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Towards Omnicompetence:
The Need for Effective School-Based
Preparation for Primary Headship

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ABSTRACT

Teachers are entering deputy headship and then deciding not to become headteachers. This is a double problem for the profession. Firstly, potential headteachers are being lost to that role, and secondly, career deputies block the route to headship and prevent ambitious deputies from getting that essential management experience that will effectively prepare them for headship.

In Bromley, where this study was carried out, some deputies are getting good advice and support from their headteachers, are given real leadership development opportunities and are going on to become effective headteachers. However, some deputies are given low grade tasks and do not receive the support and encouragement from their headteachers that will lead them towards headship. Finally, there are some deputies who, although in a supportive environment, have decided that headship is not for them.

Initially, a short survey of all primary schools in Bromley was conducted to gain an overall picture of deputy headship in Bromley. All schools were contacted to find out whether the deputy at the school was interested in becoming a headteacher at some stage in the future.

During a period of twelve weeks, eleven primary headteachers were interviewed together with a senior Local Authority adviser. The aim of the work was to gain a picture of the state of deputy headship in one London Borough and establish what experiences and opportunities were given to deputy headteacher to prepare them for headship.

This inquiry found that the majority of deputies in Bromley did not want to be headteachers and that their preparation experience differs greatly from school to school. The study suggests that deputies should be given the opportunities and experiences that will prepare them for headship. Information from the literature review, the survey and interviews are analysed to construct a model for effective preparation for headship and to make recommendations for improved practice.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Personal and Professional Context

My own experience as a deputy head in a primary school contrasts strongly with the experiences I try to provide for my deputy today. I was a deputy from 1988 to 1991, before NPQH (National Professional Qualification for Headship). My training for headship consisted of an eight-day course provided by the Local Authority. More importantly, my headteacher would not or could not provide me with the experiences that would enable an effective transition to headship. I did not realise the importance of the lack of training until I became a headteacher. I had a very steep learning curve, becoming personally responsible for the leadership and management of a whole institution without adequate training or even an understanding of the real role of a headteacher. I had to learn to manage a budget of half a million pounds without any financial management training; as well as oversee and manage the work of others, including the implementation of the new National Curriculum, management of the buildings and site, dealing with staff and personnel issues and forging effective working relationships with staff, pupils, governors and the Local Authority. I do not believe I realised the true extent of my role, responsibility and authority for a year or

more. This was a difficult time for me and, of course, meant that I could not be an effective headteacher immediately.

Once a headteacher myself, I resolved to ensure that my deputies received the experiences that would enable them to become effective headteachers at an earlier stage. My last deputy passed her NPQH training at my school and was given many opportunities and real responsibilities; giving her a true understanding of the headteacher's role. This support has enabled her to become an effective headteacher in her own school. (In Chapter 6 I describe this appointment in more detail). My current deputy has been accepted on the NPQH course and will follow the same programme at this school. We meet regularly and discuss issues related to the management of the school. In this large, three-form entry primary school, she has been given responsibility for managing the whole school curriculum and for monitoring, and evaluating planning throughout the school. These are major responsibilities that will give her an opportunity to develop and display the skills that will be needed once she becomes a headteacher herself.

In 1994, as part of my MA, I carried out some research to ascertain how headteachers were managing the change in their role since the 1988 Education Reform Act. This research included a survey of twelve headteachers. The replies to the section on training were surprising and for me, at the time, quite shocking. Headteachers responded with some anger that they had not been properly trained for the post, one voicing the sentiments of the others by stating 'I had to make it up as I went along' (Hayes, 1995). These comments were so strong that I shared them with my LEA adviser and was then asked by the Area Director of Education to extend the training part of my survey to all heads in the North West Kent area. At that time there was little or no training for heads and most of us had indeed made it up as we went along. For me it was a very difficult introduction to headship, particularly as my new school was in such poor condition when I took over as headteacher. Finance, buildings and curriculum in particular needed urgent attention and I had received little training to be able to carry out these tasks. My survey was used within Kent to begin to put together a programme of training for headteachers. However, this was shortly superseded with the introduction of 'Headlamp' (Headteachers Leadership and Management Programme), a national Government training programme for new

headteachers, and soon after the NPQH programme was introduced for deputy headteachers.

I now see the importance of training deputy headteachers for headship and in fact see the development of all staff as an essential part of my role as headteacher. I have been a headteacher at two primary schools for a total of fifteen years and whilst I have been a headteacher I have worked to promote this feature of my role. In June 2004 Ofsted inspected my school and in the report this aspect was discussed.

‘The headteacher devolves responsibility effectively, so that staff are enabled to fulfil their roles securely and develop professionally. At the same time he maintains a sensitive control and awareness of overall provision. He has a good working relationship with key senior staff and their roles are clearly defined.

‘The headteacher works well with the deputy heads. The non-teaching deputy provides strong support in developing monitoring, planning and assessment systems.

‘A very strong feature of the headteacher’s management style is his concern for the staff’s professional development, their training needs and career aspirations. This is a regular feature of his calendar, in addition to performance management, which is managed well. These systems link in closely with school development and teachers’ professional needs, and meet requirements effectively. Teachers have a clear view of their strengths and areas for development as a result’ (Ofsted, 2004).

The delegation of tasks, described in the first paragraph from the Ofsted report, is a necessary management tool; an essential element in the development of all staff and especially a deputy headteacher. The second paragraph notes the effective working relationship that Ofsted inspectors found existed between my deputies and me. I have two deputy headteachers, one ambitious and non-teaching and the other is a career deputy with a class responsibility. The last paragraph shows clearly that Ofsted found a commitment to the development of all staff in the school, both teaching and non-teaching.

A description of the appointment and development of a non-teaching deputy in my school, detailed later, gives evidence to the success of my approach to working with staff and especially deputy headteachers.

A doctoral study

This study can be read alongside the QAA (2001) descriptor for qualifications at the doctoral level. They state that doctorates are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

i. the creation and interpretation of new knowledge through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline and merit publication.

This is a unique study of deputy headship in Bromley. As a headteacher in Bromley, I have an understanding of the Borough and as a headteacher interviewing headteachers; I was able to gain an exclusive insight into the nature of headship and deputy headship; in particular, into the shortcomings of the present system of preparing deputies for headship. Its contribution to knowledge is to demonstrate the serious situation in Bromley with regard to the shortage of deputy headteachers prepared to become headteachers, the inconsistency in preparing deputies in primary schools and a need to establish a consistent framework that would be an entitlement that new deputy headteachers could expect. Also, I have highlighted the wider problem of headteacher recruitment. The impact of this research on professional practice would be that deputies will be given better opportunities to prepare them for headship.

ii. a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice.

The basis of this substantial body of knowledge has been accumulated over thirty years as a teacher and fifteen years as a headteacher. During the course of this study, knowledge of the role of the deputy headteacher and the headteacher have been extended and developed together with an understanding of the issues that make the move from deputy to head arbitrary and undeveloped.

iii. the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems.

This is shown by the construction of this study for the purpose of understanding the state of deputy headship in Bromley and by implication, deputy headship in England. Although many minor adjustments have been made to this project, for example the

adoption of a semi-structured rather than a structured interview and the project has naturally grown and developed, major changes in direction have not been necessary.

iv. detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

During the first two years of the EdD course, Research methods 1 and 2 have given EdD students a good understanding of the methods and techniques that can be used for academic research. The use of these methods have been refined and focused as this study began to take form.

The descriptor states that typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

a. Make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data and to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences.

The proposed ideal model and recommendations made at the end of the project represent informed judgements made following the collection and analysis of interview and survey data. During this study I have tried to create a balanced blend of data, professional experience and literature to produce a study that is readable, informative and purposeful.

b. continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas or approaches.

Further research is needed to investigate when and why career deputies decide not to become headteachers. This would be valuable because it may be possible to intervene at an early stage to ensure that deputies go on to headship. It may also be useful to find out if secondary schools have similar issues to primary schools.

And will have:

c. the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of professional responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent environments.

The skills acquired during the Ed.D programme and demonstrated by this project can be developed for further study and in other professional situations.

1.2 The Problem

Teachers are entering deputy headship and then deciding not to become headteachers. This is a twofold problem for the profession. Firstly, potential headteachers are being lost, and secondly, these deputies become 'sitting tenants' (Hayes, 2005)¹ blocking many of the routes to headship and preventing 'rising stars' from getting that essential management experience that will effectively prepare them for headship.

In Bromley, where this study was carried out, some deputies are getting good advice and support from their headteachers, are given real leadership development opportunities and are going on to become effective headteachers. However, some deputies are given low grade tasks and do not receive the support and encouragement from their headteachers that will lead them towards headship. This variable experience of deputies, also noted by Rutherford (2002) will affect the number of deputies who aspire to headship. Finally, there are some deputies who, although in a supportive environment, have decided that headship is not for them.

My view is that as a profession, we must ensure that rising stars are encouraged to become headteachers. In particular deputy headteachers must be given the leadership opportunities and the support that will enable them to fulfil the role of the headteacher.

Fortunately, many headteachers do realise the importance that the development of their deputy has to the profession and support their deputies into headship. However, this is not universal and I suggest that all deputies have an entitlement to good support within the school and to be effectively prepared for headship if that is their wish.

¹ The author was appointed as a Research Associate for the National College for School Leadership in April 2004. A summary of the resultant report, 'Rising Stars and Sitting Tenants', published in July 2005, was sent out to all schools in England and the full report was published on the NCSL website.

1.3 Preparation for Primary Headship

There is considerable anxiety about the decreasing number of applications for headteacher posts. Each year the number of applications for headships is monitored and the number of re-advertisements is continuing to rise. In January this year the TES noted that 'almost 1000 schools struggled to find a new headteacher last year as the number of posts advertised hit an all time high.' (Lepkowska, 2005) The major source of headteachers is, of course, deputy headteachers and if deputies decide not to become headteachers, there will be a breakdown in headteacher supply. Last year Professor Howson, quoted in the TES said 'If there is any reluctance by deputies to take on jobs then we will have a significant issue, particularly in primary schools.' (Ward, 2004a)

There are several reasons why deputies may decide not to become headteachers. There is, for example, alternative professional development. Teachers who are on the top of the pay spine can now work through the threshold and achieve a good salary. Five years ago the teachers' nine-point pay scale was reduced to six points. Progress on the scale is annual and automatic unless performance is especially poor. When they reach the top of that scale, teachers may elect to pass through the 'threshold' where they can obtain a further three points, provided they meet certain criteria. As the resultant salary is quite high, teachers no longer feel the need to go through the management route. This also means that often, teachers do not see headship as the pinnacle of their career². Some deputies have decided that they do not want to complete the NPQH (National Professional Qualification for Headship). This qualification is there to prepare deputies for headship and is mandatory from September 2004 for anyone wishing to apply for headship (HM Government, 2003). Many deputy headteachers, having achieved that position in a school, have decided that headship is not for them and have chosen to remain as deputies, becoming career deputies.

² Further reasons why deputies might not wish to become headteachers can be found in Chapter 4.

This last group have serious consequences for the profession. The deputy headship route is by far the most common route into headship and if deputies are deciding not to move on to headship, then not only are there going to be less people applying for headships, but also by staying in post, they block the route to headship. Primary schools that are potentially conducive to developing ambitious deputies are prevented from doing so because of career deputies who have become ‘sitting tenants.’

It is appropriate in this study that I separate deputy headteachers into two main groups: the ambitious deputy, who intends to become a headteacher as soon as possible; and the career deputy who is happy with the job of deputy and has, for their own varied reasons, decided not to become a headteacher. These two groups need to be treated differently within the school. Career deputies will have management tasks delegated to them by their headteacher that are a necessary part of the organisation and management of the school. The ambitious deputy will need experiences that will prepare him or her for headship. These are quite different requirements and headteachers should recognise and work with these staff as appropriate. I have both a career and an ambitious deputy in my school. They both have management tasks and are effective deputies. They are both being developed but the tasks I assign to my career deputy, now nearing retirement, are different than those that I assign to my ambitious deputy who needs to prepare for headship.

Sergiovanni (2001 p44) asks of headteachers: ‘which would you rather be? A ‘manager’ who focuses on maintaining organizational systems or a ‘leader’ who focuses on changing organizational systems’. West-Burnham (1997) sees a similar demarcation of role, the manager who maintains the systems of the school and ensures the school runs successful from day to day and the Leader who looks to the future, setting a vision for others to follow. He simply and clearly sets out the difference between leadership and management:

Leading is concerned with:

- vision
- strategic issues
- transformation
- ends
- people
- doing the right things

Managing is concerned with:

- implementation
- operational issues
- transaction
- means
- systems
- doing things right

The reality is, of course, that headteachers need to be both effective leaders and effective managers if they are to become successful school leaders and translate their vision into action. 'Training should include management as well as leadership to ensure effective implementation of the vision' (Bush and Glover, 2003). Headteachers need to be able to balance both leadership and management in their schools. Bolman and Deal (1997) suggest that

'leading and managing are distinct but both are important. Organisations which are over managed but under led eventually lose any sense of spirit or purpose. Poorly managed organisations with strong charismatic leaders may soar temporarily only to crash shortly thereafter. The challenge of modern organisations requires the objective perspective of the manager as well as flashes of vision and commitment wise leadership provides'.

Initially, it is difficult to see a marked difference between ambitious and career deputies apart from the decision whether or not to go on to headship; professionalism and enthusiasm can be found in both groups. Career deputies need to be carefully managed; given tasks that will maintain their status in the school and allow them to continue to contribute and feel valued in their schools. Although they will have some leadership tasks under the umbrella of the headteacher's own leadership, theirs will be more of a management role. In order to ensure their development 'there is a need for specialist training for those who see assistant and deputy headship as a career choice rather than a step towards headship' (Harris et al., 2003).

In contrast, ambitious deputies view their deputy headship as a training position seeing their appointed tasks and responsibilities as opportunities to prepare them for headship. Primary schools with ambitious deputies tend to benefit because the deputies feel they have to be successful with projects and responsibilities assigned to them as they had a need to demonstrate achievement in their NPQH assessment and later their applications for headship. They see themselves as potential leaders and thus need to learn about leadership. Just as with career deputies, the training for ambitious heads needs to be improved as 'there are currently limited opportunities for formal leadership training for assistant and deputy heads. This is potentially a major drawback in preparing for headship and becoming more effective in that role'(Harris et al., 2003).

The career deputy is an interesting phenomenon. Often capable and effective deputies decide not to go onto headship. Perhaps recent developments in the role of headteacher, such as the management of many new government initiatives, have made the post unattractive to some deputies. There is clearly a need to understand this group, why they have decided not to become headteachers, and at what stage the decision was made. In this small-scale survey I note several reasons why deputies choose not to go on to headship, but I am mostly confining my consideration to the ambitious deputy and the experiences they need to become effective headteachers.

Perhaps a more positive question to ask is why teachers and deputy headteachers want headship. Fullen (2003) believes that 'many principals are committed to making a positive difference in the lives of individual students and teachers.' Headteachers have the power to change things within their school and they can employ the staff to support them in those changes. Mostly they want to be able to improve the educational environment for the children in their charge. 'Teachers want to become school leaders in order to 'have a say' and 'make a difference' in order to encourage this, 'there is a need for leadership programmes that encourage school leadership whilst permeating the organisation of the whole school' (Ofsted, 2003b). Many teachers have this desire to manage their own school as soon as they start their career. Ribbins and Marland (1994 p64) asked one headteacher when he realised that he wanted to become a head. He said 'I suspect I knew right from the beginning – almost as soon as I started teaching'. Whereas they also quoted one head who said 'I don't think I started out thinking I wanted to be a head. And it was quite a while, in fact it was probably only five years ago, that I thought this is what I would like to do.' This last interviewee also went on to say 'If I was reading legislation and educational thinking right, then headship was the place I needed to be.'

This study examines primary schools in one LEA (Local Education Authority) only, but anecdotal evidence suggests that the situation in Bromley is not unusual and that a similar pattern may be found in primary schools in other areas.

1.4 The deputy headship role

‘The peculiar world of the deputy headteacher demands the ability to perform like a circus juggler, shouldering a whole range of responsibilities and tasks’ (St-Amour and Stevens, 1996 p37). On arriving at a school, a deputy is ‘increasingly expected to come into post with a basket already half-filled with management skills and experiences. There is often a further expectation that they will fill the basket in a short period of time’ (Thomas, 1995 pvii). In order that they have the credibility to manage teaching staff, observing them and feeding back on their work, the deputy must ‘be recognised as superb practitioners who know their craft and demonstrate it’ (St-Amour and Stevens, 1996 p37).

Over the last ten years, training for headteachers in England has improved considerably. I received just an eight-day Local Authority training course in 1990, which was more than my headteacher colleagues who mostly received no training at all. Deputy headteachers and new headteachers now receive a good, comprehensive training package. NPQH (National Professional Qualification for Headship) in particular provides an effective and practical introduction to the post, and the Headteachers Induction Programme (HIP) provides continued training for new heads once they take up their post. LPSH, the Leadership Programme for Serving Headteachers, provides training for headteachers who have been in post for four or more years.

Although the NPQH course, undertaken by deputy headteachers is well designed and provides a solid grounding for the role of the headteacher, it is not seen by the majority of new headteachers as the principal factor in their preparation for headship (Male, 2001). There is another element of headteacher preparation in primary schools that is not, in my opinion, being properly addressed and that is the variation and quality of the training deputy headteachers receive in their own school. At present, deputy headteachers experience in their current role very varied opportunities to gain insights into the role for which they are preparing themselves. Primary schools and their headteachers are all very different. Primary schools will vary in size and socio-economic catchment and headteachers will differ in the way they manage their schools and in the level of responsibility they are willing to delegate to their staff. The responsibilities that I have given my deputies have varied as I have gained

confidence in my own role as headteacher and it should also be said that some of my deputy headteachers have been more capable than others and this has also affected the amount of responsibility that could be assigned to them.

Headteachers decide themselves the role of the deputy and the tasks the deputy will undertake. Often the only difference between a class teacher and a deputy head will be that the deputy will, besides taking a class, have tasks delegated to him or her by the headteacher. These may often be low-grade management tasks. They may be asked to manage in-service training in the school, compile rotas or they may be given a small budget to manage, such as the Standards Fund³. These tasks give the initial impression that the deputy is learning to manage the school, but although these are management tasks, they are self-contained and do not help to prepare the deputy to manage the whole school.

Apart from the theoretical underpinning for the training given by NPQH, deputy headteachers need to be given experiences in their school that will prepare them for the post. These experiences should consist of 'real responsibility for leading and managing significant areas of school life' (Garrett and McGeachie, 1999), commensurate with the role of the headteacher; the opportunity for regular discussions with the headteacher on their future role and the chance to complete some of the regular tasks that need to be carried out by a headteacher. Mostly, they need to be able to shadow the headteacher through real management issues. The head needs to discuss issues with the deputy so they have an understanding of how the headteacher approaches and deals with these issues. For example, rather than giving the deputy the Standards Fund to manage, it is far more helpful for the deputy to sit alongside the headteacher whilst a new budget is planned; giving the deputy an insight into the budget setting process.

'Budgeting is essential to good financial management. The budget sets out how resources are allocated and provides a mechanism for monitoring expenditure through the year. It should be the concrete expression of the schools development plan. It provides a coherent framework which allows staff and governors to see how the schools spending with help the school achieve its targets and other objectives' (Ofsted, 2000).

³ The Standards Fund is a small, self-contained grant that principally pays for staff development especially in the fields of Literacy and Numeracy. Unlike the majority of school funding, standards fund grants must be spent within a limited period usually 12 or 18 months.

Surely, an ambitious teacher, applying for a deputy headship, will be expecting to gain the skills and knowledge that will prepare them for headship. Once a school employs an ambitious deputy head, they have an obligation to give them that training and a deputy headteacher has the right to expect it; they have an entitlement to this. My view is that a school-based preparation for primary headship programme should be an entitlement for deputies and must be a requirement of the job of headteacher that they actively prepare their deputy for headship.

In this study, I look at school-based preparation for primary headship. I use this term to include a combination of both training and experience that happens in school. This term enables me to separate the preparation deputies receive from the NPQH course from those that they receive in their schools. Whilst all prospective heads who complete the proscribed NPQH training meet national criteria, informal discussion with heads and deputies in Bromley has indicated that deputies have a wide variety of experiences within their primary schools. Some deputy headteachers play a major role in running the school with real responsibility whilst others are given just a few extra jobs to do. The former leave their post as deputies ready to take on the role of headteacher whilst the others have a steep learning curve when they take up their new post, sometimes unaware of the responsibilities of their role until they have been in it for some time.

Some deputies are non-teaching and have the time to take on more responsibilities and others are full-time teachers with little or no contact time, so it is difficult for them to have similar experiences. Nonetheless, they should all expect a minimum amount of training and support within their school that would enable them to prepare for headship.

I identify the experiences that are appropriate for deputy headteachers and examine whether headteachers in Bromley are giving their deputies the experiences they need to become effective headteachers. Finally I propose a model that suggests a way forward to encourage headteachers to fulfil this important function within an agreed framework.

I talk to both new and experienced headteachers in Bromley in order to find out how they were prepared for headship and I look at the experiences that they felt were essential to their preparation for primary headship. I also ask how they, in turn, are preparing their own deputies for headship. I look at the experiences that should be offered to deputy headteachers to prepare them for headship. For the purposes of this study I need to separate out those deputy headteachers who are ambitious and aspire to headship from those deputies who have little or no intention of becoming a head. With those who would want to be heads, I examine the experiences that they have been given as preparation for the post of headteacher.

My research questions are:

- 1 Do headteachers feel they were given the experiences necessary to become effective headteachers?
- 2 Which experiences should be an entitlement for aspiring headteachers?
- 3 Is there a preparation model that would facilitate a successful move from deputy to head?

When we train class teachers, they have a teaching practice in a school arranged by their college or university and at the end of that practice they are expected to take the class for the majority of the time. They are effectively given control of the class under the direction of the class teacher. Perhaps we should consider adopting a similar model for deputy heads? They could have a preparation programme in primary schools that enables them over a fixed time period to increase their responsibilities until at the end of the course they are effectively running the school, of course, under the direction of the headteacher.

Following my recent visits to look at schools in America and subsequent work with American school principals, I also refer to the experiences of assistant principals in America. Whilst examining literature from research carried out in England, I look at literature from America where appropriate to see if their experiences are useful to this study.

Finally, I establish if there is a model that could be adopted that would lead to guidelines for headteachers to ensure they give their deputies the responsibilities that would enable them to become effective headteachers.

The theoretical bases for this study are theories related to adult learning. If I am going to examine school-based preparation for primary headship, I need to examine theories that suggest that learning in the workplace is an essential part of the preparation of deputy headteachers for primary headship. In particular, I look at situated learning theory. The relationship between the headteacher and the deputy is vital to this learning process and so I need to look at mentoring theory to examine whether the mentor model is the best approach to this development.

1.5 Influences: Pre and Post Appointment

The two major influences on deputy headteachers are the work they do in school (SBPPH: School-Based Preparation for Primary Headship) and the work they do on the Government’s NPQH course. This study is not to compare or contrast the two areas but to suggest that both have an essential role to play. SBPH is highlighted because it is not clearly identified as a part of deputy headteacher training. The influence of the deputy’s work of the NPHQ and SBPH carry on into headship. The following model shows how their influence is augmented and perhaps eventually replaced by other influences once headship is taken up.

Figure 1 – Influences – Pre and Post Appointment

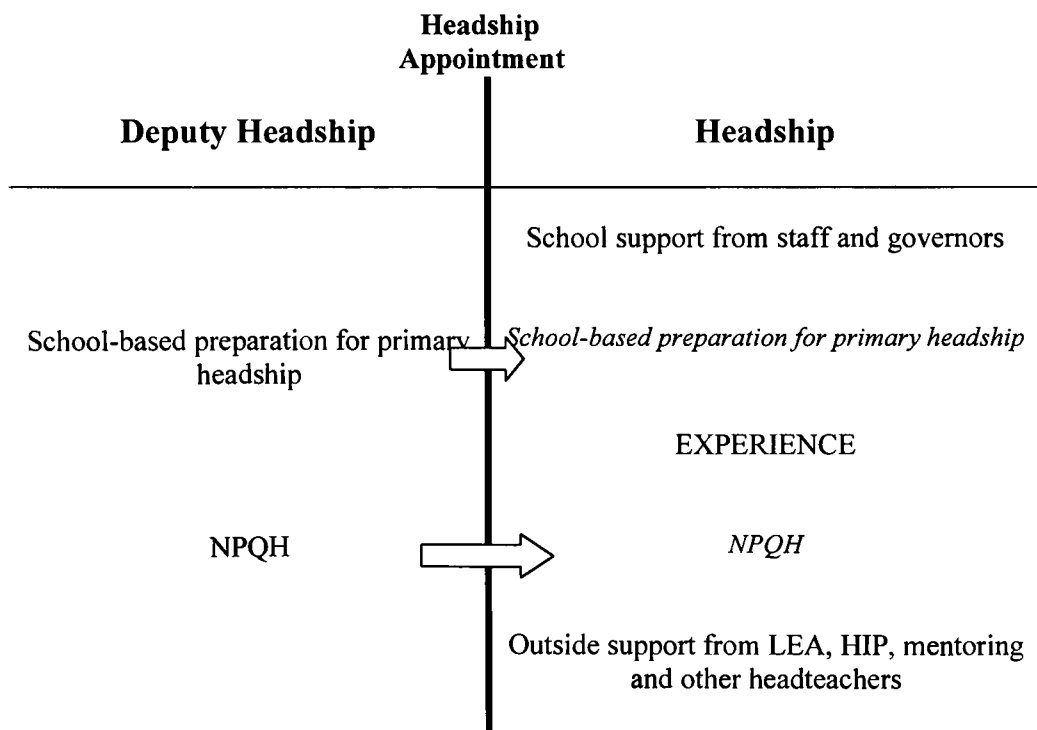


Figure 1 shows how influences change over time for the new headteacher. The first part of the model shows the preparation work and experiences in school alongside the more formal, Government led NPQH course. When completed effectively, these two initiatives complement each other and provide the support necessary for the new head to start their post with confidence.

After appointment, the effect of training received in school (SBPH) and that gained from completing the Government's headteacher training programme (NPQH) diminish as the headteacher gains experience and support from within their school and from outside agencies. Gradually, the knowledge and skills gained from NPQH and SBPH are replaced and modified by the experience of headship. Some ideas from the new headteacher's previous school or from NPQH will not work or be effective in a new environment but skills and competencies gained will be simply modified by that experience into methods appropriate to the new school. Evidence from interviews suggests that the support the head gains from the staff in the school will have the most influence on the success of the headship. Support from governors and from the parents of the school will also have a strong influence on the success of the appointment.

In figure 1, it is shown that the influence of SBPH and NPQH do not diminish completely. The work that the aspiring head carries out in their school and on the NPQH programme will continue to influence the work of the new headteacher. Indeed, these two powerful facets of headteacher preparation will sustain the headteacher through what can be a difficult time. Obviously, the more successful the two initiatives, the more long-lasting and effective will be the influence over the work of the head, particularly in their first months in headship. Over time, as the new head gains experience and support, these take precedence over earlier work but from time to time the new head will continue to reflect on opportunities experienced before appointment and these methods and experiences will continue to shape future work.

2. Headship: Recruitment and Training

This literature review will focus on four main themes. Firstly, it will examine the current situation where the recruitment of headteachers is becoming more difficult. Secondly, it will look at what is required of headteachers today and the need for appropriate training. Thirdly, it is considered whether experiences of deputy headteachers prepares them to meet those requirements and examines the role of the school in preparing their deputy for headship and finally it looks at Situated Learning, the theoretical underpinning of the study.

2.1 Recruitment

The role of the headteacher has changed remarkably over the last twenty years, Local Management of Schools gave headteachers financial responsibility for their school and the Education Reform Act 1988 introduced a National Curriculum for the first

time and gave governors more responsibility. Since that time there have been more Government initiatives, for example the Literacy and numeracy strategies, which have affected the headteachers' role. In many ways it is a different job than it was before these changes and there are major issues for those involved in preparing new headteachers for the role and in ensuring that existing headteachers, appointed before or just after the 1988 Act, receive the proper support. It is important that these issues are seriously considered if problems of recruitment and retention, which have been recently in the news, should be addressed. I intend to look at the literature around the current nature of primary headship, the changes to the role and the training issues involved.

A modern British school is a complex organisation and the headteacher has to lead and manage every aspect of that organisation. The headteacher is personally responsible for everything that happens in those buildings and must be competent to be able to manage: for example, the detail of the National Curriculum, staffing and personnel issues, building work on the site and a budget of a million pounds or so. This need to be 'omnicompetent' is daunting and at times exhausting.

'The leader is seen to be a 'super-manager'; it is expected that leaders must be more competent at a wider range of tasks. This model of headteacher is one of omnicompetence: the skilled classroom practitioner plus curriculum leader, plus technical expert, plus all the manifestations associated with being the figurehead and with being 'in control' of the whole mechanism all the time. It is a little wonder that so many headteachers seek early retirement or suffer from a range of work-related illnesses' (Bowring-Carr and West-Burnham, 1997 p118).

There has been a considerable change in the role of the headteacher since the Education Reform Act 1988 which introduced the National Curriculum, Local Management of Schools and a change in the role for school governors. From this there developed, quite rightly, a move to raise standards in the public education system. However, 'at the same time, there appears to be an increasing trend towards approaching changes in education through a controlling, rational and technical framework. This content tends to concentrate on educational content and delivery and ignores the human resource perspective and the complexity of how human beings live, work and interact with one another' (Myers and MacBeath, 2001). The job is now very difficult but 'the job can be fun if one is at ease with complexity, likes challenges and is willing to work hard (Sergiovanni, 2001).

Unfortunately, finding candidates who are willing to take on the challenge of school leadership is getting harder. Recently Earley (2002) examined the current state of school leadership and found that 'despite a comprehensive training package, there are seemingly intractable issues over recruitment and retention.'

This is not a new problem, fifteen years ago, Tytler (1990) wrote about the crisis in finding sufficient primary school headteachers adding that 'in London and the South East two out of three primary headships have to be re-advertised'. Earley (2002) conducting a survey into school leadership which included 227 deputies and 151 NPQH students from both primary and secondary schools, found that '40% of deputies did not wish to become headteachers'. Although these statistics will cause concern, they are far more positive than the survey carried out for this report that found 75% of deputies in Bromley did not want to become headteachers. Even amongst NPQH students, Earley found that twenty percent did not want to become a head. They noted that the main reason for not wanting to become heads was that it involved 'too much stress'. The position has not changed; indeed it seems to have become worse as several recent studies have shown (Male, 2001, Ward, 2004b).

In the latest annual report written by Professor John Howson for the NAHT and SHA on the state of the labour market for senior staff in schools, he claims that '23% of primary headteacher posts were reported unfilled' this compares with 16% for secondary headships. Primary schools received only 6 applications on average with an average of only 2.6 candidates being interviewed (Howson, 2004). If this is a fair representation then we have to wonder where our future heads are coming from. Indeed, recruitment has become such a concern that one Local Authority, Kent, has recently warned that primary schools may have to share headteachers stating that 'it may no longer be possible to have a head for each of its 473 primary schools because recruitment is becoming such an issue.' (Stewart, 2005)

This is not a phenomenon restricted to the United Kingdom. In the United States, the shortage of school principals is also becoming a concern. Each district has a supervisor who liaises with the school board and deals with finance and staffing. This makes the role of the school principal less complex than the role of the headteacher in England who has to deal with these issues. Nonetheless, recent

research into the lack of candidates for school leaders in the United States has shown that teachers there consider that 'the job is just too big' (Hopkins, 2003)

'Education officials and policymakers across the United States have come to a staggering conclusion: the shortage of school administrators to lead the nation's schools is real and is reaching crisis proportion' (Quinn, 2002).

Australia sees 'a principal shortage looming', finding that 'schools are re-advertising positions that once attracted dozens of applicants' (Bond, 2002). In Canada, they have an ageing population of school leaders and a shortage of teachers interested in taking over the role. Williams (2003) found that 'Over 40% of vice principals in Ontario, Canada, are planning to retire by 2007 causing concern about filling principal vacancies in the near future.' Sweden, with a similar problem, has tried to identify solutions. They devised a national early training programme for school leaders and a support programme for headteachers once appointed. This has led to an increase in the numbers of applicants. Their leadership programme, aimed at teachers early in their career, 'will enable those involved to deepen their awareness of the task assigned to schools; will enable school heads to manage and develop their roles and is based on experience and focuses on procedures / processes' (Korp, 2005). The British Government would do well to follow Sweden's example, they too must understand the pressure on headteachers and ensure they are adequately trained and supported.

Retention is a part of the recruitment problem. There has been concern with the number of headteachers who leave the post early. Flintham (2003), researching why some headteachers left the profession early, found that some 'successful headteachers leave with a planned and career-driven exit strategy' whereas others 'felt burn out and had suffered high levels of psychological stress which had made it impossible to continue in headship.' The latter indicates that many headteachers are finding the job becoming more and more difficult owing to the increase in government initiatives and accountability structures such as Ofsted. Earley (2002) investigated what de-motivates headteachers. 'The most de-motivating aspect of headship mentioned was 'bureaucracy and paperwork... Constant change was also seen in a negative light by a quarter of those responding. Other key aspects, which headteachers mentioned as de-motivating were: budget and resources issues (noted by just over one-in-five); the low status and negative media image of the profession

(noted by around one-in-six); more generalised comments about stress and the demands of the job (about a fifth); and, problems with recruitment (noted by just over a fifth). 'The real problem in our schools is the absence from post of many heads who resigned because of the pressures in which they found themselves. We have far more vacancies for headships than we have the headmasters' (Lord Parry, 1998).

2.2 The Headteacher

Sallis (1994) describes the difficult role of the headteacher. 'I know of no job which demands a wider range of qualities than headship... a vision of learning, the ability to translate that vision into effective programmes of development and the skill to share both vision and plans with staff...' Since this was written eleven years ago, the role has developed still further requiring new skills, in particular, the judgement to advise how buildings, staff and money may be used to best advantage in planning children's learning and the ability to communicate effectively with parents and the community. Headteachers also now have a greater responsibility to implement Government initiatives, some of which they may not agree with and can lead them to become 'demotivated by the bureaucracy and excessive paperwork which they associate with their role and the constant change in the education system'. (Earley et al., 2002)

Headteachers are required to have a vision for their school and to share that vision with the whole school community (DfES, 2000). This picture of an ideal future for the school is generalised by Beare, Caldwell and Millikan (1992) who argued that '1) outstanding leaders have a vision for their organisation; 2) vision must be communicated in a way that ensures commitment among members of that organisation; 3) communication of vision requires communication of meaning and 4) attention should be given to institutionalising vision if leadership is to be successful.' Headteachers realise the importance of having a vision for the school but often struggle to develop and maintain their vision in the face of enforced Government initiatives.

Gunter (2004) notes that since the Education Reform Act 1988 'control over the curriculum and pedagogy was taken away from the headteacher and staff as leading

professional by the national curriculum and the growth of external inspection and league tables'. This has led to a need to change the role of the headteacher. 'In order to enable centralised direction of the educational product and accountability for the resourcing and delivery of that product, the headteacher was conceptualised as a leader with a vision and mission to bring about school improvement'. She believes this has required a different type of leadership: first, separated from other activity that is labelled as 'management'; second, located in post-holders rather than an inclusive relationship; third, being trained rather than developed; and, fourth, organisational leadership in educational settings rather than educational leadership'. Instead of the knowers being the headteacher and teacher within schools, 'the prime knowers [became] the Department for Education and Skills and its agencies such as the National College of school leadership (NCSL)'. Knowing is less about how to put together a curriculum for a school based on the needs of the children and the area in which the school resides but now 'knowing is increasingly about complying with central requirements to implement reform'.

Primary schools are, of course, very different and the increasing standardisation of a headteacher style could result in headteachers with skills that do not match the needs of their school. Southworth (1995a) finds that leadership is contingent on many factors. 'Where you are, who you are and whom you are working with combine to affect how you lead. It makes a difference whether the school is a special, secondary, upper, middle, primary, lower first or nursery school. It also matters whether the school is denominational or not and whether it is relatively large, medium or small in terms of pupil and staff numbers. In short, leadership is differentiated by school type and size'.

The role of the headteacher in schools has largely developed in line with management practices in industry. 'School leadership has been conceived in large part from management conceptions originating during the Industrial Revolution.' (Crow, 2002) However, the changes in primary schools, especially since the Education Reform Act 1988 have in turn changed the role of the headteacher (Hayes, 1995). 'The dynamic nature of organizations such as schools where numerous individuals without close supervision, make multiple decisions working directly with children, requires a different kind of leader' (Crow, 2002)

Spillane (2005) defines leadership as ‘activities tied to the core work of the organization that are designed by organisational members to influence the motivation, knowledge, affect and practices’. There are many different leadership styles; Richmond and Allison (2003) have produced ‘a non-exhaustive list of 35 separate theories’; too many to be discussed in full here. However, certain types of leadership appear to be particularly relevant to school leadership today. It is perhaps easy to see that the heroic or charismatic leader, who leads by strength of personality, can be found operating in the hierarchical structure of schools where the headteacher leads the organisation. Industry has many examples of heroic leaders brought in to save companies in serious difficulty and one of the Government’s responses to schools that they regarded as failing was the importation of ‘heroic’ headteachers. ‘The downside is that when the crisis is past, the qualities of the heroism is no longer needed and indeed may be dysfunctional’ (MacBeath, 2005). Edwards describes this as ‘the British obsession with the heroic leader’ (Edwards, 2003) and sees the need to move away from this to a more distributed approach. Kanungo and Conger (1998) find that the Charismatic leader has a ‘heightened sensitivity for his or her environment and gains followers’ commitment through establishing a rapport and sense of purpose...charismatic leaders are ready to see market changes and actively scan their organisations horizon’. However, they find that they are ‘better at change and innovation than at administration; their motives may not be ethical; they may use control techniques to get follower compliance and that followers can become over-reliant and dependant on their leader’. The deputy headteacher working with a charismatic leader may not get the support or training they need as Kanungo and Conger also found that ‘charismatic leaders do not usually train and develop their successors’. The instructional leader makes it very clear to his subordinates what they have to do and what is expected of them. McBeath (2005) describes the five key components of instructional leadership as ‘defining mission, managing curriculum, and instruction, supervising teaching, monitoring student progress and promoting instructional climate. The concept of instructional leadership ‘implies overseeing, monitoring and evaluating of teaching by senior managers.

The transactional leaders set clear goals for their subordinates, ‘letting people know what needs to be done to achieve those goals’. They typically control followers with a number of psychological carrots and sticks’ (Gronn, 1995). Subordinates learn what they must do to gain rewards and avoid punishments through an exchange

process with their superior'. Their staff are aware of what they have to do within the organisation and know their role within it. They are clear about the relationship they have with the leader so that within the organisation 'leaders and followers are in fixed and recognisable complementary roles'. Transformational leadership is a more dynamic concept the MacBeath (2005) defines the three components as '1) the stimulation and development of a collaborative culture 2) contribution to the continuous professional development of teachers and 3) expansion of the problem-solving capacity of the school.' 'transformational leadership provides the vision and inspiration that is intended to energise all members of the school community' It is about 'transforming organisations and creating new cultures in which collaboration is valued, systematic enquiry is assumed to be the proper basis of professional judgement and in which there are high levels of reflection and discussion of professional practice. It sets expectations high and assumes a strong sense of shared responsibility for attaining educational goals'. It could be concluded that headteachers display transactional leadership in their relationship with their deputy, offering effective preparation in return for sharing the leadership and management of the school but in truth, an effective headteacher displays transformational leadership by developing his deputy's skills to the point of achieving a readiness for headship (Cambell et al., 2003, Silins, 1994)

Day (2000) is concerned that these and other established theories of leadership do not 'adequately reflect or explain the current practice of effective leaders. He suggests a new model of 'values-led contingency leadership'. Believing that 'effective leadership is defined and driven by individual value systems'. He found that headteachers in his study did not follow the monitorial transformative nor transactional models of leadership but followed a 'people-centred' philosophy that placed emphasis upon improving teaching and learning through the high expectation of others. He sees the strength of values-led leaders as leading to a 'passionate conviction to build, implement and continually monitor a vision for excellence in learning and achievement by means of feedback from stakeholders inside and outside the school'.

Headteachers now have to operate in a competitive 'market place through which resources are based on pupil recruitment and by the growth of the bidding culture' (Gunter, 2004). They have to 'practice effective leadership in the competing value

frameworks of the post-modern age [and] will engage in bartering, building, bonding, and binding simultaneously according to circumstances. Their focus will always be upon the person and the task and the broader stakeholder contexts. They will be leaders and managers who pay close attention also to building learning and achievement culture in their schools and communities. This is not as straightforward as it may appear at first sight for staff rooms like classrooms are complex micro-political environments' (Day et al., 2000). Headteachers have to be able to work closely with their staff and develop effective teams to take the school forward. 'As schools have become self-improving organisation, the need to understand the ways in which staff in them use their profession knowledge, expertise and experience has never been greater' (Southworth, 1995a).

One of the most significant changes resulting from the Education Reform Act 1988 was the introduction of Local Management of Schools. This gave headteachers control of their school budget and the freedom to decide how it was spent. Jones (1999) notes that 'heads like having more control over how they spent their money' and that how pre-LMS, 'they were at the mercy of the LEA and had to wait for resources'. However, this extra freedom was not given without cost. Heads had to produce much more detailed accounts and much of the funding was given with strings attached. Moore (2002) wonders 'to what extent must English headteachers' embracing of relative financial autonomy be linked to – or even dependent on – the development of a generally uncritical stance towards the wider policies and policy effects to which that autonomy is sited.'

Management of the curriculum has always been considered to be the headteachers most important role; hence the title 'headteacher'. However, the same Act introduced the National Curriculum. This was an example of a good idea that was badly implemented and it took away from headteachers the control over what was taught in their schools. This was followed by a succession of initiatives including the Literacy and Numeracy strategies and Performance Management. Moore (2002) noted that 'increased control over budgets, however, has been offset by considerably reduced control over curriculum, now largely set by government decree.'

The policy context in which schools and their headteachers have had to operate, firstly under the Thatcher government and more recently under the government led

by Tony Blair, contained many major initiatives. These policies have had considerable impact on schools, headteachers and teaching staff:

While these policies are typically represented as technical changes in funding, administration or assessment or as means for raising standards of educational performance or 'improving' schools, I want to suggest that they do much more than this. Taken together they also change the 'processes and contents' of teaching and learning, redirect effort and resources and re-frame the 'interests' and purposes of teachers and schools' (Ball, 1998).

Thompson (1999) found that education policy during the Thatcher government achieved a heightened symbolic economy with new forms of symbolic capital. This was achieved by:

'both de- and recentralization: responsibility for staffing and finances were shifted to school while a new national curriculum was accompanied by the introduction of national testing at key stages. The system of local education authorities was eroded and schools were encouraged to opt out of them altogether. Market contestability was introduced, school zoning was undermined and parents were urged to select the school their children attended...students test results were made public in league table form, school inspections were toughened up and published and schools deemed to be underperforming were variously named, shame supported closed and reopened'.

Although she found that the Blair government 'ostensibly wound back the worst excesses of the education market and restored some control on parental choice and school autonomy', the basic frame work initiated by the Thatcher government remained. Blair kept many Thatcher policies that he had earlier espoused such as the publication of school league tables. Thompson found that Blair's government made some significant changes in the decision to solicit private companies to take over failing schools and later the introduction of 'workforce remodelling to take administrative tasks away from teachers and, significantly to this study, she found that:

'Leadership became a widely spoken mantra and an expensive and elaborate infrastructure of standardized training for heads and aspirants was created. This was a codification of knowledge that largely ignored professional associations'.

The National College of School Leadership supports this infrastructure and now has responsibility for preparation for headship (NPQH) courses as well as those for new

headteachers (HIP). The college helps to prepare headteacher for the challenges that are about to face them. This early preparation is essential as new headteachers in particular can find the role very difficult.

‘The first year of leading a school is possibly the biggest comprehension exercise any teacher and headteacher has to face. Making sense of a school is a complex, dynamic and multilayered professional intelligence test’ (Southworth, 1995a).

Preparation work completed in the deputy’s own school will reinforce the work carried out by the National College. This study looks at the support that is offered, or in some cases, not offered by headteachers to prepare their deputies for headship.

Primary heads have had the difficult task of bringing about enormous change in their schools. Although their teachers worked hard to implement the changes and are to be commended for their efforts, it is the headteachers who have had to manage that change within their own schools. Fullan (1982a) described the crucial role of the headteacher in bringing about successful change. He outlined the need for the headteacher to be fully involved in the change and to lead that change, stating that ‘ As long as we have schools and principals, if the principal does not lead the development of an effective organizational process, or if he or she leaves it to others, it will not normally get done. That is, change will not happen.’ He also described types of headteacher and how that will effect change in the school. He said that half of heads ‘operate mainly as administrators and ad hoc crisis managers’. These heads were not effective in helping to bring about change. Other heads are either ‘direct instructional leaders’ or ‘facilitative instructional leaders’. These heads do become involved in effective change with the latter type, co-ordinating the change and empowering staff, usually being more successful.

Schools that are in difficulty require specific skills from their headteachers. In his work on ‘turnaround leadership’ which he describes as the ‘kind of leadership needed for turning around a persistently low-performing school to one that is performing acceptably as measured by student achievement according to state tests’, (Fullan, 2005) describes its limitations in that ‘what looks like apparent success in turning around schools is actually quite superficial and indeed illusory’. He makes a distinction between ‘accountability (pressure) and capacity building (support)’. He

found that 'the strong elements of accountability, exam results as league tables, Ofsted inspections, publicly naming schools as failing, had initial success but that these had lacked sustainability'. He argues for the emphasis to be on capacity building rather than accountability.

He sees capacity building as becoming a core feature of school improvement leading to the 'difficult issues of sustainability' in this he sees the need for 'rethinking leadership in the context of sustainability.' He believes we need leadership that, in effect, represents 'system thinkers in action'. He sees the need to develop new leaders and the importance that have an understanding of capacity building. 'This new leadership focuses as much on developing other leaders as it does on student learning and achievement'.

Handy (1993) saw the need to relate management to organisational theory. He suggested that the manager needs to look at 'People, work and structures and systems and procedures and that these need to be looked at alongside 'the goals of the organisation, the technology available and the culture of the organisation.' The strategic management of the school is an essential element of the role of the headteacher; it is also the most difficult. This underlines the differences between leadership and management. If a headteacher is to make real long-term changes to a school he must impact on the fundamental culture of the school. Ogawa and Bossert (1997) suggest that 'leadership is a cultural phenomenon' and that 'leadership involves shaping organizations' cultures and influencing the meanings that people attach to organizational events'. In order to develop the strategic direction for a school, the DfES (2000) suggest that the headteacher must be seen to be providing 'educational vision and direction which secure effective teaching, successful learning and achievement by pupils and sustained improvement in their spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development and prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life; and secure the commitment of parents and the wider community to the vision and direction of the school.'

Realising a vision is becoming difficult to achieve as headteachers are finding that the Government is taking more control of the curriculum. Carter and O'Neill (1995) identify a 'new orthodoxy' which they describe as a 'shift in the relationship between

politics, government and education'. They cite five main elements to this new orthodoxy:

- '1) Improving national economics by tightening the connection between schooling, employment, productivity and trade.
- 2) Enhancing student outcomes in employment-related skills and competencies.
- 3) Attaining more direct control over curriculum content and assessment.
- 4) Reducing the costs to government of education and
- 5) Increasing community input to education by more direct involvement in school decision making and pressure of market choice'.

Evidence for these five elements can be found in many of the government policies such as the National Curriculum, national testing at 7, 11 and 14 and the PFI (Private Finance Initiative) to raise funds for new schools. The government reinforces and controls its policies within schools by charging Ofsted to ensure they are carried out and by the hypothecation of funding to schools that ensures schools spend money in the way the government demands.

The new orthodoxy, slowly developing from the introduction of the Education Reform Act 1988 under Margaret Thatcher's government has radically changed education and the role of the headteacher. Control of what happens in school has drifted from the headteacher's hands into the hands of the government. Headteachers no longer have the freedom to control what is taught in the school, only (to a diminishing extent) how it is taught. Although the (DfES, 2000) document talks about the responsibilities of the headteacher with regard to Teaching and Learning, these can be interpreted as a requirement to deliver the National Curriculum and other Government initiatives such as the Literacy and Numeracy strategies. Glatter (1999) describes the current Government as 'among the most centralized of the advanced industrial countries'. It seems that the strategic plans of headteachers are being supplanted by the strategic plans of the government. The headteacher is finding it more difficult to define the strategic role of the school in anything other than that which the Government describes. Schools are becoming institutions that support Government policy implementation and 'school leaders are becoming simply agents or instruments of national policy.'

2.3 Training needs

In training headteachers, there appear to be two areas to be addressed: existing, older heads need to receive on-the-job training to ensure they are coping with the change in the nature of headship since the 1988 Act and new headteachers need to receive training that will prepare them for the change brought about by career advancement. The former is catered for by the LPSH programme (Leadership Programme for Serving Headteachers) and the latter by NPQH (National Professional Qualification for Headteachers) and by the experiences they receive as deputy headteachers. The move from deputy headteacher to headteacher is a dramatic one and many current headteachers have made this move with little or no training at all.

Bright and Ware's (2003) study into how headteachers felt prepared for the post revealed that their perceived state of preparedness varied across the range of skills required to do the job. Headteachers of primary and secondary schools were asked a series of questions to ascertain how prepared they were in certain areas. They were asked to grade them as 1) Not at all prepared; 2) inadequately prepared; 3) adequately prepared and 4) extremely prepared.

The following table is taken from their study. I have taken the section that concerns primary headteachers (n=1,100) and arranged the table in order of preparedness.

Table 1 – Preparedness for Headship. (Adapted from Bright and Ware, 2003)

Question	Mean	Sd	%
Maintaining effective school discipline	3.19	0.66	90
Working effectively with adults	2.96	0.67	81
Identifying children with special needs	2.95	0.78	75
Using effective communication techniques	2.88	0.68	76
Forming and working with teams	2.85	0.72	75
Building community / parental involvement	2.84	0.71	73
Conducting a meeting	2.83	0.79	69
Constructing timetables	2.71	0.88	68
Resolving conflict / handling confrontation	2.67	0.79	63
Ensuring all people are involved in the school mission	2.54	0.76	56
Putting vision into words	2.51	0.77	55

Planning for future needs and growth	2.32	0.75	43
Organising school administration	2.29	0.81	44
Assuming responsibility for school based management	2.11	0.86	34
Using student performance data to plan curriculum	2.01	0.87	29
Using information technology and other tools	1.95	0.93	28
Working with the underperforming teacher	1.94	0.81	24
Applying educational law to specific situations	1.78	0.74	16

Clearly, headteachers felt most prepared to deal with those areas where they had had experience in their previous career. Maintaining discipline and working with adults, for example, the area in which heads felt most prepared, would have been a feature of any teacher's professional life. By contrast, one might have expected to see the application of educational law at the bottom of the table. One might also expect that most areas would have had a higher score had the headteachers been given more real responsibility when they were deputies. The results of interviews described in Chapter 5, support the results of the table in that headteachers were better prepared for areas that related to teaching.

In his survey of 1,405 headteachers, Male (2001) found that 57% perceive themselves to be either well prepared or extremely well prepared in the skills necessary for the role of headteacher but only 7% indicated that training (NPQH) had been the principal factor in their development. In the development of skills, 53% of respondents identified experience rather than training as the key factor in their formation; and 65% felt that experience was the major factor in the development of appropriate attitudes and values. In order to gain a real understanding of a headteacher's role, a deputy headteacher must be able to gain experience of the leadership and management of, for example, finance, staffing, buildings and site and dealing with children, parents, governors and other stakeholders. This can only happen effectively in a school environment and requires a headteacher who is able to share his experience and provide the opportunities necessary for learning the post. If we accept that this experience is gained during their teaching career and especially whilst in the position of deputy headteacher then primary schools must ensure that this experience is carefully planned. Deputies need to be prepared for the new role of headteacher, a radically different job to that of deputy headteacher.

When a deputy takes on the new occupational role of headteacher, a process of professional socialization occurs. The new headteacher learns about the school and the staff of the school, in turn, learn about their new school leader. In order to fit into a new school environment, a new headteacher has to learn: skills to perform the job, e.g. financial management; adjustment to the specific work environment, e.g. staff issues and internalisation of values, e.g. collaboration (Feldman, 1976). Any organization needs to pay close attention to the development of its employees. This usually will lead to the introduction of some form of training. This form of developmental training should take place for all employees. Handy notes that 'Individuals do change over time. They acquire new knowledge or find new capacities within themselves or learn to interact with each other more productively. They learn to cope with stress or to help others to do so' (Handy, 1993).

Headteachers often feel isolated and are expected to carry out responsibilities for which they are not trained; leading to a stressful situation. This is often seen by headteachers in terms of their ability to complete tasks and the level of stress is '...often viewed in terms of tasks that tax or exceed an individual's self-perceived capability to manage them' (Chaplain, 2001). When employees' jobs change radically, it is even more important to ensure that they are properly trained. To expect someone to do a job without training is to set up a stressful situation and there has been a major change in the role of the headteacher that needs to be addressed through proper preparation. New headteachers are mostly unaware of the history of the role of the headteacher and indeed there is no reason why this should concern them; their concern is the significant change in the role as they move from deputy to head. Usually, a deputy is primarily a class teacher and has a completely different role to that of a headteacher who has total responsibility for the leadership and management of the school. There are, however, difficulties in providing a training programme for a role that has undergone and continues to undergo so much change.

The UK has been slow to recognise the need to prepare its headteachers; to give them the training they need to begin their new role effectively. The USA can trace university programmes for the preparation of school principals and superintendents back to the 19th Century. Brundett (2001) is able to cite evidence of a training programme for Superintendents devised in 1866. In England, however, training for senior staff in schools began to develop in the 1960s, almost a century later. Local authorities began to

run short courses for headteachers from the 80s but it was not until the introduction of Headlamp in the late 1990s that a national programme for the training of headteachers began to be established.

Bottery (1992) describes the promotion to headteacher and says that 'within education there seems to be an assumption that a good teacher makes a good headteacher, a good manager.' Although he concedes that this is changing he continues, '...untrained 'role switching' is not a good thing, though there is a common sense appreciation of the fact that someone who has been a good teacher is more likely to influence and help other members of staff, and appreciate their difficulties and problems...'

It seems ironic that the individual with the most responsibility in a school, namely the headteacher, is often the only one who is not trained for his job. The post is obtained based on success as a teacher and there is the expectation that a new head would have the skills to manage a school. This situation has improved considerably over the last few years. Firstly 'Headlamp' was introduced, a scheme to give new headteachers a sum of money in order to purchase training. Shortly afterwards, NPQH (National Professional Qualification for Headteachers) was introduced, an intensive course which aims to give deputy headteachers the skills to become an effective headteacher. However, there are a vast number of headteachers currently in post who have had little or no training for their position. LPSH (Leadership Programme for Serving Headteachers) was introduced more recently but provides theoretical rather than practical support for headteachers.

Jones (1999) notes that moving from deputy headship to headship is 'psychologically a big jump' and that the new headteacher takes some time to come to terms with what it means to be a head. Southworth (1995a) believes that 'they are discovering whether the new mantle fits...and learning what it means to be in a position of power, authority and responsibility.' A recent research project by Earley et al (2002) has shown that 'only one in six headteachers (17%) thought they were 'very prepared' for headship with one-in-ten (9%) stating that they were not prepared at all.' This study is also looking at the effectiveness of NPQH programme and a larger number (21%) now find that they are 'well prepared' and only 3% feel that they are 'not prepared at all'. Although an improvement, this is not a clear endorsement of the NPQH programme.

The DfES (2000) has produced a set of national standards for headteachers. These are in five parts: Core Purpose of the Headteacher; Key Outcomes of Headship; Professional Knowledge and Understanding; Skills and Attributes and the Key Areas of Headship. The Key Areas for Headship most clearly define the role of the headteacher. The DfES has listed the Key Areas for Headship as follows: Strategic Direction and Development of the School; Teaching and Learning; Leading and Managing Staff; Efficient and effective deployment of staff and resources; and Accountability. These five areas are fundamental to the role of the headteacher and need to be addressed in any training programme. These national standards are quite comprehensive and, for most headteachers, can be a little daunting as it would seem to require a super head to attain them all. Looking particularly at the Key Areas of Headship, however, we should also consider whether all the aspects of good headship are easily measured and categorised in this way. Glatter (1999) is also concerned with the Government's use of competences because of their 'technical-rational features and the sense of certainty and predictability on which they are based'. He suggests that we also look at meta-competencies that are as important but are problematic because they are fluid, dynamic, intuitive, aesthetic and innate. Fletcher (2005) describes meta-competencies as 'so powerful that they affect an individual's ability to acquire other competencies.' They 'signal a holistic understanding' (Schuller et al., 2002), and include 'self-assessment, being open to ideas, eagerness to accept new challenges, being comfortable with turbulent change and being able to identify the qualities critical for future performance and being able to make the changes needed to develop them (Fletcher, 2005). These wider competencies seem suited to a modern headteacher who has to manage a complex institution within a complex society.

The New Labour Government set up the National College for School Leadership in November 2000 to provide a centre for preparing and developing headteachers and 'while the NCSL does not claim a monopoly on excellence, the government has decided that it should provide a single national focus for school leadership and research' (Bush, 2004). It now has overall direction and management of the government's NPQH, HIP and LPSH programmes as well as many leadership programmes of its own'. Bush (2004) identifies four distinct strands, firstly it aimed to be a 'world-class institution and is establishing this reputation through international research associates programme and participation in international

conferences. Secondly it aimed to work 'with other bodies' evidenced by the universities partnership group which it has 'consulted about a whole range of issues.' Thirdly is the 'enhanced status it has given to educational practitioner research, an example of which is the 'Headteacher Research Associates Programme'; and fourthly it is the 'college's commitment to distributed leadership. This it has achieved by a range of programmes for deputy headteachers, 'Established Leaders'; middle managers, Leading from the Middle and for leadership teams, 'Working Together for Success.'

Southworth (2004) defines the programmes the college offers, stating that they are 'underpinned by a leadership development framework. The framework presently recognises five stages of leaders: emergent leaders, established leaders, entry to headship, advanced leaders and consultant leaders'. However, he sees an important aspect of the college's work is to be able to work with school leadership teams to 'support schools to build their leaderships capacities'. However, Thrupp (2005) sees that 'the NCSL is doing much more than providing school leadership programmes. It is also more broadly framing up school leadership through research, publications and other services for school leaders provided through its website and at organised events'.

Glatter and Kyd (2003) hoped that as the National College seeks to 'become a single national focus, it nevertheless celebrates and promotes genuine debate and pluralism because this is the stance that is most likely to bring well-founded advance in leadership development and research'. However, Bush (2004) believes that 'the Government's decision that it should provide a single national focus for school leadership and research is ambitious, probably not wise and manifestly untrue'. Thrupp (2005) goes further believing that the NCSL is more generally used as a 'conduit or relay of New Labour policy into schools while critical perspectives which do not fit with government policy are largely ignored'.

Expanding on Gromn (2003) who is concerned that bodies like the NCSL are engaged in 'designer leadership'; which means the use of National Standards to produce school leaders according to a government model', Thrupp (2005) believes that the 'wider thrust of the NCSL is also to frame up school leadership so as to uncritically relay managerialist education policy into schools'. However, Southworth (2004)

believes that the college is catering for different leaders in different circumstances. He argues that 'leadership is contingent and situational and that we must be differentiated in our provision. Through differentiation we can not only increase the relevance of our activities but also customise and personalise the content and processes of learning for the emergent established and advance leaders'.

One concern is the apparent lack of criticism of the National College. Thrupp (2005) sees that there is a 'mutual tendency to view the NCSL as a beneficial development'. One reason for this positive view of the work of the college is that 'many in the school leadership and management arena have done work for it, including funded research and consultancy'. However, Bush (2004) acknowledges this by beginning his article on the NCSL with a 'statement of interest' in which he describes work he has done for the National college: 'this wide involvement provides the potential for informed comment on the activities of the college but also means that it is difficult to remain objective'.

As a headteacher and a NCSL Research Associate, I find the college to have raised the esteem of headteachers and agree with Bush (2004) who sees the introduction of the college as the 'latest and most important stage of a long process of recognition that effective leadership and management are vitally important to the success of schools'. However, it is essential that the college keeps its independence from government, recognises the importance of local context and culture and develops the headteachers as individuals rather than producing 'designer leaders'.

There has been so much change and innovation since the 1988 Education Reform Act that headteachers have struggled to ensure it is all implemented. One could argue that with the responsibility of leading and managing the education of our children, the headteacher of a school is one of the most important jobs in the country and it is unacceptable that for many headteachers their only qualification for the post of headteacher is the experience they have had as class teachers.

We as primary headteachers must decide what is important in our schools and what values we hold as inviolable. 'The question of what's worth fighting for must be addressed and acted on immediately – today, tomorrow, next week (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992). It is imperative that the government looks closely at the role of the

headteacher and provides the support and the training that such a demanding job needs. The danger is that the role of the head will become one of a grey administrator as we lose those headteachers with vision and flair that are able or willing to combine the role of administrator with the more important role of curriculum leader.

2.4 The Deputy

During his interviews with headteachers, Sergiovanni (2001) asked about the role of the deputy. One head said that, 'First you stand in for the head; Secondly, you are learning to be a head so you need to have the opportunity to try a variety of tasks and gain the necessary experience. Thirdly, the role of the deputy is a dogsbody job. It is part of the learning process. You are picking problems up, filling in the jigsaw, noticing what has not been done and doing it' (p.64). I agree with this comment but I would add a fourth element, that of 'project leader'. Deputy headteachers are often given projects to lead and complete. Recently my non-teaching deputy led the school through a successful application for the Investors in People award and is in the process of organising and managing the Performance Management programme for teaching staff. My second deputy, who has a class responsibility, is responsible for implementing the Government's new PPA (Planning, Preparation and Assessment) time initiative for teachers⁴.

Although the role of the headteacher has been examined (Southworth, 1995a, Webb and Vulliamy, 1996, Garrett and McGeachie, 1999), the role of the deputy has not been so closely examined. 'As far as we were aware, nothing had been published that gave a whole city perspective to the role of the deputy head in the primary school.' (Garrett and McGeachie, 1999) However, the DfEE outlined the following definition of the duties of the deputy head:

'A person appointed deputy head shall...under the direction of the headteacher...play a major role in a) formulation of the aims and objectives of the school, b) establish the policies through which they shall be achieved

⁴ The UK Government has said that all class teachers must have 10% release for PPA (Planning, Preparation and Assessment) from September 2005.

c) manage staff and resources to that end and d) monitor progress towards that achievement.’ (DfEE, 1998)⁵

Although formal requirements of the post may have been identified by the DfES, the actual role of the deputy within the school that employs them is ‘highly dependent on the headteacher’ (Harris et al., 2003). As primary schools are themselves different, it is expected that deputies will have different experiences. However, it does not seem reasonable that there is no requirement for headteachers to provide certain basic elements of preparation that are needed for their deputy to prepare for primary headship.

It is the headteacher who must take the responsibility for developing his deputy and heads cannot shirk from this role. ‘There is no place for managers who do not appreciate their own vital role in fostering learning’ (Boud and Garrick, 1999). Tranter (2003) comes closest to the need to develop deputy headteachers by talking of the ‘interrelationship with professional development’ that needs to be led by the headteacher, stating that ‘it depends on the willingness of the manager to engage with the concept of performance management’. She later recommends that heads provide ‘opportunities for aspiring leaders’. Failure to provide this support will either result in a deputy who is not properly prepared for headship or a deputy who becomes demoralised and decides not to go on to headship at all.

Rutherford (2003), borrowing from Southworth (1995a) and Hughes (1999), proposes four factors that would underpin a successful relationship between the head and the deputy:

- 1) Shared values and vision;
- 2) Close personal and professional relationships;
- 3) Clarity about the boundaries between the two roles; and
- 4) Provision of non-contact time for the deputy.

Shared values and vision are important as the deputy and the head need to work closely together in order to take the school forward. The deputy and headteacher having a close, personal relationship will obviously facilitate this. All the staff in the school need to be clear where the boundaries between the two roles lie as it is easy for these to become blurred when the head and deputy are working so closely

⁵ After the June 2001 election, parts of Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) and former Department for Social Security (DSS) merged to form the Department for Work and Pensions; the DfEE became the DfES (Department for Education and Skills).

together. All deputies must have non-contact time to be able to carry out their tasks and responsibilities. Ideally, a deputy should not have a class responsibility but this is only possible in the larger primary schools.

These factors are echoed by Garret and McGeachie (1999) who cite three main factors that separate a meaningful role for the deputy from the actual practice seen in schools. These are:

- 'Quality time,
- Sufficient funding and
- The importance of the headteachers' understanding of the role of the deputy and their willingness and ability to practically support all aspects of this.'

Again, quality time is highlighted for the deputy to be able carry out their own function. Deputies need to be funded for release time and to support training programmes and courses such as NPQH. The third factor, that headteachers understand the role of the deputy, is an ideal which unfortunately is not found in all primary schools. Headteachers may not understand the needs of an ambitious deputy and what is required of them to help their deputy into headship. It is interesting to note that Garret and McGeachie state that headteachers should have both the willingness and the ability to support their deputies. Some headteachers may be willing to support their deputy but may not have the ability to see where the deputy could be most effectively used within the school.

Unintentionally, headteachers may be influencing their deputy's decision to move on to headship. Deputies will acquire their perception of headship from headteachers that they have worked for or known, and their decision whether to become a head is, to a large extent, going to depend on the image of headship that is presented to them on a daily basis by their current headteacher. A confident, competent head is more likely to present a positive role model to his deputy whereas by contrast, deputies, 'exposed to the degree of disenchantment expressed [in an early retirement project] might well hesitate to undertake the burden of headship themselves' (Draper and McMichael, 1998).

The preparation of deputies in-post has 'complex goals for primary headteachers, varying from altering identities from teacher to manager to shifting emphasis from people centred care to competitive, efficient and performance related competence.'

(Draper and McMichael, 1998) However, if the influence of the headteacher is crucial then perhaps this should not be left to chance. If 'effective schools are learning organisations with teachers and senior managers continuing to be learners' (Sammons et al., 1995), then headteachers need to be trained to develop their deputy headteachers and to understand that through this they are fulfilling their responsibility to the profession. 'We [headteachers] are responsible not only to the pupils in our schools but also to the local community and to the education system as a whole' (Creasey et al., 2005).

2.5 Role of headteachers in preparing their deputy for headship

'It should be the aim of the headteacher to train a deputy who will be valuable to the school in his or her own right, who could take over the running of the school, who is able to act as liaison officer between the head and the rest of the staff and who is being trained to become a headteacher at some time in the future' (Kent, 1989 p82).

I do not necessarily agree that the deputy should be a liaison officer between the head and the rest of the staff, as I believe that the staff should feel that they could have access to the headteacher whenever they need it. However, I agree with Kent that it should be an aim of the headteacher to train the deputy, as I am aware that in some primary schools this happens either incidentally or not at all.

Introduction of the NPQH programme indicates that the Government believes that training for headteachers needs to begin whilst they are deputies. 'Waiting until school leadership posts have been secured before training is too late. There is a need to pay greater attention in a coherent and systematic manner to a period of induction as an important and distinct learning phase in a school leader's life and work (Mulford, 2003). This 'coherent and systematic manner' is partially addressed by the NPQH programme but the varied nature of a deputy's experience in their school fails to ensure that each deputy receives the support and training necessary to become an effective headteacher.

'Most headteachers are appointed from the ranks of deputy heads and other senior staff of schools. If recruitment problems are to be addressed, this group will have to be encouraged to apply for headship and be properly prepared of

it... A key role of the headteacher is to identify and develop the management potential of senior staff' (Hopkins, 1999).

Earley (2002) asked all their respondents to their survey what was the single most powerful development opportunity of their career. Over a third made reference to 'On the job' activities such as working with others, especially an effective headteacher. In a series of interviews with new secondary headteachers, Sieber (2002) found that 'given the opportunity to talk about previous headteachers with whom they had worked, the newly appointed heads spoke at substantial length, in considerable detail and often with great feeling about their influence as role models'

The relationship between the deputy and the headteacher is a crucial one for the effective development of an ambitious deputy. In a review of literature carried out on behalf of the NCSL, Harris, Muijs and Crawford (2003) found that 'the degree to which they [deputies] are given leadership responsibility is highly dependent on the headteacher.' Although they found role tensions between the head and deputy 'as the responsibilities often overlap' they also found that 'the leadership potential of assistant and deputy heads in many schools is not being fully realised or exploited'.

'The headteacher remains the main gatekeeper for leadership functions in the school and if the headteacher does not support a strong leadership role for the deputy or assistant headteacher, it is unlikely that this will happen' (Harris et al., 2003).

Deputy headship without real management experiences is both frustrating and ineffective in helping the deputy to prepare for the role of headteacher. 'Many headteachers found their experience frustrating or disappointing because of the lack of leadership influence they felt they had within the school' (Harris et al., 2003). Headteachers who are able to share leadership throughout their school will enable teachers and deputy headteachers to gain the experience of working with and leading others. Frost and Harris (2003) suggested that in an investigation into distributed leadership, 'what may be most interesting is the extent to which teachers' experience a growth in their 'influencing skills' in schools where teacher leadership is facilitated and scaffolded'. It is to the schools' benefit that headteachers share the leadership and management of the school with their deputy. 'It is no longer true – if it ever was – that leadership and management are the sole responsibility of the headteacher' (Ofsted, 2003b). By sharing leadership, the headteacher prepares his deputy for

headship and strengthens the leadership and management of the school at the same time.

Harris (2004) sees distributed leadership characterized as 'a form of collective leadership in which teachers develop expertise by working together' She sees it as 'multiple sources of guidance and direction, following the contours of expertise in an organisation, made coherent through a common culture.' This was highlighted in a research project into schools in challenging circumstances where Harris and Chapman (2002) found that 'all heads invested in others to lead the school.' For the heads in these particularly difficult schools, 'effective leadership was about capacity building in others and investing in the social capital of the school'. This approach allows leadership to be distributed throughout the school and also allows an opportunity for potential leaders to develop as it 'starts not from the basis of power and control but from the ability to act with others and to enable others to act. It places an emphasis upon allowing and empowering those who are not in positions of responsibility or authority to lead'.

Muijs and Harris (2003) describe the notion of 'teacher leadership' as 'centrally and exclusively concerned with the idea that all organisational members can lead and that leadership is a form of agency that can be distributed or shared'. They concede that the success of teacher leadership is dependent on other teachers and school management and that the importance of these is 'evident, both with respect to teacher's ability to influence colleagues and with respect to developing relations with school management'. Spillane (2005) believes that 'a distributed perspective frames leadership practice in a particular way; it sees leadership practice as a product of the interactions of school leaders, followers and their situation. The issue is not whether leadership is distributed but how it is distributed'.

Muijs and Harris (2003) identify three 'ways in which teacher leadership can be developed in schools. They suggest that they need 'time, to plan and discuss issues; rich and diverse opportunities for continual professional development and structured programmes of collaboration or networking... to ensure that teacher leaders can fully develop their leadership potential'. Interestingly these elements reflect the model for effective preparation for headship described in Chapter 7.

The value of distributed leadership is also seen by Storey (2004), believing that it 'offers growth and development of multiple individuals' but she warns of possible problems. 'Important questions tend to be left unanswered: How widely should leadership be distributed? Is the governing principle fair share all round or is there some other operating rule? Who determines the distribution?... and what kinds of tasks or roles are to be distributed?' In her study she found 'clear tensions in evidence' between senior members of a school management team and sees the need for further research into 'the interplay between the competing perspectives of the multiple leaders'.

Despite the strengths and weaknesses of distributed leadership, primary schools, at present, still need to have someone in overall charge of the school, someone to 'hold the pieces of the organisation together in a productive relationship. Their central task is to create a common culture of expectations around the use of individual skills and abilities' (Harris, 2004). Whilst we have this current headteacher-led model of school leadership there is the need to prepare deputies for headship with that model in mind as 'a distributed form of leadership suggests an emergent leadership role for deputy and assistant headteachers where they are centrally involved in building culture and leading change within the school' (Harris et al., 2003). However, they must also have the understanding of models of distributed leadership and the skills to maximise the capacity of the staff within their primary schools.

A study on the effectiveness of the NPQH (Male, 2001) investigated whether new headteachers considered themselves ready for headship. He concluded that 'those who had taken part in the NPQH trials, pilot phase or early cohorts consider themselves to be better prepared in four of the skills identified...in comparison to all other appointees'. There is 'a need for professional development programmes that focus specifically on leadership skills, knowledge and understanding for assistant and deputy heads' (Harris et al., 2003). It is also important that there is training for headteachers in how they should prepare their deputies for headship. Clearly, there is a need for existing headteachers to nurture new leaders as they 'are in a key position to help themselves and their staff to become more effective managers by fostering the conditions which maximize the possibility of learning through performance of everyday management tasks' (Wallace, 1991). Although as primary schools are very different, there will always be the need for new headteachers to develop in post. This

'development is *ad hoc* because experience in the school is contingent upon the circumstances of the school' (Southworth, 1995a).

Headteachers, however, need to be proactive in identifying potential headteachers and then ensuring a programme is devised that will develop them towards and into headship. 'The way in which headteachers motivate, influence and enthuse others is critical to the effective leadership of the future' (Barker, 2003). This work has to begin in the deputy head's school. The profession needs to ensure that headteachers enter their school prepared for headship. 'The emphasis in our schools has been on training following an appointment. There is increasing recognition of the need to develop leadership potential in anticipation of career development' (Creasey et al., 2005).

If the influence of the headteacher is crucial then perhaps this should not be left to chance. If 'effective schools are learning organisations with teachers and senior managers continuing to be learners' (Sammons et al., 1995) then headteachers need to be trained to develop their deputy headteachers and to understand that through this they are fulfilling their responsibility to the profession.

'The ramifications of this means that failing to act is not an option. 45% of heads and deputies are aged over 50 and will be retiring in the next 10 years or so. There are 25,000 headteacher posts. At the same time, NCSL recognises that many teachers have a leadership role. Therefore, the sector probably requires about a quarter of a million leaders to manage its schools. The responsibility for growing such leaders is inescapable' (Hartle, 2005).

2.6 Situated Learning

This work is based around the view that in order that a deputy headteacher is properly prepared for headship, he or she should be given careful training and guidance in school and that the school is the most effective place for any training work to be carried out. This would require the headteacher to act as mentor with a responsibility to ensure that the deputy headteacher is given the opportunities and experiences that will lead to a successful headship. The work then needs to be based in the school so that the situations are real and the headteacher needs to act as mentor

to the deputy. This appears to require a pluralistic approach using the combined theories of situated learning and mentoring within a wider theory of adult learning.

Knowles' theory of Andragogy is an attempt to develop a theory for adult learning. His theory emphasises that adults are self-directed and expect to take responsibility for decisions. Andragogy makes the following assumptions about the design of learning: Adults need to know why they need to know something; They need to learn experientially; to approach learning as problem-solving and they learn best when the topic is of immediate value (Knowles, 1984). In practical terms, andragogy means that instruction for adults needs to focus as much on the process as on the content being taught. 'All humans bring to the process of learning personal schemas that have been formed by prior experiences, beliefs, values, socio-cultural histories and perceptions. When new experiences are encountered and mediated by reflection, inquiry and social interaction, meaning and knowledge are constructed. Learning takes place, as does adult development' (Lambert, 2003). The most appropriate training for deputy headteachers fit in well to these assumptions. Ambitious deputies are well motivated and are very aware of what they are learning and why. An effective headteacher will ensure that a deputy headteacher is allowed to learn experientially and will help the headteacher to solve problems on a day-to-day basis.

Situated Learning is the study of how human knowledge develops in the course of activity '...It is a theory about the nature of human knowledge, claiming that knowledge is dynamically constructed as we conceive of what is happening to us, talk and move' (Clancey 1995). Clancy describes the proactive, interactive nature of situated learning where, rather than treating the knowledge that a deputy headteacher must acquire as static, he describes categorizing, sorting, evaluating and judging as 'dynamic processes'. He believes that it should be a 'metacognitive approach' learning how to learn. 'The focus is not on 'learning how to digest or learning how to access facts, but learning how to invent, to work around and through difficulties and to interact productively.' A deputy headteacher will learn about the school and prepare for the future role of a headteacher but will be expected to play an active part in the management of the school, productively interacting as Clancy describes above.

Situated learning was a concept developed by Lave and Wenger (1991) who argue that learning is a function of the activity, context and culture in which it occurs (i.e.

is situated). They believe that social interaction is a critical component of situated learning – learners become involved in a ‘community of practice’, which embodies certain beliefs and behaviours to be acquired.

‘Learners inevitably participate in communities of practitioners and that the mastery of knowledge and skill requires newcomers to move toward full participation in the socio-cultural practices of a community’ (Lave and Wenger, 1991 p29).

These views suggest that the ideal place for an ambitious deputy to learn about the job is within the school under the direction of their headteacher. However, deciding that the notion of ‘situated learning’ was too broad, Lave and Wenger developed the term ‘Legitimate Peripheral Participation’ to describe more accurately a person who is actively engaged in learning within the workplace. They propose that learning is a process of participation in a community of practice; which, in this study, is a deputy learning to be a headteacher within a school environment. The deputy’s participation in the school is at first legitimately peripheral in that the deputy is a newcomer to the school community, but then increases gradually in engagement and complexity as the deputy settles into the school and begins to learn the role of the headteacher.

‘Legitimate Peripheral Participation’ provides a way to speak about the relations between newcomers and old-timers, and about activities, identities, artefacts and communities of knowledge and practice’ (Lave and Wenger, 1991 p29).

Lave and Wenger describe their theory as one of social practice. A deputy headteacher enters a social community, the school, and learns their role and that of the headteacher within it. Beginning as a ‘peripheral participant’, the deputy follows a centripetal path and becomes part of that community and changes as a person whilst they develop their skills within it.

‘Learning involves the whole person; it implies not only a relation to specific activities, but a relation to social communities – it implies becoming a full participant, a member, a kind of person’ (Lave and Wenger, 1991 p53).

As Lave and Wenger’s notion of Legitimate Peripheral Participation is an entirely appropriate theoretical underpinning to the concept of School Based Preparation for Primary Headship, this will be referred to throughout this study.

It is within this 'community of practice', described by Lave and Wenger, that deputy headteachers gain the experiences they need to become successful headteachers. A deputy headteacher is employed not only to support the headteacher and to carry out certain management functions in the school, but also their post is ideally a preparation for the role of headteacher. If the profession sees this role as a preparation for primary headship, then experiences and opportunities must be given to the deputy so that they can move into headship with a clear understanding of the role. Bright and Ware's (2003) survey of 1450 new headteachers found that 'those who did feel prepared for the job said that the reason was to do with the experiences gained prior to headship'

Although training for deputies preparing for headship is provided by the government under the NPQH (National Professional Qualification for Headship) scheme and to a certain extent by local authorities, situated-learning theory suggests that the best place for a deputy to learn the job of headteacher is within their school and under the direction of the headteacher. This notion is supported by the NPQH programme which directs deputies to carry out tasks in their school. There is, by the programme designers, an understanding that any programme should include a practical element carried out in the deputy's school, as clearly, 'a training programme that consists of instructional settings separated from actual performance would tend to split the learner's ability to manage the learning situation apart from his ability to perform the skill' (Hanks, 1991 p21). However, even this will only permit a superficial understanding of the management culture in the school unless the headteacher is fully supporting the work by directing and supporting the NPQH work in the school. Of more importance is the real work that a head carries out whilst running the school. A deputy who is fully involved in this work will have a much better understanding of the role of the headteacher.

Mentoring

Lave and Wenger's (1991) monologue on Legitimate Peripheral Participation discusses the importance of the relationship between the 'newcomer and the old-timer' but see this more as a development of the master-apprentice relationship. In the school community, the relationship between the head and the deputy requires an added dimension to Lave and Wenger's work. Mentoring theory, operating within Lave and Wenger's 'community of practice', supports the particular relationship

between a headteacher and a deputy head and in turn helps to define the concept of School Based Preparation for Primary Headship. Within the social community that is a school, a system of relations arises and is reproduced and developed. 'The person is defined by as well as defines these relations. Learning thus implies becoming a different person with respect to the possibilities enabled by these systems of relations' (Lave and Wenger, 1991 p53).

Bright and Ware's (2003) survey of new headteachers suggested 'clearly that what headteachers need in order to settle efficiently into a new job is someone to talk to'. However, this 'support and mentoring from an experienced colleague' should start much earlier; not just from the beginning of a headship as they suggest but from the beginning of their deputy headship. The experienced colleague, Lave and Wenger's 'old-timers', is in this case the headteacher. Therefore, a successful and constructive relationship between the deputy and the head is crucial here. The headteacher must become an effective mentor for the deputy not just to ensure that the deputy is properly prepared for the job of headteacher, but also to ensure the deputy moves on to headship and does not become a 'career deputy'. Mentoring is more than just supporting though. The headteacher must challenge his deputy to develop their own critical awareness. Southworth (1995b) noted that without challenge, 'there will be no development of critical, educative leaders.'

Mentoring was described by Crow (2002) as 'a specific socialization tool that is currently undergoing a resurgence of interest in the educational field.' In Homer's classic novel the *Odyssey*, Odysseus left the training of Telemachus, his son, to his trusted friend Mentor. The term 'mentor' therefore tends to refer to an expert guiding a novice. This situation seems particularly suited to the experienced headteacher guiding the training and development of his deputy towards their headship.

Lave and Wenger (1991 p48) acknowledge the role of Vygotsky in identifying the role of the mentor in guiding the learner. They describe his concept of the Zone of Proximal Development as often characterised by 'the distance between the problem-solving abilities exhibited by a learner working alone and that learner's problem solving abilities when assisted by or collaborating with more experienced people.' Vygotsky believed in the importance of social interaction as part of the learning process. He suggests that 'it is the ability to develop co-operative activity

through complex social relationships that separates mature humans from all other animals' (Glassman, 2001). If we humans are 'initially social beings who slowly develop their individual selves through their relationships (experiences) with others' (ibid.), then a strong mentor/ neophyte relationship between the headteacher and the deputy headteacher in the social construct of the school must be conducive to the development of that deputy and will support the acquisition of the skills needed to become a successful headteacher.

If managed effectively, both mentor and mentee will benefit from this powerful socializing tool. Six major benefits to the mentee are identified by Crow and Matthews (1998): 1) exposure to new ideas and creativity; 2) visibility with key personnel; 3) protection from damaging situations; 4) opportunities for challenging and risk-taking activities; 5) increased confidence and competence and 6) improved reflection. These are all key needs of a deputy headteacher preparing for headship. They also discussed the need to identify four characteristics of effective mentors. They suggested that mentors should be 1) successful and well-respected school leaders who have strong character reputations; 2) commitment to mentoring and their own development as a mentor; 3) commitment to being learners themselves and 4) time to mentor.

McIntyre and Hagger (1996) suggested three basic processes of mentoring in their study on the use of mentoring in schools. The first is the development of a personal relationship between the mentor and the mentee 'where a relative novice is supported by a more experienced peer'. Second is the 'active guidance, teaching and challenging of the protégé' and thirdly the 'management and implementation of a planned curriculum tailored to the needs of the individual'. All three processes are ideally suited to the development of a deputy headteacher within their own school.

Luck (2003) wrote 'an enquiry into the value of mentoring as an aspect of professional development for new headteachers' in which he extols the virtues of mentoring stating after his research that 'the experience of being mentored had a positive impact on the effectiveness of both the mentors and the mentees... headteachers benefited most from being able to develop their self-confidence and problem solving skills'. Surprisingly, his study only looked at the mentoring of new headteachers and did not consider how mentoring could have helped to develop those

skills before headship. A mentoring model that starts in deputy headship and continues into headship would be more powerful.

A pluralistic approach then is necessary to underpin a SBPPH (School-Based Preparation for Primary Headship) model. Mentoring and situated learning theories under the wider umbrella of andragogy combine to underpin the premise that the ideal place for deputies to be trained is within their school but also that the relationship between the head and deputy should be one of mentor and mentee.

Evidence from the United States can be found to show a link between situated learning and mentoring when preparing their school leaders. A principal preparation programme also recognised the importance of school-based preparation believing that ‘the principal’s development must be linked directly to his or her role in real school settings’. (Erlandson, 1997) Within this ‘real school setting’ a later paper describing the results of a survey of principals in America sees ‘the principal’s apprentice, the assistant principal, as a special case of mentoring’...seeing it as ‘key to the case and to the issues in the area of administrative leadership preparation’ (Mullen and Cairns, 2001).

2.7 Summary

It should be a clear aim within a school that the deputy is going to be prepared for headship (Kent, 1989). All staff should be aware of this aim. The school also needs to ensure that the deputy’s needs as an adult learner are taken into account (Knowles, 1984). This aim together with an appropriate learning programme will allow the required knowledge, skills and attitudes to be developed. In my school all the staff are aware of my deputy’s desire for headship and that the work that she is doing in the school is, at least in part, to prepare her for that role. I am aware that as an adult learner, she needs to understand what she is doing and how this will help her develop. This will ensure she is able to take a full part in her own development. This forms a secure basis for deputy headship preparation.

The deputy will develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes that need to be fostered and this training should be directly related to the workplace (Lave and Wenger

1991), the importance and significance of the role of the headteacher in guiding the development of the deputy headteacher (Crow 2002; McIntyre and Hagger 1996; Luck 2003). These theories coincide to provide an integrated theory which will support the development of the deputy headteacher within their school ensuring that adequate and appropriate experiences are gained to support the deputy's development. The recommendation for practice derived from this is that primary deputy headteacher preparation should be conducted in a supportive school environment.

I act as a mentor to my deputy; we work together to ensure she gains the experiences and opportunities she needs, clearly situated within the school environment. If the preparation is rooted in the workplace and there is an effective relationship between the deputy and the headteacher, then the development of the deputy is maximised.

In this chapter I have examined the literature around recruitment, the role of the headteacher, the needs and current experience of deputies and how deputies should be prepared for headship. This clarified the problem of recruitment and poor preparation of some deputy headteachers and how this could have serious implications for the profession. The present situation for deputies in primary schools was described and suggestions as to how this could be improved were identified.

This review forms the basis for the research questions that aim to highlight the pertinent issues through the eyes of serving headteachers and from this to identify how this situation can be improved for deputy headteachers within the profession.

3. Methodology

3.1 Methodological considerations

In order to carry out an effective inquiry into preparation for primary headship, the most appropriate method for the research needs to be identified as researchers need to 'make informed choices about what qualitative approaches to use in their studies and why they are using them' (Creswell, 1998 p4). However, before a paradigm can be chosen, there must be an understanding of the terminology of research and to this end the meanings of ontology, epistemology and methodology are explored followed by an examination of established paradigms and finally the identification of an appropriate paradigm for the study.

An initial look at research methods seemed to indicate that the research world is divided into qualitative and quantitative. These, however, refer to research methods rather than paradigms and will be discussed later. Clearly there must be an understanding of paradigms before examining methods as 'questions of method are secondary to questions of paradigm' (Guba and Lincoln, 1998 p195) Most, if not all, of the paradigms below can use both qualitative and quantitative methods to collect research data.

Ontology, epistemology and methodology

The relationship between ontology, epistemology and methodology needs to be established. The hierarchical link is that 'ontological assumptions give rise to epistemological assumptions; these in turn give rise to methodological considerations and these in turn give rise to issues of instrumentation and data collection' (Cohen et al., 2000 p3).

It is often difficult to identify the differences between ontology and epistemology and there are times when they become confused. 'The muddling of issues of ontology (the study of being) and epistemology (the study of knowing) has been one of the key confusions in philosophy...almost always taking the form of ignoring ontology in favour of epistemology' (Spencer, 2002).

The Oxford Concise Dictionary describes the word ontology as the 'branch of metaphysics dealing with the nature of being' it comes from the Greek *ōn*, being the study of existence, reality. This leads to questions about reality, eg what kinds of things make up the social world and what are their properties? Ontology concerns 'the very nature or essence of the social phenomena being investigated...Is reality of an objective nature or the result of individual cognition...or is it created in one's own mind? (Cohen et al., 2000 p5). The study of the nature of reality leads to a study of epistemology. The word comes from the Greek word *epistēmē* meaning knowledge. It is a study of the theory of knowledge, e.g. How do we come to know things? Where does knowledge come from? 'This concerns the very bases of knowledge – its nature and forms, how it can be acquired and how it can be communicated to other human beings' (Cohen et al., 2000 p6).

In this inquiry, whilst interviewing headteachers in depth, it should be borne in mind that different ontologies may come into play; each person had his or own view or version of reality, both the interviewer and the interviewees; this acceptance of multiple realities should temper the work. 'Many qualitative researchers operate under different ontological assumptions about the world. Since each of us experiences from our own point of view, each of us experiences a different reality. As such, the phenomenon of multiple realities exists. Conducting research without taking this into account violates their fundamental view of the individual' (Krauss,

2005). From these realities, will it be possible to find out how ‘things really are’ and ‘how things really work’? Then only those questions that relate to matters of ‘real’ existence and ‘real’ action are admissible’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998a p201). On an epistemological level, whilst interviewing headteachers, it is important to bear in mind the relationship with between the interviewer and the interviewee, also one should be aware that knowledge will be created from the discussion between the interviewer and the interviewee; ‘researchers interact with the subjects of study to obtain data; inquiry changes both researcher and subject’(Krauss, 2005). Finally, methodology is a study of the methods of acquiring knowledge. It describes the ‘theory and analysis of how research should proceed and the processes through which research questions might best be addressed’ (Maynard, 1998).

Positivism, post-positivism, critical theory and constructivism

This leads to selection of an appropriate paradigm for this inquiry. These appear, at first, to be many and varied although further investigation shows that there are a small number of core paradigms, positivism, post-positivism, critical theory and constructivism, and then paradigms that are offshoots or variations of these, e.g. phenomenology, naturalistic study, ethnography and historical study.

In order to look at these core paradigms, it is helpful to see them in an historical context. Denzin and Lincoln (1998a p13-22) describe this as the five historical moments: traditional (1900-1950), the modernist or golden age (1950-1970), blurred genres (1970-1986), the crisis of representation (1986-1990) and the post-modern or present moment (1990-present). These moments give rise to the emergence of the basic paradigms described above. The traditional moment gave rise to the ‘positive’ research paradigm although a scientific method of research has been advocated since Aristotle. The positivist stance and research paradigm was, however, firmly in place in the social sciences by the end of the nineteenth century. (Hughes, 1990, Cohen et al., 2000) Researchers who wished to collect ‘hard’ data used, and still use, this paradigm. They were often scientists or mathematicians who used factual, quantitative data. This could be collected and analysed in a straightforward manner. They had a realistic ontology believing that they were studying things as they were. As an epistemology, they believed that the researcher and the object they were studying were independent entities and one would not influence the other. Their

methodology was to experiment to verify their hypotheses and they would establish careful controls to avoid contaminating their data.

Although these methods are still used today, researchers have accepted that the absolute nature of positivism should be questioned. During the 'modern age' post-positivism began to develop. Denzin and Lincoln (1998a) described post-positivism as a paradigm that kept the essential methods and approaches of positivism but allowed some flexibility. However, Trochim (2003) said more strongly that 'By post-positivism, I don't mean a slight readjustment or revision of the positivist position – post positivism is a wholesale rejection of the central tenets of positivism'. The ontology of the post-positivists was still realism but now a more reflective, critical realism that questioned the absoluteness of positivism and accepted that the reality achieved in the research would be only imperfectly attainable. As an epistemology, they now accepted that their findings would now only be probably true and that there could be some 'contamination' between the researcher and the object under observation. Their methodology was still empirical but the aim was to falsify rather than to verify their hypotheses. At the same time that the positivists were revising their paradigm, there emerged a variety of new interpretive, qualitative paradigms, phenomenology, feminism etc. that later developed into the critical, interpretive theory which developed the qualitative research project. This movement seems to be particularly relevant to educational research which is conducted on human behaviour.

Critical theory has the ontology of historical realism that reality is shaped over time and needs to be read alongside social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender factors. Trochim (2003) describes a critical realist as someone who 'believes that there is a reality independent of our thinking about it that science can study'. The epistemology of critical theory sees and accepts a link between the observer and the observed. Values are taken into consideration and the findings are value mediated. The methodology of critical theory requires some form of dialogue between parties and is dialectic in nature.

Constructivism has a more complicated, relativist ontology where realities are within a framework constructed by the observer. Rather than searching for truth per se, the observer is aiming for a more sophisticated and informed construction that gets as close as possible to reality. This reality may alter during the study. This leads to a

subjective epistemology where it is expected that the observer and the object will interact. The findings of the study are produced often as a result of that interaction. The ontology and the epistemology of constructivism are closely related and are often indistinguishable. The methodology is to develop a relationship between the investigator and the respondent. (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998b) In this study of preparation for headship, as a headteacher talking to colleagues, there was an effective working relationship with the interviewees before the interviews took place.

Chosen research paradigm

The structure of the post-positivist research paradigm appears to be most suited to this investigation into primary deputy headship in Bromley and in particular how deputies are prepared in their own primary schools.

The ontology of a post-positivist study is one of 'critical realism' and seems appropriate as it suggests that 'reality is assumed to exist but to be only imperfectly apprehendable because of basically flawed human intellectual mechanisms and the fundamentally intractable nature of phenomena.' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998a p205). During interviews with headteachers, the researcher strives to develop an understanding of the reality of the deputy headteachers position in primary schools in Bromley. However, as each headteacher will have his or her own views and own experiences, the researcher will need to be aware of these multiple realities, and the 'intractable nature' of shared experiences. Within a post-positivist epistemology and as a headteacher interviewing headteachers in a shared local authority, objectivity, though not abandoned, is assumed to be difficult to establish. It 'remains a 'regulatory ideal'; special emphasis is placed on external 'guardians' of objectivity such as critical traditions (do the findings fit with pre-existing knowledge?)' Finally, as a post-positivist methodology, inquiry is done in 'more natural settings, collecting more situational information and reintroducing discovery as an element in inquiry...soliciting emic [insider] viewpoints to assist in determining the meanings and purposes that people ascribe to their actions' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998a p205). In this study, Headteachers are interviewed in their own offices and are able to describe the situation within their primary schools and the interplay of the characters within it from this discourse, it is hoped that a shared understanding of the role of deputy headship will emerge.

As information has been gathered, articles read and conversations held with headteachers, this can now be seen as a study of deputy headteachers within their primary schools and within Bromley LEA. Though post-positivist in its structure, this research will have elements of a naturalistic study, looking at headteachers and their deputies in their own environments, trying to establish how they interrelate and interact with each other. From this framework, it can be established that the study would be carried out in a post-positivist, naturalist paradigm using an initial survey followed by in-depth interviews and a personal case study as research tools.

3.2 Research Design

This research began with a one item survey, initially distributed by e-mail to establish how many deputies in primary schools in Bromley were intending to apply for headship in the near future. This was followed by eleven in-depth interviews with primary headteachers. The interviews sought to answer the following research questions:

- 1 How were headteachers prepared for headship and did they feel they were well-prepared?**
- 2 Which experiences should be an entitlement for aspiring headteachers?**
- 3 Is there a preparation model that would facilitate a successful move from deputy to head?**

These questions and the data gathered will be interpreted, in part, in the context of Situated Learning and Mentoring theories. These are combined to form a theory for school-based preparation for headship, to support the proposition that the ideal place for deputies to learn about headship is within their own school and the ideal teacher is their headteacher acting as mentor.

Although the government has identified the need for deputies to be prepared for headship and then taken on the responsibility for developing deputy headteachers, the NPQH course that has been designed on their behalf is a national course and has little effect on the opportunities that are given deputy heads by their headteachers. This inquiry will identify the need for this work to be undertaken in primary schools,

define the experiences to which all deputies are entitled and will outline an ideal model that should be adopted by all primary schools as ‘the project of critical research is not simply the empirical re-presentation of the world but the transgressive task of posing the research itself as a set of ideological practices’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998a p273)

Following the interviews, a case study was constructed describing more fully the procedures followed by my school when employing a new non-teaching deputy. This example is used as it exemplifies good practice and supports the suggested model for the preparation of deputy headteachers in Bromley.

3.3 Research Strategy

Context

This inquiry looks at preparation for headship within primary schools in one London borough. Within this borough, it establishes the willingness of deputies to go on to headship initially by contacting every primary school in the Borough to find out how many deputies are interested in headship and secondly by a series of in-depth interviews with eleven headteachers. The study was carried out in the Outer London Borough of Bromley. This area has a reputation as a ‘leafy borough’ whereas actually it has a wide mix of socio-economic groupings. The Bromley LEA Ofsted Inspection report in 2003, described Bromley thus:

‘Although Bromley ranks 292 on the national indices of deprivation (with one being the most deprived and 354 the least deprived) it has sharply contrasting areas with some significant pockets of disadvantage that affect schools in particular wards. Overall, 14.1 per cent of primary children and 13.4 per cent of secondary pupils are eligible for free school meals, compared with 18.5 per cent and 16.9 per cent nationally...Eight per cent of the total population is from minority ethnic backgrounds compared with nine per cent nationally. For the school population, the Bromley figure is 8.4 per cent. However, percentages vary considerably between schools, with some having up to 50 per cent of their pupils from minority ethnic groups. Bromley also has a very large resident Traveller community, the largest in Britain.

There are 76 primary schools in the borough, 20 of which have specialist provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN)... All 17 secondary schools have post-16 provision.

Ofsted school inspection data shows that the proportion of primary schools in Bromley judged to be good or very good in their last inspection is in line with national and statistical neighbour averages⁶ (Ofsted, 2003a).

Sample

The following table shows the variety of experience of the headteachers interviewed. The headteachers were divided into two main groups, new heads with less than 3 years experience (NH) and experienced heads with more than 3 years experience (EH). Comments and quotations throughout Chapter 5 are linked to this chart by this nomenclature.

Table 3: Headteachers

Head	NPQH	Male / Female	Years as Teacher	Years as Deputy	Years as Head
NH1	Y	F	15	7	First term
NH2	Y	F	15	3	First term
NH3	In prog.	M	18	1 1/3	First term
NH4	Y	M	19	3 ½	2
NH5	Y	M	9	3	2
NH6	Y	F	25	1 1/3	2
EH1	N	M	28	2 1/3	14 (5,9)
EH2	N	F	32	3 ½	10
EH3	N	M	38	2	22 (3,11,8)
EH4	N	M	38	0	25 (8,17)
EH5	N	M	26	3	8 (6,2)
Average			24	2.7	7.7

For heads with more than one headship, the years in each headship in each school have been shown in brackets.

One pilot interview was carried out at the end of the summer term 2005. This interview was crucial to the study. The interviewee not only tested the formal interview structure but she also became the key informant (Creswell, 1998 p247). She was a new headteacher (NH1) and her descriptions of her experiences highlighted and modified the issues that would be raised with the other interviewees and altered the selection of subsequent headteachers who should be interviewed. Following the pilot interview it was clear that as a new headteacher she had not

⁶ Bromley's statistical neighbours are Bexley, Bury, Croydon, Kingston-upon-Thames, Sefton, Solihull, Southend-on-Sea, Stockport, Sutton and Trafford.

begun to work with her own deputy and it was decided to speak to some experienced headteachers to find out how they were preparing their own deputies for headship.

As most of the headteachers chosen for interview responded positively to an introductory e-mail, apart from two who were asked to take part, the question arises as to how representative these headteachers are of primary headteachers in Bromley. There are 76 primary schools in Bromley and two schools were looking for headteachers at the time of the interviews. The 11 headteachers interviewed represented 15% of the total group. I interviewed both male and female headteachers and the experience of the headteachers varied considerably, from heads of 25 years standing to new heads in their first year giving a broad spectrum of age and experience.

3.4 Data Collection

Short survey

Initially, a short survey of all primary schools in Bromley was conducted to gain an overall picture of deputy headship in Bromley. This small-scale survey consisted of a single question: Is the deputy headteacher at the school interested in becoming a headteacher at some stage in the future? Just as the instruments used in action research can be described as 'methodologically eclectic' (Cohen et al., 2000), so this project used a variety of methods to gain this picture of deputy headship in Bromley.

A questionnaire could have been sent to all primary schools in Bromley and an approximation could have been extrapolated from the returns. Instead, it was decided to contact every school in Bromley to find out exactly how many deputies were contemplating headship at some stage in the future. Most primary schools were contacted by e-mail, telephone or by speaking to headteachers at meetings. A conversation was also held with a senior adviser in the local authority who was able to talk about the ambition of the deputy headteacher in some schools whose headteachers had been difficult to contact. The adviser works with both deputies and headteachers in the Borough, runs a successful 'Preparation for Deputy Headship' course in Bromley and was able to give background information to the study. The

results of the short survey gave an accurate picture of deputy headship ambition in Bromley in October 2004. These results are described in Chapter 4.

Interviews

Following the short survey, carried out in the autumn term 2004, eleven primary headteachers were interviewed together with a senior Local Authority adviser. Originally it was decided just to approach new headteachers to ask them about their experiences as a deputy then later, following the pilot interview, it was decided that it would be useful to have responses from experienced headteachers as well who could not only comment on their own training but also comment on how they, in turn, are preparing their own deputies for headship. As an introduction, an e-mail was sent to all the headteachers in Bromley to advise them of the inquiry and a number of them responded, interested in the study and offering to take part. Two other new headteachers were asked to take part and from this group, a balance of experienced and new headteachers, as well as a balance of male and female were selected.

One headteacher was chosen for a pilot interview working through a list of structured questions in a formal manner. The formal structure was found to be uncomfortable, stilted and too restricting. For subsequent interviews, a semi-structured approach was adopted where the questions used for the pilot interview were used to guide the discussion but the discussion was allowed to explore the different experiences of each headteacher. A series of questions were still useful to initiate and stimulate discussion but they were not followed religiously. Also, questions were added or deleted as the interview progressed.⁷ The interview is an effective way of gathering data. It is 'an exchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest, sees the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production, and emphasises the social situatedness of research data' (Cohen et al., 2000 p267). During the interviews, questions were developed allowing the interviewer to probe in depth rather than having to adhere to the fixed questioning afforded by a formal structure.

During a preliminary investigation study, a questionnaire was used to elicit responses from school principals in America to questions about their role and how they were prepared for it. This gave an opportunity to try out the questionnaire as a research

⁷ The interview instrument can be found in appendix 1

tool and it highlighted certain themes that are developed during the final thesis. The questionnaire is a useful tool as it is able to provide information quickly and efficiently but 'the likely limited flexibility of response' (Cohen et al., 2000) can be frustrating because once replies had been received, further questions are developed. However, the use of the questionnaire was valuable in this situation, as it provided some of the questions that were developed in the interviews.

The interview approach was chosen as it was important to identify headteachers' own views on how they were developed as deputies, and consequently how prepared they felt for headship. Headteachers were asked to describe in detail their own experiences and these were recorded for analysis. Heads were asked whether they felt they had been given experiences that had adequately prepared them for the post of headteacher and also how, in turn, they are preparing their own deputy for headship. The aim of the work was to establish what activities were occurring in primary schools in Bromley to prepare deputy headteachers for headship and to understand how widely varied is their experience.

There are, of course, difficulties in objectivity when an interviewer interviews colleagues; and implications when one undertakes a study related to one's own personal experience. Denzin and Lincoln (1998a p58) say that 'using personal experiences for such a study is not *wrong* ... the researcher needs to be aware that... such experiences may give the study a particular bias.' The choice of the wording of the questions was particularly difficult. It was difficult for the researcher not to be biased and to ask 'loaded' questions. In a post-positivist epistemology, 'objectivity remains a regulatory ideal' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998a p203) and the researcher, also a headteacher, has to strive to ensure responses are open and honest. Although Cohen et al (2000 p27) note that 'doctors' consulting rooms and headteachers' studies are locations in which inequalities in power are regularly imposed on unequal participants' in this study of a headteacher interviewing headteachers in their studies, the status, and therefore power, was equal.

The interviews were carried out in each headteacher's office and recorded on a tape recorder. Contemporaneous notes were also taken to supplement the taped interviews. Once the interviews were completed, the tapes were transcribed using a professional transcription service and returned in Word format. The transcriptions

were converted into Rich Text format so that the interviews could be coded and analysed using Nvivo, a computer program that allows detailed coding of qualitative text.

Cohen et al (2000 p281) warn that 'transcription is a record of data rather than a record of a social encounter'. It is important then that these transcriptions are seen in the context that the data was taken. As a headteacher interviewing headteachers, the researcher was able to understand and correctly interpret the data from the transcriptions. Cohen et al (2000 p281) also warn that transcription has 'the potential for massive data loss' when interviews are transcribed. The tapes from the headteacher interviews were initially sent back from the transcription service as, owing to the imprudent use of a poor quality tape-recorder, some of the discussion could not be heard clearly. The tapes had to be burnt on to a CD and sent to a language laboratory in India to be cleaned up. Fortunately this was successful and the dialogue was able to be restored and subsequently transcribed. This was an expensive error and clearly demonstrates the importance of using good quality equipment.

3.5 Data Analysis

The data was analysed carefully to identify the issues that appertain to the preparation for deputy headship in primary schools. 'The purposes of these disciplined approaches to analysis are of course to describe and to explain the essence of experience and meaning in participant's lives' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998b p49). A careful and detailed analysis of the data, then, is vital to the value and effectiveness of the study.

The transcripts were coded into five main nodes and each was subdivided into subsections. Headship, for example, was subdivided into headship general, headship positive and headship negative. The section on preparation was divided into areas that heads needed particular support with or were areas of potential weakness in a new headteacher, e.g. finance, curriculum and personnel. Text within these coding areas was then grouped together and analysed for relevance and importance to the argument of the study. Comments that supported mentoring and situated learning theories were also of interest. Finally, the Nvivo program was used to organise the

data as it allows nodes to be related to other nodes so that sections and subsections can be grouped and arranged to support a cogent argument. 'The software helps to manage and synthesize ideas, providing a range of tools for clarifying understanding of the data and for arriving at answers to research questions' (Tappe, 2002 p11). The NVivo program was found to be an extremely useful and efficient way to code and organise text for this study. (Kelle and Laurie, 1995 p27) believe that 'the use of computer aided methods can enhance (a) validity (by the management of samples); and (b) reliability (by retrieving all the data on a given topic, thereby ensuring trustworthiness of the data)'.

The pilot interviewee became the key informant as noted earlier and her responses modified issues to be raised and informed the selection of subsequent interviewees. (Creswell, 1998 p247). Following the pilot interview carried out in the previous term, the headteachers were interviewed consecutively, each a few days after the other, over a period of several weeks. Each interviewee added to the knowledge accumulating until after the eleventh interview the identified categories became effectively 'saturated. Less and less new information was given that added to the understanding of the category' (Creswell, 1998 p242) Similar comments were starting to occur in the last few interviews. Further interviews would have added to the anecdotal evidence but would not have increased the understanding of the state of deputy headship in Bromley.

As the interviewer is a Bromley headteacher, headteachers interviewed were happy to speak frankly about headship. Cohen et al (2000 p279) implore us to 'remember that the interview is a social, interpersonal encounter and not merely a data collection exercise'. However, it is important to be reflexive and to accept and understand the personal perspective of the researcher; in this study, a headteacher and a colleague. 'for me it is about situating my/self in the research and the process of research in ways that acknowledge and do justice to my personal stance and to the personal stances of those involved in the research' (Savin-Baden, 2004). Headteachers were happy to discuss all aspects raised and all were open, frank and friendly. Cresswell (1998 p124) suggests that a researcher 'needs individuals who are not hesitant to speak and share ideas' and in this the headteachers were the perfect group. Headteachers interviewed were found to be interested, articulate and verbose. They

expected, as a matter of course, that the conversations were in confidence and their responses and quotations from their interviews have therefore been anonymised.

The issues of validity and reliability are not as straightforward in a qualitative study as they are in a quantitative inquiry. Denzin and Lincoln (1998a p186) state that 'conventional positivist social science applies four criteria to disciplined inquiry: *Internal validity*, the degree to which findings correctly map the phenomenon in question; *external validity*, the degree to which findings can be generalized to other settings similar to the one in which the study occurred; *reliability*, the extent to which findings can be replicated, or reproduced, by another inquirer; and *objectivity*, the extent to which findings are free from bias.' Although these are more difficult to establish in a qualitative study such as this one, I feel they must be considered. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000 p105) suggest the 'concepts of validity and reliability are multi-faceted' and Denzin and Lincoln (1998a p287) suggest that the term 'trustworthiness is a more appropriate word to use in the context of critical research. It is helpful because it signifies a different set of assumptions about research purposes than does 'validity'.

This inquiry looks at deputy headship in Bromley through a short examination of the number of deputies looking for headship and then by interviewing primary eleven headteachers. As all primary schools in Bromley were surveyed, this was not just a sample. The results were exactly correct at that period in time. The interview sample was representative of male and female as well as experienced and in-experienced headteachers. As there are seventy-six primary schools in this Borough, this represents fifteen percent of primary headteachers in Bromley. The headteachers gave frank and honest responses to the questions put to them and as (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998a p287) define internal validity as 'the extent to which a researcher's observations and measurements are true description of a particular reality', the results of the interviews give a valid narrative of the state of deputy headship in primary schools in Bromley. The point of this study is to highlight the weaknesses in the way deputy headteachers in England are prepared for primary headship. The problems with deputy headship in Bromley are at least in part due to the lack of national guidance for headteachers in how they should prepare their deputies for headship. This study has national implications or 'generalizability' (Cohen et al., 2000 p107) although surveys in other LEAs would be necessary to establish external

validity with any certainty. The results of the interviews will highlight the issues and the study will suggest an ideal model for how deputies should be prepared nationally.

Many of the issues and concerns were raised by more than one headteacher. This together with similar issues raised by Day et al (2000) (e.g. stress, staff, enthusiasm, accountability and vision); Garrett and McGeachie (1999) and Harris (2003) (e.g. Relationship between head and deputy), and Earley et al (2002) (e.g. budget and resource issues, governors, staffing and workload), serve to triangulate the results.

Reliability is difficult to establish in a quantitative inquiry 'indeed the premises of naturalistic studies include the uniqueness and idiosyncrasy of situations, such that the study cannot be replicated – that is their strength rather than their weakness' (Cohen et al., 2000 p119). However, it would not be difficult to replicate the interviews with other headteachers and although they would have different personal experiences, it is probable that they would express similar responses to the interview questions and to how they were prepared for headship.

The final stage is moving from analysis of the data to its interpretation. This is an important phase in any inquiry when 'qualitative interpretations are constructed' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998b p29). In this phase, the researcher makes sense of the findings, develops a position on the inquiry and seeks a wider meaning in the profession. In this sense, 'the interpretive practice of making sense of one's findings is both artful and political' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998a p30). The researcher must consider the accumulation of data in the context of the inquiry and the research questions. An understanding of the researcher's own position in the study together with the information gathered from the interviews lead to the 'interpretation of the culture-sharing group' (Creswell, 1998 p60). The researcher's own part in the study must be acknowledged as 'credibility in interpretation also demands that we engage with the issue of ownership of interpretation so there is a sense that what we are presenting are shared truths and shared values so that people's norms and values, including our own, are always evident in the way data are presented and portrayed' (Savin-Baden, 2004 p378). From the interview categories and within them the interviewees' contributions, the strengths and weaknesses of the current system of preparing deputies for primary headship emerges. The attempt is then made to construct a set of guiding principles that, if adopted, would lead to an improvement in professional practice.

4. Short Survey Results

4.1 Introduction

Rather than taking a sample of primary schools I decided to contact all the primary schools in Bromley, a 100% survey sample, to determine whether the deputy headteacher was an ambitious deputy, looking for headship in the near future; or a career deputy, not interested in headship but intending to remain a deputy headteacher. This gave an accurate snapshot of primary school deputy headship during the autumn term 2004.

4.2 Information from the survey

Of the 76 primary schools in Bromley, only 22 deputies and assistant heads were actively considering headship out of a total of 87 (25%). Initially, this seems a surprising low figure. If this pattern is repeated throughout the country, there are significant implications for the future development of our school leaders. Not only has a large proportion of our deputy headteachers decided that headship is not for them, but this also means that career deputies acting as 'sitting tenants' block the route to headship.

Primary schools in Bromley vary considerably in size, from a four-form entry primary school with nearly 900 children on roll, to a small village primary school with just 48 children on roll. The larger primary schools will often have two deputy headteachers. Some primary schools are beginning to make more use of assistant headteachers whose salary scale falls between that of a deputy headteacher and that of the highest paid class teacher. It is difficult to distinguish between the roles of the deputy and assistant headteachers because each headteacher defines their roles differently within their schools. As there are few assistant headteachers in primary schools in Bromley, I have considered both groups together when looking at the ambition of deputy headteachers.

The 25% of deputies and assistant heads looking to headship contrasts with 40% found in the survey of primary and secondary schools described earlier (Earley et al., 2002), 42% from a survey carried out in primary schools in Sheffield (Garrett and McGeachie, 1999) and 53% found recently by Mori who were asked, by the DfES, to replicate the survey carried out earlier by Earley et al. (MORI, 2005) Although the results from these studies were obtained from a much larger sample than mine, the deputies responding were self-selecting and the result could have been affected by 'volunteer bias' (Belson, 1986). I am confident my study was an accurate snapshot of deputy headship in Bromley in October/November 2004 because I spoke to headteachers or LEA advisers in this time and the situation in every school was recorded. Although the position in some of the primary schools surveyed has already changed, the snapshot was accurate at the time and I do not believe the situation has changed radically since then. Also, this survey examined primary schools whereas the other surveys cited looked at primary and secondary schools combined. It could be that secondary schools have a larger percentage of deputy headteachers who wish to go on to headship. However, this is beyond the scope of this study.

This result has importance for Bromley and for other Local Education Authorities. As almost all headteachers will be appointed after some time as a deputy headteacher, the number of opportunities for potential deputy heads is relevant. The more primary schools that have career deputies, the less career paths are available for ambitious teachers to gain the training and experience necessary within primary schools as a deputy headteachers for the exacting post of headteacher.

As contact with the primary schools was mostly through the headteacher, it was not possible to ask each career deputy why they were not interested in headship. However, discussion with headteachers during the short survey and informal discussion with deputy headteachers revealed a variety of reasons for their decisions:

- Impending retirement – Several deputies were in the last few years before they were to retire. Some deputies however, had a few years to go but did not want to take on the responsibility of a headship just before retirement. Some deputies were too young to retire but were leaving anyway, either for another profession or were just disillusioned with the job.
- Family commitments – Some deputies indicated that they had young children at home or were caring for elderly relatives and did not feel that they could afford the time to become an effective headteacher. The job was clearly perceived as very time consuming.
- Illness – Two deputies were ill, one seriously and although one was able to carry out the role of deputy, she did not feel that she would be well enough for the physically and mentally taxing role of a headteacher.
- Perception of headship – Most of the deputies who did not wish to become a headteacher said that it was because of their negative perception of headship. They saw the difficulties encountered by their own headteacher and the portrayal of headteachers in the press and decided that they did not want to be a school leader. They felt that the role was undervalued by society and by Government in particular.
- Pay – Deputies felt that the difference in their pay to that of the headteacher did not justify the increase in responsibility. Although no one enters the teaching profession expecting to be well paid, they felt that remuneration for teachers was reasonable, that for headteachers was not.
- Just not interested – Of greatest concern were the headteachers who extolled the virtues of their deputies but then added that they were not interested in headship. Three heads felt that their deputy would make an excellent head but that they could not be persuaded to apply for headship. One headteacher said that his deputy would be a very effective candidate but she did not want to complete the NPQH course.

Although this was not a formal part of my inquiry and the comments were mostly anecdotal, the reasons given by deputies for their decision to remain in post were similar to those found in the Sheffield study (Garrett and McGeachie, 1999). In that study they also found that deputies were concerned with stress, bureaucracy and that they would miss working closely with children. The James and Whiting (1998) study found six factors that had influenced deputies not to seek headship, role overload; contentment with current job; negative impact on the individual's family; self-doubt; concerns over public accountability and external factors such as inadequate funding and the scale and pace of bureaucratic initiatives (James and Whiting, 1998).

I was not able to find out when deputies made the decision not to apply for headship. It seems likely that when applying for a deputy headship, teachers will be interested in going on to become headteachers. If this is the case, then deputies will have decided not to become headteachers during their deputy headship. Although we cannot prevent illness or family circumstances, headteachers need to be aware of the image of headship that they are presenting to their deputy. Headship is a lonely job at times and some headteachers will only have their deputy to talk to. If they continuously complain about their job then they could dissuade deputies from applying for headships.

Last year there was an unusually large turnover of headteachers. Fifteen of Bromley's primary schools advertised for new headteachers. Most of these schools had very few applications. One of Bromley's school advisers informed me that the number of applications has dropped considerably over the last ten years or so. Whereas Governors could expect twenty-five or more applications for a post, now they are pleased to receive seven or eight. Most primary schools will interview after receiving just three or four applications. Howson, in his study of 2,790 posts reported that last year primary schools averaged just 6 applications (Howson, 2004).

Interestingly, from discussion with LEA advisers, it seems there is a hierarchy of popularity of primary schools rated by the number of applications received for headships. Both the largest and the smallest schools in Bromley receive the most applications. As headteachers' pay is linked to the size of the school, large schools will inevitably attract more applications including existing headteachers from smaller schools. The smallest primary schools attract new and younger headteachers who see

the school as a useful first headship. Mid range primary schools attract less candidates with separate infant and junior schools attracting very few. Recently, a highly regarded, mid-range infant school interviewed just one candidate. The hardest posts to fill seem to be the Roman Catholic primary schools. One recent vacancy received one application from the first advert and none at all from the subsequent two adverts.

Governing Bodies are charged by the Government to appoint 'the key figure in the school' (DfES, 2004b) However, It is difficult to see how Governors are able to make an effective selection for the headship of their school with such a small field of candidates.

Knowing from this short survey that the numbers of deputies wanting to go on to headship are in the minority in Bromley, I moved on to in-depth interviews of new and experienced headteachers to find out about their own preparation for headship and how they in turn are preparing their own deputies for headship. This survey provides a background against which the state of preparation for primary headship within Bromley could be considered and highlights the need to be aware of the level of encouragement and support that exists for deputies in Bromley's primary schools.

5. Results from Interviews

5.1 Introduction

In the short survey, career deputy headteachers in Bromley cited a number of reasons why they are not interested in headship; one of the main ones given is their negative impression of the job of the headteacher. They see their own head often struggling to manage a complex job; a task perhaps exacerbated by a lack of appropriate training. If we then believe that ‘the dearth of applicants for headteacher posts reflects the demands and pressures on heads to perform a range of leadership and management tasks that they previously have not been equipped for in their teaching careers’ (McEwan, 2003) then we need to examine those leadership and management tasks and determine the degree to which headteachers have been equipped to deal with those tasks whilst they were deputy heads.

In the following interviews with eleven primary headteachers in Bromley, I aim to examine where the strengths and weaknesses in headteacher preparation can be found. From the analysis of these interviews, I intend to formulate a model for the school-based preparation of primary headteachers that will help shape the work that

goes on within primary schools to produce effective headteachers related to and incorporating aspects of Situated Learning.

The ages of the headteachers in the study varied from thirty-eight to sixty and their experience of headship from two weeks to twenty-five years. In a semi-structured interview, they talked about their perceptions of headship in general, how they were prepared for that headship and finally, how they in turn are preparing their own deputy for headship.

5.2 Initial perceptions of headship

Enthusiasm

Heads were asked about headship in order to get a feel for how they perceived the role before focusing on issues of preparation. The question was simply phrased as ‘tell me about headship’. The purpose of the question was to ascertain how comfortable they felt with the role and in particular, what aspects they found easy or difficult to manage. The reaction amongst the new headteachers was refreshing, as they all seemed to be enjoying their new role. Their comments were immediate and enthusiastic demonstrating the obvious enjoyment they find in their new post.

‘I am embarrassed about how much I am loving it. I really love it and I love this school’. (NH2)

‘I’ve really enjoyed it, I was very pleased right from the start because it was the job I was looking for’. (NH1)

‘I’ve really enjoyed it so far. It’s just been four weeks but totally the right thing to do’. (NH3)

Honeymoon

Headteachers will often find the first few weeks of headship easy and pleasurable as ‘the community normally provides the new leader with a “honeymoon period” (McGrevin, 2004). During the first few months the head undergoes a steep learning curve as he tries to understand the culture around him and to understand the role he now has to assume. During this time, ‘the school’s culture and community are engaged in socializing the principal into “how things are done around here” (McGrevin, 2004). A new headteacher has to take up the reins of the school whilst

being surrounded by staff and children who know the school, its customs and procedures, better than he does. During the period when a new headteacher is taking stock of the school and considering where to make changes, the staff, usually trying to maintain the status quo, attempt to inculcate the new headteacher into the school culture. The length of this 'honeymoon period' may depend on how well the deputy was prepared for the post but the real test of this preparedness will come later in the post once problems begin to occur. This ability to deal with problems must be helped by the headteacher having experienced similar problems themselves as a deputy, either having had to deal with them personally in their capacity as a deputy but also through discussions with their headteacher as to how he has dealt with problems. Ideally the deputy may have been invited to sit alongside the headteacher whilst he dealt with those issues. I experienced this 'honeymoon period' in both of my headships. Apart from friendly overtures, both staff and parents left me alone for the first few weeks. Thereafter, I had a very steep learning curve once I began to understand the issues that needed to be dealt with in the primary schools and began to tackle them. This was particularly difficult for me in my first school, a village primary school in Kent, as I had moved from teacher to headteacher with very little training.

It is during this period that a headteacher requires help and guidance. The Government has realised this and has provided several programmes over time for new headteachers: Headlamp (Headteachers Leadership And Management Programme) that has recently become the HIP (Headteachers Induction Programme) and has which has most recently incorporated the 'New Visions' programme. Local authorities often support their new headteachers by providing a mentor from a local school to help the new headteacher settle into the post. Luck (2003) describes the value of mentoring at this early stage of a headteachers' career. He states that 'after their unofficial induction, new headteachers quickly begin to understand the responsibility that comes with the post. It will always be difficult to fully prepare a deputy for the total and final responsibility that is theirs as headteacher. It is also a time when heads begin to be challenged by staff and parents'.

'I found that because the buck stops with you and there are real anxieties, or real anger, real conflict and real frustration, you know, people tend to go to the guy at the top, so whether its parents or other staff or whoever have got something to say, they make sure they say it to that person, which is fine, but

that's been quite a strain and that coupled with the fact that it's almost a bit like being a teacher for the first time and your very first class test you out, they want to find out what you are all about. So, it's like that, but on a much bigger scale. Parents are testing me out and staff are testing me out - a lot'.
(NH5)

Power

By contrast, a number of headteachers found the responsibility of the post exciting as it is just this ultimate authority that they enjoy, being able to take charge of the school and to be able to exert influence on a number of groups within it.

'I just sort of liked the whole idea of being able to organise things and sort of move things along; the sort of contact you have with all the different stakeholders you know, the staff, the parents, the children. The buzz of it all, it's busy, isn't it. And I think I'm enjoying the fact that you just don't know what's going to come at you from one minute to the next. That's exciting.'
(NH3)

Paradoxically, I identify with both of these comments. It is a complex job that is both exciting and daunting at the same time. This question will be discussed further when the relationship between their previous headteacher and themselves as a deputy is looked at more closely. If they had a positive role model in their headteacher and their preparation was effective, then we might expect them to have more immediate enjoyment from the role and that this might be sustained.

The heads then went on to identify why they were enjoying the role. One of the main reasons why the move from deputy to head is a difficult one is that the deputy has no real responsibility of their own; any authority they have is that which is delegated from the headteacher. The challenge for a headteacher is to give his deputy some real responsibility in the school to help prepare them. However, it is difficult to totally prepare them for the fact that once they become a head, they have total responsibility for everything that happens in a school. The sudden change from no responsibility to total responsibility is the main reason why headship seems to be a daunting but exhilarating one. It is no surprise that all the new heads responded to this new aspect to the role.

Int: 'What have you particularly enjoyed about the role?'

NH1 'Power – straight away, it is in a way – it's control.'

It is this feeling of power that stimulates headteachers, encouraging them to change things in the school. That they are able to reorganise and redefine the school is one of the main attractions of the job although it is not fully understood until a head has been in post for some time. I believe that I was in post for a year before I fully understood the power and authority that I had within the school.

‘...you are in a position to make a difference at whole school level. As a teacher you have to work within the whole aims of the organisation but as a head you are able to shape those aims ...having the drive and determination to say “we’re going to do it, we’re going to try it this way”. (NH4)

Since the Education Reform Act 1988, the Government has taken an ever-increasing role in the way that schools are managed and run. This is one of the reasons that headships are becoming less attractive as headteachers are feeling that they have less and less authority to change and develop a school in the way that they would like. This means that rather than a headteacher using his own experience to decide the vision and direction for a school, ‘the role of heads in implementing innovations is more often than not a case of being on the receiving end of externally initiated changes’ (Fullan, 1988).

Strategic Management

The strategic management of the school is an essential element of the role of the headteacher; it is also the most difficult. Strategic management is a function of leadership rather than management as the headteacher formulates a vision and from this looks at how each aspect of the school will develop over the longer term. This can only be effectively learned by discussion with and working alongside the headteacher. Ideally, the deputy and head could work together to plan the strategic future by writing the annual school development plan. If a headteacher is to make real long-term changes to a school he must impact on the fundamental culture of the school. Ogawa and Bossert (1997) suggest that ‘leadership is a cultural phenomenon’ and that ‘leadership involves shaping organizations’ cultures and influencing the meanings that people attach to organizational events’.

In order to develop the strategic direction for a school, the DfES (2000) suggest that the headteacher must be seen to be providing ‘educational vision and direction which secure effective teaching, successful learning and achievement by pupils and sustained

improvement in their spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development and prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life; and secure the commitment of parents and the wider community to the vision and direction of the school’.

This is becoming difficult to achieve as headteachers are finding that the Government is taking more control of the curriculum. They no longer have the freedom to control what is taught in the school. Although the DfES document goes on to talk about the responsibilities of the headteacher with regard to Teaching and Learning, these can be interpreted as a requirement to deliver the National Curriculum and other Government initiatives such as the Literacy and Numeracy strategies. This is a coercive, top-down model rather than one encouraging headteacher professionalism and autonomy.

The more experienced headteachers were able to see that although their institution was in a state of continual change and under intense public scrutiny, their power as headteacher was different but undiminished. They realised that it was up to them to find a way to establish their authority within the school despite the perceived efforts of Government and the LEA to take some control away from them.

‘In the past four or five years, I have begun to feel that where the power is in education is, is within headship... and I think also the government and the local authority are beginning to recognise just how powerful we can become and I feel much more independent of the powers that be...so I am excited by headship now’. (EH2)

Influencing Others

The ability to influence the lives of other people was a strong theme throughout the interviews. Headteachers enjoyed the ability they had to positively influence the lives of many children but seemed also to see their ability to develop their staff as almost equally fulfilling. All the headteachers referred to the work they do with children as being their main focus.

‘I enjoy being able to influence, I think, the lives of a lot of people...I hope that what I am doing is helping them to grow and develop to be very successful adults in whatever field that happens to be. It doesn't matter to me whether they are going to be great musicians, or you know poets, or sportsmen, or just happy and balanced people but the fact that I can influence

that in some way is what excites me and probably what has always excited me about education is the fact that I am part and process of people growing and I like that idea of being engaged in that process. So, for me, that, I think, is my prime mover'. (EH2)

The Child

Heather Du Quesnay, ex-chief executive of the National College for School Leadership (NCSL), said that the commitment to enhancing the quality of children's lives is paramount and that "That is the passion that drives school leaders. Without that kind of fire in your belly, the job of being a leader can be very challenging" (Midgley, 2003).

'...my whole philosophy, if you like, is that the children should come out of the school thinking they have enjoyed their time in my school and they have done the best they can and to provide them with every single opportunity that I possibly can, right across the curriculum.' (EH3)

Headteachers were all clear that they were in headship to improve their primary schools and to improve the education of the children in their charge. They seem to agree with Fullen (2003 p29) that the 'moral purpose of the highest order is having a system where all children learn, the gap between high and low performance becomes greatly reduced and what people learn enables them to be successful citizens and workers in a morally based knowledge society'. It is important that as school leaders, we do not forget that we are there for the children. In times of conflict in my school, when there are disagreements with staff or parents about the way children are managed or disciplined, I have found, as a headteacher, it essential to keep in mind the interests of the child. Although this may seem obvious, it is easy to become distracted by the personalities of those involved in the conflict and to forget that it is the child's welfare that ultimately matters.

'I also enjoy making a difference as far as the children are concerned...if we motivate and we build self-esteem and confidence and autonomy, we get better and more confident learners and I would say that, at my own school, there has been a shift in culture. I do feel the children...weren't quite buzzing and full of, you know, 'joie de vivre' and eagerness that I think young children should be and that has changed'. (NH4)

The opportunity to work with children is the main reason why anyone chooses to become a class teacher and it is this interaction with the children that keeps teachers

in the profession. It is therefore understandable that one of the reasons why deputies did not want to become heads, found in the study of Garret and McGeachie (1999), was that they would miss working with the children.

‘...the reason I didn’t really want to go for Headship initially was because I thought I would lose the contact with the children and actually I found that I had more contact with more children ultimately and I quite enjoyed that’.
(NH6)

The amount of contact with the children depends on the individual headteacher. After some years in the classroom, some headteachers will be happy to spend time in an office environment but refreshingly, the headteachers I interviewed worked hard to ensure that links with children were maintained.

‘My particular style of headship is that I am quite determined to maintain the links with the children and what I get out of it is seeing the children are happy, the children are safe, as well as making obviously good academic progress, they have got to make good academic progress but my whole philosophy, if you like, is that the children should come out of the school thinking they have enjoyed their time in my school and they have done the best they can and to provide them with every single opportunity that I possibly can.’ (EH3)

Woods (2002) found that ‘Closeness to the children’ was one of the main elements of an ‘enchanted headteacher’. He describes how some headteachers can retain their enthusiasm no matter how long they are in post. He felt that their foundations were built on pride, caring, respect, sensitivity, optimism, and an overriding passion that their work makes a difference to children. He suggests that these may be fundamental foundations on which to build a successful headship and asks what the implications are for headship training.

All headteachers must now have regard for the Every Child Matters agenda. This is a new approach to the well-being of children and young people from birth to age 19 and require agencies involved in caring for children to work much closer together. The Government’s programme, ‘Every Child Matters: Change for Children’ has identified five outcomes and their aim is for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances, to have the support they need to: Be healthy, Stay safe, Enjoy and achieve, Make a positive contribution and Achieve economic well-being.

‘This means that the organizations involved with providing services to children - from hospitals and schools, to police and voluntary groups - will be teaming up in new ways, sharing information and working together, to protect children and young people from harm and help them achieve what they want in life. Over the next few years, every local authority will be working with its partners to find out what works best for children and young people in its area and act on it. They will need to involve children and young people in this process, and when inspectors assess how local areas are doing, they will listen especially to the views of children and young people themselves’ (DfES, 2006).

Staff Development

Heads found the development of staff to be a rewarding element of the job. They enjoyed the ability to change the way that their staff think and to be able to develop them as individuals. ‘Headteachers are often heard to say that their teachers are their most valuable resource. It is necessary, surely, to provide planned opportunities to develop that resource so that it becomes even more effective’ (Emerson and Goddard, 1993 p101). Personally, this is one area of leadership that I enjoy the most. It is very pleasing to see new teachers grow and develop into effective teachers and managers who are then able to share their expertise with others. The ability to lead a staff of professionals is probably the most important aspect of headship and seeing staff develop and then move on is one of the most rewarding.

‘The other side of it is that I take great pleasure in seeing teachers who are on the staff that are developing and moving on. I like to see young teachers, particularly NQTs⁸, coming in. I give them responsibility as soon as I can, and as soon as I’m allowed to, but as soon as I can I give them responsibility and I am at them all the time really saying “Come on, think about the future, what are you going to do in the future?” and I really like the idea of teachers who have been on the staff at any school I have been in, moving on and doing well and all the time I have been headteacher, there have been four deputy heads that have gone on to headships and teachers that have gone on from posts of responsibility to deputy headships’. (EH3)

Leaders

Although there is a lot of emphasis on leadership at the moment, good management is equally important. In their new framework for inspection, Ofsted (1999) separates

⁸ An NQT is a Newly Qualified Teacher. Their first year acts as a probationary year. At present they only teach for 90% of the time and they have to have regular lesson observations that are reported back to the Local Authority. The LEA decides whether they have passed their probationary year or whether it needs to be extended.

out leadership and management and comments on them both when describing the effectiveness of the headteacher in a school inspection report.

Fullan (1982a) identifies three main types of leader, the responder, the manager and the initiator. The responder trusts teachers' judgement, orders what they feel they need and is interested in keeping his staff satisfied. The manager keeps the management systems and the instructional programmes of a well-oiled school running smoothly. She monitors teachers' work closely and does not impose too much on them at once. The initiator is a 'go getter'; she will get any resources the staff need. She will also 'get after' teachers who are not delivering the curriculum in the way that she believes will increase student learning.

Kent (1989) has identified four main types of leader; the Teacher, the Educationalist, the Manager and the Salesperson. Later in the work he describes four main attitude types as: "I'm in charge" - The head is autocratic ... "I love you but I know best" - The head is friendly and considerate but takes all major decisions, ... "Well done everybody" - The headteacher develops a happy family atmosphere, ... and "Let's get this show on the road" - The headteacher expects teachers to take a full part in decision making.'

'I think part of the joy is actually taking people with you, moving your own thinking forward as well of course and being influenced by responses and reactions, but sometimes also having the drive and the determination to say "We're going to do it, we're going to try it this way and see how it is", knowing that probably if it's tried that way, the overwhelming majority of people would be receptive to that and will think it's a good thing'. (EH4)

Golman (2000) suggests six styles of leadership. He sets these out as Coercive, Authoritative, Affiliative, Democratic, Pacesetter and Coaching. These styles are used in the Government's Leadership Programme for Serving Headteachers (LPSH). We all have our own distinct leadership style but Golman suggests that we all adopt all of these styles to a greater or lesser extent. The style that a headteacher adopts is not important, what matters is the effectiveness of that style. It is worth noting that during a school inspection Ofsted do not comment on a headteachers' style only on its effectiveness.

Brighouse (1999) looked at the 'optimum leadership style'. He described this as the perceptive professional developer; the problem solver and the motivational leader.'

The perceptive professional developer sees weaknesses in the school and in his own leadership and promotes or appoints someone to fill the gap. The problem solver manages the day-to-day problems of his staff and 'keeps the show on the road'. The motivational leader inspires and motivates his staff to provide their best efforts in the management of the learning of the children in their charge.

'...teachers have fed back to me that they feel so much more confident and relaxed. I don't know why that should be, but I know that the way I am has had a lot to do with that'. (NH4)

Support

As part of Bromley's induction programme, the LEA arrange for an experienced headteacher to advise and support a new headteacher. Although the success of this programme varies depending on the people involved, one head made a positive reference to this work.

'...the mentor head was very supportive so that aspect of it worked really well, and the Head's meetings that Sue [an LEA adviser] did at the EDC, each half term I think it was, were really useful because you started networking and could ask advice from people'. (NH6)

An effective mentor for a new head could often be the headteacher they had as a deputy. A headteacher will know a deputy personally, their strengths and weaknesses and therefore will be in an excellent position to act as an advisor once the deputy becomes a headteacher.

Headship can be quite lonely at times and heads often feel that no one on their staff can understand their job. They therefore need to talk to other headteachers to discuss the issues and problems that they are trying to deal with in their own school. Heads found that the support of their colleagues was essential. In Bromley, headteachers work in small cluster groups of six to ten primary schools. These headteachers meet each term to discuss issues within their schools and within the Borough. These groups are important because of the isolated nature of the job and often this is the only regular opportunity I get to share problems and issues with colleagues. Also, if we have a shared concern, we have found that the Local Authority has a more positive response to our collective representation.

'...it is networks that keep you going and, you know, nobody knows what happens really. It is sometimes a secret world, isn't it, a headship is always a secret world because you can't explain to everyone what it is that you have done, you know, you have a number of staff who comes in and says, "Well I have just done this and this and this and this" and you think, "Yeah, and I have done this and this and this and this and as well as that and that and that and that". But of course it's a secret world, you don't tell people what you do because a) they wouldn't understand b) they don't really want to know and c) you have to, you know, sort of make it look as if you are not doing X, Y and Z and balancing the balls and filling the dishwasher as well'. (EH2)

I have found that this is particularly difficult when implementing a major change or dealing with a difficult staff issue. Often, despite trying to discuss and explain things to other members of staff, they are unable to see or understand the whole picture into which the situation is occurring. I have, from time to time, found it necessary to continue with a policy that is unpopular, knowing or hoping that staff will eventually come to appreciate the reasons for my actions. The appointment of a non-teaching deputy in my own school caused some distress amongst some senior staff members. A detailed account of this new appointment and the effect it had on the school can be found in Chapter 6.

Once a deputy is ready for headship, the previous headteacher, as mentor, should ideally be helping to look for a suitable post. People coming from industry often find this strange. A headteacher will often help teachers to find new posts, recognizing that in order to develop fully a teacher should gain experience of several primary schools. A headteacher will often suggest to effective teachers that they should move on other primary schools in order to gain this experience, even though they may be highly valued and the head would want to keep them. This is particularly necessary when a deputy headteacher is becoming ready for headship. A headteacher will certainly know the primary schools in the area and should be able to ensure that deputies are able to select schools that are commensurate with their skills, experience and aspirations.

Heads interviewed felt that the choice of school was important. None of the headteachers interviewed applied for any school. Deputies looked at the primary schools that needed a headteacher and chose carefully which ones to apply for, often speaking to their headteacher and any other colleagues who may know the school. The schools were selected according to the phase of the school, infant, junior or

primary; the size of the school, usually indicated by the number of form of entry to the school; and the position of the school, i.e. its geographical location which would indicate the socio-economic grouping of the families that attended the school and the success of the school.

'It was the job I was looking for...the right size school, the fact that it is an infant headship, and I was taking over a 'good' school – I didn't want my first job to be taking over a challenging school'.(NH1)

Although pay is an important issue with most working groups of people, it didn't seem to be an issue with the headteachers I interviewed. Most had had very small rises from being a deputy to being a headteacher. However, this is certainly a recruitment issue and one of the reasons, stated earlier, why some deputies choose not to become headteachers. Firstly, potential headteachers look at the salary differentials and decide that it is not really worth it and secondly teachers can earn higher salaries by going through the threshold to be on the upper pay scale or by taking on extra responsibilities.

'One of the teachers showed me their salary I remember once, and I think that I did the headship job for another £25.00 a day or something and I thought, well, by the time I paid all my tax and various other things, and so, I think, people sometimes say "It probably isn't worth it"...and with the threshold and up the spine and all of those things, you can earn a pretty good salary by being a class teacher. And I'm not suggesting being a class teacher is an easy job, but you don't have to go right up the scale to actually earn a very reasonable salary'. (EH4)

5.3 Difficulties of headship

Responsibility

The question 'what have you found difficult?' produced answers that are particularly interesting to this study as this, almost certainly, will be related to the preparation the new headteacher had for the role.

'Having to hit the ground running, I suppose, and having to come into a society where all the relationships are already established and there's lots of hidden agendas and it's all the unwritten stuff that you can't possibly pick up on and you have got to try and listen to it, but then make your own sense of it and not be influenced too much by what people are telling you, you've got to

listen to what people are saying and then make your own judgement of the situation'. (NH2)

Although there were a wide variety of things that each headteacher found difficult, one common thread was that they were unprepared to deal with the responsibility that came with the position. Heads were surprised by

'...the enormousness of the job I think, the fact that there are so many balls to juggle and every so often you get overwhelmed by it...all these things suddenly whirl around in your head and you suddenly panic that you haven't got a direction and you thought you did have and it all knocks into the feeling of 'am I able to do this job'...and you start to self-doubt...it's the enormity of the job and the fact that you are supposed to be accountable for such a lot'. (NH1)

This can be an almost frightening experience when, after a few weeks in post, the total responsibility of the post strikes the new headteacher. Headteachers quickly learned that they are responsible for everything that happens within the school.

'The headteacher is considered to be the pivotal figure in the state education system, one whose leadership qualities largely influence and determine the effectiveness of the school. In addition headteachers in England are the only official identified as being individually responsible for the administration and management of the school' (Male, 2001).

A new, inexperienced headteacher will suddenly realise that he is personally responsible for everything that happens in the school and the lives of, including the children, hundreds of people. When Hopkins (2003) investigated why there was a shortage of principals in America, he said that one principal interviewed referred to the 'paperwork, many mandates, dealing with parents and pupil behaviour as just some of the elements that make the job of the school principal too much to cope with'.

'Well, what I didn't anticipate and perhaps and I think a lot of new heads find this as well was the sheer force of emotional and intellectual strain, that occurs when you are in your first year'. (NH5)

Despite any preparation work that the deputy may have undertaken in their school, they cannot imagine what the effect that a headship will have upon a new headteacher's emotions and the intellectual effort it takes to manage such a complex organisation. I found the first year emotionally draining and intellectually very hard.

I had worked in Bromley since I started teaching but I moved to Kent for my first headship. I was in a new authority where procedures were a little different and had responsibility for a school that was in difficulty. Most importantly, I had not been adequately trained for the post.

Most headteachers will quickly develop coping strategies to enable them to handle the complex role.

‘My way of dealing with that is to, and I have to make lists; I’m a terrible list maker and once I’ve written it all down and can actually see how much, I’ve quantified it, and then I can prioritise it and then I can cope again. I can work my way down the list and I feel good if I can tick one. Always put something on the list that you’ve already done so that you can tick it off and that makes you feel good’. (NH1)

Headteachers soon learn to gain a sense of proportion if they are going to survive in the job. Parents and even staff will occasionally see the head of the school as a target for their anger and frustrations.

‘I am just used as a figure to vent frustration and therefore I shouldn’t take it personally. Life is too short and if I did carry on like this I would have a nervous breakdown or all my hair would fall out and, you know, I would be out of this career within two years. So, I come into it fresh this year with the feeling that I know things are going to get to me because they always do, but I am not to going to let them, I mean going to take things on the chin a bit more this year’. (NH5)

Financial Management

One of the first challenges that a new head encounters is the need to fund the programmes that he would like to put into place. This is not necessarily a grand plan but often, for example, it may just be the appointment of an extra classroom assistant to help in the management of a particularly difficult class. All heads found financial aspects caused them some concerns. They felt that education was under-funded and that had prevented them from managing their primary schools in the way that they would like.

‘You can have everyone agreeing with you and you still can’t move forward because there isn’t the money, the finance, resources, the person that you need, and there are barriers all the way. And that is what has always been the difficulty, is that the steps that you have to take to get to, you can see your goal, but the gates and barriers, which is why so many people give up and

you see people being depressed in either teaching or in headship, you know, you can see people saying, “Well, I know what I want to get to as an end result with this child, but, you know, I can’t get the statement or can’t get the support” and it’s the hurdles that are put in the way to get there’. (EH2)

There is a difference here between the lack of funding in primary schools and an understanding of how budgets are set. Their understanding of financial management will be examined later.

Int. ‘What have you found difficult?’

EH2 ‘Getting money... it’s the frustration of not being able to have the resources or to get people to support you in the way that you would want to move... you know what is right for your school but you don’t have the money’. (EH2)

Headteachers are required to have a vision for their school (DFES 2000) but any change or development of the school is going to require some funding. Most of the new funding coming into primary schools is to support specific Government initiatives. Free funds, that is funding that is un-hypothecated, are becoming a rarity. This means that the headteacher’s vision must be one of reorganisation requiring a shifting of finance from one area to another, rather than the creation of new staffing or buildings in the school.

‘...the decisions I had to make because of the lack of finance, particularly the redundancy issues that we had and that was particularly difficult’. (EH3)

Staff

Issues with staff featured in both the positive and negative comments from headteachers. Clearly the existing staff of the school had a significant impact on a headteacher new to post. One head was relieved to find the staff of the school ‘very welcoming’ as she had been concerned about this aspect of the job.

‘The one thing that you worry about, how the staff are going to be once you start trying to make your mark on something...they were, in some ways frustrated by the way things had been run in the past and so they welcomed my approach’. (NH1)

As is true of any manager taking on an existing business, he has to contend with the staff he inherits. Unless a new headteacher has the opportunity to become head of a brand new school, he will have to work with the staff and get them to develop the

school in the direction that he wants it to go. Heads found varied experiences with the staff that they inherited. Mostly they found that the staff were willing to support them but they were also elements of the staff that were concerned that the school may change direction and were keen to keep the status quo. However, this contrasted with other accounts where the staff refused to co-operate and caused significant problems for the new headteacher.

'my experience in first headship was pretty awful...the deputy went for the school...most of the staff actually wanted this chap to get the headship...I nearly gave up actually...they would say things to me like 'do you realise you said "what" seventeen times in assembly' and once I said I would organize sports day and it was a Year 4 race and one of the teachers wouldn't send her class out, you got all the parents there, it was a disaster'. (EH4)

In my first school I had a situation where the previous headteacher had refused to adopt any of the Government's new initiatives. I took over the school in 1991 and as the previous head was about to retire, he had not begun to implement anything from the Education Reform Act 1988, including the National Curriculum. However, the staff were aware of the National Curriculum through discussion with colleagues from other primary schools and they knew that they needed to begin this work. This meant that although they were a long way behind and that there was a lot to do, the staff were ready to change and together we made rapid progress to bring the school up to date.

Headteachers established themselves with staff in a number of ways. Firstly, they made a point of being very visible in the school; walking around, talking to teaching and non-teaching staff.

'There were lots of stony silences in the early days and it was working, I think it was continuing to "walk the walk and talk the talk" that was as much to do with changing that culture. I made it a very early priority of mine to show myself in a very high profile around the school, relating to children and teaching classes in the way that I would like to see it done'. (NH4)

This headteacher continued to describe how he had had difficulties getting his staff to adopt a culture of change but saw this as a challenge and within a short time has been able to get his staff on his side to work together to develop the school.

'...here was a school with a very entrenched culture...Experienced members of staff who'd been here for many years were absolutely sure of what they thought its own identity was... and here was someone coming in and saying this place is right for change...That was challenging'. (NH4)

Staff need to feel secure in their relationship with their headteacher. As a headteacher can make a considerable change to a school, staff can often find a new headteacher with new ideas rather threatening. It is this insecurity that sometimes makes staff uncooperative. 'Individuals need to be able to respect and trust the honesty and integrity of those who seek to exercise authority over them. A fundamental aim of good management must be to inspire trust and confidence and keep it alive and healthy' (Potter and Smellie, 1995).

'Schools that come unstuck, particularly when a new head is appointed, very unlikely to be finance, unless the school is in a serious situation before. Unlikely potentially to be standards because, you know, these things, they can drop but they can go up, it's nearly always about man management relationships and those are the things that are least well done, if at all, and I think that is the real problem'. (EH4)

Heads also helped to establish their own credentials by bringing in LEA advisers or external consultants who would help demonstrate to staff that the headteacher was moving the school in the right direction.

'You know you can't do it all as the head, so working with local educational authority advisers and bringing other expertise in to work with staff and look at planning and look at, you know, learning and teaching from that other perspective also helped to change the culture'. (NH4)

All heads found dealing with staff to be one of the most challenging aspects of headship, the need to deliver the 'hard message' has to be faced by most people in management. This is when a teacher is failing in his or her delivery of an effective education to the children in their charge. Two heads admitted that sometimes they have allowed a teacher to get away with substandard teaching for some time. Even more difficult to deal with is when a head discovers that the previous headteacher had allowed staff to get away with poor performance.

'I think the other thing that had been challenging is that, you know, where you have to deliver hard messages...their teaching was certainly not going to fit in with the vision I had for the place and that was hard because we had to go down the route of informal capability and support structures'. (NH4)

Poor performance of staff needs to be tackled quickly. If this does not happen then a poor teacher will assume either that she is performing well or that her poor performance is acceptable. 'Poor performance that has been tolerated for so long now becomes infinitely more difficult to tackle' (Potter and Smellie, 1995 p74).

'I don't think I am very good at it, taking the bull by the horns, if we had a member of staff who was not quite up to scratch, I do find that hard...one of the areas that make schools really successful is not being particularly tolerant and I think that was probably a mistake on my part. I probably accepted aspects of teaching which I ought not to have done'. (EH4)

A new leader must go into his school determined to raise standards and improve the organisation. This should be part of the preparation work covered in his previous school. Clearly, if a leader is to become effective, he must refuse to accept poor performance from his staff. Heads must display a 'determined action to confront teachers who do not perform well enough' (Ofsted, 2003b).

5.4 Preparation for primary headship

The heads were asked to consider the experiences and opportunities that they had in their post as deputy and to separate those from the work they completed on the NPQH course. Heads talked about the support and preparation they received from their Local Authority. 'Headship has sometimes been described as a lonely position. It may well become lonelier... The demands... may well be accompanied by an increase in occupational stress unless appropriate forms of support and development are constructed.' (West, 1989 p201) Although the headteachers interviewed were working as heads in Bromley, some had completed their preparation in other authorities and for some it was their second or third headship, often in authorities other than Bromley.

'I was lucky, I was in Lewisham at a time when Lewisham were working on a programme for developing headteachers...and so I actually was very well prepared for headship and I was well supported. I went on a lot of courses'. (EH2)

Some Local Authorities provide very effective preparation for primary headship training programmes for deputies. Bromley Local Education Authority, for example, has some systems in place to support its deputy headteachers. There are two main ways in which they do this: Firstly, Preparation for Primary Headship is a local course that looks at research, and standards, invites speakers, and prepares deputies for headship interviews; and secondly termly 'Forums' for deputy headteachers have been established where current issues around school leadership and education are discussed. When run effectively and regularly, the support from Local Education Authorities provide a very effective augmentation of the work deputies complete in school and the work they undertake on the NPQH course. In Somerset, for example, the LEA are modifying the Standards for Headteachers (DfES 2000), producing standards for deputy headteachers, attempting to provide a benchmark for their work (Somerset 2001).

Although some new headteachers were able to turn to their previous headteacher for advice and support, these seemed to be in the minority. For new headteachers to the Borough, it took time to establish themselves with local networks of headteachers and so new headteachers tend to look to the Local Authority to provide them with the help, advice and support they need during the first few months of their headship. This is a very vulnerable time and mostly, headteachers felt that Bromley was not providing the support for new headteachers that they felt they needed.

'... when I came in to Bromley and looked at what was going on here, I recognized then how incredibly fortunate I have been because there was nothing going on here and at that time everyone who was being appointed to headship was being appointed from outside the borough and there was a lot of frustration within the borough because there was no support'. (EH2)

For some headteachers, the 'honeymoon period' (McGrevin, 2004) did not last long. There can only be this respite if a school is relatively stable. Sometimes heads join their new school at a difficult time and need support from the beginning. At these times headteachers will usually turn to the Local Authority for support. Some of the headteachers interviewed did not find the LEA was offering the support they needed.

'...OFSTED came within the first 5 weeks and I didn't actually feel that I'd got any support from the Authority'. (NH6)

Once a headteacher is appointed, they are often left to themselves with little guidance or support. Local Authorities need to take more care to provide support for new headteachers especially if new heads are faced with situations in their first few weeks that even experienced headteachers would find difficult. When I took over my first headship in Kent, the LEA appointed advisers who were to act as a 'critical friend' to new headteachers. I had a good relationship with my adviser and found this very beneficial. I was able to use him as a sounding board to test my ideas for developing the school.

Headteachers interviewed also identified a possible role for Local Authorities when deputies are preparing for headship. Clearly, every school is different from its socio-economic catchment area to the way the school is led and managed by the headteacher. LEAs could arrange for deputy heads to visit or work in other primary schools besides their own which would give them an understanding of the role wider than that which can be had in one school.

'As a deputy head, you should be allowed to visit four or five schools and spend a week working alongside the head and just see how the head manages their school in their environment and you don't need to model that because you are going to be different'. (EH4)

It was also suggested that if not the LEA, then perhaps this could be arranged as part of the NPQH course as it is often difficult for individual primary schools to afford to release a deputy in this way.

'I knew that I lacked experience of different types of schools, and one thing I wanted to do when I first started NPQH was to shadow other deputies or work in other primary schools and get a range of experience and that never happened. It would have been extremely difficult, it was hard to be relieved from my school because it was hard to get supply teachers, because it was hard to afford it'. (NH1)

Relationship between deputy and headteacher

Heads also talked about the work they did in school. In almost every case, they wanted to talk about the relationship they had had with their previous headteacher. This was a similar response to that experienced in the Sheffield study where it was found that 'the newly appointed heads all acknowledged the role of their previous heads in providing opportunities for them' (Garrett and McGeachie, 1999). Heads I

interviewed were clearly and understandably influenced by their headteacher and this is an area where heads seemed to feel quite passionate.

‘I was very well prepared, I think, because of all the experiences I had at [my previous school] and the other experiences that I had before that. I think I was very well prepared for headship and I am not actually finding this anymore difficult than the job that I was doing before, which I equally loved’. (NH2)

This new headteacher clearly had had a positive experience as a deputy headteacher. Her head had been both a mentor and a coach to her; giving her exactly the sort of experiences she needed to become a headteacher. In a good mentoring programme, (Bova, 1987, Hagger et al., 1995, Parsloe, 1995) headteachers themselves get pleasure through the development of their deputy. Seeing a deputy grow and eventually become a headteacher is a fulfilling aspect of headship.

‘Also a lot of people get personal pleasure out of developing individuals; certainly that was how [my head] used to be, she just loved to see her deputies go on to be a head. That was her goal in life. And it was a personal thing; no one ever said that to her, that what you’ve got to do as a good head is to train your deputy head’. (NH1)

Many headteachers form close working relationships with their deputies, and for some headteachers it is an opportunity to find a professional equal who is able and willing to debate educational issues. ‘When actively engaged in reflective dialogue, adults become more complex in their thinking about the world, more respectful of diverse perspectives and more flexible and open toward new experiences. Personal and professional learning require an interactive professional culture if adults are to engage with one another in the processes of growth and development’ (Lambert, 2003 p10).

‘...we would sit up, sometimes long into the night, you know, and just talk education. The chance to work with someone who valued you in that way I think was tremendous and it is what I try to do with my own deputies’. (NH4)

NH4 evidently valued the opportunity to develop this relationship with his headteacher and it is most pleasing to note that he is in turn developing this relationship with his own deputies. He also felt that his development towards the role of the headteacher was a continuous process; that his headteacher was taking every opportunity to prepare him for headship.

'I mean, and it's about having a supportive boss who's always grooming me for the leadership role'. (NH4)

The discussions between deputy heads and their headteachers need to be more than the superficial, day-to-day management of the school. Deputies need to understand the thought processes that guide a headteacher's decision-making. They need to understand the philosophy that guides the headteacher's approach to the leadership and management of the school. By understanding and discussing the headteacher's educational theory, the deputy is able to begin to form her own philosophy of education which will, in turn, affect the way she runs her school once she has a headship of her own.

'...that enabled me to have quite long discussions with the head so she was able to involve me right in, in the middle of different personnel politics whether it was sort of politics involving governors, politics involving members of staff, issues raised, so I was able to sort of get a really good flavour of her philosophy on how to run a school. Which I am at liberty or not to sort of take on board. I think one thing I was able to do was to realise that she actually had a philosophy, over and above just the running of things rather than just being an administrator'. (NH3)

It is important, during a deputy headship, that the deputy has the opportunity to experience the management of the whole school. A headteacher will, of course, attend a meeting away from the school every week or so but if the opportunity does not present itself, the headteacher should go on school journey or arrange to work at home for a day or two so that his deputy can have the experience of having to run the school and deal with the issues as they arise. One of the headteachers interviewed, was able to gain valuable experience in running a school because his headteacher was asked to help out in another Bromley school that was experiencing difficulties and needed an experienced head to manage the school for a term. Just by not being there, the head was giving the deputy the opportunity to try out the role of headteacher for himself.

'...it was fortunate that my head was looking after [another school] for 2½ days a week, plus she was also out getting involved in her new school as well so that actually meant...that she was here less than half a week and so at those times whether I was teaching in the classroom or whether...I had a release day; it certainly sort of meant that I was more involved in the overall running of the school'. (NH3)

Probably the most important aspect of school-based preparation is the degree to which the deputy is involved in the management of the school and to what extent the headteacher allows the deputy this involvement. In the Sheffield study, the 'most cited opportunity from the surveys...was the chance to work alongside the headteacher in a whole school role as well as having real responsibility for leading and managing significant areas of school life' (Garrett and McGeachie, 1999).

'I did have very good preparation by being a small primary school, being Deputy Head at a small primary because of the fact that you can't help but be involved in every aspect of the school because it's a small school. Everybody does everything, so I knew about headship, I knew about finances, I knew about governors, you know, I was on every committee, so I had fingers in lots of pies and I could see direct correlation between finance and the school and things like that'. (NH1)

Although in the above quotation the size of the school appears to be a factor, it is the attitude of the headteacher towards his deputy that allows her to be involved in all the aspects of school management mentioned. It is how the headteacher perceives his deputy that is crucial here.

'I think this is absolute key, I was given the opportunity to be the kind of deputy headteacher that I think the DFES or NCSL or NPQH, from what I believe, would have been espousing, the sort of deputy headteacher who's not the white boards and rotas deputy headteacher and the jobs that other people don't want to do deputy headteacher, the dog's body, but the deputy headteacher who genuinely is valued as part of the leadership team and is given opportunities for CPD [Continuing Professional Development], often alongside the headteacher, is given release time to do the job even in a small school'. (NH4)

An interesting paradox appears here. Whether a headteacher feels prepared for the post is not always the same as how they were actually prepared in practice. One head, for example considered that he was poorly prepared, as he had had an ineffective headteacher who had pushed almost every part of her job on to him so that he felt overburdened. Interestingly this had given him good preparation for the post of headteacher even if it wasn't managed in the most comfortable way. Heads can provide preparation almost by default - by setting a bad example.

'I suppose I spent a lot of time kind of thinking, watching my headteacher and thinking, right that's what I must not do, so I must remember not to do it

like that and the thing that I came in with was that I wanted people to be able to get on with their jobs without me interfering all the time'. (NH5)

Unprepared

Some headteachers, though, were clearly unprepared for the role and for them the new job was made much more difficult. This first example seems to show that the headteacher was aware that the deputy should be released and that she should have some experience in charge of the school. Evidently, this didn't happen. It is easy for a deputy's release days to be lost or used in some other way; for example, a member of staff can be suddenly off sick and so the deputy is asked to use her day to act as a supply teacher. A school should not use a deputy's release day for sickness cover. If a teacher is off sick in my school, the deputy will often take the class until a supply teacher can get into school. This head indicates the importance of being able to work alongside the headteacher as was mentioned earlier but for her, the planned release time was of little value. Just giving deputies release time is not sufficient; they need a planned programme to develop their skills and knowledge.

'The idea was that I would be released for a couple of days a week from my class to actually work alongside the headteacher but that didn't happen. So I didn't really, you know when she went out for the day I would sit in her office and start going through paperwork and stuff but it wasn't, you know I wasn't working alongside anybody so it was a bit of a hit in the dark'. (EH5)

The use of the deputy's time is one of the main concerns. Headteachers will often give a deputy management tasks to complete during her release time. These are often low-grade tasks that could be undertaken by an administrative assistant. These tasks do not to raise the profile of the deputy in the school, make best use of the talents and experience of the deputy and certainly will not prepare the deputy for headship.

'...during my release time I had to count up all the registers and send the letters out to parents about lateness and poor attendance and things and I said 'Don't the office do this kind of thing?' and was told 'No, it's your job' and so I just felt like I was a very expensive paper clipper really. Oh, and then I had the wonderful job of cutting up all the class lists every week for the draw for the person who was to win the punctuality prize each week'. (NH6)

Headteachers need to share their leadership tasks and responsibilities with the deputy headteacher as 'in this complex, fast-paced world, leadership cannot rest on the

shoulders of the few. The burden is too great. In highly complex, knowledge-based organisations, everyone's intelligence is needed to help the organisation to flex, respond, regroup and retool in the face of unpredictable and sometimes overwhelming demands' (Hargreaves and Fink, 2003 p443). However, not all headteachers were given the opportunity to share the leadership of the school when they were deputies. In the worst example, a head reported that when he was a deputy he was not given any non-contact time; and was given no management tasks at all in the school and most seriously was not given any of the headteacher's time to discuss the role of the head.

'So, the preparation for headship, it was more that, I don't know, you taught a class and you were there if a headteacher was away. There was no.... to answer your question simply, there was no preparation for headship, zero'. (EH3)

This was similar to my own experience. As a deputy, I was not given any non-contact time at all. Also, my headteacher found it difficult to share leadership with any member of staff and as a consequence, I felt, in retrospect, that I was poorly prepared for headship. It is fair to say though that EH3 and I were deputies some years ago when our experience was commonplace. The situation in most primary schools has improved considerably since then.

Crucially, the success of the preparation work within school depends on the amount the headteacher involves his deputy in the running of the school. In the best examples, the deputy was seen almost as another headteacher working alongside the existing one. The notion of shared leadership not only prepares the deputy for headship but also strengthens leadership within the school. 'A feature of effective headteachers is the sharing of leadership responsibilities with other members of the senior management team' (Sammons et al., 1995). This 'sharing of responsibilities', delegation, is a necessary part of the management processes of any school. 'The process of delegation is an inevitable consequence of finite human capacity facing the extending complexity of organisation' (Paisey, 1981 p101). By effectively and honestly delegating to his deputy, a headteacher demonstrates trust and gives his deputy the opportunity for learning the role of the headteacher whilst in post.

According to (West-Burnham, 1997 p129):

‘Real delegation has a number of significant benefits.

- It is a real and direct demonstration of trust; it translates the rhetoric of trust into a tangible expression.
- It is one of the most powerful means of facilitating development allowing real learning to take place by doing the job’.

The effectiveness of the deputy headship seems related to the quality of the headteacher’s delegation. Effective headteachers recognise the need to ensure their deputies are fully involved in the management of the school and they need to ensure that all other stakeholders, staff, governors, parents and children, are aware of the deputies authority in the school and of their responsibilities.

‘It is actually [my deputy] who was the assessment coordinator, she was the inset coordinator; she ran the behaviour and disciplinary policy in the school. And once I give those jobs to the deputy, all of the staff know that is the deputy. I do not delegate, and this is a cliché coming up, I don’t delegate without authority. If I delegate, they have got the authority and I trust them to do it and touch wood, it has worked’. (EH3)

New headteachers are more effective if they have had the benefit of being fully involved in the school, in a significant capacity and with the evident support of their headteacher.

‘where I was able to do so much, I almost feel that I know I can do it because I have done it before, and I know I can do it, and I know how to do it...you cannot imagine what it is like to be a headteacher unless you have had the opportunity to ... actually be involved in some significant leadership stuff’. (NH2)

However, as can be seen earlier in the short survey, very few deputies in Bromley are interested in becoming headteachers. This meant that amongst the eleven headteachers in the in-depth interviews, only four heads were in a position to train their deputies for headship. This is the concern with career deputies who as ‘sitting tenants’ block the route to headship for others. Fortunately, the heads that were in a position to train their deputies were the most experienced headteachers and were able to provide a useful insight into effective school-based preparation for primary headship.

The two main factors to come from this area of the discussion were the relationship between the heads and their deputies, and the experiences and opportunities that were

given to the deputy heads. All four heads demonstrated good positive relationships with their deputy. One headteacher, interviewed with her deputy, talked about how she did not want to lose her.

‘I’m probably not a good example to talk to because I don’t want her to go and I will do anything I can to keep her here’. (EH5)

Interestingly, the head then went on to praise her deputy highly, describing the responsibilities she had in the school and how they had developed and improved the school together. She was, in fact, giving her all the experiences and opportunities she needed to become a successful headteacher. Although the head will no doubt be sad to lose her, she was clearly proud of her deputy and all they had achieved together, will ensure she becomes a successful headteacher and will be very proud when she becomes a successful head.

The best example of how a deputy should be seen in a school was described by a very experienced and successful headteacher who was about to retire. He clearly sees the need to give his deputy the experiences she needs to become a headteacher and is aware of what these experiences are. Finally, he understands the need for others in the school to understand his vision of the role of the deputy in his school.

‘The first thing I say to any deputy I have is, as far as I am concerned, they are the headteacher in all respects, because I tell them I am going to treat them as a headteacher, I am going to tell the governing body they have to treat them as the headteacher...so that governs everything I do with them. Confidentiality issues is a strange one in as much as you get people coming in and telling me, as the head, things that they don’t want anybody else to know. Now my view on that is that it is wrong that the deputy head does not know. It is very rarely that I keep anything from the deputy head because, well it is just dangerous and it is almost displaying a lack of trust, I think. So unless it is something of an extremely personal nature I will not tell the deputy but what I used to do if a teacher comes in or any member staff comes in or a parent or a governor, and says “I would not like this to go any further, I would always say “Yes, but I am going to tell the deputy and if you do not like that, don’t tell me”. And if they say “Why?”, I say “Well what would you do if I am suddenly not here...the deputy has got to know what is going on and I’ve said you have got to trust the deputy. So, there is not, there is hardly anything frankly that my deputies do not know’. (EH3)

Generally then, a successful deputy has a total trust and involvement from their headteacher. ‘The deputy should be taken into the full professional confidence of the

head' (Kent, 1989 p82) Unfortunately, not all headteachers offer the same support for their deputy or see it as their role to develop their deputy and prepare her for headship.

'I'm not sure that heads actually give it a lot of thought'. (NH1)

This is one of the most serious and damning comments of all and sadly may be more common than one might think. There seems to be headteachers who have not considered how a deputy should be regarded in the school and what experiences that deputy might need to prepare her for headship. I believe that the preparation of one's deputy should be a part of the training for new headteachers and should be built into the HIP (Headteachers Induction Programme).

Don't Go

This next comment also is a cause for considerable concern. This head identifies and discusses headteachers who come to rely on their deputies and do not want to encourage them to move on to headship. This is because they feel that it would be difficult to manage without them. This is a somewhat selfish attitude and sadly one that seems to exist in some primary schools.

'You know that for whatever reason, they might not want to lose the person concerned in the first instance. I have already found out there are some schools where the deputy head is running the school and if the deputy head leaves the headteacher knows that without them they would be in a real mess, because they don't have the skills and qualities that the deputy has. So, I think there are very few headteachers who are prepared to consciously see themselves as a developer of people in the deputy head position'. (EH4)

Ultimately though, it is the headteacher that will decide on and control the development of the deputy headteacher. Where the head is able to see that he has a responsibility to the profession and is keen to develop his deputy, there will probably be a successful and well-prepared deputy moving on in to headship but where the head is either not interested in developing staff or actively wishes to retain his deputy for selfish reasons, there is unlikely to be an effective new headteacher emerging.

'I also think perhaps too much is left to, this is controversial, but the integrity of headteachers actually, because if you happen to have a different vision from your headteacher, yes as a deputy you have got professional

responsibility to recognize that the head is the head, but it can be quite stifling and I know of several anecdotal cases where I feel that it is not the person themselves, it is the relationship with the headteacher that is actually stopping them moving forward'. (NH4)

Headteachers who do not prepare their deputies for headship when they are aware of the deputy's ambition, not only deny their deputy the opportunity to run a school of their own, but also they deprive the profession of a potential headteacher. To have a supportive management is an important aspect of situated learning. 'Denying access and limiting the centripetal movement of newcomers and other practitioners changes the learning curriculum' (Lave and Wenger, 1991 p123). I was very sad to lose my last deputy when she went on to headship. We were complimentary to one another, she was strong where I was weak and vice versa. Although I was very sad to see her move on to become head of a school of her own, I was also delighted to see her make this progression. I also now have the opportunity to develop a new deputy headteacher.

5.5 Specific Preparation

In order to examine the level of preparation, the interviews then focused on specific aspects of the headteacher's role. In particular, five areas were chosen that were central to the role of the headteacher and ones which if they had had effective preparation whilst still a deputy, would have ensured an easier transition into headship. Headteachers were asked how they were prepared in the areas of finance, personnel, working with other stakeholders, curriculum and the management of change.

Finance

The first, finance, had a strong and immediate reaction. It is essential that headteachers have a secure grasp of the school finances. 'Sound financial management and controls are essential to schools because they provide an effective framework for financial planning and accountability and safeguard the use of public funds (Ofsted, 2000). Within this important area, headteachers are charged with 'developing and implementing appropriate budgetary procedures for allocating resources in line with priorities; ensuring an appropriate division between

environment, manpower, and materials; monitoring to check proper disbursement and to ensure 'value for money' (Emerson and Goddard, 1993 p15). All the headteachers interviewed felt that they had not known enough about finance when they took up their new post, even though some had had partial involvement in school finances as a deputy. The successful management of a school's finances can be a daunting and frightening prospect.

'...you come into school, you might start in September and you are rolling on somebody else's budget until you hit a sort of January deadline and then you have actually only been in headship for a few months before you have to set a budget and may be for the first time you are dealing with over a million pounds in a very large school'. (NH2)

It is crucial that headteachers demonstrate good financial management if they wish to develop a school. 'School finance and budgeting are not just about spending money: they are also about a large number of leadership and management functions that help relate educational objectives and the resources that facilitate them' (Davis, 2003 p140). A headteacher has to work with a finance committee. This is made up of a group of governors of the school. It is quite possible that none of them will have any financial experience at all. Thus it is quite possible that there could be a new headteacher with an inexperienced group of governors trying to put together a budget that will take into account every aspect of a school's life, teaching and non-teaching salaries together with on-costs; maintenance of premises; books and equipment and administrative costs. Together these form a complex budget that a headteacher has to get right.

Each authority will provide some financial assistance, especially for new headteachers. Kent, for example has provided a financial planning booklet for some years. Each page relates to a different aspect of the budget and once the headteacher has worked through the booklet, the budget is planned. Oxford provides a similar service but it is computer based. Bromley has offered little help in the past and heads have had to get help from colleagues or work out their own system. Having had the experience of Kent's system in my first headship, I was disappointed when I came to Bromley to find that a similar level of financial support did not exist. I devised my own system using Microsoft Excel and have used it successfully for the last ten years.

Competent management of the finances of a school is an essential part of the job of a school leader and therefore it would seem obvious that all deputies should be given a good grounding in finance prior to them taking up a headship of their own. However, it seems that many heads, do not share the budget setting process with their deputy headteachers or help them to understand how school finances work.

‘I was one of the signatories, so I was involved on a very practical manner in financing. But at my last school funnily enough, even though it was such a well-run school, with such a dynamic head who understood about delegation, he kept all the finances to himself’. (NH1)

Some of the deputies interviewed had been given the opportunity to become involved in the finances of the school and therefore felt, in some part, prepared to take on the responsibility of the finances.

‘I had the opportunity to sit on the finance subcommittee of the governing body. You know, I had the spreadsheets and everything, I knew what the budget was and I would look at the budget and work and see where we wanted, you know, what priorities we wanted for the school’. (EH2)

Good financial management is an essential part of a headteacher’s job and deputies have been particularly fortunate if they have had the opportunity to work with a headteacher who has been able to manage his finances well.

‘I had quite a good understanding of the actual school budget and the funding of the school and how funding was allocated and also standards funds and individual budgets and budget areas, the importance of making sure that people stayed within their budget and that everything was allocated to the right code and that really to stay well on top of it and to really know what was being spent and who was spending it and why it was being spent. My head was very careful and I think that was a good lesson for me’. (NH2)

During the interviews, I became particularly concerned with two headteachers who, feeling neither prepared nor sure of how the finances of the school were managed, relied on others to manage this within their school. This has an element of risk as headteachers carry the final responsibility for the management of finances in their school.

‘[Financial preparation was] ...appalling. We talk about being fortunate and lucky, I have got here an outstanding finance officer, so in terms of the nuts and bolts, the VAT returns, the bank reconciliations, the processing of all the,

you know, I don't have to do any of it... With this finance officer, I say "this is what I want" and she says either it is possible or it isn't possible and if it isn't, we say "how can we make it possible?" (NH4)

Even an experienced headteacher thought that his role was only a strategic one when it came to finance and that it was his finance officer who should make the majority of the financial decisions in the school. This is a dangerous policy as he could leave himself open to fraudulent practices by the finance officer by relying so comprehensively on an administrative officer. If something does go wrong then it will, of course, be the headteacher that will be liable.

'I have to obviously see it all and know where it is going, but I see my primary function as the leader of learning and teaching and making sure that in terms of financial expenditure, we're getting value for money in terms of learning and teaching. And that is a much more, I think, my strategic angle on financial management'. (EH5)

All headteachers must take an active role in the management of the finances of the school. A deputy should also be fully involved in this aspect of the headteacher's job. This will not only ensure that the deputy is prepared for headship, but also that the headteacher is protected by having another senior person looking at financial matters.

Personnel

Secondly, I asked how they felt they had been prepared to deal with personnel issues. Generally, heads felt that dealing with these issues was one of their most difficult challenges. Headteachers have to take 'a major role in the appointment of staff; leading and counselling staff; providing appropriate staff structures and procedures for remuneration, management, development and appraisal; ensuring effective communication' (Emerson and Goddard, 1993 p15). The answers from headteachers seemed to separate into firstly, dealing with staff, which heads found both enjoyable, demanding and at times frustrating, and secondly, dealing with personnel issues such as contracts and payroll issues. As deputies, most had experience handling staff problems, disagreements or other inter-personal issues but none had learnt about the theoretical or bureaucratic side of personnel management.

'...although they [NPQH] do quite a lot of work as I say, with dealing with staff and handling difficult situations and all those sort of things, it's the

'nitty gritty' of actually how do you get all the personnel paperwork and so on sorted out. Which person goes on which grade and how do you write a job description, so it's those sort of practical things'. (EH2)

Heads tended to use their own intuition or limited experience of dealing with staff leaving them vulnerable to any legal threat that could come from an ignorance of employment laws. Staff, supported by their unions, increasingly turn to legislation to make their case against a school and the headteacher. Headteachers have found themselves in difficult situations having to deal with disciplinary or redundancy issues, again with no training. Heads need to work with staff and unions, 'have procedures for dealing with disputes... think through situations and be prepared to compromise, consider possible implications and acceptable actions' (Emerson and Goddard, 1993 p183).

'I think at the moment I think I would be fair to say that I'm still running on intuition rather than any sort of courses that I've been on, with regards to how to deal with personnel. Certainly this includes an understanding of the rights and legal requirements of an employer or the employee'. (NH3)

There are a wide variety of employees in a school, teachers, classroom assistants, office staff, caretakers and cleaners. Each of these groups has different contracts specifying different conditions of employment, hours and holidays. Within these groups, some staff are full time and some part-time; some permanent and some temporary. One experienced head decided that some knowledge of the variety of contracts that apply in primary schools was an important aspect of headship and insisted that his deputy had an understanding of some of the implications of personnel management.

'I have actually given her some of the contracts and said "Read them, word for word, read every single word in those contracts, make yourself familiar because they can come back to haunt you", even down to how much leave can I have, what is the holiday entitlement, when does it change, after how many years does it change, what entitlements don't I have in the first two years and all of that stuff. So, they get the real grounding'. (EH3)

This is an area that headteachers must take great care to get right as 'courts and tribunals will usually presume that contracts are intended to be binding on both employer and employee' (Emerson and Goddard, 1993 p67) New headteachers can be effectively supported by the NPQH course, as it is quite straightforward to set up

paper exercises that address these issues but support from the Local Education Authority is essential here.

‘The personnel module on NPQH was quite useful and the key things that I remembered was writing a person spec and writing a job description, and how to then work from that to get your interview questions and your criteria sorted out and all that type of thing, and just covering that at the time we needed it at [my last school] and so I did all the work for selecting my replacement’. (NH1)

New headteachers must ensure they have ‘clear and established policies and procedures... they must make clear to staff what is expected of them and how any problems will be dealt with’ (Potter and Smellie, 1995 p2).

Stakeholders

Heads also need to be able to work with other stakeholders in the school such as governors and parents. Any experience that a deputy can get working with these groups whilst a deputy will prove invaluable once they become a headteacher. Governors need to be informed and like to be involved where possible but the headteacher must maintain the day-to-day management of the school. Management of the Governing body is a delicate skill.

‘The other thing I found difficult is the governors, trying to get grips with all the different committees, curriculum, premises, finance, and the different personalities of the governors and the fact that the governors don't deal with things in the same way as I am used to them being dealt with at [my previous school]’. (NH6)

Governors are lay people whose only knowledge, until recently, came from the headteacher. Many governors only visited the school three times each year for the meeting of the Governing Body. Headteachers were gatekeepers of information and could effectively control their governors by restricting or filtering information about the performance of the school. Since the Education Reform Act 1988, Governors have had more authority and responsibility in the school. The Government believes ‘Effective governance stems from corporate decision-making based on comprehensive and accurate information about the school. Effective governance also results in clear public accountability for the performance of the school. Weak governance reduces accountability, removes checks and balances and denies the school a potentially valuable source of guidance (Ofsted, 2000). Now, with the

introduction of the Panda⁹, Governors have annual performance information about the school provided by the Government. Governors have an important function 'to act as critical friend of the head not only in terms of professional challenge but also as regards personal support' (Flintham, 2003) Headteachers now have to have an understanding of the legal responsibilities of the governors and of themselves in order to develop an effective working relationship with the Governing Body.

'I feel that I am getting up to speed with the governors and the laws surrounding the governors and governors' roles and responsibilities...I could have been more prepared because I think I should have gone to more full governors meetings'. (NH2)

A headteacher, supportive to the ambitious needs of his deputy will ensure his deputy attends as many Governors meetings as possible to gain an understanding of their respective roles in the management of the school. My current deputy attends all full meetings of the Governing Body and working committees as an observer.

'Get on committees...do lots of governors committees, they're very useful. Find out a lot about how governors committees work'. (NH1)

Equally important to the headteacher and often more difficult to manage are the parents of the children at the school.

'My first day I had to call the police because one woman turned up drunk and then wouldn't leave my office'. (NH6)

Although this is unusual behaviour in most schools, for some primary schools this happens too often. Parents have a right to be in school and instinctively wish to defend their children if they feel they are being bullied or treated unfairly. However, some parents do not have the language skills to be able to discuss this properly without being aggressive, abusive and even violent. Any headteacher will be rightly concerned about how they are perceived by the parents of the children at the school but for a new headteacher it will cause some anxiety.

⁹ The Panda (Performance AND Assessment) report is designed to help schools and inspectors understand how effective a school is in comparison with other schools using the results of Government testing (SATs) at age 7 and 11. The report is sent to schools to help with self-evaluation and to develop plans to raise standards; inspectors also use it when a school is inspected.

'The parents have been pleased with even the slightest small thing I have done, so I haven't had to kind of work too hard to please them and that has a good knock-on effect. I was worried the first thing I would find would be lots of parents, not making...making sort of complaints just so they could come and see how I handled them, just to test me out. And I haven't had that, and there have been a few issues but nothing I haven't been able to handle so I haven't had a rocky ride, I've had a very smooth ride'. (NH1)

Headteachers need to develop a relationship with the parents at an early stage, walking around and talking to them, and inviting them into school. 'No matter the size of the student population, when school leaders have a choice, involving parents primarily in the instruction of their own children is most likely to contribute to student growth' (Leithwood and Steinbach, 2003 p36). We have a large number of parents helping in school. Although it is good to have help in the classroom, the main reason is that parents see and take part in the day-to-day life of the school.

'Mostly they were fine because I made a point of showing myself around you know quite a lot being around before and after school'. (NH6)

Curriculum

As one might expect, heads felt comfortable with the management of the curriculum as it is the one area in which all teachers are well experienced. For headteachers, it is a crucial area as 'an effective headteacher is in most cases not simply the most senior administrator or manager, but in some sense a leading professional. This implies involvement in and knowledge about what goes on in the classroom, including the curriculum, teaching strategies and the monitoring of pupil progress.' (Sammons et al., 1995) Again though, deputies found it easier if their previous headteacher had given them the responsibility for managing a major aspect of the curriculum.

'I think I was fairly well prepared with that. Having worked in a small school, you to have to be subject leader for about three things and we went through an OFSTED at that school and I had to have three subject leader interviews. And when the literacy strategy first came in, in '98, you know, I was given the brief to run with it and try it out and present it to staff. So yeah, I think, I'm well prepared for that'. (NH4)

However, as headteachers they will have responsibility for the quality of the education provided by the school. The Government and Local Authorities now strongly emphasise the notion of Quality Assurance. They have always seen the role of the LEA advisors and inspectors in the Authority as providing Quality Assurance on

behalf of the Education Committee. This role has also been extended to headteachers. This monitoring role is also something that has been highlighted by recent OFSTED reports. Our LEA advisors have informed us that we are the 'on-site' inspectors and that we must perform the QA role in school. This is also emphasised in the Ofsted handbook for Inspection in Schools.

'...inspectors should consider the extent to which there is rigorous monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching'. (DfES, 1999).

It is imperative then that deputy headteachers are fully involved in monitoring the curriculum through observing teaching and the scrutiny of children's work so that they are able to take on this responsibility as headteachers.

'As deputy, I was responsible for monitoring the curriculum on a day-to-day basis and was able to lead the development of a whole school curriculum overview. I went on an Ofsted training course and was then able to observe teachers teaching and give them useful feedback'. (NH2)

Managing Change

Primary schools are in a constant state of change, mostly as a response to Government initiatives. The role of the headteacher in managing change in the school is an essential one. Fullan (1982b) described the crucial role of the headteacher in bringing about successful change. He outlined the need for the headteacher to be fully involved in the change and to lead that change.

'As long as we have schools and principals, if the principal does not lead the development of an effective organizational process, or if he or she leaves it to others, it will not normally get done. That is, change will not happen' (Fullan, 1982b).

He also described types of headteacher and how that will effect change in the school. He said that half of heads 'operate mainly as administrators and ad hoc crisis managers'. These heads were not effective in helping to bring about change. Other heads are either 'direct instructional leaders' or 'facilitative instructional leaders'. These heads do become involved in effective change with the latter type, co-ordinating the change and empowering staff, usually being more successful.

The experience of headteachers in managing change had a mixed response depending on how much they had been allowed to be involved in implementing new initiatives in their previous school whilst they were deputies.

‘...that was how we worked really, all through the management of initiatives. Where are we going to do now? What part of these government initiatives are we going to ignore and which ones are we going to follow? Which ones of our own are we going to do? I’d say that because my head was nearing retirement, she didn’t always want to follow initiatives. Sometimes they were driven by me. And so that was the preparation’. (NH1)

Clearly the success in managing change depends on other previously mentioned issues such as managing curriculum issues and the management of staff.

‘I have got better at getting people on board and keeping them on board and getting them to change with you rather than trying to expect things to happen too quickly.’ (NH2)

A difficult element of headship is the requirement to positively implement initiatives that heads themselves do not agree with. This is often a topic of discussion amongst headteachers. We are contractually obliged to implement initiatives from the Government and in order for them to be successful we have to sell them to the staff, often having to argue in favour of an initiative that we do not feel is in the best interest of the children or the school. Ofsted inspectors are instructed to monitor the implementation of these initiatives; therefore headteachers must ensure they are working successfully when the inspectors arrive.

‘I haven’t found it difficult to actually carry out all the government’s initiatives, it is just that I don’t agree with a lot of them and I find that quite difficult to ask staff to do things that I think are politically expedient on the part of government to score points for electioneering or whatever’. (EH3)

Heads felt that the onus was on them, when they were a deputy, to a certain extent to look for opportunities to develop their understanding of the headteachers role. Each deputy must take some responsibility for his or her own learning.

‘In terms of preparing for it, it’s really I think about trying to develop a role within your own school and you need to be, I think, pestering your headteacher about this that includes you in far as is humanly possible in the big picture and in the big decision making process. So if you are not a teacher governor, be an observer on the governing body, be invited to as many

different subcommittees as you can. Have the opportunity to push yourself forward in terms of leading curriculum presentations for parents, leading staff meetings'. (NH1)

Although this involvement can require a deputy giving up a great deal of their own time in order to become more involved in the school's management, all time spent in this way will prove to be well spent when the deputy becomes a headteacher.

'I was on the governing body, I was involved in sub-committees and sometimes that was very difficult, you know, because sometimes you would have a 7.30 finance meeting and then 9 o'clock you would be in the classroom, but nonetheless the opportunity was given to me'. (NH4)

5.6 National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH)

In this study I intended to look specifically at preparation for primary headship within schools and I did not intend to look at the NPQH (National Professional Qualification for Headship) course as others (Earley et al., 2002, Male, 2001) have already carried out detailed reviews of its effectiveness. However the role of the NPQH is worth mentioning in so far as it impacts on and interacts with the work being carried out in primary schools.

The NPQH qualification was introduced nine years ago to ensure deputies were properly trained for headship. The first version of the course was very bureaucratic and time consuming. However, it was fully funded by the Government including paying for deputies to be released from their classrooms to attend the course. After a few years the course was redesigned and it is now a little more accessible. The course aims to give candidates

'...the opportunity to examine their current leadership style, learn about the demands and challenges of headship, and through face-to-face training, online learning and peer group analysis are able to make changes to their leadership style before they take up their first headship post' (DfES, 2004c).

The NPQH course though effective, must be supported by experiences gained in school and the deputy's involvement on the course must be supported by the headteacher, completing the NPQH in-school tasks and advising where necessary in order for the course to be successful. However, it will not, on its own, be enough to

prepare deputies for headship. Completion of the NPQH 'is neither a guarantee of fitness for headship nor a guarantee for the holder of a headship position. Responsibility for the appointment of a headteacher will still reside with the governing body of a school (Baroness David, 1998).

Until recently, the government funded primary schools to allow their deputy to attend the NPQH course. This funding has now been cut which means there is a significant cost element to primary schools making the headteacher's support of his deputy's application imperative. Now each school that sends a deputy on the course must fund their deputy's release time from the classroom. This is often a very difficult expense for primary schools to bear. From September 2004 it became compulsory for all new headteachers to either have the qualification or, as the course has a fairly rigorous application process, it is acceptable to apply for headship whilst undertaking the course.

The National College for School Leadership was set up to provide 'a single national focus for school leadership development and research', and is seen by the DfES (2004) as 'a driving force for excellence in school leadership, both through the provision of training and development opportunities that meet key national priorities and through the dissemination of good practice and research findings on practical problems facing primary schools'. It has taken over the delivery of the government's national school leadership programmes including NPQH. In a study looking at the effectiveness of the NCSL, Earley and Evans (2004) reviewed questionnaires received from headteachers and deputies from both primary and secondary schools. From these, they express some concern about the effectiveness of the NPQH and believe 'we should be cautious about assuming that NPQH will actually improve headship preparation'. Looking at headteachers' and deputies' perceptions of how prepared they were for headship, Earley and Evans were not clear as to 'how significant the role of the college was in these differences in perceived levels of adequacy of preparation for headship as heads and deputies had cited other influences that they found more significant. However, from their study they found that 'there was some indication that the appeal of headship amongst deputies – one of NCSL's indicators of impact – may be rising'.

New headteachers often referred to the course without prompting and so I felt it necessary to include how they felt that the NPQH course had prepared them so that this can be compared to the work being carried out in school.

‘It did prepare me, and I can tell you that more in reflection than I could have told you at the time. At the time I thought ‘what am I doing? ... this is very dry...it doesn’t seem to be covering all the factual stuff that I feel I need to know... but in reflection I realised what was happening, I was I was being put into a position of thinking about issues as a head before I was a head...So if you were a head how would you deal with this? Think about this aspect from a point of view of a head. You are running the school – how would you deal with this?’ (NH1)

One of the most important aspects for training for new headteachers either in school or on the NPQH course is to see aspects of education, often familiar to teachers, but as seen from the eyes of a headteacher. This provides a different focus and deputies are often surprised how different things look from the head’s perspective. Headteachers mostly spoke positively of the NPQH programme as a piece of professional development. One of its strengths is to give deputies a wider view of education and through interaction with other deputies; it gives them an understanding of issues experienced in primary schools in different socio-economic circumstances.

‘It saved my career in education. I don’t know if that is reflection on how disgruntled I was as a deputy in that particular school. It refuelled my enthusiasm for it and I very much enjoyed it...The validation, I suppose, when you pass your assessment, is quite nice. They had a day when two relatively new heads who were doing it for three or four years I suppose, they put a pack together and they were calling it office management for heads, and they did a day where they said this is the reality, right down to how you organize your filing and do your diary and you know this, that and the other and I found that brilliant and really very helpful. I suppose that might be one such limitations of NPQH you could say it’s a bit “airy-fairy” at times’. (NH5)

Unsurprisingly, certain elements of the course were found to be more beneficial than others. Headteachers appreciated the aspects where students were given the opportunity to interact with tutors or with other members of the group.

‘I am bound to say that there were aspects of NPQH that were absolutely superb and they were the five face-to-face training days, the residential, the school-based assessment and the final assessment day. You know, these were absolutely outstanding features of NPQH, for me’. (NH4)

However, some heads did not feel that the NPQH was a worthwhile course. They saw it as a hurdle to be jumped in order to become a headteacher, just another Government regulation, rather than an effective preparation for primary headship. Although this was not recognised by others, they still valued the course.

‘It is very scripted, as all of the programs are now from government, you say this in this particular way, and you give a presentation and it is an active, interactive day, and they are fantastic pieces of learning. I have learnt so much from the way that people respond in the scenarios. I mean, there is a lot of role-play, there is a lot of interaction between the groups, working together, questioning, and raising questions, all sorts of active learning goes on. So, those sessions are incredibly valuable’. (EH2)

Just as earlier, new headteachers described the most effective elements of the course, others described the parts of the course that were not so effective. These tended to be the parts where there was little or no personal interaction. The NPQH programme is designed to reflect the growing use of technology in primary schools including the use of distance learning via the Internet. ‘The programme uses e-learning, including online discussion communities, to maximise learning opportunities for candidates’ (DfES, 2004c). However, this seems to be seen by some as a weakness of the programme.

‘Where I become much more critical of NPQH is the expectation that you will become involved in learning communities, in distance learning, in online communities that becomes quite frustrating because once you actually try to access them, you realise fairly quickly not many other people are accessing and you also realize that your tutor is not accessing them either’. (NH4)

One headteacher expressed concerns about how the NPQH course expects deputies to carry out projects and assignments within their own school. It is a requirement of the course that ‘applicants need to demonstrate achievements in leadership at a whole school level, usually as a member of the school’s leadership group or senior management team and need to demonstrate their motivation and potential for headship’ (DfES, 2004c). He felt that there was a danger that the deputy could become more concerned with the needs of the course rather than the needs of the school.

‘So, it should be your NPQH should be serving the school and not the other way round. And there’s a danger that you can actually make the school serve your NPQH and that isn’t in the best interest of the school’. (NH5)

Finally, the relationship between the head and the deputy is recognised as important for the successful completion of the NPQH programme.

‘The aspect of the NPQH that I did not enjoy was the school improvement project, but that was not because of the structure of the NPQH, it’s because of the relationship I had with the headteacher’. (NH5)

5.7 Summary

In this chapter I have analysed the results from the interviews of eleven primary headteachers to determine how they felt their deputy headship prepared them for headship. Although they shared many concerns with me, the headteachers, both experienced and less experienced, were positive about headship. The new headteachers felt excited about headship and the challenges ahead but it was clear that many of them lacked the preparation that would have made them more immediately effective in their new post. Also, most of them felt that there was not an adequate support structure in place in case things go wrong, giving them a feeling of isolation. It was felt that it is the role of the LEA to provide this and clearly they are not completely meeting the needs of new headteachers, especially those in challenging primary schools. Part of the School-Based Preparation for Primary Headship package received by the ambitious deputy should be that the advice and support of the headteacher continues into headship; that the headteacher mentors his ex-deputy once she is in post as a new headteacher. A friendly voice at the end of the telephone or the actions of a ‘critical friend’ will help the new headteacher manage her first few weeks or months. A new head’s dependency on a previous headteacher will vary with the character of the new head and of the mentor headteacher and the early success of the headship. For effective learning to take place, deputies need to learn to become headteachers in a supportive community of knowledge and practice. Lave and Wenger’s Legitimate Peripheral Participation (Lave and Wenger, 1991 p29) ‘concerns the process by which newcomers become part of the community of practice. A person’s intentions to learn are engaged and the meaning of learning is configured through the process of becoming a full participant in a sociocultural practice.’

Experienced heads, appointed some years ago, were mostly in place at a time when there was little or no preparation for the role. They, mostly, realise the deficiencies of their own preparation and are determined to ensure that their own deputies are properly trained. Those that had been fortunate to have experienced good preparation in their school seemed more comfortable about the role and the tasks ahead of them. Clearly their experiences were very different and they all felt that their preparation was not comprehensive. As all primary schools are different, there will always be aspects of the job that are unknown until the post is taken up but real management opportunities together with time to discuss leadership issues with the headteacher are invaluable preparation. Although no headteacher has a written programme for preparing deputies for headship, they all had a positive attitude to preparing their deputies and are preparing them in their own way, using their own experience and common sense. However, there is clearly a need to have some agreement on what experiences and opportunities should be offered to deputy headteachers in their primary schools.

6. Case Study: School Example

6.1 Introduction

I have constructed a case study that describes how my school appointed and then prepared our deputy for headship. The case study describes the appointment of a non-teaching deputy and the major responsibilities she is then given in the school (Hayes, 2004). I believe this gives a concrete example of the theory described in earlier chapters. Lave and Wenger (Lave and Wenger, 1991 p61) use a variety of examples to illustrate situated learning, midwives, tailors, quartermasters, butchers and alcoholics. Through these examples of situated learning, they demonstrate that 'any complex system of work and learning has roots in and interdependencies across its history, technology, developing work activity, careers and the relations between newcomers and old-timers.'

The following example shows the arrival of a 'newcomer' as a deputy headteacher into the complex system of a school environment. The 'old-timer' welcomes her arrival into a supportive 'mentoring' system designed to develop the school and prepare the deputy for headship. The learning 'takes place in a social world, dialectically constituted in social practices that are in the process of reproduction, transformation and change' (Ibid. p123)

6.2 The appointment of a new non-teaching deputy

The school described in this case study is a three-form entry primary school, where a new non-teaching deputy was appointed. Firstly, the circumstances that led up to the appointment, the appointment and then the appointment process is described and then secondly, the deputy headteacher describes in her own words the appointment from her point-of-view and describes how the new role fitted into the existing school structure.

I was keen to have the opportunity to train a deputy for headship and this chance came in 2001. My school was expanding from two to three-form entry and a three-form entry school will often justify, and to be able to fund, the employment of a non-teaching deputy headteacher.

I was anxious to employ someone who would have the ambition to move on to headship within a short time. The reasons for this were twofold, firstly we had a lot of work to do on planning systems and school self-evaluation which I felt required someone ambitious who would take on new initiatives and develop them quickly in a positive way and secondly I wanted the opportunity to train and develop a headteacher for the future.

The following is the proposal made to the Governing Body which detailed the appointment, clarified the aims and indicated how it could be afforded.

Proposal to employ a second deputy headteacher (non-class based)

Person:

- Experienced and qualified teacher
- Excellent class teacher with proven record
- Good interpersonal skills - ability to motivate and encourage staff
- Aiming for headship in 3-5 years
- NPQH to be completed in post
- Able to work under own initiative to develop curriculum and move the school forward
- Able to teach across the primary age range
- Positive attitude to change, keen to lead and support new initiatives
- Able to organise and manage their own timetable
- The ability to co-ordinate music would be an advantage but not essential
- 5 year contract

This shows that from the earliest conception of the post, it was made clear that I wanted an ambitious deputy that would move on to headship quite quickly. The person specification above makes this requirement clear by expecting the successful candidate to apply for headship within five years and to complete the NPQH qualification. These elements were carried forward into the advertisement for the post as will be described later. The suggestion that the deputy was given a five-year contract was dropped.

Job:

- The successful candidate will not have a class responsibility. He/she will:
- Support the headteacher in the management of the school;
- Manage the whole-school curriculum, ensuring continuity and progression through the school and into secondary school.
- Feedback to head and governors;
- Contribute to the development of the school as a member of the Senior Management Team.
- Organise and run staff meetings and INSET under own initiative where appropriate;
- Monitor and observe all teachers regularly and provide constructive feedback;
- Release staff to carry out co-ordinators' management activities;
- Ensure all documentation is up-to-date;
- Help organise the performance management programme.
- Liaise with SEEVEAZ¹⁰
- Manage projects, raise profile of school, and liaise with outside agencies.
- Share responsibility for school with existing deputy when head absent.
- Support teachers and co-ordinators
- Support new initiatives

This job description shows that, again from the original concept, that the deputy would have major responsibilities in the school. In fact, comparing this original list with the deputy's own description of her job later (6.2), it can be seen that the deputy is given even more substantial responsibility than is suggested above.

This appointment was a major change for the school. Although the Governors supported the appointment, the senior staff of the school did not. The main body of the staff were not overly concerned but the senior staff felt threatened by the change. I discussed the need for the post with them but they were difficult to convince and

¹⁰ The school was a member of the South East England Virtual Education Action Zone. This Action Zone consisted of 19 schools in Bromley and Essex. These zones were set up by the Government to enable schools in challenging circumstances to work together to raise standards.

two senior members of staff decided to leave the school. This was a difficult time for the school, the staff and for me personally. I had no option but to continue with the change as I had planned. I knew that once the new person was in place, staff would see the advantage of the appointment.

Once the governors had agreed to this appointment, I needed to place an advert that, I hoped, would attract applicants with the experience and attitudes that would lead to a successful appointment.

Deputy Headteacher (Non-Teaching)

Group 3 rising to 4; NOR 485 rising to 620; Salary L8 – L12

Required for September 2001, a highly motivated professional to play a major role in the leadership and management of this popular and successful primary school. The successful candidate will:

- not have the responsibility of a class but will be an excellent teacher who is willing and able to teach across the primary age range;
- take responsibility for the School Self Evaluation and curriculum monitoring programmes;
- become a member of the Senior Management Team, contributing to the development of the whole school;
- have a positive attitude to change, keen to lead or support new initiatives;
- complete NPQH whilst with us, aiming for headship within five years;
- have excellent management, organisational and inter-personal skills, be able to motivate and encourage staff; and
- be strongly committed to high standards of work and behaviour.

The advert attracted a large amount of interest. We sent off information packs and this resulted in twenty-four applications. This is at a time when primary schools, advertising for an ordinary deputy headteacher's post where the deputy has a class responsibility and teaches for most of the time, was attracting between one and six applications.

We formed a short-list of six applicants and I visited each of them in their own school. I spoke to their headteachers and watched them teach a lesson. Following the round of interviews, Mrs H was chosen for the post. She had a strong application, good references and was clearly an ambitious person. Mrs H was appointed to this school as non-teaching deputy headteacher in September 2001. She had worked for the Local Authority as a maths adviser for a year and wanted to return to a school environment. She also felt that the post would provide management experience and the appointment carried a place on my Senior Management Team.

As we had not had a non-teaching deputy before, Mrs H had to establish herself and her role within the school, which she did quickly and effectively. I believe a deputy headship should be a real preparation for headship and so, when she arrived, I gave her a number of major tasks to complete and gave her some degree of freedom to complete these in her own way. She was asked to manage the curriculum; co-ordinate and formalise planning, develop effective assessment procedures, act as liaison with SEEVEAZ, the South East England Virtual Education Action Zone of which we are a member; support subject co-ordinators to ensure they manage their subject and continue our move towards a self-evaluating school.

I asked her to investigate the Investors in People Award. She tackled this with enthusiasm, working with the assessor to ensure that we met the criteria. I was not surprised to find that we passed on the first assessment; which we later found was a rare occurrence. She has written several policies including Teaching and Learning and School Self- Evaluation and has worked with co-ordinators to ensure that all policies are up to date. She worked with me to ensure that lessons were appropriately monitored throughout the school. She organised students, acting as mentor; work experience placements; carried out risk assessments as Health and Safety co-ordinator; worked closely with Hayes Secondary School to develop effective links and took an active interest in developing a talented and gifted programme throughout the school. Having the opportunity to work with class teachers and subject co-ordinators, she gained valuable experience in dealing with staff issues.

Mrs H was a very hard-working and well-organised member of my staff and as such completed the tasks set efficiently and well. As a direct result of her work, the school is better organised and co-ordinated. She was an excellent class teacher and was able to act as a first-class role model for class teachers. Her knowledge of the National Curriculum and of planning and assessment requirements was comprehensive and ensured that we were well placed to meet any outside scrutiny and indeed we were able to offer support to other primary schools.

6.3 The deputy's perspective

Mrs H worked in the school for three years and I asked her to describe the experiences that she had as a deputy and how prepared she feels she was for headship.

'I was appointed as Deputy Headteacher without class responsibility in 2001. A major part of my designated job role was to be responsible for the whole school curriculum 'to ensure continuity and progression through the school and into secondary'. I was also given responsibility for school self-evaluation.

One of my first actions was to conduct a comprehensive and thorough audit of the school and the curriculum, using a wide range of methods, evidence and sources. I used this information to plan a programme of school self-evaluation and continuous improvement and also to develop the School Improvement Plan, based on the identified areas for improvement. The main focus of my school improvement work has been to develop the curriculum and improve teaching and learning through the development of planning, assessment for learning, strategic staff training and whole staff professional development.'

Responsibility for managing the curriculum is a major responsibility. Many headteachers would not give this level of responsibility to their deputy. However, this is exactly the sort of experience that is necessary to prepare a deputy for headship. It is fair to say though, that the level of responsibility given to a deputy will depend on their perceived ability to manage and cope with those responsibilities. This deputy was clearly capable of extended responsibility.

'To date I have led, and played a major part in, the development of a whole school, long-term curriculum overview, individual subject long-term overviews and individual curriculum schemes of work. I have established improved and consistent weekly planning systems across the school by discussing and setting expectations for content and standards and then monitoring the same and providing feedback. I have written a Planning Policy that records the policy and practice now in place. I have, in conjunction with my role as performance management leader and in response to the 1998 Teacher's Standards, linked performance management more closely with professional development and staff training needs and as a result I have arranged for individual staff, groups of staff and the whole staff as appropriate to receive relevant training or professional development opportunities. This has included strategic maths courses and a whole staff INSET, with discussion, on Teaching and Learning, the records of which I have used to prepare a Teaching for Learning Policy.

As a reflection of our increased commitment to professional development for all staff, I led the successful application for Investors in People. I have introduced and led the training and development of Assessment for Learning in the school and provided training and support on effective assessment record keeping. I have recently produced an Assessment Policy, with marking and feedback statement, to reflect our agreed policy and practice. Working with subject leaders, I have been responsible for the up dating of a number of curriculum policies to include recent relevant legislation and issues such as equal opportunities and inclusion. I have written and introduced a Race Equality and Cultural Diversity Policy and worked with staff to develop our Inclusion Policy. I have led and managed the programme for Talented and Gifted Children in the school, including working with secondary schools and the De Bono Institute and will shortly produce a policy to reflect our provision and systems for the more able. As part of our School Self-evaluation process and the Teacher's Standards Framework and also the concept of 'Leading from the Middle', I have led and managed the subject leaders and am providing training and support in how they can lead and monitor their own areas more effectively. I have developed a rigorous monitoring framework that I incorporated into a School Self-evaluation and Continuous Improvement Policy. This then feeds into the current SIP (School Improvement Plan), which the Head and I prepared together. I also worked with the Head to prepare a comprehensive S4 form¹¹ ready for our OFSTED inspection in June 2004 - for which we were fully prepared!

School improvement work undertaken since September 2001 is now embedded in practice in the school. Improved and more consistent systems for planning, assessment and the agreed long-term curriculum have already had a beneficial effect on continuity and progression and standards of teaching and learning. This is evidenced by staff interviews, staff evaluations, evidence obtained from thorough monitoring and most importantly pupil achievement. Another major project in which I was involved was using analysis of assessment data to track, set targets and also to put in place strategic intervention strategies.

During my time at the school I was also responsible for, and made great improvements to, Health and Safety, development of students at all levels and deployment of resources and support assistants. Just before I left, I was working with the head on Workforce Remodelling and Raising Standards and Tackling Workload.

The introduction of a non-teaching deputy headteacher was a major change for the school; however, I believe it was a highly successful appointment. The school clearly benefited from her experience and expertise and she made a positive contribution to the progression of the school. In turn, she was given the training and preparation that was necessary to become an effective headteacher.

¹¹ The S4 form is the Headteacher's School Self-Evaluation Form (now called a SEF). This comprehensive form is filled out by the headteacher prior to a visit from Ofsted inspectors and forms the basis for the inspection.

This deputy was appointed as headteacher of a primary school in Bromley from September 2004. She was interviewed as a new headteacher as part of this study and her comments on early headship and her perceived level of preparedness can be identified in Chapter 5 as NH2.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

7.1 Conclusion

The recruitment of headteachers is a national concern at this time. This is a complex issue with various reasons contributing to the current situation. The job has been made very difficult, often stressful, mostly through Government initiatives. Pay differentials are not remarkable and the job is unappealing to deputies. The Government continues to make more and more demands of its headteachers whilst the supply of aspiring headteachers diminishes.

This study sought to examine the work that goes on in primary schools to prepare deputies for headship. In order to identify and focus on the issues one London Borough was selected to examine closely. Bromley, in which the author is a headteacher, was the obvious choice for this study.

A short survey of all the primary schools in Bromley was carried out to find out the number of deputies that are interested in headship and this led into a series of eleven in-depth interviews that examined the nature of headship, asked headteachers to consider how they were prepared for the job and how, in turn, they are preparing their own deputies for the role. The short survey identified a surprisingly low number

of deputies that were interested in becoming headteachers in Bromley, just 25%; significantly lower than has been found in other surveys.

Interviews with headteachers examined their own experiences as deputies, and in particular, the relationship they had with their headteacher. A number of areas, important to the role of the headteacher were examined and strengths and weaknesses in the development of deputy headteachers in the school were identified.

Context

Headteachers operate in an education system that has undergone enormous change since the 1988 Education Reform Act. Many government initiatives including the National Curriculum, the Literacy and Numeracy strategies, have been implemented involving major change in primary schools. At present, all headteachers have to have regard to the 'Every Child Matters' agenda, (DfES, 2004a) a government initiative that brings together agencies that support children to ensure basic entitlement for children. The white paper, 'Higher Standards, Better Schools for All' sets out the government plans to 'radically improve the system by putting parents and the needs of their children at the heart of the school system, freeing up schools to innovate and succeed, bringing in new dynamism and new providers' (DfES, 2005a). This programme will have significant implications for schools. Primary headteachers will soon have to work with School Improvement Partners (DfES, 2005b), a programme being piloted in some primary schools and already established in secondary schools, where an external, government trained adviser works with the headteacher to improve their school and to raise standards. Thrupp (2003) is concerned with the 'post-welfarist' education reforms seen over the last decade or two' noting that these 'market, managerial, performative and prescriptive policies have clearly had many harmful effects'. The main problems include 'increasingly polarised schools and communities, a narrowed educational focus in schools and the loss of authenticity in the teaching and learning process... the distraction of existing teachers and school leaders from educational matters [and] the discouragement of potential teachers and school leaders'.

It is this 'discouragement of school leaders' that needs to be addressed by the government. Headteachers have to work within their school society but also under the direction of the government and this can lead to professional conflict. Thompson

(1999) describes how a 'principal's daily life is now taken up with mediating various contested views about schooling as everyone, it seems, has an opinion about how schools and the curriculum should be'. Headteachers have to continually defend their vision against the onslaught of others who have a different vision for their school. When the government becomes involved, the headteacher's role can be difficult to manage as they try to balance the requirement of a government that 'increasingly presents itself as certain' against what the headteacher believes is an appropriate curriculum for the children in his charge.

Policy makers strive to stay elected by promising sure fire, and short term fixes for all social woes. In education, the increased definiteness of strategic plans – All children will.... Schools must ensure.... Principals will provide – accompanied by the production of statistical data, indicators, targets and benchmarks that purportedly represent the reality of school life, become the daily stuff of principal's in-trays. Principals must deal with these plans even if they suspect that they are undeliverable and hopelessly idealistic and unrealistic' (Thompson 1999).

It is into this national context, we try to develop new school leaders. Unfortunately, deputy headteachers see the context in which they will be expected to work and see the effect that working within both national and local contexts has on their headteacher and many decide that the job is not one for them. Failure to address these complex and conflicting issues will lead to a further dispirited and diminishing group of school leaders, frustrated by the restrictions on their role and attacks on their vision.

Each school also has its own context and these differ widely from school to school, some very challenging, and the fear must be that headteachers that take part in government training programmes may not be sufficiently prepared for the circumstances that exist in the primary schools in which they will eventually work. The only way that headteachers can be effectively prepared for these primary schools is by working in them and having a leadership and preparation for headship programme that develops them within the school environment.

Complexity

The education system in England is hugely complex. In January 2003 there were 420,000 full time equivalent teachers teaching 8.4 million primary and secondary pupils in 25,500 schools (DfES, 2003). Each school is different, working with

different staff and within its own unique context. Despite their differences, primary schools also must work within the government system and the influences of economics and politics have marked effects on them. The governments stated aim is to raise standards in primary schools but to effect change in such a large system is very difficult. 'In the complexity of the educational environment...change in education, at whatever level, is not so much a consequence of effecting change in one particular factor or variable, no matter how powerful the influence of that factor. It is more a case of generating momentum in a new direction by attention to as many factors as possible' (Mason, 2005). Primary schools have to manage the government's 'attention to many factors' and ensure directed change happens. Ofsted then monitors the effectiveness of their work.

The important function of preparing deputies for headship has been left to each individual headteacher to decide. The result of this is that there are as many preparation models as there are primary schools. Some headteachers provide an excellent preparation for headship and some provide no training or preparation at all. The government has attempted to address this weakness by introducing the National Professional Qualification for Headship. However, in such a diverse and complex system, a single, externally produced programme, however well planned and executed, cannot match the needs of every school and every aspiring headteacher.

This training programme attempts to give deputy headteachers the knowledge and skills to prepare them for headship but it cannot be effective unless the deputy is receiving support and real opportunities for development within their school. In order to ensure that more deputies go on to headship, the government's NPQH must be augmented by a common agreed programme for the development of deputy headteachers within their own primary schools.

Culture

Primary schools exist within national and local communities and as such the 'culture within schools reflects the wider culture of the community and its history' as 'headship does not exist independently of the values and traditions of a culture' (Mahony, 1998). Over the last twenty years, primary schools have had many externally imposed changes that have affected the culture within their schools. Headteachers 'perceive a change from a culture based on the value of professional

education to a culture based on the values of business and entrepreneurialism. Such a culture emphasizes private sector values rather than public sector ethos... a concern for external rather than internal influences and a focus on visible and measurable dimension of educational processes rather than those that are less visible. (Foskett, 2003 p180)

The positive culture of a school is an important element of a school's potential development. Sammons and Elliot (2003 p518) highlight the value of 'positive school culture' and find that 'schools with a common sense of purpose and a strong communal organisation are more effective in promoting a range of student academic and social outcomes reflecting pupil engagement and commitment'.

Learning is part of the culture in all primary schools and their central aim, their *raison d'être*, must be to improve learning. Although the emphasis is, of course, on children's learning, teachers too are expected to continue to learn and management of their CPD (continued professional development) is an important function of the leadership of the school. The headteacher is often referred to, quite rightly, as the 'lead learner' as 'a key dimension of school improvement is the creation of an environment in which adult learning (as well as pupil learning) is acceptable and is the norm' (Hartle and Hobby, 2003 p392). Oddly this important aspect does not seem to be recognised by Ofsted. When their new SEF (Self Evaluation Form) (Ofsted, 2005), filled out by schools prior to an inspection, asks 'How many learners in the school?' it refers only to children. Nothing in the Ofsted guidelines for school evaluation refers to the development and encouragement of adult learners in a school environment, missing an essential element of a good school.

Any training programme for headteachers must include an understanding of the importance of the school culture. Creissen and Ellison (1998) describe the 'cultural context of the headteacher's job within the school environment' as 'one of the most important factors' in training headteachers. As the culture will be different in each school, this study suggests that the best place for a deputy to learn to become a headteacher is within the powerful learning culture of their own school.

Capacity

The NCSL (National College for School Leadership) now manages the NPQH and HIP (Headteacher Induction Programme) and provides a 'capacity for broadly based leadership' (Caldwell, 2004). However, the College and the programmes are all largely controlled by government and their aim is to produce headteachers that conform to the government's National Standards for Headteachers (DfES, 2000). This means that the college will produce headteachers who conform to these standards and whose central aim will be to deliver Government initiatives but may not have the skills to lead and manage a school in the area in which they intend to work. Wright (2001) describes this as 'bastard leadership' in that it is closer to management than it is to leadership. 'The model that increasingly seems to be advocated by central government as leadership for schools is not really leadership. Leadership, as the moral and value basis of the direction of schools seems to have been largely removed'. Leadership needs to be developed in a working school setting where the deputy is gaining real experience as 'such deeper understanding, no less than skills and techniques, must be transmitted through the medium of concrete administrative settings rather than predominantly 'classroom' settings' (Glatter, 1992 p9).

Obviously, the capacity of the individual school to develop the deputy headteacher will vary according to the school's circumstances. In a small school a headteacher will often want to 'protect his deputy because of his full timetable' whereas in a large primary school, a deputy may be non-teaching and be able to take on significant responsibility. The attitude of the headteacher is also crucial as 'It is important to recognise that there are often contexts which are inappropriate for the good preparation of potential headteachers – namely, poor schools or those with unsupportive heads' (Creissen and Ellison, 1998) p35

None-the-less, deputy headteachers have an entitlement to be prepared for headship and even in a smaller school a deputy should be given the opportunities and experiences that will prepare them for headship. Clearly, this will have cost implications for smaller primary schools, these will need to be supported financially and headteachers should be required to offer an agreed training and preparation programme to their deputy headteachers if they have indicated that they wish to go on to headship.

Primary schools should be developing a programme for distributing leadership throughout the staff of the school, as 'distributed leadership offers more opportunities to put more individuals into leadership roles. At the same time it calls for an environment in which they are given continuous support, guidance and development' (Hartle and Smith, 2004). This allows leaders to grow naturally throughout their time in the school and develops the schools' capacity to grow its own leaders as 'a capacity for leadership should also pervade programmes for initial teacher education and ongoing professional development'(Caldwell, 2004). Within this strong supportive framework, headteachers must be encouraged to develop the capacity to train their own deputies and prepare them for headship. Failure to do so will ensure that primary schools do not have the leaders to replace existing headteachers. 'it would appear wise to pay more attention to developing existing leadership capital within schools if we are to build capacity within the system' (Chapman, 2004).

From this study, it has become clear that the experiences that headteachers have had within their own school and indeed that they are offering their own deputy, varies considerably. Although there are bound to be some differences owing to the strengths, weaknesses and individual characteristics of the headteacher and deputy involved and the individual circumstances of each school, the ad-hoc nature of deputy headteacher training is not conducive to the effective preparation of new headteachers. There is much that headteachers can do to influence their deputy to become a headteacher and there are ways in which a headteacher can train their deputy that will make their new headship more effective. Also, there must be ways that we can ensure that all deputy headteachers receive an agreed standard of experiences whilst a deputy headteacher that will prepare them for the demanding role of headship.

If the process of preparation is successful, the deputy moves to the new school as a successful headteacher. 'The person has been correspondingly transformed into a practitioner, a newcomer becoming an old timer, whose changing knowledge, skill and discourse are part of a developing identity – in short, a member of a community of practice' (Lave and Wenger, 1991 p122).

This thesis suggests that deputy headteachers are entitled to a programme, based in their own school that will effectively prepare them for headship. A set of guiding principles follow that should frame a training programme. Finally the thesis concludes with implications for future research, policy and practice.

7.2 A set of guiding principles for the school-based preparation of ambitious deputy headteachers

This project including the short survey, analysis of interview data and case study, underpinned by Situated Learning theory, suggests that a model for the effective preparation of a deputy could be constructed. This model should, 'motivated by newcomers' desires to become full practitioners...[ensure that] the transformation of newcomers into old-timers becomes unremarkably integral to the practice' (Lave and Wenger, 1991 p122). I would suggest that such a model should contain the following elements:

1 The ideal model for the school-based development of any deputy headteacher is a symbiotic one where the deputy and the headteacher draw on each other's strengths and each uses their own individual assets to augment the skills of the other.

Each deputy and headteacher brings his or her own strengths to the job. They may, for example, be good with managing people but not so good with managing paperwork. To have a deputy with skills that complement and augment their own can only add to the overall strength of the school. 'The notion of a collegiate approach to management is becoming widely accepted and with it the adoption, by head and deputy, of areas of responsibility which reflect their personal aptitudes, knowledge and expertise.' (Thomas, 1995 pvii)

2 This relationship will be one in which the headteacher sees his deputy as an equal in the school, has the courage to share the leadership of the school and presents his deputy to the governors and staff as a parallel professional who carries his full support and confidence.

How others see the deputy in the school will determine the deputy's status and authority. If the headteacher presents his deputy to all stakeholders as an equal, the deputy will find it easier to carry out her agreed duties, support the headteacher and be able to prepare herself for her next role as headteacher in her own school. 'Above all the headteacher must show by word and deed that she regards the deputy as an integral part of the school's management team. If the headteacher's attitude towards the deputy is made plain, then colleagues, parents, governors and other visitors will adopt the same policy' (Kent, 1989 p82)

3 *Headteachers should give their deputy real responsibility, involving them in all decision making, large and small.*

'The responsibilities given to the deputy should be important and meaningful ones, not just odds and ends with which the head cannot be bothered' (Kent, 1989 p82) Rather than minor management tasks such as organising rotas or arranging courses, for example, an ambitious deputy should be allowed to run staff meetings and INSET sessions, possibly given the responsibility for implementing certain Government initiatives. They will, of course, need the time to complete those tasks but a head will find considerable strength in having someone who shares and actively supports his vision for the school.

4 *Headteacher's time, though valuable, should be freely given to discuss issues and solutions with his deputy as she is mentored from appointment to headship and beyond.*

A headteacher should take the time to share his expertise in managing the school with his deputy. The solutions to day-to-day problems need to be discussed with his deputy so that she is able to share in his experiences. This support should even stretch to advising his deputy when and where to apply for headship. Deputies will need to be funded and supported through the NPQH programme, given release time as necessary and the head should engineer opportunities for the deputy to manage the whole school from time to time.

In return a headteacher can expect an ambitious deputy to be enthusiastic and willing to take on tasks from the head. In sharing leadership they will help shape and manage the curriculum together, working in partnership to manage staff and deal with discipline and parental problems. Class observation, scrutiny of work, and monitoring planning are all high-level tasks that can be shared with the deputy.

The headteacher and the school will particularly benefit from an ambitious deputy who will be anxious to learn all aspects of the job. A successful deputy headship with a record of effectively implementing management initiatives is invaluable to take into headship interview and on into first headship.

Finally, heads will enjoy the experience of seeing their 'rising star' mature into headship. Not only will they get considerable pleasure from the development of a deputy but also they will be supporting the profession as a whole by ensuring that a new, effective and competent headteacher emerges from their school.

7.3 Implications for future research, policy and practice.

This study is small scale. Nevertheless it does suggest that:

1. Headteachers should be offered detailed guidance on how to prepare ambitious deputies for headship.
2. Deputy headship should be considered a training position. Ideally, it should be a temporary post – after five years a deputy with no interest in headship should become 'Senior Teacher' with no loss of pay or status. This would prevent deputy headteachers from becoming 'sitting tenants' freeing up the deputy head's position for an ambitious teacher to move through to headship.
3. Local authorities need to monitor the development of deputy headteachers from their appointment to their move into headship. Authorities should interview deputies who decide not to move into headship to determine whether a different school or a course could re-establish their ambition.

4. Local Authorities should facilitate the movement of ambitious deputies between primary schools to develop their skills. Career deputies should also be offered this experience as this experience could reignite their ambition.

5. The Government, and NCSL must continue to raise the positive profile of headteachers within the profession, and within society more generally, in order to increase the numbers of teachers wanting to move into school leadership. Government policy must support headteachers through national headteacher support systems as in Sweden (Korp 2005), demonstrate trust and champion the work of schools and headteachers through the media; reinforce the supply of new headteachers by establishing an entitlement to headship preparation in primary schools and allow headteachers the freedom and responsibility to develop and improve their schools.

6. Further research needs to be carried out to find out not just why but when deputies decide not to become headteachers. The research needs to find out what makes them change their mind and whether there are perceived barriers to headship that can be addressed. Finally, there are a small group of deputies who, having decided not to go on to headship, change their minds. This group should also be studied to see if other deputies could be persuaded to rethink their decision not to become headteachers.

7. From the guiding principles described earlier, a detailed programme for the development of deputies in their primary schools needs to be developed. This should detail the opportunities and experiences that ambitious deputies should experience. Each year these should increase and develop, according to the abilities of the deputy and the ability of the school to deliver the programme, until at some time during the third or fourth year the deputy is given the opportunity to run the school for a term. This would release the head to work in the classroom or take a secondment opportunity whilst the ambitious deputy would gain the most valuable experience of all - running a school.

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Appendix

Table 3: The Interview Instrument

General background	
1	Name
2	Age
3	How long have you been in teaching?
4	How long were you a deputy headteacher?
5	Have you completed your NPQH?
General comments about headship	
6	Tell me about your headship so far?
7	What have you enjoyed?
8	What have you found difficult?
How prepared were you for headship?	
9	Do you think you could have been better prepared?
10	Is there anything you could you have done to prepare yourself?
11	How far did the NPQH course prepare you for headship?
12	What were the strengths of the NPQH course?
13	What were its limitations?
14	What could the course have contained that would have better prepared you for headship?
15	How far do feel your deputy headship prepared you for headship?
16	What were its strengths?
17	What were its weaknesses?
Specific Areas	
18	How prepared do you feel you were in the following areas: a. financial management, b. personnel management, c. management of the curriculum, or d. management of initiatives.
Reflection	
19	What opportunities and experiences could you have been given that would have helped to prepare you for headship?
20	How do you think you could have been better prepared?
21	What advice would you give to a deputy who is contemplating headship?
22	What should they be doing to prepare themselves?