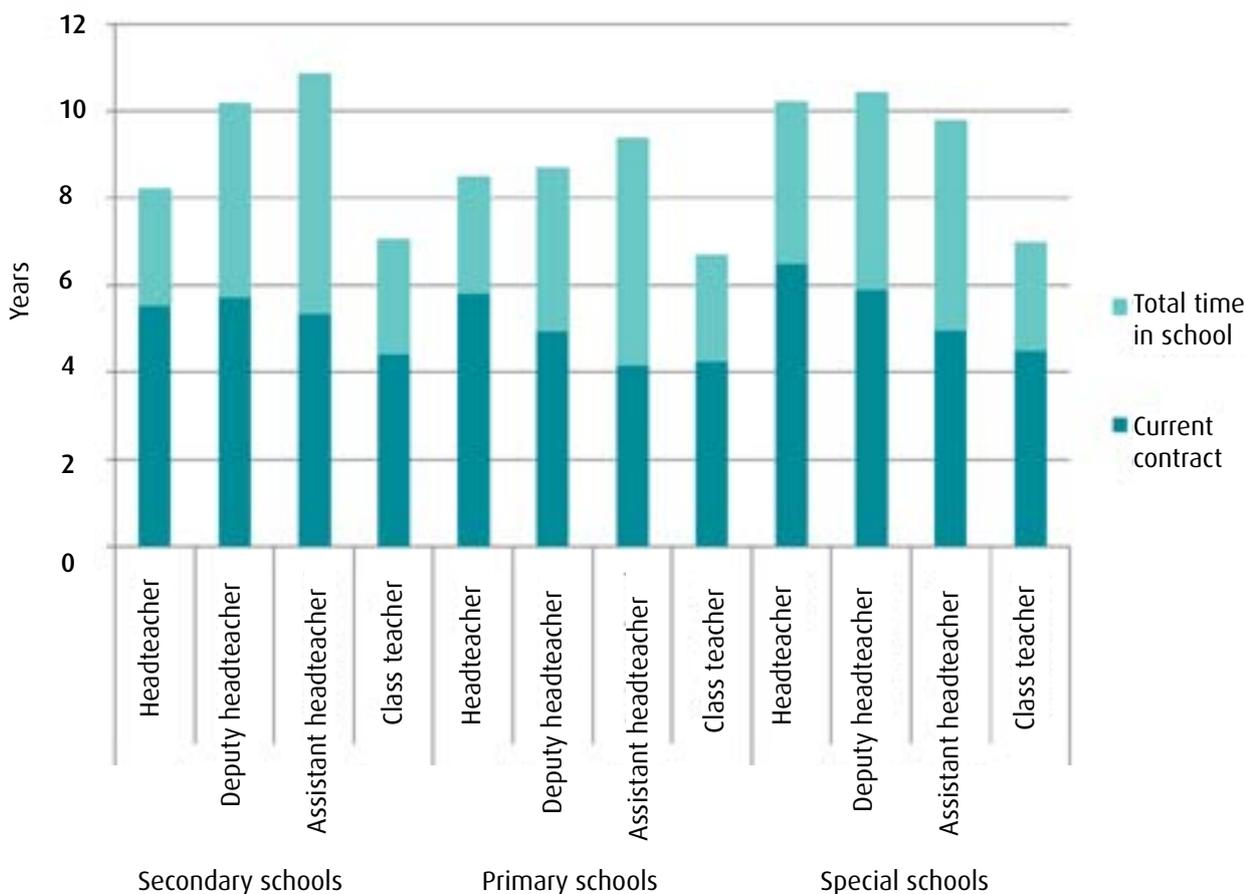
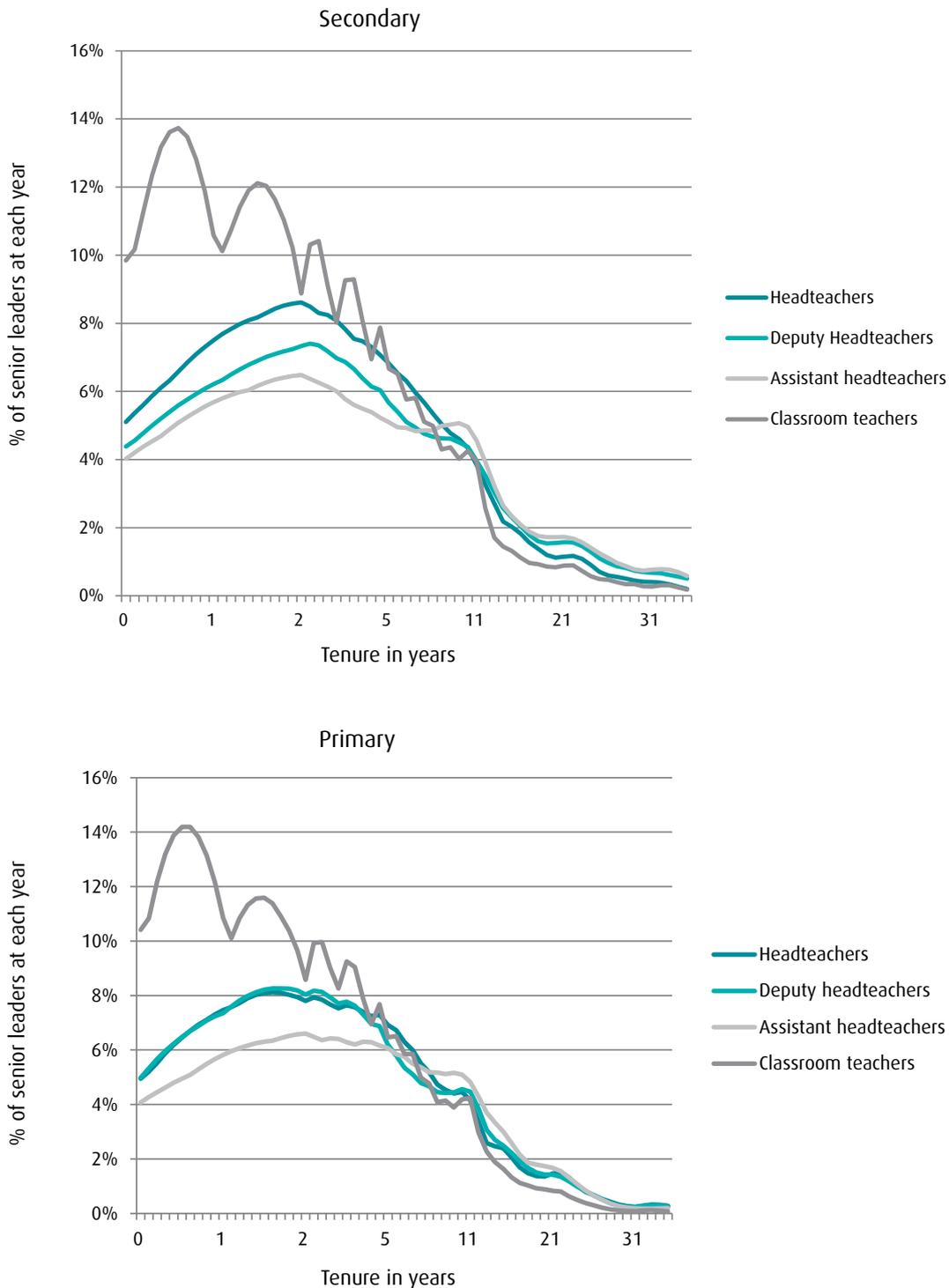


Figure 3.12 shows the tenure distribution, measured as total time in school, for different levels of current post. Rather surprisingly, the tenure distributions are very similar across senior leadership and classroom teaching posts, although average tenure is shorter for classroom teachers. Over 13 per cent of teachers have been in their current school for less than a year. About a quarter of teachers have taught in their current school for over ten years and 1.5 per cent for over 30 years.

Figure 3.12: Tenure (years in school since first arrival) for senior leaders in secondary and primary schools



Several regressions were run to explore how tenure varies by characteristics of school and teacher, separately for posts in primary and secondary schools (see Table 3.6). In the secondary sector, there is some evidence that tenure for headteachers at foundation and voluntary-aided schools may be slightly longer than the mean. Regional differences in tenure length are very slight for headteachers and longest for classroom teachers. In general, tenure is longer in the north of England and shortest in the south-east and London. Teachers in large schools have slightly longer tenure, which may reflect greater internal promotion opportunities. Schools with deprived student intakes have shorter tenure for all teachers. This association between deprivation in school and headteacher tenure is consistent with earlier studies (eg Chapman & Harris, 2004).

Table 3.6: Modelling variation in tenure (ie total time in school)

	Headteachers		Deputy and assistants	Classroom teachers
<i>Secondary schools</i>				
School governance	Voluntary-aided and foundation schools have longer tenure	Academies have shorter tenure	Academies have shorter tenure	Academies have shorter tenure
Regions	East Midlands, East of England and South East regions have shortest		Shortest in South East region	Short in outer London, East Midlands, East of England and South East regions; longest in North West and North East regions
Grammar schools	No difference		No difference	Tenure longer
Urbanness and deprivation level	More deprived schools have shorter tenure		More deprived schools have shorter tenure	More deprived schools have shorter tenure
Number of students	Larger schools slightly longer		Larger schools slightly longer	Larger schools slightly longer
Age of teacher	Little difference		Older teachers have longer tenure	Older teachers have longer tenure
Sex of teacher	No difference		Female teachers have shorter tenure	Female teachers have shorter tenure
Ethnicity of teacher	No difference		Black and other minorities have shorter tenure	All ethnic minorities have shorter tenure
<i>Primary schools</i>				
School governance	No differences		Academies have shorter tenure; foundation schools have longer	Academies have shorter tenure
Regions	Shorter in outer London, East Midlands, East of England, South East, South West and West Midlands regions		Shorter in outer London, East Midlands and South East regions	Longest in North West and North East regions
Urban-rural, deprivation	More deprived schools have slightly shorter tenure		More deprived schools have slightly shorter tenure	More deprived schools have slightly shorter tenure
Number of pupils	Little difference		Little difference	Larger schools slightly longer
Age of teacher	Little difference		Older teachers have longer tenure	Older teachers have longer tenure
Sex of teacher	Female teachers have shorter tenure		Female teachers have slightly longer tenure	Female teachers have slightly longer tenure
Ethnicity of teacher	No difference		Black and other minorities have shorter tenure	All minorities have shorter tenure

In primary schools, regional patterns of tenure length are visible across all leadership levels, with short tenure in the South East, London and East Midlands regions, and longer tenure in the North West and North East regions. Primary schools with a disadvantaged pupil intake have shorter tenure for all teacher posts. Larger schools have slightly longer tenure for classroom teachers. Female headteachers have shorter tenure than male headteachers in primary schools, which may reflect a later age of first appointment. However, they have longer tenure at the deputy and assistant head, and classroom teacher level. This is consistent with McNamara et al (2010) who report that male teachers move school more frequently before achieving a leadership role. Finally, there is some evidence that those of Black and other ethnic minority background have shorter tenure in general at the primary school level.

Overall promotion rates

Analysis presented earlier in this chapter indicates that generally females are less likely than males to achieve a promotion (holding constant their other characteristics) and that the chances of promotion peaks in a deputy's 40s and a classroom teacher's 20s (the promotion window for the assistant head is dispersed across a very large age range).

How promotion takes place is now examined by looking at the chances of achieving promotion at a new school rather than at the same school (as shown in Table 3.7). This analysis confirms that female teachers are much less likely to seek external promotion rather than internal promotion at all levels of senior leadership. External promotion also becomes relatively infrequent for promotions of classroom teachers over 50 years of age. There are no ethnic differences in the use of internal versus external promotion, once other teacher characteristics are taken into account. For all levels of promotion, the longer a teacher has been in his or her current school, the more likely he or she is to seek and achieve an internal promotion.

Table 3.7: Odds of external rather than internal promotion

	Academy			Community			Foundation		
	Odds ratio	Standard error		Odds ratio	Standard error		Odds ratio	Standard error	
Female	0.68	(0.09)	**	0.86	(0.13)	ns	0.55	(0.55)	***
Age 60 plus	1.42	(1.44)	ns				0.23	(0.17)	ns
Age 50s	3.02	(1.88)	ns	0.73	(0.29)	ns	0.43	(0.78)	***
Age 40s	4.46	(2.70)	*	1.89	(0.66)	ns	0.84	(0.10)	ns
Age 30s	3.40	(2.05)	*	1.88	(0.64)	ns	0.97	(0.10)	ns
Ethnicity Asian	1.58	(0.92)	ns	1.54	(0.72)	ns	0.96	(0.22)	ns
Ethnicity Black	2.31	(1.66)	ns	0.84	(0.54)	ns	1.03	(0.35)	ns
Tenure in years	0.92	(0.01)	***	0.94	(0.01)	***	0.94	(0.01)	***
Primary school	1.15	(0.22)	ns	1.07	(0.18)	ns	1.95	(0.18)	***
Special school	0.62	(0.22)	ns	0.54	(0.21)	ns	1.35	(0.29)	ns
Grammar school	2.71	(2.48)	ns	0.48	(0.28)	ns	1.19	(0.42)	ns
% of students FSM	0.98	(0.00)	*	1.01	(0.01)	ns	1.00	(0.00)	ns
No. of observations	1,185			1,192			4,832		

Key:

ns = not significant

* = statistically significant at 5%

** = statistically significant at 1%

*** = statistically significant at 0.1%

Segmentation of the teacher labour market

This section explores how segmented the teacher labour market appears to be, both regionally and by school governance types. This is done by analysing how frequently new teacher appointments involve a move across region or governance type.

Table 3.8 shows number of appointments (by post) that were made in each region between November 2010 and 2011. These figures have been split into whether the appointment was a promotion for the teacher concerned and also whether the teacher previously taught in a different region. Generally the regions of London, the East of England and the East Midlands make the most appointments from a different region. Across the country, geographical moves are generally more prevalent for sideways moves than they are for promotions and are far more prevalent at more junior ranks than for the most senior roles. This suggests that non-career motives dominate long-distance job moves and also suggests that senior teachers become increasingly constrained by family commitments in their choice of school.

Table 3.8: Rates of appointments from another region for teachers who move schools

	Headteachers		Deputy heads		Assistant heads		Classroom teachers	
	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
East Midlands	90	.	27	48	29	28	1,381	88
	18%	.	18%	15%	34%	18%	23%	18%
East of England	130	.	66	67	45	41	2,178	140
	13%	.	23%	12%	27%	17%	20%	15%
London	84	.	84	75	92	66	2,708	164
	23%	.	17%	27%	21%	29%	24%	26%
North East	54	.	32	24	26	20	828	60
	4%	.	14%	4%	8%	10%	10%	3%
North West	130	.	86	81	64	41	2,122	148
	8%	.	7%	14%	9%	7%	12%	10%
South East	162	.	103	85	84	46	3,324	204
	9%	.	12%	11%	14%	11%	16%	12%
South West	107	.	38	50	28	34	1,415	103
	4%	.	5%	10%	21%	3%	14%	15%
West Midlands	74	.	49	77	54	33	1,807	146
	22%	.	12%	10%	13%	9%	18%	6%
Yorkshire and the Humber	102	.	47	50	44	39	1,788	107
	15%	.	13%	14%	18%	10%	16%	15%

Table 3.9 explores whether new appointments tend to be made to teachers who have come from a school of the same type of governance. This segmentation of the teacher labour market appears to happen even for sideways moves of classroom teachers. This is consistently true across all sectors, but is most pronounced for voluntary-aided schools, where 37 per cent of all new appointments to classroom teacher roles (excluding newly qualified teacher (NQT) appointments) are made to teachers who have previously taught in voluntary-aided schools. If these appointments were made at random, the figure would be just 16 per cent. What is interesting is how pronounced this segmentation becomes for all senior leadership roles in all sectors. Once again, in the voluntary-aided sector, the proportion of appointments made to teachers currently in the same sector is 74 per cent, 84 per cent and 87 per cent for headteachers, deputy heads and assistant heads respectively.

These statistics are equally high for Roman Catholic (RC) schools, with recruitment of teachers from other RC schools standing at 88 per cent, 90 per cent, 90 per cent and 45 per cent for heads, deputies, assistant heads and classroom teachers respectively. This desire to recruit within sector clearly restricts choice of appointment and so may explain the appointment difficulties experienced within this sector.

Of course it is not possible to explain why this stark segmentation is taking place; in particular, whether this represents the choices of teachers in job application patterns or whether it is more due to the preferences of the schools for particular teachers. In addition, it is important to bear in mind that some of the segmentation is due to the geographical clustering of particular school governance types and internal promotions that will be taking place.

Table 3.9 Sector origin for new appointments (external and internal) by school governance

2011	Headteachers	Deputy headteachers	Assistant headteachers	Classroom teachers
<i>From another sector</i>				
Academy	13	40	106	1,347
Community	249	196	146	3,145
Foundation	61	53	106	1,921
Voluntary aided	120	80	68	1,780
Voluntary controlled	162	74	35	931
<i>From same sector</i>				
Academy	19	67	128	135
Community	1,039	1,490	1,856	6,503
Foundation	92	179	427	924
Voluntary aided	340	428	474	1,039
Voluntary controlled	155	152	156	198

Subject background of senior leaders

The School Workforce Census provides information on the academic subject that teachers took their most advanced qualification in, although the data is imperfect in several respects. There are particular concerns with the level of absent data and with large numbers of teachers not reporting any qualification information. Unfortunately, the qualification reports from headteachers are particularly low. This means that Table 3.10 must be interpreted with caution. Nevertheless, by comparing the data across columns, it is possible to suggest the proportions that tend to progress to senior leadership from the main school departments.

Table 3.10: Subject qualification of senior leaders and teachers

	Headteachers		Deputy headteachers		Assistant headteachers		Classroom teachers	
	N	% of total	N	% of total	N	% of total	N	% of total
<i>Secondary schools:</i>								
English	376	11.7	501	9.4	1,137	9.8	18,135	9.0
Humanities	470	14.6	721	13.6	1,382	11.9	16,627	8.3
Languages	111	3.5	207	3.9	458	4.0	8,475	4.2
Maths	176	5.5	371	7.0	763	6.6	10,822	5.4
Science	584	18.2	1,129	21.3	2,562	22.1	40,483	20.1
Other subjects	555	17.3	928	17.5	2,066	17.8	39,410	19.6
Not reported	939	29.2	1,457	27.4	3,228	27.8	67,683	33.6
<i>Primary schools:</i>								
English	1,728	10.5	1,342	11.2	899	12.0	17,690	9.5
Humanities	1,661	10.1	1,253	10.5	750	10.0	15,490	8.3
Languages	227	1.4	170	1.4	75	1.0	3,206	1.7
Maths	604	3.7	473	4.0	282	3.8	4,357	2.3
Science	1,639	9.9	1,298	10.8	761	10.2	17,943	9.6
Other subjects	5,076	30.1	3,518	29.4	2,238	29.9	56,458	30.2
Not reported	5,567	33.7	3,934	32.8	2,486	33.2	72,044	38.5
<i>Special schools:</i>								
English	56	6.1	72	7.7	98	9.0	935	6.8
Humanities	72	7.8	59	6.3	75	6.9	829	6.1
Languages	12	1.3	9	1.0	7	0.6	186	1.4
Maths	24	2.6	28	3.0	26	2.4	289	2.1
Science	112	12.1	121	13.0	159	14.6	1,594	11.6
Other subjects	326	35.2	323	34.7	342	31.3	4,015	29.3
Not reported	323	34.9	318	34.2	385	35.3	5,841	42.7

The data shown suggests that in secondary schools, those with a background in humanities are most likely to progress through to headteacher (this is also somewhat true for English in SWC but not in other datasets). Interestingly, for historical comparison, a study of the cohort of all secondary heads appointed to their first posts in England and Wales in 1982-83 found humanities (38 per cent) and English (24 per cent) to be their main subject backgrounds (Weindling & Earley, 1987). In the SWC data, those with a background in maths, languages and sciences do progress to assistant and deputy head positions, but the proportions who make it to headteacher are significantly lower. In primary and special schools, very few teachers have subject qualifications in maths, languages or sciences, although those who have a maths or science qualification do successfully progress to leadership positions.

Changes in the leadership landscape

In this final section of the chapter, recent changes in the leadership landscape and prospects for changes over the next few years, particularly in the light of constrained school budgets, are reflected upon. Much of the data in this section is not taken from the SWC and in the case of Vactrak, not from government data.

Table 3.11 shows changes in the number of senior leaders and other staff from 2005 onwards (taken from Table 1 in a Department for Education statistical first release (SFR) dated April 2012).

According to this data, the number of teachers and senior leaders peaked in 2010 and has started falling, but only a little. Looking further back into the past, the large rise in the number of teaching assistants over this period has resulted in each headteacher now managing a larger staff, on average. However, other data shows that the rise in the number of assistant heads means that the number of employees at a school per SLT member is unchanged.

Table 3.11: Changes in the number of senior leaders and school staff between 2005 and 2011 (thousands)

	January						November	
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2010	2011
Full-time headteachers	.	.	.	.	.	.	20.5	20.1
Full-time deputy heads	.	.	.	.	.	.	17.5	17.3
Full-time assistant heads	.	.	.	.	.	.	18.8	19.2
Part-time FTE leadership	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	3.4
Total FTE qualified teachers	415.4	420.2	422.1	423.6	425.2	432	430.3	422.2
Total FTE unqualified teachers	18.8	18.2	17.2	17.5	17.4	16	17.8	15.8
Head count occasional teachers	.	.	.	.	.	.	12.2	11.5
Total teachers	.	.	.	.	.	.	460.3	449.5
Teaching assistants	96.6	103.1	112.3	126.1	132.4	143.3	.	194
Special needs support	48.1	47.7	48.5	47.9	48.4	48.1	.	24.9
Minority ethnic support	2.6	2.7	3	3	2.9	2.9	.	0.9
Total teaching assistants	147.2	153.5	163.8	177	183.7	194.2	213.9	219.8
Administrative staff	59	63	66.7	69.7	73.1	75.6	.	79.9
Other support staff	59.6	72.6	77.7	79.9	89.1	93	.	179.3
Total FTE workforce	700.1	727.6	747.5	767.7	788.5	810.9	850.1	875.9
Source: DfE SFR using Form 618g (teachers) and the school census (support staff) (January 2002 2010) and School Workforce Census (November 2010 and 2011)								

Table 3.12 shows the age distribution of headteachers in 2000 and 2010. Compared to a decade ago there are now more teachers achieving headship in their 30s, but also considerably more heads in their late 50s and 60s. Caution is needed in interpreting Table 3.12 however due to the large percentage of 'not known' for primary heads in 2000. Retirement pressure does seem containable overall. About 1,500 headteachers retire and/or retire early each year (about 7 per cent of schools).

Table 3.12: Age distribution of headteachers in 2000 and 2010 (share of total)

	<30	30 -34	35 -39	40 -44	45 -49	50 - 54	55 -59	60+	Not known
<i>Primary schools:</i>									
Mar 2000	0.1%	1.7%	5.4%	13.4%	30.4%	22.1%	13.4%	1.9%	11.4%
Nov 2010	0.1%	2.1%	10.5%	16.1%	19.0%	22.7%	24.4%	5.1%	0.0%
<i>Secondary schools:</i>									
Mar 2000	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%	12.2%	30.7%	36.6%	17.3%	2.8%	1.4%
Nov 2010	0.0%	0.4%	4.4%	10.4%	20.7%	30.5%	27.6%	6.0%	0.0%
<i>Special schools:</i>									
Mar 2000	0.0%	0.7%	4.6%	15.5%	32.0%	31.7%	14.5%	1.2%	0.1%
Nov 2010	0.0%	1.1%	3.5%	8.5%	16.5%	32.4%	32.9%	5.2%	0.0%
Source: Department for Education and Employment (2000) <i>Statistics of education: Teachers England and Wales 2000 edition</i> , London: The Stationery Office and <i>School Workforce Census</i> (November 2010)									

Looking to the future, job advertisement rates give an indication of very recent changes in demand for senior leadership jobs. In theory, job advertisement rates should mirror the total number of resignations or retirements, less any posts that governors decide not to retain. One obvious response to more constrained budgets is to reduce the number of senior leadership positions. The data shown in Table 3.13 suggests that a contraction in the number of deputy and assistant headteacher positions may have started as early as 2009, but that the rate of contraction has speeded up considerably. Figures for September 2010 to June 2011 indicate that the number of assistant head positions that were advertised fell by as much as one-third from the previous year, with a slightly less severe fall for deputy headteacher positions.

This fall in new appointments reduces the size of the pool of candidates for promotion from these grades. Thus, with around 2,500 headships advertised annually, the loss of 700 deputy head and a similar number of assistant head vacancies will have an impact in the future on the pool of candidates applying for promotion.

Table 3.13: Senior leadership job advertisement rates from 2006 onwards

	2006	2007		2008		2009		2010		2011	
Jan - Dec:											
Headteacher	2615	2611	0%	2436	-7%	2349	-4%	2421	3%		
Of which: Secondary school	384	390	2%	400	3%	394	-2%	381	-3%		
Primary school	2108	2083	-1%	1932	-7%	1846	-4%	1906	3%		
Special school	123	138	12%	104	-25%	109	5%	134	23%		
Deputy head	2345	2312	-1%	2308	0%	2071	-10%	1806	-13%		
Assistant head	1024	1122	10%	1174	5%	968	-18%	995	3%		
Sep - Jun:											
Headteacher						3201		3198	0%	2898	-9%
Deputy head						2539		2278	-10%	1796	-21%
Assistant head						1407		1265	-10%	864	-32%
Source: Vactrack											

The data on teacher vacancies over time in Table 3.14 mirrors the advertisement data that suggests a recent large fall in demand for deputy and assistant heads, particularly in primary schools. The vacancy rates in the November 2010 SWC look very low across the board, but this undoubtedly reflects the timing of the data collection early in the school year. The figures for November 2011 are little different.

Table 3.14: Teacher vacancies from 2000 onwards

	Vacancies as a percentage of teachers in post								
	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Jan 2010	Nov 2010	Nov 2011
<i>Nursery and primary school:</i>									
Headteacher	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.1	0.1
Deputy/assistant head	1.3	0.8	0.9	0.7	1.0	1.0	0.5	0.3	0.3
Classroom teacher	0.8	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.1
<i>Secondary school (maintained only):</i>									
Headteacher	1.1	1.0	0.9	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.1	0.0
Deputy/assistant head	0.9	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.2
Classroom teacher	0.7	0.9	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.5	0.1	0.1
<i>Special school:</i>									
Headteacher	2.5	0.9	1.6	1.2	0.7	1.1	0.8	0.1	0.2
Deputy/assistant head	2.6	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.1	1.4	0.8	0.2	0.2
Classroom teacher	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.4	1.5	1.4	0.9	0.1	0.2
<i>Academy:</i>									
Headteacher								0.0	0.0
Deputy/assistant head								0.5	0.2
Classroom teacher								0.2	0.1
Source: Department for Education (2012) <i>School Workforce in England November 2011</i> , Statistical First Release SFR06/2012 (25th April 2012).									

Implications

These first two SWCs have made a great contribution to our understanding of the state of school leadership, but findings are necessarily limited by the quality of the data (see appendix). There are three key variables that are not currently collected in the SWC that would particularly aid analysis:

- date of teaching qualification or qualified teacher status
- number of years of experience or years of pension contributions (to reflect part-time roles)
- qualification route originally taken by the teacher

The total time spent in teaching is particularly important because where differences in pay or rates of promotion for teachers of the same age and sex are identified, it is not possible to account for years of experience. It would also be useful to know the country of origin for teachers, and whether they were trained in the UK. Information on teaching hours in the classroom for primary school teachers is lacking. Elsewhere, the data was presented but it may contain inaccuracies. For example, reports of middle management positions (eg head of department, year, etc) are not mentioned in this chapter because they appear to be substantially under-reported by schools.

The availability of two SWCs has enabled the linking of teachers across years to study transitions between posts. It has proved possible to study the characteristics of teachers who achieve promotion and levels of

segmentation in the teacher labour market. However, all this analysis is seriously impaired by the frequency with which schools have failed to submit an accurate teacher number for their staff, as discussed at the outset. It may be possible to repair the data through use of the pension records for staff, which should have a much higher degree of accuracy.

Several key observations are highlighted in the executive summary. Here, ways are suggested to develop a greater understanding of these findings:

- First, although very significant differences in patterns of promotion between male and female teachers are observed, the data cannot explain fully why they occur and also cannot suggest policy interventions to help female teachers, should they be required. It would be particularly interesting to investigate spatial distances in job moves in more detail within SWC, and also to use survey work to ask what types of constraint female teachers feel they face and why they make such high use of internal promotions.
- Second, the findings related to the continued under-representation of ethnic minority teachers in SLTs suggest that under-representation will not be corrected by simply waiting for young, ethnic minority teachers to reach an age where promotion to higher positions typically takes place. The analysis cannot explain why this is happening, but the SWC does allow lower cost survey work to be conducted because it names the schools taught in for all ethnic minority teachers.
- Third, segmentation of the teacher labour market by school governance is particularly interesting and there are several reasons why it might be occurring. In order to understand it further, the whole process of job advertisement, from applications and interviews through to appointments, needs to be studied.
- Fourth, the issue of acting head and deputy head turnover is important. The data suggests a reduction of such posts and a degree of ‘blocking’ or limited promotional opportunities. Turnover of such posts ensures a pool of applicants for headship going forward to prevent possible future shortages.
- Finally, there will always be a significant number of heads reaching retirement age each year (approximately 1,500 at the time of the SWCs) because that post is usually a person’s last appointment. However, after a period of above-average number of retirements there may be a greater proportion of younger heads in post than previously. Some turnover during the next few years will result from some of these heads changing schools. Turnover may also be affected by the range of other posts available to heads, including any further development of the executive head grade. However, the age profile of headteachers is higher than it was in 2000 and the issue of retirement remains a challenge for the sector.

Chapter 4: Responding to change and the current policy landscape

For many observers of the English education system, contemporary policy is undergoing a period of rapid change (Baker, 2010). Recent changes include the increase in the number of academies, the end to a range of national programmes and national agencies, the changing role of the local authority and changes to school accountability, including a new Ofsted framework. For some of the school leaders who responded to this research, the combination of change is creating uncertainty. For others, as one of the case study headteachers argued: “At times of change there are always opportunities – for those with an entrepreneurial background”. This chapter reports on the views of headteachers, middle/senior leaders and chairs of governors on a range of government policies and their potential impact on schools. The chapter draws on three main sources of data, which are detailed in chapter 1: the survey of schools, the headteacher interviews and the school case studies.

The survey data shows that, overall, there was a high level of confidence in managing current change. Most headteachers (84 per cent), middle/senior leaders (84 per cent) and chairs of governors (86 per cent) felt their school had the confidence to manage current policy changes. There was also, however, a diverse range of opinions on the aims and potential impact of policy. For instance, while a third of headteachers agreed that they felt able to work with current policy to support their school’s aims and values, another third disagreed. Similarly, while 20 per cent of headteachers agreed that students would benefit from current policy reforms, 41 per cent disagreed.

In the context of these overarching perspectives, this chapter discusses in detail four themes that were of particular concern to respondents:

- school partnerships
- the changing role of the local authority
- school autonomy
- school accountability

This chapter then analyses how headteachers are seeking to manage policy change. Four distinct groups of respondents are identified from the survey data through a latent class analysis (see chapter 1). Just over one-fifth of headteachers (22 per cent) were found to be strongly positive about current policy and actively pursuing new autonomies. About a third (34 per cent) were more cautious about engaging with policy while being moderately positive about its potential impact. Another third (32 per cent) were less positive, more apprehensive and hesitant about engaging with policy, especially in relation to school autonomy. The smallest group of headteachers – about 1 in 8 (12 per cent) – viewed policy change negatively and were sceptical about its intentions.

The impact of policy on relationships with other schools

The survey respondents – heads, middle/senior leaders and chairs of governors – were most positive about policy where it focused on schools working together. The survey indicated that 87 per cent of headteachers, 80 per cent of middle/senior leaders and 83 per cent of chair of governor respondents believed that working in partnership with other schools was critical to improving outcomes for students.

Survey respondents also saw opportunities and incentives in policy to engage in collaboration. Approximately 60 per cent of respondents felt that the current policy agenda encouraged their school to form collaborative partnerships with other schools. About half of headteachers and chairs of governors also felt that current policy encouraged them to formally support another school’s improvement. Further, two-fifths (43 per cent) of headteachers and a third (34 per cent) of chairs of governors and middle/senior leaders felt encouraged to make decisions that would support the progress of other schools.

Interview and case study participants were also positive about partnership working, keen to form school alliances and noted that existing school networks were frequently the basis for new and emerging partnerships. There was also evidence, however, of a range of local obstacles to realising aspirations for collaboration in practice.

While some schools benefited from close, supportive local relations, others faced a degree of local distrust and/or competitive relations that were difficult to resolve. This could reduce their ability to enter into, contribute to and gain from rigorous collaborative work. The movement of some schools to academy status was also seen to have the potential to change local dynamics of trust, for instance, where concerns existed that new academies would leave or give lower priority to existing partnerships on exclusions and hard-to-place students.

Schools previously in receipt of initiative funding, such as behaviour improvement partnerships, excellence clusters and training partnerships, had experienced a reduction, in some cases a significant one, in funding that specifically supported collaboration. For instance, in one case study school the loss of these grants totalled over £700,000 a year. This has led to staff redundancies and a reduction in local partnership activities.

There was also the potential for new forms of partnerships to reinforce existing local hierarchies. For instance, there was a perception among schools judged not to be 'outstanding' or schools with lower levels of student attainment that the teaching school agenda was for schools with 'higher status'. This had potential ramifications for who might be involved and who might benefit most from such partnerships.

Perhaps most importantly, schools that might benefit most from collaborative working were not always well placed to engage with such work. For some this was due to a perceived range of time, capacity and pressure constraints. For others, a vulnerability to external intervention led to a wariness to engage with partnerships, given the uncertainty over whether partnerships themselves might become new forms of intervention. This sets up a challenge: schools that most need support may realise that they need increasingly to find support for themselves through partnerships; they may also, however, be unable or unwilling to recruit such support.

As one headteacher of a school close to the primary school floor standards commented:

There are some schools locally it would be very useful for us to work in partnership with, but it's a conflict, because we need to do that, but because of all the pressures [of the standards agenda], you don't have the time to get into that as much as we would like. It's a frustration.

The changing role of the local authority

All groups of respondents were least positive about the changing role of local authorities. Nearly three-quarters (73 per cent) of middle/senior leaders and chairs of governors and 66 per cent of headteachers suggested this would impact negatively on their schools.

Within this overall perspective, however, there were significant school-type and school-phase differences. As Table 4.1 demonstrates, the majority of academy principals (71 per cent) were positive about their local authority's changing role and only 17 per cent thought this would have a negative impact on their school. Among community school headteachers, however, only 24 per cent were positive and 71 per cent were negative.

As Table 4.2 demonstrates, among secondary school headteachers, 41 per cent saw the changing role of their local authority as having a positive impact on their school, while 49 per cent thought the impact would be negative. Among primary headteachers, however, only 23 per cent were positive and 72 per cent were negative.

Interview and case study participants described a range of examples where local authority roles were already changing. While a minority of schools reported their local authority to be active in brokering new partnerships between schools, a majority reported that the influence of their local authority was in some form of decline. These included the following contexts:

- There were fewer local authority officers trying to cover a range of previous roles, without the relevant expertise, experience or time to do so.
- Specific school and school improvement services had already been discontinued.
- There was a wider fragmentation of services, with the local authority receding into the background.

Table 4.1: Impact of the changing role of the local authority (primary and secondary schools)

What impact do you think the changing role of the LA will have on your school?	Primary %	Secondary %
Positively/moderately positive	23	41
No impact	5	10
Negatively/moderately negative	72	49
Total %	100	100
N =	408	263
Note: From a series of single-response items The percentages in this table are weighted by school type and student FSM eligibility. Source: NFER and IOE leadership survey for the National College, 2012		

Table 4.2: Headteacher perspectives on the impact of the changing role of the local authority (academies and state-maintained schools)

What impact do you think the changing role of the LA will have on your school?	Academies %	State-maintained schools %
Positively/moderately positive	71	24
No impact	12	5
Negatively/moderately negative	17	71
Total %	100	100
N =	67	753
Note: From a series of single-response items The percentages in this table are weighted by school type and student FSM eligibility. Source: NFER and IOE leadership survey for the National College, 2012		

There was a mix of views about these changes, which corroborated broadly the distinctions above between school phases and types. For case study schools that perceived these changes negatively, there were clear implications for the practice of leadership. As one headteacher of a small rural community primary school argued:

I personally don't like the way the local authority has almost faded into the background and we are supposed or expected to do everything. That's fine if you're a head and a manager [of a larger school], and your only job is managing the school. But when you've got a massive teaching commitment, trying to find time to go through service agreements, health and safety, maintenance and the building and all the other things – to be honest it's utterly ludicrous what is expected of one person in a small school.

Attitudes towards school autonomy

A relatively complex picture emerged on school autonomy. Just over half (52 per cent) of headteachers were positive about the potential for schools to become more independent and autonomous. A third (33 per cent) of middle/senior leaders were similarly positive.

Headteachers and chairs of governors held similar perspectives on their potential use of greater autonomy. Approximately half of headteachers (54 per cent) and chairs of governors (48 per cent) had clear plans about how they would like their school to use greater autonomy. Similarly, just under half of headteachers (47 per cent) and just over half of chairs of governors (52 per cent) felt that greater autonomy would enable their school to use financial resources to support priorities better, and 46 per cent and 49 per cent respectively felt that greater autonomy would enable improvements to teaching and learning.

A similar proportion of headteachers and chairs of governors (56 per cent) were however in agreement that, despite what policy intentions were, they did not think their institution would actually gain more autonomy. Just over one-half (53 per cent) of chairs of governors also disagreed with the opportunity for their school to become an academy.

There were significant school-phase and school-type differences on these matters among headteachers. An overwhelming majority of academy principals (97 per cent) were positive about school autonomy. Among community school headteachers, however, 50 per cent were positive, but 36 per cent were negative.

A majority of secondary school headteachers (68 per cent) were positive about the potential to become more autonomous. Among primary headteachers, however, 49 per cent were positive but 37 per cent were negative.

On becoming an academy in practice, overall, 10 per cent of schools had already or were currently transferring to academy status, 8 per cent of schools were planning to become an academy and 79 per cent had no plans to do so. These proportions are in keeping with the national proportion of schools that were academies at the time of the survey sample creation in November 2011.

A significant school-phase difference was again however apparent. As Table 4.3 demonstrates, while 56 per cent of secondary schools had already become or had plans to become an academy, this was only true for 13 per cent of primary schools.

Table 4.3: Plans to become an academy (headteachers)

Do you plan to become an academy?	Primary %	Secondary %
Already happening	5	38
Planning to	7	18
Neither	88	45
Total %	100	100
N =	409	262
Note: From a filter question: all those who responded to Q15A The percentages in this table are weighted by school type and student FSM eligibility. Source: NFER and IOE leadership survey for the National College, 2012		

There were also school-phase differences on other aspects of autonomy. As Table 4.4 demonstrates, while 66 per cent of secondary headteachers agreed that greater autonomy would enable their school to use financial resources better, only 44 per cent of primary headteachers agreed. Further, as Table 4.5 demonstrates, while 44 per cent of secondary headteachers agreed that increased school autonomy would make headship more attractive, only 21 per cent of primary headteachers agreed.

Table 4.4: Greater autonomy will enable my school to use financial resources better (headteachers)

Greater autonomy will enable my school to use financial resources to support our own priorities better	Primary %	Secondary %
Agree/agree strongly	44	66
Neither agree nor disagree	30	16
Disagree/disagree strongly	27	17
Total %	100	100
N =	407	264
Note: From a filter question: all those who responded to Q11C The percentages in this table are weighted by school type and student FSM eligibility. Source: NFER and IOE leadership survey for the National College, 2012		

Table 4.5: School autonomy makes headship more attractive (headteachers)

Increased school autonomy makes headship more attractive	Primary %	Secondary %
Agree/agree strongly	21	44
Neither agree nor disagree	32	28
Disagree/disagree strongly	47	28
Total %	100	100
N =	407	261
Note: From a filter question: all those who responded to Q11E The percentages in this table are weighted by school type and student FSM eligibility. Source: NFER and IOE leadership survey for the National College, 2012		

In terms of converting to academy status, interview and case study participants described a range of motivations. These included:

- ‘Changing to stay the same’ – exemplified by ‘outstanding’ schools converting to academy status but not anticipating significant changes to leadership, teaching or learning, while planning to evolve their procurement of external services.
- ‘Taking charge of one’s own destiny’ – not always from a position of strength, where schools had chosen to become an academy in partnership with another school so as to avoid other potential forms of intervention.
- ‘Providing a local solution for other schools’ – where schools not otherwise contemplating conversion had done so to support another school; described by one primary academy’s principal as a means of preventing the partner school from getting ‘hoovered up by a local secondary, or a chain’.
- ‘Enabling the development of specific provision’ – for example, to provide specific care and teaching for children with identified special educational needs.

Across these motivations, academies, or schools in the process of becoming one, also referred to the financial advantages of conversion. Funding incentives were clearest among the following:

- ‘Early converters’ included those that had calculated that their local authority central equivalent grant (LACSEG) to initially be on the generous side. One case study principal concluded: ‘There was a government incentive that has subsequently changed’.
- ‘Net beneficiaries’ included schools that did not regularly use local authority improvement services and calculated that LACSEG funding would be greater than the additional costs of academy status, such as financial management or additional pension contributions.

Among schools not converting to academy status there were a number of motivations for not doing so. These were expressed most clearly by primary schools and included the following views:

- ‘More autonomy is not a big issue’. This was expressed, for instance, where headteachers did not feel very involved with the local authority, rarely heard from the local authority or where the local authority was giving up particular services and the school had already gained greater autonomy. Further, for some headteachers this was linked to a relatively light-touch governing body.
- ‘Others will test the water’. This was expressed, for instance, where the local authority was seen to provide ‘protection if things went wrong – which they can sometimes do’ and/or where headteachers felt it was not certain that academy status would secure additional resources.

-
- ‘A centralised hug might be too tight’. This was expressed, for instance, where schools were concerned that a direct relationship with central government could lead to greater oversight or intervention. One chair of a governors argued that: “Autonomy is good... but centralising could be just as dangerous. We would rather seek to protect our school community. We may not be seen to be outstanding by a centralised gaze”.

Beyond academy status, respondents also saw opportunities for autonomy in other policies. School leaders were positive about the planned increasing role for schools in teacher training. Two-thirds (64 per cent) of middle/senior managers and 57 per cent of headteachers said the impact would be positive. This leadership perspective on school-based continuing professional development (CPD) was tempered, however, in terms of their own development where senior/leaders managers in particular (64 per cent) and under half of headteachers (45 per cent) felt there would be a negative impact from fewer government-commissioned CPD programmes.

Among interviewed headteachers, the potential of greater curriculum autonomy was tempered by preceding accountability developments. This was particularly the case among secondary heads who were often negative about the retrospective introduction of the English baccalaureate (E-bacc) as a success measure for students whose curriculum had been planned several years in advance. The perceived likelihood that the E-bacc would become a new accountability benchmark also led the majority of interviewees and case study secondary headteachers to question whether school autonomy in this sphere was not in fact being reduced. Among interviewed headteachers, schools committed to offering vocational qualifications also lamented the lower status the E-bacc explicitly gave to these subjects.

School accountability

The majority of schools saw a wider range of external limits to autonomy. Accountability was seen to be a necessary and important part of a public education system. There were concerns, however, about specific aspects of the current accountability framework.

Around two-fifths (43 per cent) of headteacher and middle/senior leader respondents thought the new Ofsted inspection framework would have a negative impact on their institution. Interview and case study participants, while expressing support for a focus on teaching and learning in the new inspection framework, felt that recent inspections had become a more negative experience and ‘punitive’, with inspectors seeking to identify faults rather than work with schools to identify areas for improvement. This was particularly, although not exclusively, felt by schools that were improving from a previous grade of ‘satisfactory’.

On accountability to parent choice, headteacher respondents were more neutral, with the majority (57 per cent) feeling that current policy neither encouraged nor discouraged competition with other schools for students and resources. Among interview and case study participants, incentives for competition were most clearly observed in contexts where there had been demographic declines, surplus places and hence pressures on funding. This included in particular secondary schools managing the interim between a small current cohort of students and larger cohorts that had recently entered local nurseries. For one case study principal of an urban secondary academy, this had led to:

a marketing splurge on back of our move to academy status... We needed to change the image of the school – through direct advertisements, newspapers, radio, getting into primary schools through liaison and targeting schools that you know have large cohorts in the primary phase... We know it worked last year.

On funding more generally, exactly two-thirds of headteachers (66 per cent) were positive about the impact of the Pupil Premium.³ Interview and case study participants had also started to notice the redistributive effects of the Pupil Premium. Schools serving a high proportion of students eligible for FSM had experienced an increase in funding. One primary headteacher noted that: “We were a very, very poor school, and now we have got some money”. A number of schools, however, particularly those with lower proportions of FSM-eligible students, said they had experienced a reduction in funding and had already made staff redundancies in two consecutive years. In part these decreases resulted from the end of a number of initiative-based funding streams.

³ The Pupil Premium is funding allocated to children from low-income families who are currently known to be eligible for free school meals in both mainstream and non-mainstream settings and children who have been looked after continuously for more than six months.

Headteacher responses to managing policy change

In seeking to provide an overarching analysis of how headteachers understand and plan to respond to current policy changes, a latent class analysis (LCA) was undertaken. LCA searches for underlying types of individuals (known as latent classes), so that the key patterns among responses can be revealed. Once these latent classes have been identified, it is possible to identify how membership of the classes differs by school background characteristics. The responses reflected national proportions of school types (including academies) at the time, and the analysis was based on weighted data to reflect national proportions of all types of school.

The LCA included responses to all policy-related questions within the headteacher questionnaire. Four latent classes of headteachers were identified. Figure 4.1 shows the size of each class. Each class was then defined thematically. Table 4.6 sets out the thematic definitions for each class. These are then discussed in turn.

Figure 4.1: Size of latent classes

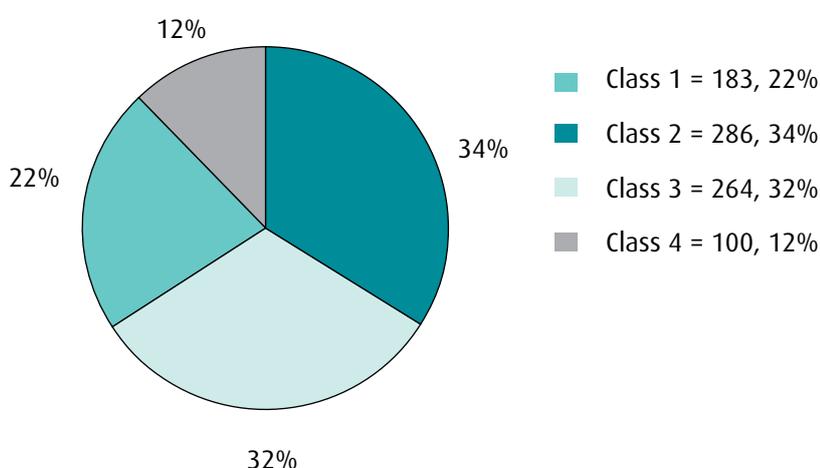


Table 4.6: Definitions of the four latent classes

Classes	%	Thematic definition
Class 1	22	Positive about policy and already pursuing new opportunities
Class 2	34	Mildly positive about policy, while cautious about engaging
Class 3	32	Apprehensive about policy and hesitant to engage
Class 4	12	Sceptical about policy and demotivated by its potential impacts

Class 1: Positive about policy and already pursuing new opportunities

Headteachers in this class were positive about school autonomy (89 per cent positive or moderately positive) and had clear plans about how to use autonomy (90 per cent), including its use to improve the quality of teaching. They welcomed the changing role of the local authority (71 per cent), and 69 per cent had already or planned to stop using some local authority services. They also felt confident about their school's capacity to manage policy changes (90 per cent), with 76 per cent feeling excited by policy changes, 76 per cent feeling able to fit policy to the school's aims and values, and 69 per cent believing that students will benefit from these changes. These headteachers were also already pursuing new policy opportunities, with 56 per cent already an academy or planning for their schools to become an academy. Furthermore, 22 per cent were already or planned for their schools to become a teaching school and 50 per cent were already or planning to participate in a teaching school alliance. More broadly, a majority (85 per cent) of these respondents felt encouraged by policy to support another school's improvement.

Class 2: Cautious about engaging, while mildly positive about policy

Headteachers in this class agreed that their school had the capacity to manage policy changes (90 per cent) and they were moderately positive about school autonomy (58 per cent). One-half (50 per cent) moderately agreed that they had clear plans about how to use autonomy (with 38 per cent neither agreeing or disagreeing). They were largely uncertain (78 per cent) about whether schools would actually gain more autonomy, and 88 per cent did not currently plan to become an academy. They were also concerned about the changing role of the local authority (72 per cent), with 45 per cent seeing this change as moderately negative and 27 per cent seeing it as negative. Nearly two-thirds (65 per cent) did not plan to stop using services provided by the local authority. Headteachers here were moderately positive about teaching schools and NLEs (approx 50 per cent) and 33 per cent already planned to work with a teaching school alliance. The majority did not currently plan for their schools to become a teaching school (91 per cent) or to become part of a teaching school alliance (77 per cent).

Class 3: Apprehensive about policy and hesitant to engage

While three-quarters (74 per cent) of headteachers in this class or cluster felt their school had the confidence to manage current policy, they were concerned about school autonomy. Over half (56 per cent) said greater autonomy would impact negatively on their school (30 per cent felt strongly negative). The vast majority (92 per cent) did not plan for their schools to become an academy. They were also concerned about the changing role of the local authority (83 per cent). The majority (82 per cent) did believe working in partnership could support improvement and 49 per cent saw incentives in policy that encouraged partnerships. Nearly one-third (31 per cent) planned to work with a teaching school, although 75 per cent did not plan to join a teaching school alliance and 90 per cent did not plan for their schools to become a teaching school. More widely, two-thirds (67 per cent) saw 'very little' incentive (rather than none at all) in policy for school improvement.

Class 4: Sceptical about policy and demotivated by its potential impacts

Headteachers in this fourth class had similar perspectives to those in class 3, but they were strongly negative about the potential of policy developments to provide an incentive for improvement. They were relatively balanced in their perspectives on school autonomy, with 43 per cent feeling autonomy would have a negative impact on their institution but 37 per cent feeling it would have a positive impact. The vast majority (92 per cent) did not plan for their schools to become an academy. The majority were concerned about the changing role of the local authority, with 86 per cent feeling this would impact negatively (48 per cent negative; 38 per cent moderately negative) on their school. Indeed, 71 per cent did not plan to stop using local authority services. The headteachers here disagreed that current policy provided an incentive for school improvement. The majority said policy did not ('not at all') provide an incentive to improve student achievement (84 per cent) or to focus on the leadership on teaching and learning (83 per cent).

Following this definition of each latent class, the relationship between each class and school background characteristics was analysed. The school characteristics included school phase, school type, FSM eligibility and Ofsted grading. Overall, there was a relatively even spread of headteachers by these school characteristics across the four classes. There was also however a statistical likelihood of:

- academy principals (both primary and secondary) as well as headteachers of 'outstanding' schools being located in class 1
- schools rated 'good' in both primary and secondary phases belonging to class 2 and class 3
- primary, community and voluntary-controlled schools, as compared to foundation schools and academies, belonging to class 4

No relationship was identified between the four classes and FSM eligibility bands.

Case study 1: Local change and the national policy landscape

The secondary school was inspected under the January 2012 inspection framework and was judged 'good with satisfactory features'. This represents a change from its previous grade of 'outstanding'. Key to the new judgement is the school's attainment data that shows stalling of progress from entry to Key Stage 4. The school has subsequently developed a concerted focus on progression monitoring and development to elicit improvement for pupils progressing through the school and as they reach the end of Key Stage 4.

The headteacher expressed a commitment to leadership that focuses on improving student achievement to improve their long-term life chances, even when in the midst of structural and national change. Policy change was not an unprecedented experience; however, the multiple areas and levels of change were viewed as extremely high and in some instances regressive, such as discussions to reintroduce a two-tier examination system; a possible narrowing of the curriculum was also anticipated in lieu of the English baccalaureate. The speed of policy change was also questioned, such as the short lead-in period from publication to implementation of the Teachers' Standards.

The primacy given to judgements of 'outstanding' in Ofsted frameworks was seen to have important ramifications for schools' eligibility to engage in NLE and SLE activity; the prospect of barring talent from a number of schools who fall short of the criteria in a particular area was raised as a concern. This was seen to potentially create a monopoly rather than diversification within the marketplace.

National policy agendas have influenced change at a local level and this is apparent in relation to the academies agenda. Historically, headteachers in this locality have largely acted together in a consortium arrangement; however, this is a fragile peace as two schools that have adopted academy status have now separated from the consortium. The sustainability of the local consortium is therefore no longer clear and this could become challenging in a context where there are few alternative partnerships locally. The school is located among the f40 group.⁴ The relatively lower level of funding here was identified as a significant concern for the school. Subsequent to the research, the Department for Education reported that the formula would remain unchanged until at least 2015.

Summary

In summary, most participants perceived current policy as potentially opening up opportunities for partnership and collaboration and this was viewed extremely positively. However, tensions such as mistrust, time pressures and the privileging of 'outstanding' status were seen to undermine opportunities. The vast majority of participants reported a decline in the local authority's role in areas such as school improvement services and in expertise such as SEN advisory support. Headteachers of small schools reported experiencing even further pressure as a result of local authority contraction.

Overall, headteachers tended to be more favourable towards autonomy than other senior/middle leaders, and chairs of governors. Secondary headteachers were also more receptive to the notion of autonomy than primary headteachers. The vast majority of academy headteachers were positive about autonomy as compared to half of headteachers of community schools. Those schools with, or considering, academy status were motivated by a desire to determine specific ambitions such as developing school improvement services and products, an alternative to imposed configurations such as executive headship, and financial incentives.

Accountability was seen to be an important part of a good-quality education system and the renewed focus on teaching and learning in the revised Ofsted framework was welcomed. The initial questionnaire also drew overall positive and neutral responses on the issue of curriculum change. However, subsequent qualitative data in the wake of more intense policy discussion, for example on curriculum and examination reform, indicated a less favourable response.

An overview of headteacher views suggests that primary and secondary academy principals tend to be the most positive about policy and are most likely to be engaged in pursuing new opportunities. Heads of primary, community and voluntary-controlled schools appear most likely to feel demotivated by current policy changes and their potential impacts.

⁴ f40 is the name given to the Campaign for fairer Funding in Education and represents local authorities where funding is relatively lower than elsewhere in the country. See www.f40.org.uk

Chapter 5: Current models and future challenges

This chapter explores the changing school landscape with reference to models of leadership. Four key themes are addressed:

- leadership roles and approaches, including the senior leadership team and middle leadership
- leadership recruitment and retention
- the structure, composition and recruitment of governing bodies and the role of chairs of governors in school leadership
- the most significant leadership challenges anticipated in the near future by headteachers, middle/senior leaders and chairs of governors

The traditional approach to headship – of one school, one headteacher – was shown by survey respondents to be the predominant model. Related to this, over 8 out of 10 headteachers described their institutional governance as a single, stand-alone school governing body. There was also evidence, however, of the more recent growth of executive headship models, which were reported in 7 per cent of schools responding to the survey. (The SWC 2011 identified 410 executive heads – see chapter 3.) Nearly 1 in 10 schools was also part of a hard federation – with one governing body across two or more schools.

The mean number of senior leaders serving on a school's core SLT was four (ranging from 0 to 15 members). As well as staff on leadership scales, such as deputy or assistant headteachers, many SLTs included other teachers who were seen as key to leading improvements in teaching and learning, such as subject leaders for core subjects or advanced skills teachers (ASTs).

Senior and middle leaders reported that leadership was commonly adopted collectively rather than on an individual basis in their school. There was a trend towards flatter, less hierarchical leadership structures and contributions to school leadership were often encouraged from teachers. There were also several differences related to school phase and school type. Primary school respondents were more likely to report the adoption of a flatter leadership structure than other schools. Academy respondents were more likely to respond that their school had no current plans to introduce less hierarchical structures.

More than three-quarters (79 per cent) of chairs of governors felt that the governing body should play a major role in the strategic leadership of the school. Only 46 per cent felt, however, that they actually did so. The comparable figures for headteachers were also significantly lower: 46 per cent and 22 per cent respectively.

On key challenges, the main concern was funding. Nearly one-half of headteachers, one-third of chairs of governors and a quarter of middle/senior leaders made reference to financial/budgetary issues and reductions in funding. Four other challenges were also reported to be significant across all three survey respondent groups: the new Ofsted inspection framework; academy status; sustaining/improving student outcomes; and staff recruitment and retention.

Leadership models and roles

The survey of over 800 headteachers asked respondents which headship model best described their institution. As Table 5.1 demonstrates, the traditional approach to headship – of one school, one headteacher – was the predominant model. The more recent growth of executive headship models was also reflected (7 per cent). A very small proportion of headteachers reported sharing their role with a colleague (2 per cent).

Table 5.1: Headship models

Which of the following headship models best describes your institution?	%
Traditional (one headteacher, one school)	91
Two headteachers, job-sharing one school's headship	2
One executive head of two or more schools, who directly leads each school	5
One executive head of two or more schools but with heads of school responsible for the daily leadership of each school	2
Chief executive (or equivalent) of a chain of schools, with a principal/head responsible for the daily leadership of one school	0
Other	1
No response	0
N = 833	
Note: From a single-response item The percentages in this table are weighted by school type and student FSM eligibility. Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100. Source: NFER and IOE leadership survey for the National College, 2012	

Headteachers were also asked about their school's governance structures. As Table 5.2 demonstrates, over 80 per cent of headteachers described their school as a 'stand-alone' institution; and 9 per cent reported their school to be part of a hard federation with one governing body. This reflects, but is not limited to, the growth in executive headship described above. A further 5 per cent of schools were part of a soft or non-governance federation. Very few headteachers responding to the survey were part of an academy chain but as noted earlier 8 per cent were planning for their schools to become an academy.

Table 5.2: Governance structures

Which of the following governance structures best describes your institution?	%
Stand-alone (including informal partnership)	83
Part of a collaborative (eg soft or non-governance federation)	5
Part of a hard federation (one governing body)	9
Part of an academy chain	1
No response	1
N = 833	
Note: From a single-response item The percentages in this table are weighted by school type and student FSM eligibility. Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100. Source: NFER and IOE leadership survey for the National College, 2012	

Senior leadership teams

The mean number of senior leaders serving in a school's core SLT was 4 (ranging from 0 to 15 members). A majority (62 per cent) of headteachers reported there had been no change in the size of their current SLT in the past 12 months. Nearly three-quarters (73 per cent) had no plans to change its size over the next 12 months. Secondary schools were more likely to have plans to widen SLT membership in comparison to primary schools.

These findings are broadly similar to those of the 2012 National College annual survey (BMG, 2012), which asked over 1,400 heads and deputy/assistant heads if their SLT was larger, smaller or the same size compared to the same time in the previous year. The size of the SLT was largely unchanged. Where SLTs were smaller, this was largely due to retirement or staff having left and not having been replaced (37 per cent) or as a result of reduced funding (31 per cent).

Within the headteacher survey, just over a third (37 per cent) of schools reported that they had appointed a bursar or school business manager (SBM) onto the SLT. (It is shown in chapter 6 that 59 per cent of the schools in the sample had a bursar or SBM). As Table 5.3 demonstrates, there was a significant school-phase difference in bursar or SBM membership on the SLT. While this was the case in 71 per cent of secondary schools, it was true of only 30 per cent of primary schools.

Interview and case study participants described how the size and composition of the SLT were linked to the size, phase and context of the school. Where recent restructuring of leadership roles had taken place, there was a focus on improving teaching and learning but also a set of wider influences. For schools where the number of formal positions had been reduced, this was often in response to financial pressures or an inherited 'top-heavy' structure. For schools where the number had been increased, this was often in response to developments such as becoming a teaching school or converting to an academy.

Table 5.3: Bursar or SBM on the senior leadership team

Does the team include a bursar or school business manager?	Primary %	Secondary %
Yes	30	71
No	70	29
Total %	100	100
N =	409	262

Note: from a filter question: all those who responded to Q16B

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100.

The percentages in this table are weighted by school type and student FSM eligibility.

Source: NFER and IOE leadership survey for the National College, 2012

As well as staff on leadership scales, such as deputy or assistant headteachers, a majority of the case study SLTs included other teachers who were seen as key to improvements in teaching and learning, such as subject leaders for core subjects and/or ASTs. In all but the smallest schools the bursar or SBM was included in the team. Less frequently, another senior member of the school's support staff was also included.

Senior and middle leadership

The survey of middle/senior leaders asked respondents about their school's approach to leadership. As Table 5.4 demonstrates, leadership strategies were commonly being adopted collectively rather than on an individual basis. For instance, 69 per cent of respondents reported that their school had widened its SLT membership (including 44 per cent that had widened it for more than a year). A small majority (58 per cent) said that a flatter, less hierarchical leadership structure had been developed within their school (including 36 per cent for more than a year), while 82 per cent stated that contributions to school leadership from teachers had been encouraged (including 50 per cent for more than a year).

There were several school-phase and school-type differences here:

- Primary school respondents were more likely to report the adoption of a flatter leadership structure than other schools. Academy respondents were more likely to respond that their school had no current plans to introduce less hierarchical structures.
- Respondents from schools categorised by Ofsted as 'satisfactory' or 'unsatisfactory' were less likely to answer that teachers had been encouraged to contribute to school leadership 'in the last 12 months'.

There was also evidence that collaborative leadership strategies, in partnership with other schools, were developing. While one-half (51 per cent) of middle/senior leader respondents reported that their school had no plans to share leadership responsibilities with a partner or across a family of schools, exactly one-third were already doing so (including 18 per cent for more than a year). Further, while 81 per cent had no current plans to develop an executive head and head of school model, 9 per cent were already doing so (6 per cent for more than a year). This mirrors the existence of executive headship within the sample discussed above.

In Table 5.4, the figures in brackets are taken from the headteacher survey and are discussed in more detail in chapter 6. There is a broad similarity in responses across the two surveys, although it should be borne in mind that the headteachers and middle/senior leaders were not necessarily from the same schools.

Table 5.4: Information about leadership strategies (senior leaders)

To what extent has your school used the following strategies on leadership?	We have been doing this for a year or more %	Yes in the last 12 months %	Plan to do so in the next 12 months %	No current plans to do so %	No response %
Widened SLT membership	44 (23)	25 (22)	5 (12)	24 (40)	3 (2)
Built a flatter less hierarchical leadership structure and ethos	36 (38)	22 (23)	6 (8)	31 (28)	4 (3)
Encouraged and enabled teachers to contribute to school leadership	50 (52)	32 (37)	5 (5)	11 (1)	2 (1)
Shared specific leadership responsibilities with a partner or across a family of schools	18 (14)	15 (14)	12 (16)	51 (55)	4 (1)
Developed an executive head and head of school model	6 (5)	3 (1)	4 (3)	81 (88)	6 (2)
N = 769					
<p>Note: From a series of single-response items</p> <p>The percentages in this table are weighted by school type, size and student FSM eligibility.</p> <p>Percentages in brackets are from the headteacher survey.</p> <p>Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100.</p> <p>Source: NFER and IOE leadership survey for the National College, 2012</p>					

Interview and case study participants commonly described how building a culture that supports leadership at all levels and sharing a vision for doing this was an important part of the role of the headteacher. Senior leaders often reported that they needed to continue to develop shared responsibility and accountability for outcomes among all staff. The need to develop the ability of colleagues to cope with uncertainty and change in a shifting climate was also reported.

On specifically middle leadership, differences emerged between primary and secondary schools. Within primary schools, headteachers referred to the successful sharing of leadership roles across the school and the willingness of all staff to take on additional responsibility even where there was no formal recognition of this in terms of pay or status. Commonly, the majority of teachers had subject co-ordination responsibilities. Where primary schools were too small for middle leadership to be applicable as a 'layer' of leadership, all teachers with teaching and learning responsibility (TLR) points were usually included within the SLT. Overall, leadership in primary schools was nearly always considered by the headteacher to be good and developing at all levels, with the main area identified for development relating to the roles of support staff.

In secondary schools, a mixed picture was more frequently reported. Concerns about middle leadership were usually reported about heads of department (or faculty), including for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Headteachers referred to a number of strategies for monitoring and improving middle leadership. These included deploying:

- line management, for example with senior leaders monitoring closely student progress and the impact of interventions in a specific department
- performance management, including formal or informal capability measures and individual improvement plans
- mini-inspections of subject areas, conducted by internal or external colleagues
- leadership development programmes, such as those from the National College, were often run locally in a partnership arrangement or in-house
- support from other schools, for example with the head of department from another school supporting directly the respective subject leader
- restructuring, for instance in one case using an AST to lead teaching and learning in a core subject area with an SLT member leading departmental management

Case study 2: Senior and middle leadership

A mixed 11-18 Church of England (CoE) school had been judged by Ofsted to be 'outstanding' in all inspection categories in 2006, a judgement confirmed by an interim assessment in 2010. The schools had a very low proportion of students eligible for FSM and converted to academy status in 2011.

The SLT structure was described by the headteacher as being fairly conservative but flexible and included: a deputy head responsible for learning and the curriculum; a deputy head responsible for pastoral care; an assistant head of 14-19; an assistant head of Key Stage 3; an assistant head of assessment, CPD and teaching school bid lead; a personnel director (personnel and plant); a financial director (newly appointed on academy conversion); an AST with responsibility for pedagogy 'in-reach' and professional tutor for NQTs and graduate trainee programme (GTP) participants.

A current whole-school focus was on 'working parties'. For each working party, one member of staff from each faculty was required to attend. The SLT set the themes, and working parties were chaired by SLT members, but teachers said that in practice each working party's approach was agreed by staff. Current focuses included classroom starters, ICT and coaching.

The headteacher reported that key areas for improvement tended to be subject-department based. The school's response, as the headteacher described it, was: "Support and challenge: it is making sure that, first of all, the most important thing, is that the head of faculty accepts there is a problem. That is sometimes the hardest thing. We [then] make sure there is support there". This included the detailed analysis of the department by senior leaders and observations by the AST.

Recruitment of senior and middle leaders

The headteacher survey asked respondents about the recruitment of senior and middle leaders. As Table 5.5 demonstrates, one in eight schools reported challenges currently in recruiting senior staff. The same proportion (13 per cent) reported challenges in recruiting middle leaders. There were no significant differences between school types or phases.

Table 5.5: Recruitment of senior leaders and middle leaders

Are you currently experiencing any challenges recruiting?	Senior leaders %	Middle leaders %
Yes	13	13
No	46	44
Not applicable (not currently recruiting)	41	42
No response	1	1
N = 833		
Note: From a single-response item		
The percentages in this table are weighted by school type and student FSM eligibility.		
Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100.		
Source: NFER and IOE leadership survey for the National College, 2012		

Headteachers were also asked about the factors impacting upon the recruitment and retention of both senior and middle leaders.

As Table 5.6 demonstrates, about one quarter (26 per cent) reported that a lack of credible external candidates for senior leadership posts (as opposed to 17 per cent for internal candidates) was impacting 'significantly' or 'a lot' on recruitment and retention. The most significant factor, however, was changes to the school budget, where 30 per cent of headteachers reported this impacted 'very significantly', 17 per cent 'a lot' and 22 per cent 'partially'.

There were several significant differences by school phase and school type:

- Headteachers of schools with an above-average number of children entitled to FSM were *most* likely to consider a lack of credible external middle leader candidates to be 'very significant'.
- Headteachers of secondary schools, special schools and PRUs were *least* likely to respond 'not at all' on whether a lack of external credible candidates for middle leader posts impacted on their school.

Table 5.6: Factors impacting on recruitment and retention of senior and middle leaders

Do the following factors impact on recruitment and retention?	Very significantly %	A lot %	Partially %	Very little %	Not at all %	No response %
Lack of credible candidates for senior leadership posts externally	13	13	21	12	34	7
Lack of credible candidates for senior leadership posts internally	7	10	18	17	42	7
Lack of credible candidates for middle leadership posts externally	7	11	26	13	35	8
Lack of credible candidates for middle leadership posts internally	5	7	18	21	42	8
Changes to your school budget	30	17	22	8	16	7
N = 833						
<p>Note: From a series of single-response items</p> <p>The percentages in this table are weighted by school type and student FSM eligibility.</p> <p>Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100.</p> <p>Source: NFER and IOE leadership survey for the National College, 2012</p>						

The governing body

The average number of governors serving on a school governing body was 14. If there were no vacancies, the mean size of the full governing body was reported to be 15. On changes to the size and membership of the governing body, 72 per cent of chairs of governors and 64 per cent of heads reported there had been no recent change. Three-quarters of both groups (74 per cent of chairs of governors and 76 per cent of heads) reported there were also no changes planned to the governing body for the next 12 months. Secondary school heads were most likely to report that governing body size was likely to decrease over the next year.

On recruiting governors, over one-third of chairs of governors (38 per cent) and nearly one-half (47 per cent) of heads reported experiencing difficulties over the last 12 months. Among the factors impacting on the recruitment and retention of governors, chairs of governors reported that low volunteering rates (32 per cent), increasing time commitments (30 per cent) and heavy workloads (20 per cent) were 'very significant' or impacted 'a lot'.

Schools had used a number of strategies to address governor recruitment difficulties. These included approaching potential candidates directly (72 per cent), advertising in the school newsletter (65 per cent) and working with the local authority (45 per cent).

Despite voicing difficulty in recruiting to their governing body, 92 per cent of chairs of governors were confident that their governing body had the skills to recruit and appoint a replacement headteacher. A further 71 per cent believed they would be able to find and recruit a high-quality replacement.

Attitudes towards NPQH were generally positive, with only 1 per cent of chairs of governors noting that they would not expect candidates to have the qualification when recruiting for a head. However, 40 per cent of chairs of governors were not aware of the change to the requirement to possess NPQH. Furthermore, 89 per cent of chairs said they would support staff who wished to undertake NPQH for professional development.

On the role that the governing body should and does play in strategic leadership, there was a disparity between the views of headteachers and chairs of governors.

As Tables 5.7 and 5.8 demonstrate, while 79 per cent of chairs of governors believed that the governing body should have a major role in the school's strategic leadership, this was the case for only 46 per cent of headteachers. (It should be noted that chair of governor and headteacher respondents may have come from different schools.)

Similarly, while 46 per cent of chairs of governors stated that the governing body does play a major role in strategic leadership, only 22 per cent of headteachers believed this was the case. Half of headteachers believed governors played a moderate role and just over a quarter (26 per cent) believed governors only played a minor role.

These discrepant views between chairs of governors and headteachers may relate to the difficulty voiced by leaders in recruiting to their governing body and/or the difference in perceptions and expectations of the role. As noted above, chairs of governors suggested that difficulty in recruitment might be due to low volunteering rates, increasing time commitments and heavy governor workload; the extent of which may not be acknowledged by headteachers who believe that governors should be playing a more significant role.

Overall, however, this picture compares favourably with heads' and chairs of governors' views on governing bodies a decade earlier. For instance, Earley et al (2002) describes the findings from a survey of approximately 600 headteachers and 200 chairs of governors undertaken in 2002. The current study found a marked increase in the proportions of headteachers and chairs of governors who believed the governing body should play a major role in the strategic leadership of the school than was the case 10 years earlier. Both headteachers and chairs of governors also reported greater governor involvement in school leadership in 2012 than in 2002. Tables 5.7 and 5.8 summarise data from these surveys.

Table 5.7: Role of governors in strategic leadership: headteacher responses

What role <i>should</i> and <i>does</i> the governing body play in strategic leadership?	Major role %	Moderate role %	Minor role %	No role at all %	No response %
Role it <i>should</i> play	46 (22)	43 (58)	8 (18)	2 (2.5)	1
Role it <i>actually</i> plays	22 (13)	50 (52)	26 (31)	1	1
N = 833					
<p>Note: From a series of single-response items</p> <p>The percentages in this table are weighted by school type and student FSM eligibility.</p> <p>Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100.</p> <p>Figures in brackets are taken from Earley et al, 2002.</p> <p>Source: NFER and IOE leadership survey for the National College, 2012</p>					

Table 5.8: Role of governors in strategic leadership (chairs of governor responses)

What role <i>should</i> and <i>does</i> the governing body play in strategic leadership?	Major role %	Moderate role %	Minor role %	No role at all %	No response %
Role it <i>should</i> play	79 (57)	21 (39)	0 (4)	0 (0)	0
Role it <i>actually</i> plays	46 (29)	50 (56)	4 (15)	0 (0)	1
N = 347					
<p>Note: From a series of single-response items</p> <p>The percentages in this table are weighted by school type and student FSM eligibility.</p> <p>Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100.</p> <p>Figures in brackets are taken from Earley et al, 2002.</p> <p>Source: NFER and IOE leadership survey for the National College, 2012</p>					

The National College’s annual survey (BMG, 2012), which was completed at about the same time as this project’s survey, asked headteachers (n = 837) how effective they considered their school’s governing body to be in:

- providing effective challenge to the headteacher and the SLT
- understanding their strategic responsibilities
- driving school improvement as a whole

Respondents stating governors were ‘very effective’ in these three areas were, respectively, 51 per cent, 52 per cent and 42 per cent, indicating a reasonably high level of perceived governing body effectiveness.

School leader participants in our interviews and case studies also commonly reported good working relations with their governing bodies, with a majority of governors being involved and interested in the life of the school. Interviewed headteachers reported a high level of skills among their governors and were particularly appreciative of those who had themselves held senior posts in education and who had both time and expertise to offer the school.

A minority of headteachers noted a relative lack of educational expertise among their governors and, because of this, an inability to provide suitable challenge on specific issues. A minority of governing bodies were also reported to need help in understanding the implications of the changing context in which they hold their responsibilities. One headteacher, for instance, ran regular governor meetings on teaching and learning, behaviour, HR and admissions and also ran workshops for governors on, for instance, curriculum, assessment and planning to support their contribution to leadership and governance. Governor matters, including use of time, is further discussed in chapter 6.

Leadership challenges

Headteachers, chairs of governors and middle/senior leaders were asked to describe the three most significant challenges they expected to face over the next 18 months. These were open-response questions. The answers were coded, and quantitative analysis was conducted to categorise emergent themes in the responses.

Across all three leadership roles the most common concern was funding, with 44 per cent of headteachers, 34 per cent of chairs of governors and 24 per cent of middle/senior leaders anticipating financial/budgetary problems and/or reductions in funding/austerity measures as a key challenge.

Representative written survey comments on this challenge included: 'doing more with fewer resources', 'managing a reducing school budget', 'coping with funding reductions', 'dealing with the financial situation - implementing cuts', 'dealing with potential budget decreases' and 'managing the finance with a significantly reducing roll and significant decrease in budget allocation'.

In addition to funding, four further challenges were reported to be among of the three most significant challenges across all three survey respondent groups. These were:

- the new Ofsted inspection framework: a concern for 26 per cent of heads, 13 per cent of chairs of governors and 22 per cent of middle/senior leaders
- academy status: a concern for 16 per cent of heads, 25 per cent of chairs of governors and 8 per cent of middle/senior leaders
- sustaining/improving student outcomes (attainment): a concern for 18 per cent of heads, 10 per cent of chairs of governors and 18 per cent of heads
- staff recruitment and retention: a concern for 15 per cent of heads, 18 per cent of chairs of governors (regarding the head/deputy head) and 10 per cent of middle/senior leaders

Further agreement between headteachers and chairs of governors included:

- admissions/student numbers (impact of falling roll/oversubscription/competition from other schools): a concern for 10 per cent of heads and 13 per cent of chairs of governors

Between headteachers and middle/senior leaders this included:

- curriculum changes/introduction of a new national curriculum: a concern for 10 per cent of heads and 11 per cent of middle/senior leaders
- rapid pace of policy change (coping with/keeping staff informed): a concern for 9 per cent of heads and 9 per cent of middle/senior leaders
- change/reduction in local authority support (minimising impact/managing without/leading to rural isolation): a concern for 9 per cent of heads and 8 per cent of middle/senior leaders

Between chairs of governors and middle/senior leaders this included:

- sustaining/building on/moving to a judgement of 'outstanding': a concern for 11 per cent of chairs of governors and 6 per cent of middle/senior leaders
- improving/maintaining/developing collaborative links with other schools (including trust status): a concern for 11 per cent of chairs of governors and 5 per cent of middle/senior leaders

Interestingly, there were surprisingly few respondents who directly identified improving the quality of teaching and learning as being a key leadership challenge. (It is noted that data reporting was subject to a cut-off of a minimum of 10 per cent of heads and chairs and 5 per cent of middle/senior leaders identifying a specific challenge.) Among senior middle leaders, 5 per cent did include staff development and 9 per cent did include tackling underperformance of staff as key challenges. However, among headteachers and chairs, teaching and learning were not identified directly as a 'top-three' challenge.

Case study 3: A perspective on funding

A mixed 11-16 school with approximately 1,000 students had been judged by Ofsted in 2009 to be a 'satisfactory' school. The school had an above-average number of students eligible for FSM. Recently, the school had become an academy as a partner to a local 'outstanding' school that was converting to academy status.

The school had experienced a significant budget decline after a number of partnership grants on behaviour and extended schooling ended in 2010. The school started a natural wastage (non-replacement of staff) process in 2011 and this had saved £290,000. The funding challenge was also demographic. While local infant and nursery provision was experiencing an expanding cohort, the secondary phase had a significantly smaller than average intake. The larger, younger cohort was expected locally to feed into secondary schools in five to seven years.

This had led the principal to:

[start] a marketing splurge on the back of our move to academy status... I've been playing hardball with the advertisements, much to the annoyance of local heads, but that's the name of the game... We needed to change the image of the school - through direct advertisements, newspapers, radio, getting into primary schools through liaison and targeting schools that you know have large cohorts in the primary phase... This has been even to the detriment of some primary heads [in the neighbouring authority] getting letters... forbidding them having any conversation with me.

In 2011/12, the Year 7 intake had increased by 15 students to take the year group "back up to 202". A similar increase in 2012/13 would equate to an additional £150,000 from increased student funding. This led the principal to "believe we cannot be significantly damaged by falling rolls".

The main leadership challenges reported by headteachers are set out in Table 5.9.

Table 5.9: Leadership challenges (headteachers)

What are the three most significant leadership challenges you anticipate facing over the next 18 months?	%
Finance/budget issues - (reductions in funding/austerity measures)	44
New Ofsted framework - (preparing for/managing/being inspected using the new framework)	26
Sustaining/improving pupil outcomes/results/(high) standards of attainment/meeting increased floor standards	18
Academy status - (its complexities/to change or not/forced on us)	16
Staff recruitment/retention - (including redundancies/dismissals)	15
Admissions/pupil numbers - (impact of falling roll/oversubscription/competition from other local schools)	10
Curriculum changes/introduction of new national curriculum	10
The rapid pace of policy change - (coping with/keeping staff informed)	9
Change/reduction in local authority support - (minimising impact/managing without/leading to rural isolation)	9
N = 833	
<p>Note: From an open-ended question where more than one answer could be put forward</p> <p>Only responses given by 9 per cent or more of respondents are presented.</p> <p>The percentages in this table are weighted by school type and student FSM eligibility.</p> <p>Source: NFER and IOE leadership survey for the National College, 2012</p>	

The main leadership challenges reported by chairs of governors are set out in Table 5.10 and those reported by senior and middle leaders in Table 5.11.

Table 5.10: Leadership challenges (chairs of governors)

What are the three most significant leadership challenges you anticipate facing over the next 18 months?	%
Finance/budget issues - (reductions in funding/austerity measures)	34
Academy status - (its complexities/to change or not/forced on us)	25
Replacement/appointment of new head/deputy head	18
Improving/empowering the governing body - (including provision of training)	17
New Ofsted framework - (preparing for/managing/being inspected using the new framework)	13
Admissions/pupil numbers - (impact of falling roll/oversubscription/competition from other local schools)	13
Succession planning - (for school leadership/key roles)	12
Sustaining/building on/moving to outstanding judgement	11
Improving/maintaining/developing collaborative links with other schools - (including trust status)	11
Supporting headteacher/deputy head with leadership	10
Sustaining/improving pupil outcomes/results/(high) standards of attainment/meeting increased floor standards	10
N = 347	
<p>Note: From an open-ended question where more than one answer could be put forward</p> <p>Only responses given by 10 per cent or more of respondents are presented.</p> <p>The percentages in this table are weighted by school type and student FSM eligibility.</p> <p>Source: NFER and IOE leadership survey for the National College, 2012</p>	

Table 5.11: Leadership challenges (middle/senior leaders)

What are the three most significant leadership challenges you anticipate facing over the next 18 months?	%
Finance/budget issues - (reductions in funding/austerity measures)	24
New Ofsted framework - (preparing for/managing/being inspected using the new framework)	22
Sustaining/improving pupil outcomes/results/(high) standards of attainment/meeting increased floor standards	18
Curriculum changes/introduction of new national curriculum	17
Staff recruitment/retention - (including redundancies/dismissals)	10
Tackling underperformance of staff/getting all staff to teach good lessons	9
The rapid pace of policy change - (coping with/keeping staff informed)	9
Change/reduction in local authority support - (minimising impact/managing without/leading to rural isolation)	8
Academy status - (its complexities/to change or not/forced on us)	8
Raising/maintaining staff motivation/morale/enthusiasm (including self)	7
Sustaining/building on/moving to outstanding judgement	6
Staff development/CPD	5
Improving/maintaining/developing collaborative links with other schools - (including trust status)	5
Time/time management - (meeting deadlines)	5
Increasing workload/paperwork	5
N = 769	
<p>Note: From an open-ended question where more than one answer could be put forward</p> <p>Only responses given by 5 per cent or more of respondents are presented.</p> <p>The percentages in this table are weighted by school type, size and student FSM eligibility.</p> <p>Source: NFER and IOE leadership survey for the National College, 2012</p>	

The differences in perceived challenges suggest that the pressures of leadership in education are weighted differently by those working externally (governors) and internally (headteachers and middle/senior leaders) to an institution. It may be that, as governors appear to feel less accountable for student attainment, but more so for the appointment of senior positions, there is a relationship between role responsibility and the perceived challenges of leadership.

The National College's annual survey of school leaders (BMG Research, 2012) provides interesting comparable data regarding current challenges. In 2012, headteachers were asked about their current main leadership or management priorities. Improving student achievement remained their main priority (37 per cent compared with 35 per cent in the 2011 National College annual survey). Schools judged 'satisfactory' by Ofsted were found to be more likely to mention improving student achievement than schools judged 'outstanding' or 'good'. Headteachers' second-reported priority was improving teaching standards (31 per cent), along with staff development (16 per cent) and preparation for the new Ofsted framework (14 per cent). 'Managing funding/financial management/setting balanced budgets' was mentioned by 9 per cent of headteachers, with primary heads less likely to mention this factor. In the 2011 survey, this figure was much higher (27 per cent).

Case study 4: Current models and future challenges

This small PRU has a specialised target group with approximately 30 pupils on roll. It is judged 'outstanding' in its most recent Ofsted report. The school staff consists of the headteacher and two core teachers. Further teaching is delivered through use of locum instructors. Characteristically, pupils attending the school enter with low levels of attainment but make good progress. There is a perception within the school that following local authority rationalisation, support has reduced across the borough and key figures who formerly had strong connections with the school have now moved on; social capital in terms of local authority familiarity and understanding of the PRU's specialist nature is perceived as lost. The local authority does not feature strongly in terms of improvement or governance matters.

The national curriculum was in place here; there was also a concerted focus on practical and vocational learning as well as higher education pathways. Of particular interest to this school was the new Ofsted framework and ongoing revision to the national curriculum and key attainment measures.

The growing momentum towards academisation of PRUs proposed in the Taylor Review in July 2012 also raises a number of questions for this school. Currently, the school is deemed 'outstanding' and has grounds to meet the criteria to apply for academy status and convert to an alternative provision academy. However, such a move would require the existing PRU to forge a partnership with an umbrella school, whereas the notion of becoming subsumed within a mainstream school was questioned as expertise in working with the target group of students had been developed by the PRU over many years. Currently, the PRU is not located in close proximity to other institutions and links with mainstream schools in the region are relatively loose. In the interests of young people attending the PRU, it is sited in a quiet location with no obvious outward signage. Academy conversion would justly necessitate local consultation. There was also some concern that young people attending the school might also be unduly exposed in the process. Support for the decision-making and conversion process was difficult to identify – the governing body and local authority were not able to offer sufficient support or insight at the time of the research.

Summary

This chapter explored the key themes of leadership models, roles and approaches, including the SLT and middle leadership; leadership recruitment and retention; governing bodies and their role in school leadership; and the most significant leadership challenges expected in the near future. Regarding leadership models in schools, the traditional approach to headship of one school and one headteacher was still the predominant model. The more recent growth of executive headship models was also reflected (7 per cent).

On school governance structures, over 8 out of 10 headteachers described their institution as 'stand-alone'. Nearly 1 in 10 was part of a hard federation, which reflects, but is not limited to, the growth in executive headship.

The mean number of senior leaders serving in a school's core SLT was 4 (ranging from 0 to 15 members), with just under two-thirds, mostly primary schools, not having a bursar or SBM on the team. As well as staff on leadership scales as deputy or assistant heads, many SLTs included other teachers who were seen as key to improvements in teaching and learning, such as subject leaders for core subjects or ASTs. The headteachers of schools with high proportions of children entitled to FSM were more likely to report 'very significant' impact in relation to a lack of credible external middle leader candidates for recruitment.

Survey data showed that the average number of governors serving on a school governing body was 14. Over one-third of chairs of governors and nearly one-half of headteachers reported experiencing difficulties in recruiting governors over the last 12 months. On the governing body's role, more than three-quarters of chairs of governors felt that they should play a major role in strategic leadership, whereas only 46 per cent felt they actually did play a major role. The comparable figures for headteachers were lower.

On key challenges, the main concern was financial, with nearly half of headteachers, a third of chairs of governors and a quarter of middle/senior leaders anticipating finance/budget problems and reductions in funding/austerity measures.

Chapter 6: The balance between operational and strategic leadership

A key challenge to heads and other senior leaders in schools is achieving a balance across their various areas of responsibility such as strategy, managing teaching and learning, staffing issues, networking, operational matters and accountability (PwC, 2007). A recent report for the National College on the experiences of new headteachers (Earley et al, 2011) echoed this state of affairs and stated how difficult new heads found it to get the balance right and ensure time was being spent on the ‘right things’. In the first part of this chapter, the tasks of leaders and their use of time are considered. How this use of time compares with their ideal use, especially as it relates to strategic and entrepreneurial activities, and leading teaching and learning, is discussed. How leaders work to improve teaching and learning is a key focus of the second part of this chapter, which draws on various data sets to address these questions.

Leader activity

Time spent on tasks

Results from the headteacher survey show, on average, that heads spend just over half of their time in their office (51 per cent), followed by time inside school but outside their office (see Table 6.1). Although on average the least amount of time was spent outside school (14 per cent of their time), this ranged from 0 to 60 per cent of a headteacher’s time. This time allocation is remarkably similar to that recorded in a report by Barber, Wheeler and Clark (2010), which notes that English heads spent 14 per cent of their time outside school on official business, 34 per cent in school but outside the office and over half of their time (52 per cent) in the head’s office.

Table 6.1: Proportion of time in a week spent by headteachers in different locations

Please provide an estimate of the percentage of your time you spent in the three following locations during a typical working week	Valid N	Minimum	Mean	Maximum
In your office	822	0	51	90
Inside the school but outside your office	822	5	35	95
Outside the school on official school business	817	0	14	60
Note: Quantity question				
Source: NFER and IOE leadership survey for the National College, 2012				

Table 6.2 below compares headteachers’ and middle/senior leaders’ time spent on tasks. It shows that a majority of respondents (62 per cent of headteachers and 53 per cent of senior leaders) felt they spent the ‘right amount’ of time on leadership generally. This response was more likely from heads of ‘outstanding’ schools. However, around a third of both heads and middle/senior leaders considered that ‘too little time’ was spent on leadership generally compared with how much time they would like to spend on it.

Over one-half (55 per cent) of both groups said management time was ‘about right’, whilst further analysis showed secondary school heads and academy middle/senior leaders more likely than others to say this. Leaders of academies were least likely to say that ‘too much’ time was spent on management, whilst heads from low-FSM schools and middle/senior leaders from primary schools were more likely to say that ‘too little time’ was spent on management. Notable proportions of heads and senior leaders (38 per cent and 23 per cent) also said they spent ‘too much time’ on management.

Heads and other school leaders were most likely to say that they spent too much time on administration (69 per cent of headteachers and 70 per cent of middle/senior leaders), with middle/senior leaders in state-maintained schools more likely to respond in this way. Heads (58 per cent) and other senior leaders (49 per cent) considered that ‘too little time’ was spent on the leadership of teaching and learning, although about 4 in 10 thought it ‘about right’. There were no significant differences between primary and secondary respondents in relation to leading teaching and learning. Teaching and learning are discussed further in the second part of this chapter.

As Table 6.2 shows, a notable proportion of leaders felt they spent too little time on their own teaching and professional development. Further analysis showed that middle/senior leaders from secondary schools and those schools graded either ‘satisfactory’ or ‘inadequate’ were more likely to say they had ‘too little time’ for their own professional development. More leaders of secondary schools and academies were likely to respond that their own teaching was ‘just about right’.

Primary school middle/senior leaders were less likely to respond with ‘too little time’ and those from schools graded either ‘satisfactory’ or ‘inadequate’ were more likely to respond with ‘too much time’ with regard to their own teaching. Primary school staff were also less likely to say they had ‘too little time’ to lead beyond school/partnership work.

As can be seen from Table 6.3, in the last 18 months, the amount of time spent on entrepreneurial activities had broadly stayed the same for 47 per cent of headteachers and increased for 42 per cent of them. For 1 in 10 it had decreased. There were no statistically significant differences by phase of school.

Headteacher respondents were asked to indicate which strategies they had used or planned to use to help balance strategic and operational demands on leadership time. A majority of headteachers (89 per cent) had encouraged and enabled other teachers to contribute to school leadership, and had been doing so either in the previous year or for a year or more (see Table 6.4). Further statistical analysis showed phase differences, with secondary school heads more likely to state that they had been doing this for a year or more, whilst primary and special school/PRU heads more than others reported doing this in the past 12 months. Just over three-quarters of headteachers (78 per cent) had delegated or further embedded more strategic responsibilities across the SLT. Most heads reported widening SLT membership but 40 per cent had no current plans to do so. Again there were phase differences here, with secondary schools more likely to widen SLT membership and primary schools having no current plans to do so. Most headteachers (88 per cent) said there were no plans to develop an executive head or head of school model to help balance demands on time.

Table 6.2: Perception of time spent on tasks (head and middle/senior leaders)

How much time do you spend on the following activities, in comparison to how much time you would like to spend?		Headteacher %	Middle/senior leader %
Leadership generally	Too little time	32	37
	About right	62	53
	Too much time	6	10
	No response	1	1
Leadership of teaching and learning specifically	Too little time	58	49
	About right	40	42
	Too much time	1	6
	No response	0	3

Management	Too little time	6	20
	About right	55	56
	Too much time	38	23
	No response	1	1
Administration	Too little time	2	7
	About right	28	21
	Too much time	69	70
	No response	1	1
Your own teaching	Too little time	47	34
	About right	43	50
	Too much time	6	12
	No response	4	3
Leading beyond the school/partnership work	Too little time	27	42
	About right	66	51
	Too much time	4	5
	No response	2	2
Your own professional development	Too little time	57	46
	About right	42	51
	Too much time	1	2
	No response	0	1
N =		833	769
<p>Note: From a series of single-response items</p> <p>The percentages in this table are weighted by school type and student FSM eligibility.</p> <p>Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100.</p> <p>Source: NFER and IOE leadership survey for the National College, 2012</p>			

Table 6.3: Perception of time spent on entrepreneurial activities (headteachers)

Over the last 18 months, has there been any change in the amount of time you spend on entrepreneurial activities?	%
Amount of time has increased	42
Stayed broadly the same	47
Amount of time has decreased	10
No response	2
N =833	
<p>Note: From a single-response item</p> <p>The percentages in this table are weighted by school type and student FSM eligibility.</p> <p>Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100.</p> <p>Source: NFER and IOE leadership survey for the National College, 2012</p>	

Table 6.4: Strategies to help balance strategic and operational demands

Please indicate which strategies, if any, you have used to date to help balance strategic and operational demands on leadership time	We have been doing this for a year or more %	Yes we have done this in the last 12 months %	Plan to do so in the next 12 months %	No current plans to do so %	No response %
Appointed SBM/bursar	49	10	9	30	1
Developed SBM/bursar post into a senior team role	30	10	16	43	2
Delegated or further embedded more strategic responsibilities across senior team	38	40	11	9	1
Widened SLT membership	23	22	12	40	2
Built a flatter, less hierarchical leadership structure and ethos	38	23	8	28	3
Encouraged and enabled teachers to contribute to school leadership	52	37	9	1	1
Shared specific leadership responsibilities with a partner or across a family of schools	14	14	16	55	1
Developed an executive head and head of school model	5	1	3	88	2
Other	1	2	0	11	85
N = 833					
<p>Note: From a series of single-response items</p> <p>The percentages in this table are weighted by school type and student FSM eligibility.</p> <p>Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100.</p> <p>Source: NFER and IOE leadership survey for the National College, 2012</p>					

Almost one-half of heads (49 per cent), especially secondary heads, reported having appointed an SBM or bursar for a year or more. Headteachers of schools categorised as 'good' by Ofsted were more likely to say they had no current plans to appoint such a person. Heads of secondary schools were more likely to say that they had been trying to develop the SBM post into an SLT role, whereas primary school heads were more likely to report that there were no current plans to do so.

Chairs of governors were asked how many hours they spent on governor-related work in a typical month. On average, they spent most time in committees and other meetings (5 hours a month, although this ranged from 1 to 35 hours, as shown in Table 6.5). They also spent an average of four hours a month working directly with the headteacher and preparing for meetings (again, the range of time spent on such tasks was considerable). Further analysis showed that chairs from schools deemed 'outstanding' by Ofsted tended to spend fewer hours than chairs from other schools on most of these tasks (but not committees or preparation and paperwork for governing body meetings).

Table 6.5: Time spent every month on tasks (chairs of governors)

How many hours do you spend on Governor related work during a typical month?	Valid N	Minimum	Mean	Maximum
In committees and other meetings	338	1	5	35
Working directly with the headteacher/principal	339	0	4	30
Working with the bursar/SBM	256	0	2	25
With pupils/students	269	0	2	15
With parents	244	0	1	10
Training	269	0	2	15
Working with teachers and other school staff	283	0	2	12
Preparation and paperwork for governing body meetings	334	0	4	30
Note: From quantity questions				
Source: NFER and IOE leadership survey for the National College, 2012				

The telephone interviews with 20 headteachers also explored the relationship or balance between the operational and the strategic. The phrase used by one of the interviewees, 'the important but non-urgent', captures those aspects of the leadership role for which there was always considered to be insufficient time. 'Supporting staff, developing the teaching and learning', 'being in the classroom', 'finding ways to be creative with the curriculum and overcome barriers to learning' were tasks that headteachers believed were fundamental in their work and on which they could never spend too much time. For some heads, such as the head of a special school, modelling the behaviours and expectations they have of their staff was important, especially when working with pupils with challenging and diverse needs. 'I never ask anyone to do anything that I do not show I will do myself'.

Strategic planning time, both individually and with senior teams, was difficult for many headteachers to fit in adequately. Several spoke of ways in which they planned ahead to make time, such as having away-days and weekends with the senior team, ensuring that strategic issues were discussed at regular leadership meetings or simply using travel time for thinking issues through. Research, keeping up-to-date with teaching and learning innovations and time for thorough evaluation were also squeezed into time that never feels sufficient.

Partnership working was considered important for school development but some heads noted how it was reducing opportunities to be a 'visible' head, present on corridors and in playgrounds for pupils and parents. Although recognising that others in the school were competent in leading the school in their absence, it was still considered a 'balancing act' as to how much time to spend working with and supporting other schools and partnerships as well as keeping a focus on maintaining success in one's own institution.

Several interviewees remarked that the demands of administration and bureaucracy had not diminished and they commented particularly on the pressure of increasing accountability, both under the previous and current governments. In their view they needed to spend 'too much' time keeping up to date with 'very significant' changes and reconciling these with the core priorities of the school. Some strong comments were made about what were seen as 'moving goalposts' and changes in accountability measures. The time needed to respond to these while keeping the needs of pupils paramount was sometimes considerable and took time that might, in the view of this head, have been spent more usefully.

Changes arising from increasing autonomy were, in some instances, reported as time-consuming but necessary. This might be related to changing to become an academy, both for research about requirements or working on a rebranding approach. An example was also given of 'too much' time needed to develop a new marketing strategy to maintain viable pupil numbers as new policies come into effect for opening a range of categories of schools, such as free schools, studio schools and university technical colleges, which compete directly for pupils with existing schools. In one school already facing the challenge of competition from a

new school, considerable difficulties in planning staffing and curriculum for the next academic year had been caused by uncertainty about intake numbers up to late in the summer term, with consequent impact on the use of time by the headteacher.

Reacting to urgent operational issues took up a lot of headteachers' time and although they recognised this as essential, it significantly reduced the time available for other important areas of work and ate into their personal time and work-life balance. Managing cuts in budgets and finances – a key challenge reported in chapter 5 – was taking up time for several heads, despite good support provided by SBMs. One head had spent a lot of time in the recent past on redundancy procedures. The time-consuming issues mentioned most frequently were those related to staff, parent and pupil issues. Child protection cases, serious pupil discipline issues, community issues, staff disciplinarys and the need to be available to help staff work through personal issues affecting their work, build confidence or smooth relationships were mentioned by nearly all of the 20 heads interviewed. Some mentioned the impact of the downturn in the economy on the local community and a rise in issues with parents as significant consumers of their time. With the exception of school business managers, practical strategies to assist heads and other school leaders to undertake these important and time-consuming activities were rarely mentioned.

Examples were found of how the case study heads were balancing their time between the operational and the strategic. For instance, conversion to academy status meant one headteacher had spent more time in entrepreneurial activities. This had involved developing relationships with potential partners and potential clients for school improvement services that the school was planning to grow. The time spent on teaching activity and leading teaching and learning was regarded as rewarding and the core function of educators and leaders. However, balancing this with a strategic role of headship was always going to be a challenge and was necessarily a shared role between the SLT, middle leaders and by chairs of governors too. The next section considers involvement in leadership tasks on the part of middle/senior managers and the governing body.

Involvement in leadership tasks

The survey of middle/senior leaders indicated that they felt involved to some degree in all areas of school leadership. They were most likely to be very involved in setting the aims and objectives of the school, and monitoring and evaluating progress against them (see Table 6.6).

Concerning their involvement in leadership, as Table 6.7 shows, middle/senior leaders felt most involved in influencing whole-school decisions that impacted on their responsibilities, followed by influencing whole-school approaches to teaching and learning, mentoring and supporting teachers and helping to make strategic decisions.

Table 6.6: Involvement in setting aims and monitoring progress (middle/senior leaders)

How involved do you feel in setting whole-school aims and monitoring progress towards them, particularly:	Very involved %	Quite involved %	Partially involved %	Very little %	Not at all involved %	No response %
Setting the aims and the objectives of the school	58	28	9	3	1	0
Setting policies for achieving school aims and objectives	54	33	9	3	1	1
Setting targets for achieving these aims and objectives	54	30	12	3	1	0
Monitoring and evaluating the school's progress in achieving its stated aims and objectives	58	29	9	3	0	1
N = 769						
<p>Note: From a series of single-response items</p> <p>The percentages in this table are weighted by school type, size and student FSM eligibility.</p> <p>Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100.</p> <p>Source: NFER and IOE leadership survey for the National College, 2012</p>						

Table 6.7: Involvement in leadership (middle/senior leaders)

How involved do you feel in the following areas of leadership?	Very involved %	Quite involved %	Partially involved %	Very little %	Not at all involved %	No response %
Helping to make key strategic decisions	47	31	15	5	2	0
Influencing decisions on whole-school approaches to teaching and learning	49	31	14	4	1	1
Influencing decisions on how to respond to new government curriculum policies	33	30	24	9	3	1
Influencing decisions on balancing core subjects with wider learning experiences	41	30	19	7	1	1
Influencing whole-school decisions that impact on your direct responsibilities	51	31	13	3	1	1
Mentoring and supporting teachers	48	34	11	3	2	1
N = 769						
<p>Note: From a series of single-response items</p> <p>The percentages in this table are weighted by school type, size and student FSM eligibility</p> <p>Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100.</p> <p>Source: NFER and IOE leadership survey for the National College, 2012</p>						

Governors had a substantial role in leadership too, but their main role was to support (and to a slightly lesser extent *challenge*) the headteacher/principal to achieve the stated aims of the school. Governors also had a key role in monitoring the school budget and taking decisions to improve value for money. They had less of a role in the day-to-day running of the school or the professional development of staff (see Table 6.8).

In terms of other governor tasks, nearly three-quarters of chairs of governors (72 per cent) had helped to recruit a headteacher. A fifth (19 per cent) had worked to support a governing body at another school (see Table 6.9).

Table 6.8: Involvement of governing body in leadership (chairs of governors)

How involved is the governing body in the following areas:	Very involved %	Quite involved %	Partially involved %	Very little %	Not at all involved %	No response %
Setting the aims and the objectives of the school	61	33	5	1	0	0
Setting policies for achieving school aims and objectives	55	37	6	0	0	0
Setting targets for achieving these aims and objectives	48	36	14	1	0	0
Monitoring and evaluating the school's progress in achieving its stated aims	68	28	4	0	0	0
Supporting the headteacher/principal to achieve the stated aims	80	19	1	0	0	0
Challenging the headteacher/principal to ensure the stated aims are achieved	67	26	5	1	0	1
Helping to make key strategic decisions	64	32	3	1	0	0
Monitoring the school budget and taking decisions to improve value for money	69	27	3	0	0	0
Actively considering any risks the school is facing	58	33	7	1	0	0
Building strong relations with the local community	32	39	24	4	0	1
Mentoring and supporting governors in other schools	3	7	11	32	46	0
Ensuring the day-to-day operation of the school is effective	23	33	26	14	4	0
Ensuring that school staff have the professional development and support they need to improve	24	37	27	10	1	0
Ensuring that succession plans are in place if the headteacher retires or is unable to work	32	36	18	11	3	1
N = 347						

Note: From a series of single-response items

The percentages in this table are weighted by school type and student FSM eligibility.

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100.

Source: NFER and IOE leadership survey for the National College, 2012

Table 6.9: Activities undertaken by chairs of governors

Which of the following activities have you personally undertaken as a governor (at your current school or elsewhere)?	%
Recruited and appointed a headteacher/principal	72
Chaired an interim executive board/temporary governing body	14
Chaired the academy sponsorship process	5
Chaired/or been involved in the process of an academy conversion	16
Chaired/or been involved in the creation of a federation of schools	14
Worked to support a governing body at another school	19
Chaired the establishment of formal collaboration with another school	10
Chaired the development of an informal partnership with another school	15
No response	15
N = 347	
<p>Note: More than one answer could be put forward so percentages may sum to more than 100.</p> <p>The percentages in this table are weighted by school type and student FSM eligibility.</p> <p>Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100.</p> <p>Source: NFER and IOE leadership survey for the National College, 2012</p>	

As noted in chapter 5, more than three-quarters (79 per cent) of chairs of governors felt that they should play a major role in strategic leadership, whereas only 46 per cent felt they actually did play a major role. One-half (50 per cent) reported that they did in fact play a moderate role in strategic leadership. This represents a considerable increase from the percentages noted in earlier studies (see, eg, Earley & Weindling, 2004).

Case study 5: Balance between operational and strategic

An outstanding primary school which gained academy status in September 2011 is amongst the first tranche of primary schools in England to adopt academy status. The headteacher is extremely experienced with over 25 years' experience.

Children enter the school with average levels of attainment and leave with attainment levels in excess of national averages. This robust level of progress is maintained through strong leadership and focus on children's learning. The growth of teaching assistants in supporting teaching and learning has also contributed greatly to the success of the school. Governance at the school is stable, effective and knowledgeable, drawing in a range of governors with knowledge and experience in financial management and handling performance data.

For the headteacher in particular, in the conversion to academy status, more time has been spent in entrepreneurial activities in terms of developing relationships with potential partners and potential clients for school improvement services that the school is planning to grow. More time spent on teaching activity and leading teaching and learning is regarded as rewarding and the core function of educators and leaders. However, balancing this with a strategic role of headship is recognised as an inherent challenge. A shared leadership approach, with responsibility and accountability residing across SLT and middle leaders with a fundamental contribution from governors in terms of ongoing monitoring and challenge, was being developed.

Leading improvements

Leadership tasks to improve teaching and learning

In an open question, headteachers and middle/senior leaders were invited to list the *three* most important actions that they or their school were currently taking to lead the improvement of teaching and learning in their area of responsibility. Responses were very individual and wide-ranging but the most frequently mentioned are included in Table 6.10 and Table 6.11.

For nearly one-fifth of those headteachers replying to this open-ended question, the most important action was more monitoring of teaching and learning. Running CPD or in-service training (Inset) to develop teaching and learning, developing the skills of middle leaders to improve teaching and learning, more/regular lesson observations, and the development of partnerships with other schools were the other main responses (see Table 6.10).

Table 6.10: Important actions to improve teaching and learning (headteachers)

Actions which are important in improving teaching and learning	%
Monitoring teaching and learning (including planning/work scrutinies/use of star lesson cameras/action research)	19
CPD/Inset/training related to teaching and learning	17
Developing skills/expertise of middle leaders/Developing middle leaders' roles	15
More/regular lesson observations (with feedback/follow-up)	15
Developing partnership working with other schools	14
Review/develop assessment procedures/use of assessment/AfL/APP	11
Mentoring/coaching	11
Adopt strategies to eliminate inadequate teaching/raise standard to good or better	9
Develop strategies to share outstanding/good and best practice	9
Curriculum development/adaptation/review	9
Developing strategies to improve specific area (eg writing/speaking and listening)	8
Data analysis/comparisons to inform action/planning/training	8
Pupil progress reviews and interventions	8
Developing senior leaders/SLT roles	7
Peer monitoring/support	7
Use of courses/external training where appropriate (Master's/NPQH)	6
Working with new Ofsted framework	5
Including teaching and learning in school improvement or development plan	5
Restructuring/modifying performance management procedures/line management	5
N=833	
Note: From an open-ended question where more than one answer could be put forward	
Note that only responses given by 5 per cent or more of respondents are presented in the table.	
The percentages in this table are weighted by school type and student FSM eligibility.	
Source: NFER and IOE leadership survey for the National College, 2012	

Typical reported actions around teaching and learning included: ‘training on good to outstanding’, ‘increase in number of lesson observations’, ‘using an external trainer to support the improvement of teaching from good to outstanding’ and ‘monitoring of learning and teaching including planning and work scrutinies, lesson observations and learning walks’.

For middle/senior leaders, the priorities were reported to be curriculum development/review, monitoring teaching and learning (including with observation) and the reviews of pupil progress (see Table 6.11).

Table 6.11: Important actions to improve teaching and learning (middle/senior leaders)

Actions which are important in improving teaching and learning	%
Curriculum development/adaptation/review	14
More/regular lesson observations (with feedback/follow-up)	13
Monitoring teaching and learning (including planning/work scrutinies/use of star lesson cameras/action research)	13
Pupil progress reviews and interventions	13
Data analysis/comparisons to inform action/planning/training	11
Adopt strategies to eliminate inadequate teaching/raise standard to good or better	10
Developing strategies to improve specific area (eg writing/speaking and listening)	10
Review/develop assessment procedures/ use of assessment/AfL/APP	10
Mentoring/coaching	10
(All) CPD/Inset/training related to teaching and learning	7
Develop/focus on/provide training in phonics (Read Write Inc/test in Year 1)	7
Differentiation/meeting pupil needs (eg SEN/EAL/G&T)	7
Developing partnership working with other schools	5
Developing skills/expertise of middle leaders/developing middle leaders roles	5
Restructuring/modifying performance management procedures/line management	5
Develop strategies to share outstanding/good/best practice	5
Supporting/mentoring NQTs/ITT/PGCE students	5
N = 769	
<p>Note: From an open-ended question where more than one answer could be put forward</p> <p>Note that only responses given by 10 per cent or more of respondents are presented in the table.</p> <p>The percentages in this table are weighted by school type, size and student FSM eligibility.</p> <p>Source: NFER and IOE leadership survey for the National College, 2012</p>	

Typical responses from middle/senior leaders concerning curriculum development included: ‘embedding creative teaching styles throughout Key Stage 3/4 to meet requirements of new GCSE’, ‘reviewing primary curriculum provision in our special school’, ‘developing topic-based learning’ and ‘to implement creative curriculum’.

The telephone interviews with 20 headteachers provided a wealth of further information concerning improvement actions currently in place. As might have been expected from the prominence given to supporting improvements in teaching and learning in the ‘important but not urgent’ tasks, all headteachers had strategies in place to further improve teaching and learning in their schools. Data was used extensively, both external (RaiseOnline, Fischer Family Trust, benchmarking data provided by the local authority) and internal assessment to enable individual pupil tracking and reporting to parents. Regular progress meetings

were common in schools where senior leaders meet with classroom teachers in primary schools and heads of year or equivalent in secondary schools, to look at individual students' progress, to design interventions and to evaluate the impact of these. Focused interventions were described in detail in several cases. Heads of special schools and small primary schools in the sample reported that national data sets were inapplicable or had limited use, but each used their own systems and small size of the school to monitor individual progress and set targets.

Many schools were developing professional learning communities and grouping staff for peer observation and mutual challenge and support. Staff were grouped in pairs or triads and, in secondary schools, both within and across subject areas. Several staff were involved in learning walks, both senior and middle leaders in most schools and all teachers in some. 'Unannounced' observations, 'drop-ins' or mini-inspections were used in some schools as part of the lesson observation and feedback cycle, running alongside the performance management process. Middle leadership development in providing feedback and challenging poor practice was seen as an integral part of improving teaching and learning across the school. Coaching was mentioned by many respondents, with further development of a coaching culture a priority for professional development.

Headteachers used professional development that was bespoke to the needs of their schools to improve teaching and learning. 'Learn to learn', 'thinking schools' and 'open schools' are examples of approaches taken in different schools in the sample. All heads were looking for specific expertise, tailored to the needs of their school. They sent teachers on courses when there was a specific development need for which this was most appropriate, for example the use of external providers for leadership training.

The eight case study schools were also adopting a range of improvement strategies but it was not possible to state how effective they were proving to be. Examples are given below from two schools: School A, a small, rural primary school and School B, a large secondary academy.

In School A, a key focus of leadership was on improving the quality and consistency of teaching.

- For pupils this focused on their wellbeing, attendance and engagement in learning. The school had adopted the international primary curriculum which was seen to support creativity and enjoyment within six-week thematic learning units.
- For teachers, the focus was on monitoring pupil progress and the use of data. This had in part been triggered by Ofsted's recommendations for improvement in the consistency of teaching writing and in monitoring progress. Teachers now completed pupil-tracking data that was reviewed in pupil progress review meetings with a focus on underachieving pupils and those not meeting national progress measures. This was combined with book scrutiny on assessment and the establishment of an intervention tracker which enabled staff to view the interventions pupils had received during their whole time in the school).

The school had also introduced lesson study, which comprised the joint planning and observations of classes by teachers within a phase. The current focus was on formative assessment. There was also an attempt to develop a school culture in which staff were encouraged to give 'constructive criticism'.

Another challenge for the school was to sustain and improve pupil outcomes. The headteacher was developing a whole-school approach to improving the quality of teaching and learning rather than a continual 'quick fix in Year 6'. This approach included play-based learning and then rigorous and enjoyable learning. There was however pressure to secure results during this process of change.

In School B, following an Ofsted inspection in 2009 a whole-school programme of teaching and learning improvement had been developed. Every department had been observed teaching by the SLT with the observations reported back to heads of department (HoDs) with subsequent discussion of individual support needs and collective inset focus. A recurring theme had been assessment for learning (AfL) and differentiation, with teachers often good at focusing on middle- and low-attaining students, but not so good at stretching higher achievers. This led into a student learning charter, developed with the student council, which had a summary of requirements on:

-
- lesson planning: detailing expectations of lesson preparation and activities such as differentiation, variety of tasks, literacy
 - lesson delivery: learning objectives (on what we will learn, rather than what we will do), interactive teaching, starters and a plenary
 - AfL: questioning techniques; marking (to reflect effort, attainment and progress against targets)
 - behaviour: registering of absence, clear seating plans and mutual respect
 - environment: having bright, tidy classrooms that display the student learning charter, the rewards policy and standards of behaviour policy

A second phase focused on a consistency programme in which HoDs went on learning walks with the SLT. An assistant head reported that the SLT had ‘tried to change the perception of observations, to feedback positives as well as development priorities... but change is never easy for some people’.

A teaching and learning support group had also been developed to provide voluntary support every Monday ‘by staff for staff’. Foci had included differentiation and whiteboard use. The principal did not attend these sessions, but was reported to support the initiative. The school had several initiative-based funding streams including an excellence cluster, behaviour improvement partnership and a full-service extended school. The school still runs a lot of these services.

Summary

According to the survey data, headteachers spend half of their time in their office and the majority of respondents felt they spent the ‘right amount’ of time on leadership generally. Heads and other school leaders were most likely to say that they spent too much time on administration. Heads and other senior leaders considered that ‘too little time’ was spent on the leadership of teaching and learning specifically, although about 40 per cent stated it was ‘about right’.

Heads commented particularly on the pressure of increasing accountability. Time for strategic planning, both individually and with senior teams, was difficult for many headteachers to fit in adequately.

One-half of heads, especially secondary heads, reported having appointed an SBM or bursar for a year or more. Primary school heads were more likely to report that there were no current plans to do so.

It was still considered a ‘balancing act’ as to how much time to spend working with and supporting other schools and partnerships as well as keeping the focus on maintaining success in one’s own institution.

The chapter also explored the actions leaders were taking to improve teaching and learning. The most popular strategies included the monitoring of teaching and learning, offering training to develop teaching and learning, developing middle leaders’ skills, lesson observations and the development of partnerships with other schools.

Chapter 7: New leadership skills and capabilities: support, development and training

As discussed in chapter 2, there is a growing understanding of leadership practice and the learning and development opportunities needed to help prepare teachers for headship. This chapter explores three main issues related to the support and development of leaders. First, it considers the existing and expected sources of external support used by headteachers. Second, it explores the leadership and professional development opportunities currently used by school leaders and chairs of governors. Third, it reviews the skills and capabilities that school leaders and governors report they need in order to develop in the near future.

A striking change is expected by headteachers in the external sources of support they access. Currently, the local authority and the school improvement partner (the latter is no longer statutory) are reported to be the two most significant sources of external support. It is among these two sources, however, that headteachers expect to see in greatest decline over the next 18 months. While this decline is broadly similar to the increase in support that is expected to derive from elsewhere, many respondents predict they will be using providers that few schools currently use or consider important. This suggests not only greater diversity in support but also uncertainty as schools are moving away from the known and the well used.

These trends in support expected by headteachers were broadly consistent with the actions they reported to be undertaking or planning to undertake at a whole-school level. On teaching schools, for instance, two per cent of heads of schools in the survey sample reported that their school was already in the process of becoming a teaching school, while nine per cent were planning to submit an application to become a teaching school. A further 10 per cent were already participating formally in a teaching school alliance (TSA), with about one-fifth (18 per cent) planning to do so in the future. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given that the first 100 teaching schools had only been designated a term before the survey was undertaken, 70 per cent of headteachers had no current plans to participate formally in a TSA and 61 per cent had no plans to work informally with a teaching school.

On continuing professional development (CPD) activity specific to their leadership role, 90 per cent of headteachers had undertaken some form of CPD within the last three years. Of these, the highest percentage (86 per cent) participated in activities provided by their local authority. Headteachers reported that the three most effective or beneficial CPD activities were local authority provision, attending conferences/seminars, and leadership programmes or courses. Headteachers reported their greatest development needs included 'strategies for closing attainment gaps' and 'developing future leaders for succession planning'. They also identified 'leading curriculum change and innovation', 'modelling excellence in the leadership of teaching and learning' and 'forming partnerships with schools and agencies to improve outcomes' as significant areas requiring CPD.

Sources of support

The research was interested to discover the main sources of external support and advice that school leaders draw upon and especially how these may change within a changing educational landscape. The survey of headteachers asked:

- which sources of external support and advice they currently access
- which three sources they currently considered most important
- which three sources they thought would be most important in 18 months' time

The results are shown in Table 7.1. Three main trends in external support emerge through a thematic analysis of this data.

The first trend concerns the most commonly used 'current sources of external support'. These were the local authority (used by 87 per cent of headteachers), the school improvement partner (used by 77 per cent) and informal support from another state school (used by 56 per cent). These were reported by the majority of heads to be among their 'three most important current sources of external support'.

It was among these three sources of support, however, that headteachers anticipated the greatest decline over the next 18 months. Only 29 per cent of headteachers reported that the local authority would be among the 'probable three most important sources of support in 18 months' time'. This represented a 25 percentage-point decline, down from 54 per cent of heads reporting the local authority as currently one of the three most important sources of support. On the school improvement partner (SIP), there was a 20 percentage-point decline, down from 52 per cent currently to only 32 per cent of heads reporting that the SIP would be among their 'probable three most important sources in 18 months' time'. On informal support from another state school, there was a less significant decline of 6 percentage points.

The second trend concerned other commonly used 'current sources of external support'. These included professional associations (used by 56 per cent of headteachers), the National College (46 per cent), Ofsted (35 per cent), private consultants (28 per cent), a diocese board or chain (28 per cent) and the local schools forum (22 per cent). Headteachers were less likely to report these as one of their three most important current sources of support. They were also, however, unlikely to anticipate a decline in their importance in 18 months' time. For instance, on professional associations, 23 per cent of heads reported that their association was one of their three most important current sources of support and the same percentage expected it to remain so in 18 months' time. Similarly, on the National College, the proportions were both 19 per cent respectively. (Perhaps unexpectedly on Ofsted, the proportion increased slightly from 13 per cent now to 15 per cent in 18 months' time.)

The third trend concerned sources of support that were currently both less frequently used and less likely to be reported by heads as one of their three most important current sources of support. However, it was among these less-cited sources that headteachers expected to see an increase in importance. On commercial organisations, for instance, there was a 6 percentage-point increase with up to 15 per cent of respondents expecting that commercial organisations would be one of their top three sources of support in 18 months' time (from 9 per cent currently). On NLEs/LLEs, the increase was 8 percentage points, up to 14 per cent in 18 months' time (from 6 per cent currently). On teaching schools, the increase was 9 percentage points, which was up to 13 per cent (from only 4 per cent now).

These three trends reveal how headteachers perceive the future of external support. The overall percentage-point decline in the three most important sources of support (at -51 percentage points) is broadly similar to the anticipated increases elsewhere (at +43 percentage points). What is striking is the nature of this change. While the expected decrease is predominately among the two most significant current sources of support (the local authority and the SIP), the expected increase is spread across a wide range of providers, many of which are not currently used by most schools.

This implies greater diversity in support but also greater uncertainty and thus potential risk as schools move away from the known and well used. There was also a phase dimension to these anticipated changes. Primary school headteachers were most likely to refer to the local authority and informal support and advice from other schools as current sources of support. Secondary heads and academy principals were less likely to mention the local authority or SIP as probable sources of external support in 18 months' time.

Table 7.1: Sources of external support and advice: current and future (headteachers)

Sources of external support for headteachers				
	A. The current sources of external support (tick all boxes that apply) %	B. One of the three most important sources of external support now (tick only 3) %	C. Probable three most important source in 18 months' time (tick only 3) %	Anticipated change in the three most important sources (B minus C) Percentage points
The local authority	87	54	29	-25
The school improvement partner	77	52	32	-20
Informal support from another state school	56	37	31	-6
Professional association/union	56	23	23	0
National College for School Leadership	46	19	19	0
Ofsted	35	13	15	+2
A private educational consultant or small consultancy	28	19	20	+1
Diocese board or chain	28	13	13	0
Schools forum (eg finance support)	22	7	7	0
Commercial organisation	19	9	15	+6
Specialist Schools and Academies Trust	15	6	11	+5
National or local leader of education (NLE/LLE)	11	6	14	+8
A teaching school	8	4	13	+9
The central services of a school chain	3	2	7	+5
A specialist leader of education (SLE)	2	1	5	+4
Other	8	7	7	0
No response	2	5	8	-
N =	833	827	826	-
<p>Note: More than one answer could be put forward so percentages may sum to more than 100.</p> <p>The percentages in this table are weighted by school type and student FSM eligibility.</p> <p>Source: NFER and IOE leadership survey for the National College, 2012</p>				

The trends in support expected by headteachers were broadly consistent with the actions they reported undertaking or planning to undertake at a whole-school level.

On teaching schools, as Table 7.2 demonstrates, 2 per cent of respondents in the survey sample reported that their school was already in the process of becoming a teaching school. A further 9 per cent were planning to submit an application to become a teaching school. A further 10 per cent were already participating formally in a TSA, with about one-fifth (18 per cent) planning to do so in the future. However, despite the importance of TSAs within the current policy framework, 70 per cent of headteachers had no current plans to participate formally in a TSA and 61 per cent had no plans to work informally with a teaching school in their area. We note that the National College's annual survey, undertaken at about the same time, reported that 27 per cent of heads found the model of teaching schools appealing, with secondary schools (54 per cent) and academies (52 per cent) most likely to consider working as a part of a TSA in the next 12 months. However, only a third of primary (35 per cent) and special (36 per cent) schools had such plans.

On local authority services, 41 per cent of headteachers had stopped or intended to stop using services provided by their local authority. A majority of respondents (69 per cent), however, also reported that they were already or planned to collaborate with other schools to fund aspects of the local authority improvement service to ensure specific services were sustained. This suggests that while a significant minority of schools may soon stop using a range of local authority services and diversify their support, many schools may also (simultaneously) recognise that their local authority provides (a number of) effective and beneficial services.

Interview and case study participants also described a range of examples of the demise of local authority support services, in keeping with the broader, changing role of the local authority described in chapter 4. Where local authorities were effectively redesigning (or rebranding) coherent packages of support, however, schools and especially primary schools readily bought into these. In a number of contexts, engagement (or disengagement) with the local authority appeared to be driven more by the local authority's capacity to continue to deliver services and support rather than schools making a concerted decision to disengage – particularly where relations were historically strong.

Table 7.2: Current whole-school support services (headteachers)

Has your school, or is your school, planning to:	Already happening %	Planning to %	Neither %	No response %
become a teaching school?	2	9	86	2
participate in a teaching school alliance?	10	18	70	2
work with a teaching school in your area?	15	22	61	2
contract support or advice from another state school?	18	13	66	2
contract support or advice from a commercial organisation?	19	15	64	3
stop using services provided by the local authority?	25	16	58	2
collaborate with other schools to fund aspects of the local authority improvement service to ensure those aspects are sustained?	40	29	30	2
N = 833				
<p>Note: From a series of single-response items</p> <p>The percentages in this table are weighted by school type and student FSM eligibility.</p> <p>Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100.</p> <p>Source: NFER and IOE leadership survey for the National College, 2012</p>				

The current importance of the local authority was also reported by middle/senior leaders. The middle/senior leader survey presented respondents with an open-ended question asking them which three most important sources of support and advice they expected to use over the next 18 months (rather than the list of sources presented to headteachers in Table 7.1). As demonstrated in Table 7.3, the most frequently cited source was the headteacher/deputy head of the school (one-third of middle/senior leaders stated this). The other main sources of support and advice mentioned by middle/senior leaders were the local authority (29 per cent), school/cluster network (20 per cent) and the National College (16 per cent).

Table 7.3: Sources of support and advice (middle/senior leaders)

Most important sources of support and advice	%
Headteacher/deputy head of this school	33
The local authority	29
School cluster/network	20
National College for School Leadership	16
Peers/colleagues in other schools (including other deputies/heads)	14
Other middle/senior leaders in this school	12
Subject-specific websites	10
Others in school (including pupils)	9
Conferences/courses/CPD opportunities	8
National teacher support websites (eg Teachernet/DfE)	7
NPQH or other professional leadership qualification	6
Local heads/deputy heads/SLT group	5
Teaching/education magazines/journals	4
N = 769	
<p>Note: From an open-ended question where more than one answer could be put forward Only responses given by 4 per cent or more of respondents are presented in the table. The percentages in this table are weighted by school type, size and student FSM eligibility. Source: NFER and IOE leadership survey for the National College, 2012</p>	

Leadership development opportunities

Within the context of the wider support and advice discussed above, the research was also interested to understand the development opportunities school leaders access, specifically on leadership. The questionnaire survey asked headteachers whether they had undertaken any continuing professional development (CPD) activities specific to their leadership role within the last three years. The majority (90 per cent) had done so, but 1 in 10 had not undertaken any leadership development within the last 3 years.

Of those who had undertaken CPD, the highest percentage (86 per cent) participated in activities provided by their local authority. A further 84 per cent had attended conferences or seminars, and 58 per cent had engaged in performance management/360-degree feedback. Other activities of note were leadership programmes or courses (56 per cent), networks (55 per cent), mentoring and coaching from others (51 per cent) and regular discussions (51 per cent). Under half (44 per cent) of headteachers reported undertaking mentoring/coaching of other school leaders (see Table 7.4).

When this data was further analysed in relation to phase, school type, Ofsted category and FSM eligibility, a number of statistically significant differences were found. For example, heads of special schools/PRUs were more likely than other heads to have undertaken leadership programmes or courses, including commercially

provided courses. Secondary school heads were also more likely to engage in commercial provision, whilst primary school heads were more likely to be involved in provision from the local authority or other providers (eg chain, diocese) and in induction programmes. Heads of schools graded 'outstanding' were more likely to have been involved in leadership programmes or courses (including those of the National College), mentoring and coaching (of others), and job shadowing. Heads of schools graded 'outstanding' and 'good' were also more likely to have been involved in induction programmes, as were heads of schools with low percentages of FSM-eligible students.

Middle/senior leaders were also asked about their CPD activity over the last three years. Only 82 per cent of middle/senior leaders (compared to 90 per cent of headteachers) reported undertaking developmental activity.

Table 7.4: Professional development activities undertaken in the last three years (headteachers and middle/senior leaders)

Professional development activities undertaken	Headteachers %	Middle/senior leaders %
Local authority provision	86	79
Conferences/seminars	84	61
Performance management/360-degree feedback	58	67
Leadership programmes or courses (eg National College)	56	51
Networks (face to face and virtual)	55	43
Mentoring/coaching from others (eg school leaders, consultants)	51	44
Regular discussions (learning conversations) (face to face and virtual)	51	51
Mentoring/coaching you have undertaken of other school leaders	44	31
Other provision (eg chain, diocese)	32	16
Collaborative activity (eg teacher learning communities)	30	19
Induction programmes	26	19
Other commercial provision (eg HE institution, SSAT)	23	14
University provision and/or university-led action research	18	18
Academic study/qualifications (eg Master's, doctoral study)	8	14
Job shadowing	5	11
Job rotation	2	6
Other	4	4
No response	0	0
Total %	100	100
N =	744	645
The percentages in this table are weighted by school type, size and student FSM eligibility.		
Source: NFER and IOE leadership survey for the National College, 2012		

The range of development activities undertaken by middle/senior leaders was similar to those reported by headteachers. As demonstrated in Table 7.4, 79 per cent of senior/middle leaders participated in a local authority provision, and 67 per cent engaged in performance management/360-degree feedback, 61 per cent in conferences and seminars, and 51 per cent in regular discussions and learning conversations and in leadership programmes or courses, such as those provided by the National College.

Headteachers and middle/senior leaders were also asked to identify the three most effective or beneficial activities in their own development (see Table 7.5). For heads these were local authority provision (37 per cent), attending conferences/seminars and leadership programmes or courses (both 36 per cent). Also of benefit appeared to be mentoring/coaching from others (29 per cent) and networks (24 per cent), both face to face and virtual. About 4 in 10 middle/senior leaders indicated local authority provision (42 per cent) and the use of leadership programmes or courses (41 per cent) as among their three most effective activities.

Table 7.5: Three most effective activities (headteachers and middle/senior leaders)

Most effective activities	Headteachers %	Senior leaders %
Local authority provision	37	42
Leadership programmes or courses (eg National College)	36	41
Conferences/seminars	36	23
Mentoring/coaching from others (eg school leaders, consultants)	29	27
Networks (face to face and virtual)	24	19
Mentoring/coaching you have undertaken of other school leaders	19	12
Regular discussions (learning conversations) (face to face and virtual)	19	23
Collaborative activity (eg teacher learning communities)	14	6
Performance management/360-degree feedback	13	29
Other provision (eg chain, diocese)	12	6
Other commercial provision (eg HE institution, SSAT)	10	7
University provision and/or university-led action research	5	6
Academic study/qualifications (eg Master's, doctoral study)	4	9
Induction programmes	4	5
Job rotation	1	3
Job shadowing	1	5
Other	4	2
No response	6	5
Total %	100	100
N =	737	642

Note: More than one answer could be put forward so percentages may sum to more than 100.

The percentages in this table are weighted by school type, size and student FSM eligibility.

From a filter question: all those who ticked 'yes' to undertaking professional development activity specific to their leadership role

Source: NFER and IOE leadership survey for the National College, 2012

The responses relating to the effectiveness of developmental activities for both headteachers and middle/senior leaders ranged widely, which suggests that no one developmental activity was considered extremely beneficial, despite several activities (such as local authority provision and conferences/seminars) emerging as prominently used.

There were also statistically significant differences among respondents. Perhaps unsurprisingly, academy heads were least likely to make reference to local authority provision. Primary heads were the most likely. Secondary school heads were more likely than other heads to refer to 'other commercial provision' and 'conferences and seminars' as among their three most effective CPD activities. Heads of schools with high percentages of FSM-eligible students were least likely to tick 'induction programmes' as one of their three most effective development activities.

Skills and qualities to be developed

All three groups of survey respondents – headteachers, middle/senior leaders and chairs of governors – were asked to reflect on the leadership skills and qualities they most needed to develop over the next 18 months (see Table 7.6 and Table 7.7).

For headteachers, development needs often reflected what they had identified as their most significant leadership challenges (see chapter 4). Resulting development needs included ‘strategies for closing attainment gaps’ (49 per cent), ‘developing future leaders for succession planning’ (46 per cent), ‘leading curriculum change and innovation’ (46 per cent), ‘modelling excellence in the leadership of teaching and learning’ (37 per cent) and ‘forming partnerships with schools and agencies to improve outcomes’ (37 per cent). (It is noted that only a quarter of headteachers highlighted ‘managing finances and premises’ as a skill area that needed to be developed despite financial and budgeting issues being the leadership challenge most frequently mentioned by heads.)

A number of statistically significant differences emerged among respondents. Headteachers from schools graded ‘outstanding’ and those with the lowest proportion of FSM-eligible students were less likely to refer to ‘strategies for closing attainment gaps’ and ‘engaging with parents and the local community’ as a development need. Heads of schools graded ‘outstanding’ and ‘good’ were also least likely to refer to ‘modelling excellence in the leadership of teaching and learning’ and ‘marketing your school’. Heads of ‘outstanding’ schools, however, as well as heads of special schools, were more likely than others to refer to ‘providing services or support to other schools or organisations’ as a skill that required development.

Primary school heads were most likely to refer to ‘developing personal resilience’, ‘strategies for leading professional development’ and ‘purchasing services from a range of suppliers’. Head of special schools/PRUs were most likely to refer to ‘analysing and interpreting student data and information’, ‘implementing change and improvement successfully’ and ‘developing future leaders for succession planning’. Interestingly, heads from schools with the highest proportion of FSM-eligible students were least likely to refer to ‘strategic thinking and scanning to anticipate trends’.

Table 7.6: Leadership skills and qualities most needed over next 18 months (headteachers and senior/middle leaders)

Which, if any, of the following leadership skills and qualities do you think you most need to develop over the next 18 months?	Headteachers %	Middle/senior leaders &t
Strategies for closing attainment gaps	49	52
Leading curriculum change and innovation	46	46
Modelling excellence in the leadership of teaching and learning	37	41
Forming partnerships with schools and agencies to improve outcomes	37	33
Implementing change and improvement successfully	33	38
Strategic thinking and scanning to anticipate trends and political agendas	29	36
Marketing your school	28	23
Developing an entrepreneurial ethos within your school leadership	28	21
Analysing and interpreting student data and information	26	40
Developing personal resilience	25	24
Knowing your legal responsibilities as a school leader	24	34
Developing a learning culture and organisation community	22	13

Using learning theories and pedagogies to influence teaching	22	22
Engaging and building effective relations with parents and the community	19	20
Strategies for leading professional development	13	21
Adapting your leadership style to the school's culture and needs	12	17
Developing effective project management skills	9	13
Developing interpersonal skills	4	9
No response	4	3
Total %	100	100
N =	833	769
<p>Note: More than one answer could be put forward so percentages may sum to more than 100.</p> <p>The percentages in this table are weighted by school type and student FSM eligibility.</p> <p>From a filter question: all those who ticked 'yes' to undertaking professional development activity specific to their leadership role</p> <p>Source: NFER and IOE leadership survey for the National College, 2012</p>		

Middle/senior leader respondents were also asked to identify the leadership skills and qualities that they most needed to develop over the next 18 months (Table 7.6). There was a range of responses but no particular activity was dominant. The most common response related to 'leading curriculum change and innovation' (46 per cent), followed by 'modelling excellence in the leadership of teaching and learning' (41 per cent). Interestingly, while there are overlaps between the headteacher, chair of governor and middle/senior leader responses, each subtly accords to its own domain. For example, there was a stronger emphasis on teaching, learning and pupil outcomes with middle/senior leaders, who typically have a more direct role within these than headteachers or governors. Those responsibilities and roles that are shared by all school leaders (for example, Ofsted inspections), as expected, appear to be valued and considered by chairs of governors, headteachers and middle/senior leaders alike.

In terms of leadership development for chairs of governors, 88 per cent reported that they had a budget for school governor training, and 73 per cent said their school had carried out a governor skills audit within the last 18 months. When asked to identify the skills and qualities they considered most necessary to develop (a slightly different list of skills and qualities was used in the questionnaire for chairs of governors – see Table 7.7) the highest percentage (60 per cent) was 'building the capacity of the governing body and developing skills and confidence'. A majority also referred to 'how to prepare for the new Ofsted inspection framework' (57 per cent), which corresponds with the expected challenges over the next 18 months identified by chairs of governors (see chapter 5). As with headteachers, only a quarter of chairs of governors (25 per cent) identified 'managing finances' as an area of development, despite this being highlighted as an expected challenge by 34 per cent of chairs of governors (see chapter 5).

Table 7.7: Leadership skills and qualities most needed over the next 18 months (chairs of governors)

Which, if any, of the following skills and qualities do you think you most need to develop for yourself over the next 18 months?	%
Building the capacity of the governing body; developing skills and confidence	60
How to prepare for the new Ofsted inspection framework	57
Developing partnerships with other schools and agencies to improve outcomes	51
Overseeing change and improvement successfully	46
Supporting the development of effective relations with parents and the community	42
Strategic thinking and scanning to anticipate future trends	42
Monitoring the development of leadership succession planning	40
Understanding and interpreting student data and information	36
Knowing about key decisions in transitioning to academy status	29
Managing the performance of the headteacher	28
Marketing your school	28
Knowing your legal responsibilities as a school governor	26
How to challenge and ask the right questions	26
Managing finances	25
Monitoring special educational needs provision	20
Managing pupil performance and the curriculum	19
Managing teacher performance	16
Developing an effective relationship with your headteacher/principal	15
Understanding effective strategies for managing pupil behaviour	14
Managing human resources	13
Managing health and safety	10
Managing premises	9
No response	1
N = 347	
<p>Note: More than one answer could be put forward so percentages may sum to more than 100.</p> <p>The percentages in this table are weighted by school type and student FSM eligibility.</p> <p>Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100.</p> <p>Source: NFER and IOE leadership survey for the National College, 2012</p>	

Chairs of governors were also asked to reflect, in an open-ended question, how, if at all, the strategic (SLT and governor) leadership of their institution could be improved (see Table 7.8). The main focus of responses was on governor needs – for more time/funded time/opportunities; for more training; for more involvement and skills development. Where chairs of governors noted there was room for improvement or change was needed, representative comments included:

[The need for] more training for strategic thinking and improving the quality of volunteers. Finding a way to enable good meetings to take place at a time staff and volunteers could make without being too onerous on either.

There are too many demands on governors’ time: many requirements change quite quickly over time, and many are of secondary importance. There needs to be a clearer prioritisation of what governors should do so that they can concentrate on key strategic issues.

Finally, interview and case study participants commonly reflected on leadership succession challenges and the lack of appetite on the part of staff to take on senior leadership and headship roles. Although this was not always the case in their own schools, many heads commented that this was frequently across their wider networks. Staff were reported to be ‘turned off’ by increasing expectations and accountability. An exception to the general picture was provided by a headteacher in an inner urban area, who had recruited staff from the Future Leaders and Teach First programmes, and who reported ‘no concerns at all’ about the future of leadership and on the calibre of staff recruited through these accelerated routes.

Table 7.8: Improvements to strategic leadership – (chairs of governors)

How, if at all, could strategic (SLT and governors) leadership in your institution be improved?	%
More time/opportunities for the SLT and governors to meet/work/train together	8
Governors need more/funded time for their commitment	5
Governors need more training/to develop more expertise to lead the school forward	11
Governors need more involvement in key roles (eg monitoring and evaluating)	6
Governing body needs to comprise skilled/motivated people	5
N = 347	
Note: From an open-ended question where more than one answer could be put forward Only responses given by 5 per cent or more of respondents are presented in the table. The percentages in this table are weighted by school type and student FSM eligibility. Source: NFER and IOE leadership survey for the National College, 2012	

To plan for succession, headteachers more commonly reported building this into their way of working with a general preference for ‘growing their own’. This often began at recruitment, with time invested to select high-quality teachers with leadership potential and by asking about leadership ambitions at interview. Performance management was also used - ‘we always ask staff where they want to be in five years’ - and aspirations identified through performance reviews were commonly said to be supported through development opportunities. Examples specifically mentioned included providing for:

- opportunities to take responsibility within the school, eg through bursaries, rotating subject co-ordination and/or giving responsibility for leading curriculum initiatives
- staff to work alongside or support other schools, in leadership roles or as an AST, with the new SLE role being mentioned in some cases
- leadership provision through external providers, such as National College programmes or local variants
- courses provided by other national training networks
- visits to other schools to see good practice
- an accreditation route for support staff, to provide a ladder of opportunity
- opportunities to gain a Master’s, eg school-based programmes delivered by HE institutions

It was considered important that, alongside real opportunities to take a lead responsibility, coaching and support were also available. New opportunities, such as those offered by the school becoming a teaching school were also seen to provide new ways in which to develop the leadership skills of staff.

On the appeal of leadership, headteachers themselves were still often of the view that it was the best job in education but they were less certain about the future direction headship was taking, given recent policy developments. Headship had often been seen as 'a work of passion' but some heads were no longer sure whether it was as alluring and appealing as before. Heads were often currently seen as being very vulnerable, particularly in relation to the new Ofsted framework which presents challenges at all levels: whether you are a leader of a 'poor' or an 'outstanding' school. Others saw the role of head as becoming increasingly like that of a chief executive officer of a business, and commented that "that's not what I went into leadership to do". Chains and federations were also commonly seen to be taking over the role of the local authority, a development not all welcomed. As has been discussed, this also had implications for the sources of support available to heads and other school leaders.

Case study 6: Continuing development of leadership skills and capabilities

A special school serving children with severe and profound learning difficulties and/or physical difficulties across the 3-19 age range was graded outstanding in its most recent Ofsted inspection (2011). Of significance is the progress that children make throughout each key stage of their schooling here. The current headteacher has been a serving headteacher for 32 years and has a track record in teaching excellence and has regularly published work on teaching in his specialist area. He regards the whole workforce as key to the school's success, with frontline reception staff for example fundamental to strong relationships and communications with parents, and a raft of agencies who engage with the school.

The school grows its own talent via graduate teacher training and entry points for newly qualified teachers. The school also offers initial teacher training placements. As a teaching school, it has an established relationship with local HE institutions and they have collaborated to develop a deeper SEN offer for initial teacher trainees, including the majority who go on to engage with SEN in mainstream settings.

Across the staff there is a commitment to grounding leadership and learning in the needs of students. The headteacher in particular identified the school improvement partner, chair of governors and external consultants as key sources of advice and challenge in grounding the school's efforts in this direction. Other staff also express commitment to development through a variety of means including contact with external consultants who offer support relevant to their context in areas such as coaching and mentoring; and in-house support from the AST in the form of modelling and trialling methods as well as the use of performance management and target-setting. Rolling observations, review of the teaching and learning policy, engagement with specialist agencies that frequently come into school and reading were further ways in which professional learning and leadership of learning were enhanced within the school. Short courses in areas such as neuroscience, payment by results and models for change were consistently sought out to prepare staff to better meet the needs of students and also prepare staff for important external developments such as marketisation. The inclusion of industry figures on the governing body had been key to maintaining a high level of ambitious bidding and fundraising, financial competence and effective financial management. The small SEN advisory team was also viewed as an important area of support in terms of wider policy awareness and curriculum change.

Summary

Just over 4 in 10 headteachers had plans to stop or had already stopped using services provided by their local authority despite local authority provision emerging as the most effective/beneficial activity. A large majority – nearly 9 out of 10 – identified their local authority as a current source of external support, with just over one-half citing it as one of the three most important sources but only 3 in 10 stating that it would remain as important over the next 18 months. Headteachers recognised their local authority as an effective and beneficial service, but they also appear to be diversifying support by forming partnerships or alliances to facilitate and sustain aspects of the local authority improvement services.

Heads of schools with an Ofsted judgement of 'outstanding' or 'good' were least likely to refer to NLEs or LLEs, whilst those from 'outstanding' schools were more likely to refer to the National College and the Schools Network (previously SSAT) as sources of support and advice. Secondary heads were less likely to mention

SIPs or local authorities, and most likely to mention professional associations as probable sources of external advice and support in 18 months' time.

The survey indicated that 90 per cent of headteachers had undertaken some form of CPD activity specific to their leadership role within the last 3 years. Of these, the highest percentage (86 per cent) participated in activities provided by their local authority. The three most effective or beneficial CPD activities on heads' own development were local authority provision, attending conferences/seminars and leadership programmes or courses. Mentoring/coaching from others and networks, both face to face and virtual, were also noted as beneficial developmental activities. However, the wide range in responses suggests that no one CPD activity was considered extremely beneficial across middle/senior leaders or headteachers. Headteachers reported their greatest CPD need to be for 'strategies for closing attainment gaps' and 'developing future leaders for succession planning'. They also identified 'leading curriculum change and innovation'; 'modelling excellence in the leadership of teaching and learning'; and 'forming partnerships with schools and agencies to improve outcomes' consistently as being areas for CPD.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

This final chapter briefly considers the implications of the main research findings for the future direction and priorities of school and academy leadership and the National College.

School leadership demographics

The earlier PwC (2007) study noted improvements in leadership quality since the mid-1990s, but demography and succession planning continue to be challenges. The extent of demographic change has been examined using existing data sets, especially the School Workforce Census (SWC), and the dynamics of leadership supply and demand, including the labour market across regions, contexts and school phases, have been explored. Several issues were flagged from the analysis of the quantitative data sets which have implications for the National College. These include:

- ongoing succession challenge, with almost a third of all heads aged 55 or over
- smaller proportions of women that make it into each stage of senior leadership
- greater propensity for male teachers to make long-distance (ie regional) geographic job moves in order to achieve promotion, with female teachers choosing to make far greater use of internal promotions
- the fact that teaching continues to remain a largely White profession, with 90 per cent of teachers and 95 per cent of headteachers reporting they are of a White ethnic background. Where found, ethnic minority teachers tend to cluster in schools where pupils share their own ethnic background. Once the age and sex of teachers are taken into account, it is still the case that ethnic minorities are substantially under-represented on SLTs

The teacher labour market is segmented with relatively little movement between geographic regions or even between school governance types. Senior leadership posts are far more segmented both regionally and by governance than classroom teacher posts, and senior leaders may be constrained geographically by family and other considerations, compared to the relatively younger pool of classroom teachers. The data suggests that particular types of schools have very strong preferences for senior leaders who share a religion or school type.

The last significant demographic issue raised through the analysis of the various data sets concerns the turnover of acting and deputy heads. The data suggests a reduction of such posts and a degree of 'blocking' of promotional opportunities. Turnover of such posts is important to ensure a pool of applicants for headship going forward to prevent possible future shortages. Turnover may also be affected by the range of other posts available to heads, including any further development of the executive head grade. Heads from 7 per cent of schools retire each year, some taking early retirement, and about 2,000 new headships are advertised annually. The implications for succession planning are important.

Responding to policy and other changes

The survey data and the data collected through interviews show that a diverse picture has arisen involving a complex pattern of change, and at times, differential responses and effects throughout the system. Overall, there was a high level of confidence in managing current change. Most headteachers (84 per cent), middle/senior leaders (84 per cent) and chairs of governors (86 per cent) felt their school had the confidence to manage current policy changes. There was also, however, a diverse range of opinions on the aims and the potential impact of policy.

The data captured the situation at a particular point in time - a snapshot of a changing educational landscape - but since that time there have been several important policy developments (eg Ofsted framework, national curriculum), and academisation proceeds at pace with 2,373 academies in place at October 2012.

The data that has emerged throughout the 12-month study highlights that national policy changes have at times seen a range of responses; key differentials include school phase, with substantial differences emerging between primary and secondary sectors. Secondary headteachers were more receptive to the notion of autonomy than their primary counterparts. The vast majority of academy headteachers were positive about autonomy as compared to only half of community school headteachers. Academies – both sponsored and converter – tend to report little discomfort with the current landscape, having already embraced issues around school structure and organisation that are key to the autonomous or self-improving school improvement policy agenda. Primary schools have consistently been reported as the least ready to take advantage of policy initiatives, particularly in terms of social and material capacity. Primary schools also tend to report deeper and more frequent challenges within the current landscape.

On approaches to managing policy change, four main clusters of headteachers emerged:

- Just over a fifth of headteachers (22 per cent) were strongly positive about current policy and were actively pursuing new autonomies and system leadership roles.
- About a third (34 per cent) were more cautious about engaging with policy while being moderately positive about its potential impact.
- Another third (32 per cent) were less positive, more apprehensive and hesitant about engaging with new policy opportunities, especially around school autonomy.
- The smallest group, about 1 in 8 headteachers (12 per cent), viewed policy negatively and were relatively sceptical about its intentions and potential impact.

While there was a relatively even spread of headteachers (by school type, phase, Ofsted category and context/FSM band) across the four classes, there were more academy principals (both primary and secondary) and headteachers of ‘outstanding’ secondary schools in the first cluster: those most positive about and actively engaged in the new opportunities created by policy.

Overall, partnership and collaboration were viewed most positively but reforms to the inspection framework and curriculum change were perceived more negatively.

In terms of implications, the research suggests that confident heads mediate policy and make professional judgements to ensure that it is in the best interests of their schools and the students. The manner in which schools respond to change reflects both their particular state of readiness to meet policy change, as well as the convergence between national policy intentions and local vision. For example, most school leaders throughout the study were highly receptive to opportunities for partnership and collaboration. However, tensions such as mistrust, time pressures and the privileging of being deemed ‘outstanding’ by Ofsted were seen to undermine opportunities.

At the inception of the research it was clear that a range of issues (ie curriculum, accountability, collaboration and competition, autonomy and funding) were at play. This endured throughout the research and in some ways the complexity deepened as further changes were introduced or proposed. There has been continuing policy movement in fundamental areas such as major curriculum and qualification reviews, multiple revisions to the inspection framework, the special needs green paper and a review of alternative provision which will affect the whole system as well as reforming particular dimensions of it.

The major systemic change to the role of local authorities has also played into this picture and brought a convergence of national, district-level and local change issues. Inevitably, some schools have felt able to embrace the agenda, particularly those already used to partnership working and autonomous action, whilst others have faltered, particularly those with little history of collaboration and autonomous activity.

New leadership models, trends and innovations

The review of literature included in this research report explored three earlier and major reviews of the school leadership landscape, the first conducted over a decade ago. It reviewed the work of school leaders and particularly explored the evidence on the indirect but profound effect that leaders have on student outcomes and the actions leaders take to establish and support leadership for learning. The key role of middle leaders continues to be emphasised, especially as leaders of teaching and learning. The influence of external factors, such as context, accountability and the quasi-market, were also acknowledged. Sustained

trends were recognised in the movement towards intensification of leadership and distribution of leadership within schools. The research data demonstrated that most schools continue to retain a traditional structure of a single headteacher and a wider leadership team. The intensification of leadership in relation to the leadership of learning in particular, and the broadening of SLTs were borne out in the research data. It is clear that there has been a rapid increase in conversion to academy status in 2011/12 and this has continued. The implications of these findings should be reflected in training and development opportunities, especially for middle leaders.

New forms of leadership and governance

It may be that new forms of leadership and governance are needed. Throughout the research, effective and proactive financial management emerged as a fundamental criterion for leading a school, particularly in autonomous contexts. In response, one-half of heads, especially secondary heads, reported having appointed a school business manager or bursar for a year or more and it was increasingly common for this role to form part of the senior team. Primary school heads were more likely to report that there were no current plans to do this, and this was usually attributed to financial constraint. In the absence of a specialist on the SLT, and with a continuing contraction of local authority support, this is a primary competence for school leaders.

The capacity to forge and sustain partnerships was viewed as an increasing necessity for the headteacher, senior team and middle leaders to engage and lead effectively among a range of partners. Governors, and chairs of governors in particular, were also expected to network with other governing bodies and governance stakeholders. Again, there are implications for training and development.

Maintaining a strategic and operational balance

The extent to which school leaders successfully maintain a strategic and operational focus formed a concern within this review and previous major reviews. Some matters have remained relatively unchanged. Heads and other school leaders are still likely to say that they spend 'too much time' on administration and 'not enough time' on the leadership of teaching and learning. Heads commented particularly on the pressure of increasing accountability and struggled to include sufficient time to plan strategically both individually and with senior teams. It is still a 'balancing act' as to how much time to spend working with and supporting other schools and partnerships as well as keeping a focus on maintaining success in one's own institution. This is a key challenge to the new agenda and is further complicated in various small school contexts such as rural schools, special schools and alternative provision institutions where the headteacher has a high teaching load.

To help balance strategic and operational demands on leadership time, a large proportion of all headteachers (89 per cent) said they had encouraged and enabled other teachers to contribute to school leadership and just over three-quarters of headteachers (78 per cent) had delegated or further embedded more strategic responsibilities across the senior team. More than three-quarters (79 per cent) of chairs of governors felt that they should play a major role in strategic leadership, whereas only 46 per cent felt they actually did play a major role. However, this percentage was much higher than in the initial baseline study a decade ago and the College's recent focus on the training of chairs of governors and the introduction of national leaders of governance (NLGs) should improve the situation further.

Support, training and development of school leaders

Currently, the local authority and the school improvement partner (the latter no longer statutory) were reported to be the two most significant sources of external support. It is these two sources, however, that headteachers expected to see in the greatest decline over the next 18 months. While this decline is broadly similar to the increase in support expected from elsewhere, many headteachers predicted that they will be using providers that few schools currently use or consider important. This suggests not only greater diversity in support but also uncertainty as schools move away from the known and the well used. This has important implications for, among other things, ensuring that schools are aware of appropriate and high-quality sources of support.

As far as services provided by local authorities is concerned, 4 out of 10 headteachers had stopped or intended to stop using these services. A majority of heads (69 per cent), however, also reported that they were already or planned to collaborate with other schools to fund aspects of the local authority improvement service to ensure specific services were sustained. Teaching schools and teaching school alliances (TSAs) are important within the current policy framework and potential sources of support, yet 70 per cent of headteachers had no current plans to participate formally in a TSA and 61 per cent had no plans to work informally with a teaching school. This picture could well change as the number of teaching schools increases.

The vast majority of headteachers engaged in regular CPD and had undertaken some form of CPD activity specific to their leadership role within the last three years. The figure was lower for middle/senior leaders and may be a cause for concern. For heads, the three most effective or beneficial CPD activities on their own development were local authority provision, attending conferences/seminars and leadership programmes or courses. Also of benefit appeared to be mentoring/coaching from others and networks, both face to face and virtual. However, the wide range in responses suggests that no one developmental activity was considered extremely beneficial across middle/senior leaders or headteachers.

Heads reported their greatest professional development need to be for 'strategies for closing attainment gaps' and 'developing future leaders for succession planning'. They also identified 'leading curriculum change and innovation'; 'modelling excellence in the leadership of teaching and learning' and 'forming partnerships with schools and agencies to improve outcomes' consistently as areas in which CPD was required.

Implications of the findings for the future direction of leadership

The complexity of the role of headteacher, and leadership in general, has increased, with consequent demands on capacity. At this stage the school landscape is complex and uneven and there are signs that potential faultlines could begin to emerge between leaders across school phase and across Ofsted categories. The dual needs to both harness internal capacity and develop effective partnerships are essential for schools having to navigate numerous national policy changes within their own different contexts.

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Appendix: School Workforce Census

The School Workforce Census (SWC) is statutory return of information on all staff from local authorities, state-maintained schools and academies in England. The new census was designed to be the Department for Education's primary source of school workforce data, replacing several other exercises such as Form 618g, the school workforce element of the pupil-level school census, and the secondary school curriculum and staffing survey. By introducing this single-data collection process, the DfE aims to collect information on school workforces in a more consistent, timely and accurate manner.

The unit of observation is an individual role, so for example an individual who is a teaching assistant and a lunchtime assistant will have two observations in the data. A minority (0.5 per cent) of teachers in the SWC report having more than one role, either in the same or in different schools. Across leadership positions, almost all senior leaders have a single position that is reported in the SWC.

The census was first taken in November 2010 and this is the first year in which the census has included all state-maintained schools. The second round of the SWC was conducted in November 2011 and will continue to take place every November henceforth. The 2011 round of the full SWC had around one million observations from primary, secondary and special schools, including information on 438,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers and 219,800 FTE teaching assistants.

The census includes contract information such as start and end date, hours worked, annual pay and all roles an individual has within a school (eg teacher, head of department, lunchtime supervisor etc), as well as an indicator of whether the member of staff is employed by the local authority or the school they are working at. It also includes personal characteristics such as date of birth, gender and ethnicity. The data includes an indicator of whether a teacher has attained qualified teacher status (QTS); information on other qualifications such as subject studied and the level of the qualification (degree, PGCE etc), and information on the amount of time spent in the classroom teaching each subject. In addition to the individual-level data, aggregate counts are also available at the school level for teacher vacancies, occasional teachers and support staff employed through agencies or third-party providers. For a sample of secondary (academy) schools, information is also collected on the curriculum taught by teachers to pupils in years 7-13. This curriculum data is currently only available for approximately 70 per cent of the schools.

An important improvement to the November 2011 SWC is the collection of FTE hours in respect of non-classroom-based support staff. The absence of this information previously meant that the FTE figures for this group of employees were estimates and many support staff were double-counted in situations where they were employed in more than one post. In addition to this, pay and qualifications data in the 2011 census was collected for all staff for whom an individual record is required. This is the first time such information has been collected for other categories of support staff.

An overview of the data on teachers in the SWC is available in DfE (2011).

Note of caution

Although this is a census, the data is not complete and it is not always possible to use the teacher numbers to link teachers across the two years accurately. In total, there are 478,960 teachers in the November 2011 data set, but 72,224 of these cannot be found in the 2010 dataset, implying that 15 per cent of the workforce appears for the first time or returns following a break from the sector. Similarly, over 15 per cent of the 2010 workforce cannot be re-identified in the 2011 data. These rates are far higher than those in previous data sets, implying a misidentification across years for around 6 per cent of all teachers.

In the SWC it is possible that some unexpected findings (eg leadership structures) may simply be the result of misclassification of teachers to posts. For example, within the sample, 496 headteachers are not the highest paid person calling themselves a headteacher within their own school, so some of these may be wrongly classified, eg head of house posts that do not report directly to the governing body and so should more properly be classified as deputy heads. Data reliability is particularly low for middle and other management positions in schools, such as finance managers/bursars, heads of department or years, and special needs co-ordinators. For example, it seems highly unlikely that nearly one-third of secondary schools have no heads of year/departments; nor that so many secondary schools have no employee responsible for finance or financial assistance; nor that the majority have no SEN co-ordinators.

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