

The Recruitment and Retention of Headteachers in Scotland

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What prompts teachers to seek to become head teachers and what barriers do they face? What do head teachers think about their role? What keeps them in post and what might make them leave or change direction? This paper reports on a research study in Scotland between 2007 and 2009 designed to answer these questions. Surveys and interviews with headteachers, depute heads and teachers reveal the demanding nature of the job and the range of disincentives to assuming the role of 'the ultimate Mr, (or Mrs) Fixit'. The visibility of the role, the long hours, the toll on personal and family life were all powerful deterrents for classroom teachers, while depute heads were reluctant to move out of the comfort zone for little extra salary. Despite the emotional costs, serving headteachers balanced the cost with the rewards of seeing children learn and grow, often in the most unpropitious circumstances. The finding that the socio-economic status of the community served by the school was not a deterrent to recruitment is significant in a comparative international context.

Background and purpose of the study

The study, funded by the Scottish Government in December 2007, was commissioned to make recommendations concerning the recruitment and retention of headteachers in Scotland and to provide systematic evidence as to incentives and disincentives to assuming headship and the 'satisfiers' and 'dissatisfiers' of those in post.

The background to the study was a growing international concern, referred to in some of the extensive literature as 'a crisis'. Aspirants' difficulties with processes of selection is a finding common to studies in a number of countries as is the phenomenon of 'career deputies' - people who did not want the responsibility of leading a school. A 2004 study in England for the National College of School Leadership (NCSL) reported that only 43 per cent of prospective heads had taken up headship positions five years after graduating. In Scotland, Cowie (2005: 402-3) showed that candidate attrition in the SQH occurred overwhelmingly for reasons unrelated to the programme itself: a third of candidates dropped out when they were promoted to headships, and about 40 per cent withdrew because of workload demands and changed domestic circumstances. Data such as these, paralleled in other countries, mean that the existence of a pool or a pipeline of eligible recruits offers no guarantee of headteacher vacancy replenishment. In New York State, for example, Papa *et al.* (2002) reported that, even though there may be as many (or even more) individuals possessing principal certification as there are incumbent principals, when insufficient numbers of these people apply for vacancies, supply falls short of demand. Similar data have been reported in Ontario (Williams, 2003), while in Queensland Cranston (2007) found that potential principals who were currently deputies were more than likely to be highly satisfied with their current roles and felt no compulsion to seek promotion.

The Scottish context

The Scottish school system may be characterised as a vertical relationship of schools, local authorities and government with each layer defined by the nature of decision-making, its scope, authority and impact. It is within the interplay of this tripartite relationship that many

of the challenges and potential solutions to the recruitment and retention of headteachers are to be found.

Local management of schools has taken a different form in Scotland than in other parts of the U.K. In their comparative study of governance in England and Scotland, Arnott & Raab (2000) discuss the key differences in the latitude for decision-making at school level. Due to the much stronger role of local authorities in Scotland and the weaker role of school boards (or councils) compared with governing bodies in England, local authorities in Scotland have continued to play a much more significant role in the interface between government and schools—delivering locally, while contributing to the shaping and achievement of the Scottish Government’s strategic objectives. Since 2008 flexibility for local level decision-making has been increased by Single Outcome Agreements which give authorities a key role in establishing priorities and leading improvement.

Using the primary sector as an index and as the source of the most available data, the average number of applications for a headteacher post since May 2005 (from the 20 authorities who responded to an Association of Heads and Deputes of Scotland survey of primary headteacher recruitment) was 4.9. Of 336 vacancies 117 were re-advertised one or more times - a total of 149 re-advertisements.

The Research questions and methodology

The study was conducted by researchers from three universities: Cambridge, Glasgow and Edinburgh. The research questions were:

1. What prompts teachers to seek to become head teachers and what barriers do they face?
2. What do head teachers think about their role? What keeps them in post and what might make them leave or change direction?
3. What arrangements, approaches and policies have been adopted by local authorities and central government for succession planning, identifying early leadership potential and training and development?
4. Why do some teachers not aspire to headships and is there anything that could change their views?

The answers to these questions were obtained through two large national surveys, one a sample of headteachers and the other a sample of teachers. 1137 headteachers completed the survey (420 of these on-line)—a response rate of 41 per cent. The sample was virtually a perfect match with national data. 94% of respondents were serving heads and 6% were acting up. 29% had been heads in their current school for two years or less with the same percentage in their post for 11 or more years. 42% had been in post between three and 10 years. These surveys were followed up by interviews with the selection of a representative sample of heads (47) local authorities (10) non-aspirant deputes (30) and aspirant teachers/deputes (20).

Pathways to headship

In our survey sample 22% of heads had come through the Scottish Qualification for Headship (SQH). 48% had been previously been deputes while 34% had been acting heads. Length of time in an acting post was a critical factor in dissuading some non-aspirants, in part due to the lack of preparation for the role, the temporary status and uncertainty of the post. More

informal paths to headship were a self-determined career path; encouragement from influential others, assumption of headship by default rather than choice; and exposure to poor models of leadership, triggering a determination to do it better. Whatever the pathway the experience of being ‘the ultimate authority’ was a shock for which few heads or acting heads had been adequately prepared. In interview a common theme was ‘walking the tightrope of complex and multiple accountabilities’ (to authorities, teacher unions, parent councils, Her Majesty’s Inspectorate, the Scottish Government and parents), seen as in tension with the “direct accountability” to pupils and staff. The few who had the benefits of coaching and mentoring were extremely positive about their benefits and expressed a need for a continuing support of this kind.

Among the teacher sample only 2% were undertaking SQH with a further 5% intending to do so. A further 73% saying they had no intention of undertaking the qualification. The application and interview process for headship was cited in interview as an obstacle.

Leading a school: purpose and paradox

*A strong penchant for spinning plates and keeping them all up at the same time.
(Primary school depute headteacher)*

The overwhelming message from the research findings is that however challenging and stressful the task, leading a school is regarded as a privilege, a much valued opportunity to make a difference to the lives of children (cited by 88% of heads surveyed as ‘satisfying’ or ‘very satisfying’).

Data from the heads’ survey found that less than 2% of heads estimated that they worked less than 40 hours a week while the majority worked for over 50 hours. Nearly a quarter spent between 56-65 hours a week on school-related work and one in 10 said they worked up to or beyond 70 hours weekly, with around 2% citing as much as an 85 hour week. Very few heads were able to manage without a substantial volume of work carried out at home in evenings and at weekends. A few devised deliberate strategies for coping, such as rigid adherence to timetables such as always leave school at a set time, not working at night or at weekends and giving selective attention to e-mails. For many of those interviewed the all-consuming nature of a job was driven by a strong sense of vocationalism and self sacrifice.

Managing the balance between professional and personal life was a shared concern with a majority confessing to significant challenges in this respect - ‘The space I have to pursue personal interests and hobbies in my own time’ (76% were ‘very dissatisfied’ or ‘dissatisfied’). ‘The impact of the job on my life outside of work was cited by 72% of heads. 67% expressed concern as to ‘the impact of the job on my personal health and wellbeing’. Virtually all heads in interview emphasised the stressful nature of running a school although some admitted to some of those pressures being self generated. While 17% of heads surveyed expressed a lack of confidence in their ability to deal with stress, only 21% admitted to being ‘very confident’ in that regard.

Teachers’ perceptions of the head’s working week is a telling indicator, clearly playing a part in how they evaluate the attractiveness or unattractiveness of the headteacher job. In fact, teachers’ views of the heads’ working week fairly closely reflected those of heads themselves. However, asked to estimate time devoted to different areas within a typical week they perceived the job as one which demanded a large amount of time devoted to financial and

budgetary aspects, areas of responsibility they themselves were least confident about (only 12% attested to being 'very confident' in this respect), while giving the lowest rating to teaching and learning, the area that interested them most.

Responding to the same question a quarter of heads had no direct teaching commitment. 68% spent between three and 10 hours per week developing teaching and learning, and 66% spent the same amount of time managing curriculum. Building, budgeting, finance, absence cover: tasks which at one time consumed heads' time appear now to be mainly delegated. Lack of time to spend with children in classrooms was described as one of the most frustrating factors in the headteacher's role.

Factor analysis of the headteacher role produced two independent factors— *strategic leadership* and *personnel leadership*. The former encompassed planning, prioritising, timetabling and budgeting. It was the latter - the 'with-people' aspects - that was seen as most attractive to aspirants and headteachers alike, often counter-pointed in interviews with the burden of paperwork, typically viewed as excessive and often unnecessary. The survey could not anticipate the range of 'other' tasks mentioned by heads in interview, which encompassed a plethora of ad hoc tasks, sometimes in spite of health and safety strictures, sometimes because of them, undertaken in addition to dealing with contractors, window cleaners and roofers, patrolling the playground, lunch room and neighbourhood streets and monitoring buses and, as one head put it, being "a rottweiler at the school gates" to keep undesirables out and potential absconders in. These tasks were taken on because there was no-one to whom to delegate them and because, at the end of the day, it was heads who saw themselves as accountable for ensuring that they were attended to.

One of the most worrying concerns for heads was health and safety. Many of the routine tasks which they undertook, it was claimed, were in breach of rules, and were accomplished because janitors were not allowed to undertake them. Examples included changing light bulbs "at height" or attending to a minor fault in a boiler. Heads were aware that such actions could also land them in trouble because they cut across union agreements. The multiplicity of tasks and the range of roles assumed by heads were both a source of satisfaction and frustration. The power and responsibility of being "the ultimate Mister Fixit" allowed scope to drive change and realise their visions, except that along with the positives "the negative issues are all yours" as well, as one headteacher put it, thereby ensuring that the buck stops, "not hits you".

The description of headship as 'emotional work' is clearly merited by responses to the The vividness of the language used by heads in their interviews to describe the task of leading a school is testimony to the emotional nature of the work: "fire fighting", "battles", "murder", "ground down", "frazzled", "crumbling", "washed out", "being hammered", "getting kicked", "sucking people dry". At the same time "passion", "exhilaration" "commitment" and "pride" were recurring themes. One head described having "a love affair" with the school, another as having "an emotional relationship with the school" and another as "being married to the school". This deeply personal investment in their schools ("my school") tells the story of headship and explains why frustration looms so large in their accounts.

The emotionally demanding nature of the job was cited by 70%. 72% agreed that 'public grading of school performance' was a concern. 69% were 'very dissatisfied' or 'dissatisfied' with 'the protected management time I have to do the job of head teacher'. 72% expressed concern as to the impact of the job on their lives outside of work. 46% of heads cited the

loneliness of the job as a concern, mentioned frequently, and often with deep feeling in interviews both with heads and deputies for whom it was a signal disincentive. Support, networking and high degree of self-reliance may explain the 25% who said that loneliness was not a factor.

Multiple accountabilities, audits and reporting to a range of bodies were seen as primary factors in diverting heads from their valued priorities. Aspects of accountability were given third and fourth highest rating from a potential 20 dissatisfiers - 60% ‘very dissatisfied’ or ‘dissatisfied’ with ‘accountability demands of national inspections’ and 54% with ‘accountability demands of the local authority’ (see Table 1). The Government’s McCrone agreement which gave teachers a notional 22 and half hour teaching week was viewed negatively by senior managers because the pupil’s week was 25 hours so creating an extra ‘cover burden’ for already overworked senior managers. Limited discretion over staffing was a further source of contention for 53% of heads surveyed and proved to be a particularly sore issue in interviews with headteachers who had inherited incompetent staff from other schools by dictat of the local authority, so sometimes unbalancing the staff beyond the tipping point and creating new problems with pupil disaffection and discipline. Exposure to litigation also appeared to be an emerging issue.

Table 1: Satisfaction with Elements of Headship Role (%)

Elements	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Accountability demands of local authority	15.1	39.0	44.2	1.6
The amount of support provided to me by my employer	16.2	32.2	45.9	5.6
Current government policies	10.9	46.0	40.9	2.2
Accountability demands of national inspections	25.0	35.4	37.2	2.4

The satisfactions of headship

Analysis of the heads’ survey produced five satisfaction factors - Satisfaction with autonomy; with support and benefits; with efficacy; with influence on learning; and teaching support from senior management. One fifth said they had ‘considerable autonomy’, nearly half (45%) agreed to having ‘some autonomy’ while one third of Scottish heads professed to having ‘very little autonomy’. Five variables in particular proved to be highly significant as predictors of satisfaction with autonomy - the *degree* of autonomy; the *level* of support and benefits they felt they received; the *sufficiency* of support to carry out their job; *opportunities* and support for professional development; heads’ general level of *concern* about the headship role.

A number of variables appear to play no part in heads’ satisfaction with autonomy. These include school demographic variables, personal demographic variables and personal qualifications. Thus, satisfaction with autonomy is primarily determined by conditions within the control of the head, the local authority, the Scottish Government and the interplay among those three loci of decision-making. The nature of this interplay is the key to maintaining the balance which may tilt in one direction as events conspire to reduce or increase satisfaction. Multiplicity of demands, the urgency of implementation and the quality of local authority support prove to be significant determining factors in satisfaction or dissatisfaction with autonomy. Headteachers’ satisfaction with support and benefits was consistently rated highly

in respect of internal sources of support (colleagues) by comparison with other sources of satisfaction with external sources (local authorities and government). Heads welcomed a competent business manager where such a person existed, while others expressed a strong desire for such support.

Inspection could be either an affirming or a demoralising experience, but it was most resented when staff felt that the exposure was too public and that they and their schools had not been fairly represented, in a few cases despite recent changes to the nature of inspection.

Factor analysis of ten confidence items produced two discrete factors - *Leadership and management confidence* and *relational confidence*. It was in regard to the relational aspects – the ‘with people’ or emotional intelligence – that heads were in general most confident. Confidence in working with parents was expressed by 98% of heads and building bridges with community agencies by 97%. In turn 81% of heads were ‘satisfied’ or ‘very satisfied’ with ‘the amount of support provided by my school’s parents’. The dissatisfaction expressed by the 19% of heads with regard to parents was, however, a source of stress and a small minority of parents could have a highly disproportionate impact on the work of headteachers and the life of the school.

Some heads in highly challenging neighbourhoods described the “heartbreak” of children’s lives in very disadvantaged neighbourhoods where the term “family” was a misnomer and where instability the only constant. Citing a catalogue of mental health problems, substance, alcohol and drug abuse, parents in prison, children with Foetal Alcohol Syndrome, and “real poverty, real poverty”, one headteacher spoke of a missing generation, what she referred to locally as the “widespread granny syndrome”:

A huge number of sole parent families, a lot of grans running the family because mum is, quote, ‘a waste of space, don’t talk to her, don’t speak to my daughter, she’s better off out of this life’. (Secondary school headteacher)

In areas marked by poverty, fractured family life and casual violence, care-taking could be demanding and “draining” work. Yet, a key finding from the headteacher survey was that the socio-economic context of the school was not a significant disincentive to seeking headship and in interviews heads often expressed satisfaction from the influence they could have on children’s lives and learning in disadvantaged areas.

Sources of support and advice

The source of advice which most influences career decisions is family, cited by just over half of all heads surveyed. The local authority was cited as the second most frequently consulted source of advice, although more intermittently (53.1% said ‘occasionally’), while 50.5% mentioned the Scottish Government as “occasionally” a source of influence.

Career decisions were ultimately most affected by family (cited by just over half of all heads). The local authority as a source of advice was significant but more intermittent. The relative lack of influence of deputies and parents’ councils is perhaps surprising. Opinion was evenly divided on the influence of professional associations. For two thirds of heads media reporting was seen as not influential but among the third who disagreed with that assessment it may be attributed to those schools being in the media spotlight.

For teachers, family and teacher colleagues' counsel weigh most heavily as sources of advice, with headteachers in third place. Government and local authorities received relatively few mentions despite their significant impact on teachers' day-to-day work.

Confidence about one's ability to cope appears to be related not only to the establishment in which one works, or to luck of the draw, but to age and experience of headship. Survey data suggest that it is both younger heads and older heads who are least concerned while the middle group (40-60) appears to be the most anxious, with a slightly diminishing level of concern as one grows older. A large majority of heads (78%) expected to be still in post in Scotland in the next two years while half of all respondents expected to be still in headship in Scotland five years on. 44% expected to be retired within five years. Over two thirds did not see those expectations as liable to change in the future. In 10 years time approximately 20 % will be still serving as heads or in other posts (local authorities or national bodies for which leadership experience is important). The higher number of male heads retiring may reflect a generational demographic - the predominance of male heads in the secondary sector.

Five coping strategies were identified - *dutiful compliance*, *cautious pragmatism*, *unruffled self confidence*, *bullish self assertion* and *defiant risk taking*. These may be seen as lying along a spectrum from compliance to self assertion and differing according to a range of experiences and the sense of agency which heads bring to that role. These five strategies, drawn from heads' accounts are descriptive of 'coping' rather than conscious or considered modeling of the role and therefore may actually act as disincentives for staff considering headship.

Local authority perspectives, policies and planning

You're not just joining this school you're joining the local authority.
(Secondary school headteacher)

Headteachers sometimes described themselves as middle managers, as so many of their decisions were circumscribed by the local authority. Although the government quote a figure of 90 % of the budget delegated to schools, this was, admitted local authority managers, a highly misleading as major financial decisions still lay with the authority, given staffing standards to be adhered to. For their part, the new 'Concordat' relationship with the Scottish Government offered local authorities greater scope to devise their own policies and set their own priorities, with 'less of a dictat' and 'pushing down the line' from the government.

Complaints about the cursory nature of interviews for headship posts (sometimes 20-30 minutes) was being addressed by some local authorities which were beginning to implement, more in-depth procedures for selection and preparation. Assessment centre approaches, including role play, group activities and in-tray exercises, were all possibilities envisaged by some senior members of authorities. Succession planning was also assuming a higher and more urgent profile among authorities. Such planning goes hand in hand with offers of early retirement so as to 'refresh the profession'. Authorities interviewed recognised the need for better structured pathways to headship, and the need for more sophisticated approaches to interviewing and selection as well as induction programmes such as 'Thinking about Headship?'. Secondments to other schools or to positions within the authorities were also ways of broadening the range of aspirants' experience and aptitudes.

Greater emphasis was being given among some authorities to ensuring more systematic and structured support for deputies in acting up positions and for an open door at senior level within authorities to respond to stresses experienced by acting up, as well as serving, heads. The importance of emotional and strategic support for serving heads, it was argued, would be one way of ensuring that adverse modelling of the job did not deter prospective applicants.

SQH and FRH (Flexible Routes to Headship) would continue to be important elements in preparing serving teachers for leadership positions. One senior officer, speaking not only for his own large authority but for others he was in touch with, claimed that it would now be very unusual for a head to be appointed in primary or secondary schools or special schools if they had not come through the SQH programme. While both qualifications are important in attenuating the sense of shock associated with taking on a new role, they will be insufficient without addressing some of the structural factors which make headship as demanding and stressful as so typically reported. It was acknowledged that authorities had perhaps been too slow in discrimination as to information required from heads and there was a suggestion that authorities could be more creative in slimming down demands.

There was recognition among authority officers of the benefit of coaching but there was a problem in finding enough coaches of sufficient quality, and despite a continuing demand for these services this was a first casualty of budget constraints. Forms of lateral collegial support were less vulnerable to financial strictures and heads' cluster groups were a much valued source of mutual and professional support.

Teachers' views of the future

Only 8% of teachers saw their eventual career destination as headteacher, although 14% aspired to depute head and 18% to principal teacher. 43% of those surveyed saw themselves remaining as classroom teachers with 26% becoming, or applying for, principal teacher. 6% aspired to depute headship and 3% hoped to become a chartered teacher (an initiative designed to keep good teachers in the classroom with enhanced salary); 3% said they would apply for a headteacher vacancy within that time period. 1% were in fact currently applying, 2% had applied in the past and were likely to do so again. A further 4% had applied in the past but did not envision applying again. Asked if their future employment expectations were likely to change 43% said 'highly unlikely' with a further 29% responding 'unlikely'. This left around a quarter of all teachers seeing change in the future as a possibility.

Advice from family and teacher colleagues tend to weigh most heavily, with counsel from headteachers in third place. Government and local authorities receive relatively few mentions, despite their significant impact on teachers' day to day work. Teachers interviewed were much less likely than heads to cite local authorities and government policies as a source of information or influence, however, given their little direct first hand contact with these sources. The 33% of teachers who 'never' or 'rarely' are influenced by their heads may be seen as a worrying statistic, reflecting the reluctance of many heads to encourage teachers to follow in their footsteps. An explanation for the 'very positive' 20% of teachers who sought headship advice, on the basis of evidence from interviewees, was that they had been encouraged, supported and 'trained' by their head, grooming the succession scrupulously and systematically.

In interview, disincentives to headships cited by serving deputies were: - distance from the classroom; workload and work life balance; budgeting and finance; paperwork; disciplinary

issues; managing staff absence; public speaking; lawsuits and litigation; interviewing new staff. The 'comfort zone' for non-aspirant deposes was explained by satisfaction with the scope and impact role of their position, the continuing contact with the classroom, the achievement of a reasonable work-life balance and the absence of the ultimate decision-making authority. The small salary differential between heads and deposes combined with apparent deterioration in life/work balance and working conditions all played their part in maintaining the role of career deposes. .

The "mysteries" of job sizing and the impact of the government's McCrone agreement on salary differentials were consistent themes among heads interviewed as well as local authority personnel. While there were comments from local authorities as to the flexibility offered by McCrone, the positives were seen as being considerably outweighed by views on the adverse effects of restructuring, 'perverse job sizing' and remuneration anomalies. The references in interviews to some principal teachers earning more than depute heads and some deposes earning more than some headteachers was a factor frequently cited as one of the disincentives to promotion.

Influencing the lives of children

Headteachers, teachers and deposes (aspirants and non aspirants) held one highly satisfying aspect of the job in common - the power to influence the lives of children, to be surprised by their hidden abilities and to raise expectations (particularly in areas of deprivation). The opportunity to work with children in a larger arena than the classroom, and to widen the scope of learning beyond narrow definitions of attainment, referred in many cases to performance in drama, sports, the choir, the chess team, the community initiative or award ceremonies. It was gratifying for school leaders to meet and chat with children in less institutional contexts, where time was less constrained, where relationships were more relaxed and status was not at issue,

The key to recognizing the sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, for recruitment and retention, means grasping where the tipping point lies, what pushes people towards other options or pulls them into headship. The tipping point lies primarily in the balance between the transparent pressures of a job and the coping strategies to deal effectively with those pressures. The reluctance among deposes to give up the rewards of teamwork and support enjoyed as deposes in exchange for the loneliness, accountabilities, work-life imbalance and incessant demands of headship is a rational decision in many circumstances.

For teachers still early in their careers, their aspirations, or lack of them, were determined to a large extent by the positive messages from those they looked to for advice and counsel. Asked whether they would recommend headship to a junior colleague, nearly a quarter of headteachers said they would not do so, with 34% of female heads unsure and 26% of male heads unsure. 42% of female heads said they would recommend the job, compared with 52% of males. These figures may well reflect the gender bias in primary and secondary and the amount of management and team support in secondary as against primary schools.

The metaphor of 'entering from the shallow end' suggests careful sequencing of opportunities for teachers or deposes to exercise responsibility, in the first instance with support, and then gradually assuming greater responsibility and independence. It was said in interview by some local authority officers that a single jump from depute or principal teacher to headship was responsible for the shock and ill-preparedness of many new heads, who

would have benefited from a more graduated approach. Some deposes had experience of only one school, one headteacher, or one socio-economic context. Prospective heads, it was suggested, would benefit from exposure to a wider range of styles and locales, including shadowing of experienced heads in different locations and situations, particularly with heads willing to mentor aspiring deposes. Short, medium and longer term secondment could follow while first appointments should also be in schools that help to build confidence:

Recognising where the pressure points lie, attenuating the dissatisfiers and enhancing the satisfiers, are responsibilities of system governance, exercised as a collaborative and reciprocal activity rather than what is widely perceived as one way traffic.

Issues for consideration

A number of ways of addressing the situation were identified:

Stronger articulation of the 'leadership agenda' and expectations of leaders, implying a reconfiguration of the role of the headteacher and proactive support from local authorities and central government. Once expectations and understandings about the role of headteachers shifted it would more likely that a wider range of appropriate candidates for headship would come forward.

Promotion of the Autonomy of Headteachers. A balance be struck between the level of scrutiny and directives from local authorities and government, and their role in offering support, guidance and promoting flexibility grounded in the professionalism of headteachers. Changes to what headteachers saw as the 'downward pressure' on accountability could not fully be realised without addressing the pressure on authorities themselves to keep within the boundaries of government policies.

Support for the Role of Headteachers. The support of coaches and mentors, where available, and the quality of mediation and support offered by QIOs in many local authorities were especially important for headteachers. Formally arranged cluster groups, informal meetings with fellow heads and other sources of information, encouragement and good ideas, such as *Heads Together* and *Deposes Together*, also played a critical role in sustaining commitment and motivation.

The Impact of HMIe Inspections on Headteachers' Confidence and Motivation. Stakeholders, including central and local government and professional associations needed to continue to work with HMIe to explore ways to address the concerns of headteachers and local authorities as to the approach of HMIe to accountability, ensuring that it reflected a 'more generous informed professional dialogue'.

Addressing Perceived Disincentives to seeking Headship. Most of the other pressures that acted as disincentives could be addressed through improved guidance, support, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and exemplary practice in strategic and personnel leadership.

Promoting Routes to Headship. While SQH and FRH will continue to be important elements in preparing serving teachers for headship, the importance of a graduated entry to the scope of the work and the range of challenges of headteachers remains critical, increasingly recognised by some local authorities which are developing various programmes to promote

leadership capacity and progression. However, in most authorities facing recruitment challenges a need remains to proactively and tactfully identify those who are the future leaders rather than simply relying on self-selection.

29 recommendations were suggested applying to local authorities, heads and prospective heads, school senior management teams and national policy makers. At the heart of these are ways of making the tripartite relationship (government, local authorities and schools) more collaborative and reciprocal through addressing channels of communication and support; structured pathways from classroom leadership to senior leadership; redressing the balance between satisfiers and dissatisfiers and the impact of these on incentives and disincentives in recruitment.

A shared concern

To what extent are these issues unique to Scotland? In what respects are these concerns commonly shared across country borders? Research elsewhere suggests that much is explained by a changing work profile, the changing character and intensification of professional life and a new social and economic world of schooling.

The sources of pressure are global in nature, rooted in competitive economics, changing patterns of family life and childhood, the virtual world of the internet where children ('digital natives') spend increasing amounts of time conjoined with demands on schooling to fill the gap left by the demise of other social, moral and religious agencies. The intensified demands on schools and headteachers in particular are explained in terms of the growing disparities in social capital (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1999) which children bring with them from home and neighbourhood (Wacquant, 2001).

In the world of 21st century schooling, argues Hess (2003:1), school leaders must be able to "leverage accountability and revolutionary technology, devise performance-based evaluation systems, re-engineer outdated management structures, recruit and cultivate non-traditional staff, drive decisions with data, build professional cultures, and ensure that every child is served." Unrelenting change is perhaps the most common theme here - less one of change *per se* than a need for heads' latitude and discretion to respond to the multiplicity of external demands.

The scale and nature of change is such that we have to recast the nature of leadership and recognise the incipient potential of many who would enjoy given more scope for initiative and invention. Distributing leadership is less a matter of design, says Jim Spillane (2007) than a question of perceiving where the exercise of leadership already lies, allowing it to 'bubble up', affirming and enhancing its latent potential.

And what about the heads who meet the challenges, refuse to compromise their integrity? Who refuse to allow excessive demands infringe on their home and family life? Who refuse to allow themselves and their colleagues to be burned out by the impatience of the urgent at the expense of the important? These are leaders who, in David Hargreaves' words, know how to 'fly beneath the radar'. He describes them in this way:

An extra-ordinary generation of some school leaders who have bucked the trend, who are not intimidated and oppressed by 'the centre' because with imaginative leaders and committed creative teachers they follow their best professional instincts... They've just

got on innovating and doing exciting things and running very good schools - exciting places for teachers and kids to be in. (David Hargreaves, 2009)

Scotland can learn from what is happening elsewhere in the world and measures that are being taken, unsuccessfully and successfully, to address those issues. Scotland may also have something significant to contribute to international understanding through the way in which it deals with issues of governance and participation within the tripartite relationship of schools, local authorities and national government.

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