

Leadership in Small Primary Schools: the Headteacher's Perspective

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to identify and scrutinise current aspects of leadership in small primary schools in order to generate a new context-appropriate model of headship. The research is an in-depth study of leading the small primary school from the perspective of headteachers. There is a dearth of literature concerning leadership that is specific to small primary schools, so this research has accordingly significantly enhanced that body of knowledge. It is also timely as the newly-appointed Government is reviewing the resourcing and management of schools in England.

This study has drawn on the descriptive and interpretive aspects of a case study of all the small primary schools in one Local Authority. The resulting response sample was twenty-six headteachers. The study has identified possible changes to enhance educational policy at three levels: school, Local Authority and Central Government. The research is characteristic of the realist tradition, generating rich, qualitative data which have been gathered through the use of interviews, questionnaires, Ofsted reports and 'naturally occurring' material.

The research identified that the leadership structure in small primary schools is of a flatter and more interlocking nature rather than having a hierarchy of leaders. The headteachers used a combination of leadership styles in order to share the leadership with other members of staff. Headteachers had a multi-faceted role which included a range of both leadership and management activities, and also retained a teaching role. These features of small school headships made them 'first among equals' (Ironsides and Seifert, 1995) rather than elevated CEOs.

A new model of Leadership in Small Primary Schools has been developed which arises from the identified needs of these headteachers with regards to the perceived deficits in training, support and expected school performance and targets. This is relevant not only to all headteachers of small primary schools but also, in particular, to policymakers and educationalists in England at a point when there is an increasing loss of headteachers to retirement and an extreme shortage of applicants for these vacant posts.

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families
DES	Department of Education and Science
DfE	Department for Education
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
EHP	Early Headship Provision
ELM	Educational Leadership and Management
ERA	Education Reform Act
HEADLAMP	Headteacher Leadership and Management Programme
HIP	Headteacher Improvement Programme
HMI	His/Her Majesty's Inspectorate
LA	Local Authority
LEA	Local Education Authority
LftM	Leading from the Middle
LIG	Leadership Incentive Grant
LSA	Learning Support Assistant
LMS	Local Management of Schools
NAHT	National Association of Head Teachers
NCSL	National College for School Leadership
NPQH	National Professional Qualification for Headship
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
PPA	Planning, Preparation and Assessment
SATs	Standard Assessment Tasks/Tests
SEAL	Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning
SEF	Self-evaluation form
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
TA	Teaching Assistant
TES	Times Educational Supplement

1. Background to the research

1.1 Introduction

There is a crisis looming with difficulty in filling vacant headteacher positions (Maddern, 2011). Within education there is a forgotten group of headteachers who are in small primary schools. This research examines the experience of leadership in the context of small primary schools in England from the perspectives of the headteachers. Its findings will be of particular relevance not only to headteachers of such primary schools but also to policy-makers at both Local Authority and Central Government levels as well as to school governors. In addition there are implications for the unions, such as the NAHT, that represent headteachers.

This chapter sets the scene for this research for contextual purposes. It commences with a brief overview of education reforms that affect headteachers with particular reference to their leadership. The main aims of the research will be set out in section 1.3. Following this an exploration of how small primary schools may be defined is set out in section 1.4. Sections 1.5 and 1.6 set the scene for the research with background information regarding school experiences and leadership structures that may be encountered in primary schools. Section 1.7 then goes on briefly to identify the difference between ‘leadership of learning’ and ‘leadership for learning’ as both of these concepts are necessary for effective learning to take place and are also important processes within the leadership role of the headteacher and others in the school. While there is abundant literature concerned with leadership in general, there is a paucity of literature about leadership in small schools as shown in section 1.8. Section 1.9 identifies the methodology that was considered to be most appropriate for this research and then section 1.10 sets out the main themes that were found

through the literature which formed the basis for the data collection and analysis. The final section signposts the structure for the rest of this piece of research.

1.2 A brief Overview of Education Reforms That Affect Headteachers

The Education Reform Act of 1988 (ERA) introduced many areas of change in the management of schools. One of these initiatives was the introduction of Local Management of Schools which devolved powers of managing schools from the Local Authority to the school level with the Governing Body having ultimate responsibility for the school finances. The Governing Body may delegate some of the financial responsibilities as well as the day to day operation of the school to the headteacher (DCSF, 2010). Ironside and Seifert (1995:220) comment on the changed role of the headteacher caused by the reforms of the ERA:

Heads are becoming human resource managers and budget resource allocators, rather than senior figures among teams of like-minded professionals.

A report by Ofsted (2003:35) recognised that the ERA proved to be challenging for headteachers:

The increasing delegation of authority for managing schools to headteachers and governors, which began with the Education Reform Act 1988, has led to a greater level of challenge in the already very demanding tasks of leading and managing a school of any kind.

While it is acknowledged that the reforms affect all schools regardless of size, the effects of the reforms will be felt differently in small schools with fewer members of staff. In addition, small schools are likely to have small governing bodies with fewer people's expertise available (Punter and Adams, 2010). There are also fewer pupils, which in turn affect the level of funding for the school which is particularly relevant for small schools.

The ERA also affected the assessment system in schools, The assessment of pupils at the end of each Key Stage using Standard Assessment Tasks/Tests (SATs) was introduced through the ERA of 1988 and the first full application for Key Stage 1 pupils was in 1991 (Alexander, 2009). While the assessments are carried out by the teachers it is the headteacher who must sign a declaration that the SATs have been administered correctly. When the SATs were introduced the results were published in LEA league tables. At present the results for Key Stage 2 upwards are used to compile 'league tables' where the general public are able to see exactly how any school compares with other schools which introduces a measure of competition between schools. The effect of competition on the headteachers is acknowledged by Parker and Stone (2003:175) as they comment:

One significant challenge facing leaders today is maintaining personal and organisational integrity in the face of ever-increasing competition and demands.

The league tables do not take account of contextual differences between schools but may be used by parents to select a school for their child (Calveley, 2005). The effect of one pupil's results is significant in small cohorts and this puts additional pressure onto the headteacher as the league tables are publicly visible. These formed part of the complex dynamic where some headteachers boycotted the Key Stage 2 SATs in 2010 which was an action that was supported by the trade unions, but for which headteachers were accountable.

There have also been reforms that affected the curriculum with the introduction of the National Curriculum in 1988 which was revised in 1999 (DfEE, 1999). There were amendments with the introduction of the Literacy Strategy (DfEE, 1998a) and

the Numeracy Strategy (DfEE, 1998b) which were combined to form the Primary National Strategy in 2003. There were two major reviews of the curriculum in 2009 with the Rose Review (Rose, 2009) and the Cambridge Review (Alexander, 2009). The previous Government planned to introduce the new curriculum based on the Rose Review in 2011. However, with the recent change of Government in May 2010, this may change again as the new Government favours the Cambridge Review (Young, 2010). All of these reforms present headteachers with the strategic roles and responsibilities of reviewing, evaluating and selecting curriculum change.

1.3 The Aim and objectives of the study

The driving force behind this research was that I believed that the research would be useful to me and would have an impact on my leadership within my own school. Then I began to consider the wider picture and considered that the research would be useful to my colleagues who are also headteachers of small primary schools within my local area. As I conducted the literature review I realised that there was a lack of research in small primary schools and so the research would have an impact on a wider group of headteachers of small primary schools and that it would have implications for national practice.

The main aim of this research is to identify and address aspects of leadership in small primary schools in order to develop a new model of leadership. This will then add to the limited knowledge of leadership in such schools and their effectiveness as well as their distinctiveness.

This research started from the hypothesis that leadership in small primary schools is distinctive and different from leadership in large primary schools. The research question asked ‘what are the features that make leadership in small primary schools unique and how do they impact on the headteacher’s role in leading the school?’

The aim is underpinned by a set of objectives:

- To add to the limited body of literature about leadership in small primary schools

There is a large body of literature that deals with leadership in general and within the education sector. However, there is a dearth of literature that is specifically concerned with leadership in small primary schools. The lack of research in this area was acknowledged by Southworth (2004:18):

...the amount of empirical work into leadership in small primary schools can be seen as very meagre indeed. Clearly there is a lack of research into the role and work of heads, particularly in terms of leading school improvements and the systematic reporting of headteachers’ perceptions and concerns.

- To use empirical data collected from a sample of small primary schools in order to examine those concepts that had been identified through the literature within the context of primary schools.

These concepts include ‘styles of leadership’, ‘leadership structure in a small school’ and issues connected with headship such as preparation, mentoring and coaching. The advantages and challenges of small primary schools will be considered within these areas. The link between the areas of ‘leadership’ and ‘management’ will be explored in relation to small schools.

- To investigate the role of headteachers of small primary schools within the wider context of school leadership and management

While it is acknowledged that the headteacher needs to work closely with the governors of the school within the areas of leadership and management, it was decided that the scope of this research would be limited to the headteacher's role and so this dissertation has been written from the headteacher's perspective.

- To develop a new model of leadership

There has been some work concerned with exploring leadership models in schools (NCSL, 2009). These models, including federations and collaborative models, are not size or phase specific. They have been considered by the National College (formerly NCSL) and so they are likely to reflect the political stance at that time rather than an educational stance. With this in mind this research will be used to form a model for leadership in small schools that will be useful for other headteachers of small primary schools and will be based on educational principles as opposed to political principles. However, the dissertation will go on to show that there are also policy implications at both the Local Authority and Central Government levels regarding leadership of small primary schools.

- To make recommendations for future practice

The research findings will be used to make recommendations for future practice for headteachers of small primary schools at the local level; for Local Authorities who have overview of the schools within their charge at the Local Government level; and for Central Government with regards to policy decisions.

1.4 Definition of a small primary school

There is no universal definition of small schools and the number of pupils that comprise a small school varies between Local Authorities. Rhodes and Brundrett (2006) used the benchmark for small schools as having a single form entry which could be approximately 210 pupils for a primary school with pupils in Years R up to Year 6. Some Local Authorities use 150 as the benchmark and others use 120 to define small primary schools. It was decided, for the current purpose, to use the Ofsted definition as that is applied to schools throughout England. Ofsted defines small schools as having 100 or fewer pupils. In 2005/06 there were more than 2,500 primary schools that fitted into this category (Teachernet, 2006). The number of small schools has increased over recent years (OFSTED, 2000; Teachernet, 2006) with the result that there were more than 2,600 in 2009 (Todman et al., 2009) and so this has been identified as an important area to research.

Phillips (1997:238) acknowledges that small schools are different from large schools:

Small schools are seen as a special case in primary education. Arguments are made both for and against their continued existence; they are seen as having distinct qualities which set them apart from the rest of mainstream education as well as distinct disadvantages for the staff and pupils who find themselves working in one.

While this was written over ten years ago, this research will demonstrate that it is still relevant to small primary schools today. Indeed, Ewington et al (2008:545) formed a similar opinion when they wrote:

The special characteristics of small schools appear to set them apart from larger schools.

An important part of this research will be an examination of how the headteachers in the sample perceive that small primary schools have special characteristics,

particularly in the areas of ‘the ethos’ and ‘leadership structures’. It will also consider the limitations of leading small schools in respect of the headteacher’s role.

1.5 Setting the scene

I am currently the headteacher of a small primary school. Prior to taking this headship I had always taught in larger primary schools with a two form entry. I was the deputy headteacher of a larger primary school and then the acting headteacher of the school for two terms before taking up the headship of my present school. It was the experience of moving from a school with a two form entry to a small village school that led to the realisation that small primary schools have quite a different culture from larger primary schools. Similarly, it became apparent that the actual experiences of leading in these cultures were distinct from one another.

While I was a deputy headteacher I studied for the National Professional Qualification for Headship at a time when this qualification was not a requirement of headship. The training at that time did not fall within the remit of the National College for School Leadership and was organised on a regional basis. Part of the training involved study days with other trainees who were aspiring to headship. We were able to reflect on procedures at our schools and complete tasks that were intended to help aspiring headteachers. This training was all generic rather than phase or size specific. I became acting headteacher before I had completed the training and found that the training complemented my acting headship and vice versa. However, when I was appointed as headteacher of a small primary school I found that the training and experiences had not prepared me for the issues I encountered in a small school. These issues included the absence of a Deputy Headteacher and not

having a Senior Leadership Team as well as financial considerations due to a large element of the budget being linked to the number of pupils in the school.

Although it is acknowledged in both literature and practice that the headteacher is not the exclusive leader in a school, the influence, responsibility and accountability of the headteacher is nonetheless significant and should not be understated (Garratt, 1990). A professional musician came to our school to work with the children and he asked me why the school was so popular and had a large number of pupils from out of the catchment area. After a description of the various attractions of the school the visitor remarked that other schools also had those same attractions but in his opinion the difference was the influence of the headteacher. The headteacher's influence should not be underestimated and so in this study, although it has been recognized that there are leaders other than the headteacher, the main focus was concerned with the headteacher's role in the leadership structure of a small primary school.

1.6 Leadership structures in large and small schools

Clearly, leadership structures will vary from school to school according to factors such as size, number of teaching staff and budget constraints. I was promoted to the position of acting headteacher of a school with approximately 300 pupils. There were ten classes and the leadership structure was loosely based on a hierarchical pyramid system with layers of leadership which I have shown in figure 1.1.

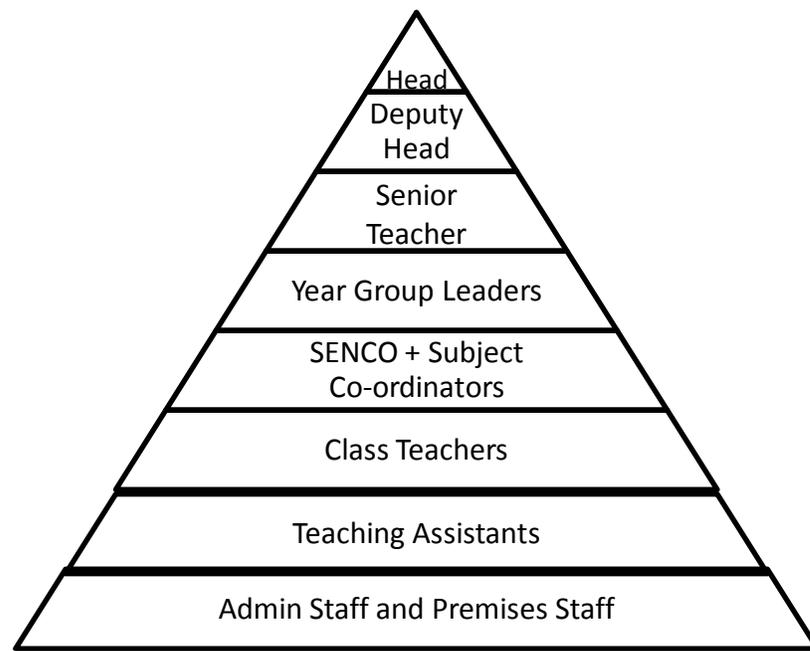


Figure 1.1: An example of the leadership structure in a large primary school

There were group teams made up of the staff in each year group and Year Leaders as well as Key Stage Leaders (Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2). Most teachers had one subject area to co-ordinate. One of the teachers was the co-ordinator for Special Educational Needs (SENCO) and as deputy headteacher I was the co-ordinator for assessment in addition to being responsible for a subject area. The headteacher was responsible for Child Protection issues and the responsibility for conducting the annual Performance Management reviews for the teachers was shared by the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the senior teacher. However, in a small school some of the layers may be missing such as the Deputy Headteacher and senior teacher layers. It is unlikely that there will be year group leaders and the subject co-ordinator layer may be combined with the class teacher layer with all teachers also being subject co-ordinators for more than one subject.

The leadership structure in my present school is very different. The school has up to one form entry but this varies from year to year. At present we have fewer than 100 pupils although our capacity is up to 145. We are fortunate to have an assistant headteacher, unlike many small schools, as this was an appointment that was made when there were more pupils in the school. The structure is flatter than that of my previous school and is more interlinked as I have shown in figure 1.2.

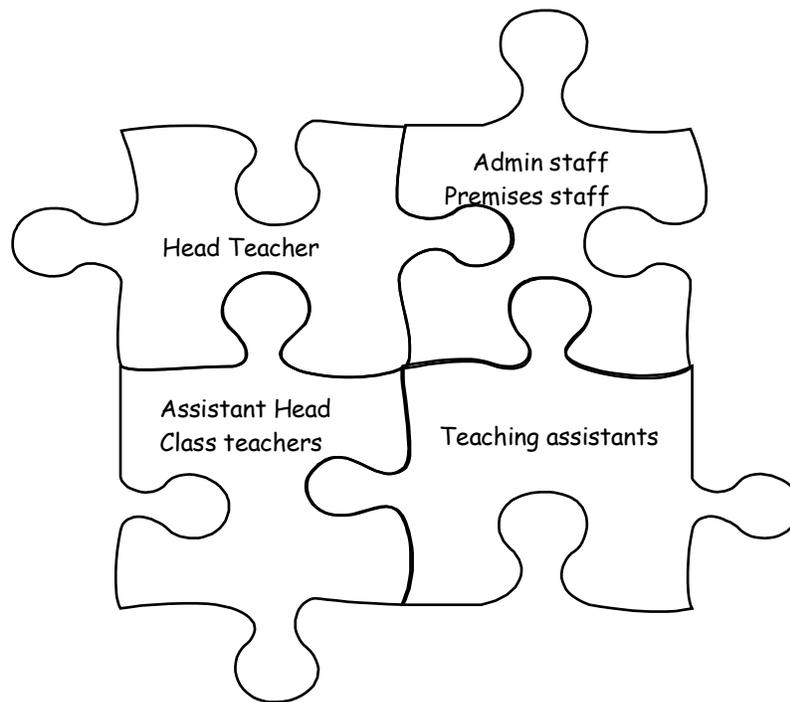


Figure 1.2: A possible leadership structure in a small primary school

This model is developed further in Chapter 6 (see Figure 6.2). As the headteacher, I interact a lot with the teaching staff as well as the administration staff and premises staff and to a slightly lesser extent with the teaching assistants. The class teachers, including the assistant headteacher, interact with the teaching assistants as well as with me. In this school every teacher has more than one subject area to co-ordinate. As headteacher, I have several co-ordinator roles including Special Needs;

Safeguarding (Child Protection); Health and Safety; and Assessment. The assistant headteacher is also a class teacher with several co-ordinator areas. We do not have year group teams or Key Stage Co-ordinators. As headteacher I have responsibility for conducting annual Performance Management reviews for all of the teachers.

The research will explore the range of leadership structures in the small schools in the sample as well as the associated styles of leadership that are evident in these schools.

1.7 'Leadership of learning' and 'Leadership for learning'

There are many areas of responsibility for a headteacher within a school but one of the main tasks must be to promote learning and ensure that effective teaching is taking place. The course materials for the National Professional Qualification for Headteachers (DfEE, 2000a) included a unit entitled 'Translating the Vision into High Quality Teaching and Learning'. Within this unit Hugh Lawlor from the Teacher Training Agency is quoted as saying:

The core purpose of headship is to provide professional leadership and direction for the continuous improvement of the school.

(DfEE, 2000a:58)

It is interesting that the unit title included the words 'teaching and learning' in that order but since then we have moved towards a culture where learning is considered before teaching (Stoll et al, 2003; Middlewood et al, 2005). The focus of this study is on leading schools and the effect of leadership on the learning that takes place within the school rather than on the teaching in the school although it is questionable if one can exist without the other. Swaffield and MacBeath (2009:33) comment:

If our conception of leadership is one that resides in a leader (in a school context the headteacher or principal), and if we believe that knowledge is transmitted or delivered from teacher to pupil, then leadership for learning is about the headteacher ensuring that the pupil learns what the teacher teaches.

Whilst neither learning nor teaching is able to function effectively without the other, the focus in a school must be to consider how effective learning is to take place.

‘Leadership for learning’ and ‘leadership of learning’ are different concepts although they both need to be present and work alongside each other in a school. Leadership for learning encompasses the conditions and climate that are necessary for effective learning to take place and in that respect are linked to the ethos of the school. Stoll et al (2003:103) use the analogy of a journey to describe leadership for learning:

Leadership for learning isn’t a destination with fixed coordinates on a compass, but a journey with plenty of detours and even some dead ends.

Leadership of learning is more concerned with the teaching that takes place in order for learning to occur and so this is where there is some overlap between the two concepts. If leadership for learning is not considered, then leadership of learning will not be as effective as it should be. The concept of learning is not restricted to the pupils but includes everyone in the school. Bowring-Carr (2005:111) states:

Of course, it is not just the students who learn; to suggest that is to imply that learning is imposed on one group by another, and that the other group has completed all the learning that it needs. In a world changing as fast as this, such a suggestion is profoundly silly. Everyone in a school is a learner.

Bowring-Carr (2005:116) identifies the leader, or headteacher, as the ‘principal learner’.

Personal Reflection 1¹

I have made no secret of the fact that I spend some days at the university and the pupils at school have been interested that I am still studying for qualifications. This has been a good exercise in modelling learning to the other members of the school community.

The role of the headteacher in leading learning has been considered as part of this research.

1.8 The literature

The literature surrounding leadership and management was consulted both before the research began and during the period of research. The literature concerning small businesses was also consulted as it was considered that small schools may have some commonalities with small businesses. It was decided not to consult other literature from the public sector that is concerned with such areas as Local Government and the Health Service as they would still be bigger and have more employees than small primary schools whereas small businesses are more similar to small schools with only a few employees and key personnel. Whilst it is acknowledged that there is a large body of literature concerning leadership in schools there is little concerning leadership in small schools and most of what is available is concerned with small secondary schools as opposed to small primary schools. A bibliometric search on the internet was undertaken in September 2008 using the terms ‘small primary schools’ and ‘primary schools’. The original search was a general search with the key words ‘small primary schools’ and ‘primary schools’ and was not restricted to leadership in

¹ This dissertation is interspersed with a series of personal reflections as headteacher of a small primary school, which are directly related to the developing thesis of this dissertation.

small primary schools. An additional search was carried out in April 2009 which was more refined and used the terms ‘leadership in small primary schools’ and ‘leadership in primary schools’. The results are shown in Table 1.1.

	Small primary schools (September 2008)	Primary schools (September 2008)	Leadership in small primary schools (April 2009)	Leadership in primary schools (April 2009)
DCSF	3	Over 100	0	7
Ofsted	1	149	0	38
Teachernet	15	500	0	0
TES archives since 1994	43	6873	0	1
NAHT	1	19	0	0
NCSL	48	492	0	50
Google Scholar	659	124,060	6	128

Table 1.1: Number of references to 'small primary schools' and 'primary schools' in 2008 and 2009

It can be seen that there was very little literature specifically related to small primary schools but that there was considerably more literature relating to primary schools in general. It was surprising that there was a lack of relevant literature on the NAHT website as this is a trade union that specifically represents the needs of headteachers. Consequently it was clear that there was a distinct need for more research concerning leadership issues in small schools in the primary sector. This research makes an important contribution in that area.

The literature review in Chapter 2 considers leadership at different levels within primary schools. This includes leadership at the classroom level in addition to middle leadership at subject co-ordinator level and the leadership of the headteacher. This

led to a consideration of leadership and management issues and the role of the headteacher. The literature concerning various styles of leadership included distributed and shared leadership; invitational leadership; sustainable leadership; transformational leadership; and strategic leadership. However, the literature does not identify these styles of leadership with specific reference to small primary schools and this will also be addressed in this research.

1.9 Methodology

The methodological approach is discussed in Chapter 3. This research followed the realist tradition which will be discussed further in Chapter 3. The data were collected through the use of semi-structured interviews, semi-structured questionnaires and the use of the Ofsted reports for the schools in the samples. These were supplemented with ‘naturally occurring data’ that were collected through conversations with colleagues and discussions at meetings with colleagues. The nature of the research meant that there was a strong element of reflexivity running throughout the collection and analysis of the data. The sample was carefully selected and was comprised of the headteachers of small primary schools in one Local Authority. There were ten headteachers who were interviewed and questionnaires were sent to the remaining thirty-two permanent headteachers of the small schools in the Local Authority. Sixteen questionnaires were returned making a total response sample of twenty-six headteachers. The rich qualitative data from the interviews were supplemented by the quantitative survey data from the questionnaires.

As I am a headteacher and I was interviewing other headteachers it was difficult to completely separate myself from the research process. Indeed, it can be said that the

shared knowledge was an important part of the research as the other headteachers were pleased to take part. They may not have been so eager to take part in research that was conducted by someone from outside of the profession. Being an ‘insider researcher’ was an important part of the research as there was a shared understanding of the nature of the headteacher’s role (Hellawell, 2006) and also it gives rise to the inclusion of personal reflection boxes in this dissertation.

An important part of the methodology was the framework for the analysis of the data. The data that were collected were largely of a qualitative nature. A template (see Appendix A) was used both to inform the design of the data collection and for the first stage of the analysis (King, 2004) with the first level codes being developed from the interview schedule and the second level codes from the data contained in the interviews and questionnaires (see Appendix B). King (2004:257) explains:

Put simply, a code is a label attached to a section of text to index it as relating to a theme or issue in the data which the researcher has identified as important to his or her interpretation.

There were themes that became evident through the analysis and the coding and these have been interpreted from the viewpoint of the headteacher leading a small primary school. These are identified in the next section.

1.10 Main themes

The main themes that emerged from the research added a new direction for the literature review. An area that had not been considered in detail during the initial literature search concerned the mentoring of new headteachers and so the literature surrounding mentoring was consulted. The themes formed the basis of the data analysis that is presented in chapters 4, 5 and 6. These themes were grouped into

aspects concerning ‘early headship in a small school’, ‘the leadership structure’ and ‘the styles of leadership’ that are evident in small primary schools.

The themes that related to early headship, specifically in a small school, included factors such as the reasons for choosing a small school; the place of the small school within the local community; the teaching commitment of the headteacher; and preparation for headship including leadership training and mentoring experiences. These areas are considered in Chapter 4.

The themes that related to the leadership structure of the schools are considered in Chapter 5. These included factors such as the senior management team or lack of a senior management team; middle leadership; leadership for learning; and leadership and management issues. The research showed that these areas in small schools are different from large schools. As there were fewer members of staff in a small school the leadership structure needed to be adapted accordingly.

Chapter 6 is concerned with the themes that related to styles of leadership and these include the influence of the headteacher on the styles of leadership that are evident in small schools; shared and distributed leadership and how this may work effectively in a small school; invitational leadership which involves inviting oneself as well as inviting others to share in leadership processes; transformational leadership; strategic leadership; and sustainable leadership. ‘Strategic leadership’ and ‘sustainable leadership’ are not leadership styles in their own right but encompass areas of leadership that are necessary for the future of the school.

1.11 The structure of this study

This chapter has set the research within its context and has identified the background to the research project.

Chapter 2 sets the research within the context of the literature surrounding leadership in schools. It will also make links to leadership within the historical context and within the business sector. The research has been informed by the literature regarding leadership in both the business sector and the education sector. However, there was little literature that referred to small primary schools specifically.

Chapter 3 sets the research within the methodological approach. There was a theoretical framework for the methodology which was based on the realist tradition and the research is largely of a qualitative nature. These areas have been expanded in subsequent chapters.

The research findings are presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 with an analysis of the data. Chapter 4 identifies the areas of research that relate to the headteacher's reasons for choosing a small school and their preparation and training for headship. It includes issues such as the place of the small school within the local community and how that is influenced by the headteacher. Chapter 5 examines the leadership structures that are evident in small schools. It links the areas of 'leadership' and 'management' as well as highlighting the challenges involved in leading a small primary school. Chapter 6 investigates the styles of leadership that are evident in the schools in the sample.

Chapter 7 draws together the conclusions from Chapters 4, 5 and 6 with the recommendations that have been made from the research. The recommendations are made at three levels: the school; the Local Authority; and Central Government. The conclusions and recommendations include the presentation of a new model for leadership in small primary schools.

This research has added new and unique insights into the under-researched area of leading small primary schools and it has led to the development of a new context-led model of leadership in small primary schools. The importance of the research is far-reaching and extends beyond the schools in the sample, possibly to more than 2,600 small primary schools in England.

2. Leadership in Relation to Headteachers

2.1 Introduction

This chapter sets the research within the literature base on leadership in schools.

It was argued in Chapter 1 that there appears to have been little research into the leadership of small primary schools although there have been some studies of small secondary school leadership (Kimber, 2003, Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Mulford & Silins, 2005). This may be surprising taking into account the large number of primary schools in England and Wales that have a hundred or fewer pupils, as identified in Chapter 1. The research that has been undertaken into small primary schools has mostly been concerned with the areas of financial viability, taking into account the low pupil numbers, and educational effectiveness (Phillips, 1997). Southworth (2004:2) acknowledges that the size of a school is part of its context and that there has been little research into different-sized primary schools:

Although context is recognised as important to leadership and as definer of the character of schools, surprisingly little attention has been paid to it in school leadership research.

In a secondary schools study Mulford and Silins (2005) found that the gender of the headteacher and the number of years experience did not make a difference to organisational learning but that the size of the school did make a difference. They concluded that distributed leadership in the schools was an important factor in the effectiveness of the learning taking place and they found that there was less distributed leadership in the larger secondary schools. This finding may be surprising as there are more people to share leadership tasks in a large school. This will be examined in more detail within the section dealing with styles of leadership.

The chapter begins by providing an overview of the development of leadership and management theory. The rationale for including business leadership and management as identified in Chapter 1, is summarised by Bottery (1992:112) who having considered social, political and industrial influences on educational management suggests:

Without doubt, the most constant and influential of these sources has been the business community.

As leadership and management have evolved over the years it is important to set the research within the context of the developing theories. Therefore the chapter will go on to consider the areas of leadership and management and how they may work together or alongside each other in small schools. Section 3 will consider to what extent the areas of leadership and management in the business sector can add a helpful perspective to leadership and management in the education sector. The Education Reform Act (ERA) in 1988 introduced Local Management of Schools (LMS) and public accountability and thus was an important influence in the rise of managerialism because of the devolvement of financial and other responsibilities to headteachers from Local Education Authorities (Calveley, 2005). Section 2.4 considers the effects of managerialism in addition to the various locations of power within small primary schools which leads into section 2.5 about the different levels of leadership.

Leadership within a school is important in order for the core purpose, learning, to take place and this will be explored further in the section 2.6 which deals with the headteacher as the leader for learning. Leithwood and Riehl (2003:3) have the view that leadership is not the role of one person in the school:

Leadership is a function more than a role ... leadership encompasses a set of functions that may be performed by many different persons in different roles throughout a school.

There is an exploration of leadership throughout the school. The chapter will then move on to consider the strengths and limitations of training and leadership programmes which are available to prepare aspiring headteachers for headship and to help existing headteachers to develop further.

Day et al (1998) also refer to leadership as a function rather than a role. It would seem that this view supports the notion that 'leadership' and 'leader' are not necessarily the same thing. This will be considered further in section 2.8 of this chapter which explores styles of leadership in relation to small primary schools. This is linked to section 2.9 which focuses on mentoring and support programmes for headteachers. Section 2.10 considers the barriers or challenges that may need to be overcome when leading a small primary school. These include the pressures of dealing with government initiatives as well as the teaching role of the headteacher.

2.2 Historical Overview of Leadership and Management Theory

This section considers leadership and management theories which although largely relating to the business sector are also relevant in the education sector. This is particularly pertinent as the headteacher's role has taken on more of a management element in recent years. This is acknowledged by Calveley (2005:37):

What is clear is that since the 1988 [Education Reform] Act, the role of headteachers has changed dramatically. They have been transformed from the senior teaching professional in the school to the senior manager, taking on a distinctive managerial role, often at the expense of their vocational teaching.

The terms ‘leadership’ and ‘management’ are often linked and become ‘leadership and management’ although it should be acknowledged that they are not the same thing (Shackleton, 1995; Hannagan, 2002; Lewis et al, 2004; Davies, 2005a). Arguably, there are five management viewpoints that have evolved since the end of the 19th century (Lewis et al, 2004; Kinicki and Williams, 2008). These have been grouped according to historical and contemporary perspectives as shown in Table 2.1.

Perspective	Viewpoint	Date developed	Characteristics
Historical	Classical	Later part of 19 th century and first part of 20 th century	Sub-divided into ‘scientific’, ‘administrative’ and ‘bureaucratic’. Emphasis on finding ways to manage work more efficiently.
	Behavioural	First third of 20 th century	Recognition that the human element has a significant role in influencing worker behaviour and output.
	Quantitative	During World War II	Measurable criteria are used to compare alternative courses of action prior to selection
Contemporary	Systems	1950s	A set of inputs is subjected to a process to generate an output. The organisation is regarded as a set of interrelated parts.
	Contingency	1960s	Situational approach which is dependant on variables or contingencies within a situation.

Table 2.1: Management Perspectives and viewpoints
Source: Adapted from Lewis et al, 2004; Kinicki and Williams, 2008

Kinicki and Williams (2008) identified a further viewpoint in the contemporary perspective which they called ‘quality-management’. This consists of three components: ‘quality control’, ‘quality assurance’ and ‘total quality management’.

Of these viewpoints, arguably the ‘behavioural’ and ‘contingency’ viewpoints are likely to have a particular resonance with school management. Managers who use the

contingency viewpoint vary their approach according to the particular circumstances and this is a strategy that would relate well to the management of a school.

Although it is acknowledged that leadership and management are separate concepts there are links between them which cannot be ignored. Hannagan (2002:66) states:

It can be argued that management is largely concerned with leadership, because managers need to establish a sense of direction and to motivate people to move in that direction.

This is a point that was also acknowledged by Lewis et al (2008:33):

Leading has always been one of the important functions of management.

Lewis et al (2004) defined 'leadership' as a process rather than a position. They identified three categories of leader approaches as shown in Table 2.2:

Category	Focus	Characteristics
Leader Centred	Trait	Assumption that leadership is an inherited characteristic.
	Behaviour	Assumption that the leader's behaviour determines their effectiveness. Behaviour is concerned with tasks and relations.
	Power	Power is the ability to use resources (human as well as material) to accomplish something.
Follower Centred	Self-leadership	Focus on creating an organisation of leaders who are ready to lead themselves without a formal leader in place.
	Leadership substitutes	These include individual characteristics, task characteristics and organisational characteristics.
Interactive	Situational	The interaction between leadership behaviour and the specific situations.
	Empowerment	Authority is delegated to the follower who is then held accountable. Power and autonomy of employees is increased.
	Transformational	The leader influences the employees to achieve more than was originally expected.

Table 2.2: Categories of Leadership
Source: Adapted from Lewis et al, 2004

These leadership categories can be applied to education as well as business, particularly the collegial styles of leadership such as ‘shared leadership’ and ‘invitational leadership’.

Lewis et al (2004:7) introduced a new model of leadership called “the 3Cs of leadership” which was based on the importance of competence, character and community in effective leadership. They comment:

While this model of leadership acknowledges the need for leaders to possess the knowledge, skills and tools to make good management decisions, it suggests that leaders be more than simply competent in business terms. It calls for leaders who understand the importance of character in leadership and who have a genuine concern for others.

It could be said that this model of leadership would be as relevant to the education sector as it is in the business sector. The current research will demonstrate that the headteachers showed concern for others in their schools. These newer forms of leadership may be referred to as ‘postheroic leadership’ and are forms of leadership that exhibit a more feminine style (Ford, 2006; Crevani et al, 2007) Ford (2006:87) suggests:

Postheroic discourses suggest a less masculine, rational and competitive subjectivity and present a more feminine, connected and team-focused identity in which the leader asserts the importance of making links with staff and showing a genuine interest in what they do.

It should be recognised that the above quotation is referring to the characteristics of the leader and not the gender. It can be seen that there is a multiplicity of theories and categories for leadership and management. The next section will show how these theories and categories relate to the practice of headteachers as they lead and manage primary schools.

2.3 Leadership and Management in Primary Schools

This section is predominantly concerned with leadership and management in schools. However, as shown in Section 2.2, there are links with leadership and management in the business sector. While ‘leadership’ and ‘management’ may be referred to as a single concept as in ‘leadership and management’, they are two distinct concepts with different functions (Lewis et al., 2004). MacBeath and Myers (1999) warn about the danger of concentrating on management training at the expense of leadership training simply because it is easier to identify management issues. Brookes (2005:171) is of the opinion that leadership and management are separate and that an organisation cannot exist without both leadership and management:

Leadership requires the vision of destination. Effective management will provide the resources to realise the vision. The vision without the management will result in a mere dream, while management without the vision will stultify and stagnate.

It is debateable as to whether leadership is more important than management or vice versa and it would seem that they are both important in their own way. Lewis et al (2004:5) define the effectiveness of management as “doing the right things” and the efficiency of management as “doing things right”.

However, the division of labour is not as simple as ‘doing things right’ and ‘doing the right thing’ as leaders and managers will exhibit both forms of behaviour to some degree. In the educational sector the headteacher of a primary school needs to be both a leader and a manager. This is especially true in small schools where the roles overlap and it is an area where small primary schools may differ from larger primary and secondary schools. Lewis et al (2004:5) identified a link between management and leadership:

...managers today must possess strong leadership capabilities. Leading people during changing environmental and organizational conditions is a critical function for most managers today.

Although they were writing within a business context, Lewis et al (2004) could have been describing the headteacher of a small school. Kinicki and Williams (2008) identified characteristics of ‘being a manager’ and ‘being a leader’ in specific tasks as shown in Figure 2.1:

	Being a manager	Being a leader
Determining what needs to be done	Planning and budgeting	Setting a direction
Creating arrangements of people to accomplish an agenda	Organising and staffing	Aligning people, communicating new direction to people who will realise the vision
Ensuring people do their jobs	Controlling and problem-solving, monitoring results	Motivating and inspiring people

Figure 2.1 Characteristics of management and leadership
Source: Adapted from Kinicki and Williams, 2008: 448-449

As will be evidenced later in the dissertation, the headteacher of a small primary school needs to be both a manager and a leader and perform the tasks set out in Figure 2.1 from both aspects, whereas arguably, in a larger school there may be other people such as a bursar or office manager who will undertake management tasks.

While there may be some similarities between management in the business sector and the educational sector, there are also similarities between leadership in both sectors. Lewis et al (2004:7) write:

In today’s business environment, effective leaders must also be visionary – capable of envisioning the future, sharing that vision, and empowering their employees to make the vision a reality. Only through leadership can the goals of the organization be achieved.

This act of forming and sharing a vision links to leadership in the education sector, particularly to the area of ‘transformational leadership’ as will be seen in section 2.8.

There is a view that business models are not necessarily appropriate for small schools. Southworth (2005:75) offers the opinion that school leadership differs from leadership in business:

The work is underscored by a belief that what distinguishes school leaders from leaders in other organisations is their desire and responsibility to enhance students’ learning. It is precisely this focus on students’ development which makes school leadership distinctive and different from many other forms of leadership.

While this distinction has been identified by Southworth (2005) it may not be quite so clear cut as business leaders are also concerned with the professional development of the people in their organisation (Hannagan, 2002). Leithwood et al (2008) identified four categories of leadership practices which could be applied to education as shown in Figure 2.2.

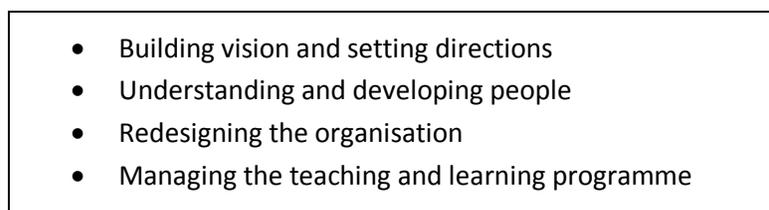
- 
- Building vision and setting directions
 - Understanding and developing people
 - Redesigning the organisation
 - Managing the teaching and learning programme

Figure 2.2: Categories of leadership practices
Source: Leithwood et al, 2008:30

While these leadership practices are applicable to all schools they may prove to be significant in small schools as, arguably, these categories of leadership practices are linked to the context of the organisation. Ford (2006:80) identified the importance of the context for leadership practices:

Recognition of the significance of the social context and socially constructed nature of leadership is of critical importance to the study of leadership discourses.

It is the manner in which the practices that have been identified in Figure 2.2 are applied that is important and this will be context oriented. The practices will not all carry the same level of importance all of the time. The level of importance will vary according to where the school is in its development at any one time. A leader does not need to build the vision every day; once the vision has been developed and shared there will be other practices that will assume greater importance. As the context varies, so may the leadership and management style as different aspects take on different values. Glatter and Kydd (2003) highlight the importance of the context within which leadership and management are operating as well as the complexity of the roles of leadership and management. Although they do not specifically refer to 'leadership and management', it could be said that this is an idea that is echoed by Hammersley-Fletcher and Kirkham (2007:428):

... the organisation of primary school communities is very different dependent on size. To add to this complexity, headteachers wield enormous powers either to delegate to staff or to retain elements of responsibility.

This also links to the area of shared or distributed leadership which is considered further in section 2.8.1. I pose the term "context-oriented leadership" as a concept that will be potentially important to a new model of leadership that will be developed through this current research.

Bowring-Carr and West-Burnham (1997) acknowledge the importance of leadership within a school although they do not specify the role of the headteacher in leadership. Lingard et al (2003) support the concept that it is difficult to separate the leadership

and management aspects of the headteacher's role. They acknowledge that headteachers need to be both leaders and managers. But it is also important that headteachers do not lose sight of their main focus which is leading teaching and learning:

An increasing range of managerial activities may be necessary to ensure that the school survives and thrives in the current policy context, but they are not sufficient; leading learning and teaching ought to be at the heart of school leadership, not a calculated managerialism. (Lingard et al, 2003:76)

There is an opinion that leadership activities should be kept separate from management activities (Fink, 2005) but this does not take account of the links between the two areas which are encompassed within the dual role of the headteacher as leader and manager, particularly in small primary schools. A report by Ofsted (2003:35) identified the need for both leaders and managers but it did not specify whether both functions could be carried out by the same person:

The need for strong and inspiring leaders and for highly competent and effective managers is greater than ever before.

In a small school the roles of leadership and management are two roles that are usually fulfilled by one person. The area of management involves managing resources which includes managing the financial budget and managing people. Lewis and Murphy (2008:130) write:

Managing people is important whether in relation to managing change or ensuring quality.

This is an important aspect of the headteacher's role. In a small school the headteacher needs to know the members of staff well in order to "manage" them and ensure that the school is run in an effective and harmonious manner.

In a primary school the leadership and management roles are also combined with an administration role. However, the nature of this tripartite role differs in a small school as there is not the same number of administrative staff to support the headteacher. While this is not included in the training programme for headship in this country (DfEE, 2000b) the situation is different in North America. Bush (2008:282) explains:

In North America, aspiring principals are required to obtain masters' degrees in educational administration.

Bush (2008) concludes that while there has been some criticism of the North American system, the training in administration is at a higher level than the National Professional Qualification in Headship training in England.

It may be more difficult to separate management from leadership issues in a small primary school as there are fewer people to whom to delegate tasks and budgetary constraints may mean that there are several part-time members of staff to whom delegation can only be limited, thus the headteacher then starts to spend more time on management and administrative tasks than on leadership tasks and this is when management may conflict with leadership (Stoll and Fink, 1989).

Personal Reflection 2

In our school the site agent and the secretary are part-time members of staff and consequently some of their areas of responsibility, including contacting contractors, will often fall to me.

Webb and Vulliamy (1996:312) identified the multi-faceted role of the headteacher:

The expanding and diverse nature of heads' work, together with increasing pressures on them to be cost effective, competitive and measurably efficient managers of their schools, mean that it may have to be accepted that headteachers are likely to become chief executives, rather than trying to run their organizations as operatives on the shop-floor.

The headteacher of a small primary school may need to combine the 'chief executive' role with the 'shop-floor operative' role when they have a teaching commitment which links to the 'first among equals' role identified by Ironside and Seifert (1995).

The headteacher has a responsibility for both leadership and management tasks which need to be prioritised. However, it is possible for the roles of management and leadership to work alongside each other in a complementary manner but the headteacher needs to be able to delegate management tasks and share leadership tasks.

2.4 Managerialism and Power

There is an abundance of literature concerned with both managerialism and power so the decision has been made to use the literature that has particular relevance to schools and the education sector. Power is a complex notion and, whilst recognising the multi-levels of power within schools, this dissertation concentrates on power in relation to the headteacher.

The 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) had a profound impact on education (Calveley 2005) and the way in which schools are managed. One of the consequences of the Act was the introduction of Local Management of Schools (LMS) which devolved financial responsibility to head teachers and school governors, thus creating a managerial role for head teachers. Alongside this was the

marketisation, and commercialisation of schools and the public accountability of headteachers. Market forces were introduced into education through school league tables which were seen to identify ‘good’ and ‘bad’ schools. As school funding is commensurate with pupil numbers, there has been a growth in competition by schools for pupils. At the same time, Ofsted inspections create yet a further way in which headteachers are publicly accountable. Calveley (2005:21) comments that there has been:

...the introduction into the public sector of management techniques which were more traditionally found in the private sector of the economy, resulting in what is now commonly referred to as ‘managerialism’.

The ERA undoubtedly altered the work of headteachers, governing bodies and Local Education Authorities (Calveley, 2005; Bush, 2008), giving headteachers a greater management role in addition to their leadership role. This may cause a certain amount of tension for the headteacher as identified by Ironside and Seifert (1995:244):

They [head teachers] see themselves first and foremost as the heads of institutions devoted to the education of pupils – as head teachers, and as first among equals rather than as ‘the management’.

It could be said that there is a subtle difference in ‘having a management role’ and ‘being the management’. LMS forced the headteacher to become part of the management.

The above demonstrates how schools are subject to policies and initiatives that are imposed on them from both Central Government and Local Authorities. Calveley (2005:45) draws on Hoggett (1996) when she links this political influence to the idea of ‘centralised-decentralisation’:

Centralised control is manifested through an emphasis by the government on both financial (devolved budgets) and public (league tables etc.) accountability. Decentralisation is the devolvement of the initiatives to achieve these to local public sector managers who are then expected to exert control over their workforce in the guise of performance monitoring.

Power over resources is, therefore, located both within and outside the school (Busher, 2006). Bush (2003:89) comments that:

National and local politics strongly influence the context within which schools and colleges operate.

It could be said that power functions at three different levels as Central Government exerts power over Local Authorities which in turn exert power over schools and as a consequence power cannot be seen in isolation from the political arena. Since the introduction of the 1988 ERA there has been a subtle shift in the power dynamics of educational provision with more power being exerted directly from Central Government over schools and more power being given to the governing body of the school (Bush, 2003). Gunter (2001:25) comments:

The nature of governance and the role of governors have been changed by successive legislation in which a governing body has substantial responsibilities for setting the strategic direction of the school, and for the quality and standards of educational provision.

While it is acknowledged that the governing body has increased accountability, it is the headteacher who has the responsibility for reporting to the governors and keeping them informed about the quality and standards of the educational provision (Gunter, 2001). As this research is from the headteacher's perspective the body of literature concerning governors has not been included.

While there is no universal definition of power (Overbeck, 2010) the work of French and Raven (1959), from the mainstream management literature, on identifying the

five bases of power as reward power, coercive power, legitimate power, expert power and referent power is widely reported in the literature. Reward and coercive power are used to manipulate the actions of others. Legitimate power is connected to the position of the person such as the headteacher while expert power implies that the person wielding the power has particular knowledge or attributes. Referent power could be said to be ‘power through association’ or power wielded by a group of people. These power bases may be seen in relation to each other with leaders exhibiting a combination of the bases. However, drawing relationships between the bases has been criticised by Podsakoff and Schriesheim (1985) due to lack of evidence.

Power may be considered to be linked to positions of leadership (Blase and Anderson, 1995). Lukes (2005:12) comments on power as a capacity that may not need to be used:

Power is a capacity not the exercise of that capacity (it may never be, and never need to be, exercised); and you can be powerful by satisfying and advancing others’ interests; ...

Authority arises from the leadership positions that are held by people in an organisation and influence arises from the personal and professional skills and knowledge that people possess. The result of this distinction is that power can have several locations within a school. Busher (2006:38) comments:

Access to some sources of authority are delegated. For senior leaders this delegation of authority comes from school governing bodies or owners. For middle leaders, teachers and support staff it comes from senior staff to allow them to enact their position in the school hierarchy.

As the governing body delegates power to the headteacher, it is then the responsibility of the headteacher to delegate power to other members of the school

staff. This could be said to be 'positional power' (Blase and Anderson, 1995) which links to the legitimate power base identified by French and Raven (1959). Lukes (2005:66) writes:

The powerful are those whom we judge or can hold to be responsible for significant outcomes.

In a small school there is often only the headteacher as a senior leader so the authority aspect of power resides with the headteacher but the influence aspect may be more widespread within the school.

Blase and Anderson (1995:14) identified three dimensions of power:

Power in relationship to others consists of a tripartite structure expressed in terms of 'power over', 'power through' and 'power with'.

The 'power over' dimension may be seen in authoritarian and hierarchical forms of leadership. This dimension is also evident at the Central Government and Local Authority levels with power being exerted over schools through the control of financial resources and legislation. The national curriculum and externally-imposed targets are examples of Central Government exerting power over headteachers and schools (Bottery, 2004). This aspect of power is linked to the prevailing political situation.

The 'power through' dimension involves delegation of power and is evident in the collegial types of leadership, as discussed further in section 2.8. Blase and Anderson (1995:14) comment:

In a 'power through' model, goals are accomplished through motivating individuals and groups who feel a sense of ownership in organizational goals.

In the 'power with' dimension there is a strong element of collaboration between leaders and the stakeholders (Blase and Anderson, 1995).

The 'power through' and 'power with' dimensions both require a measure of trust between the different groups that comprise parents, teachers, headteacher, governors, Local Government and Central Government (Bottery, 2004). However, it should be remembered that trust needs to be a two-way process.

Shelley (2005:61) links managerialism and power when he identifies managerialism as:

...focusing on power through formal controls such as the centralisation of information, line authority, hierarchy, centralised resource allocation, budgetary controls and centralised reporting procedures.

While Shelley (2005) was referring to the situation in higher education institutions, this observation is also pertinent to schools, where managers and staff are also subject to Government initiatives and policy structures that are in place. Shelley (2005:140) argues that managers are able to draw upon their legitimate power (French and Raven, 1998) in order to mediate government imposed strategies when he comments:

As workers themselves, managers are influenced by the contextual factors of policy structures and resources but also have influence over the way in which these are adopted in universities, and through this mediation have the opportunity to amend them through the various strategies that are enacted.

Likewise, in a school setting the headteacher is constrained by external policies. However, by drawing upon power resources, s/he is able to influence their implementation within the school.

Overbeck (2010:30) comments on the purpose of power:

Groups naturally require organization and coordination. Direction is needed to ensure that the group meets its goals and does not waste resources or opportunities; such needs give rise to the emergence of power. The functionalist view holds that groups invest power in one or a few individuals to ensure the success of the entire group.

This view supports the principle that there needs to be a person with overall charge of the school but that s/he cannot work in isolation from the other members of staff. The examination of power levels is linked to levels of leadership which are discussed in the following section.

2.5 Leadership Levels within a School

There are different levels of leadership within any school (Bottery, 2004). The most basic level is at the classroom stage involving interactions between the class teacher and his/her pupils. This would be true of all schools regardless of size and whether they are secondary or primary schools. Following on from this level is a middle level involving interactions between subject co-ordinators, class teachers and pupils. There is then a school level which has interactions between the headteacher, subject co-ordinators, class teachers and pupils. These levels may be absent in a small primary school as there are fewer members of staff. Add into this pattern a management level involving governors and the Local Authority and it can be seen that the picture of leadership can be hierarchical and more complex than it would initially seem.

Fink (2005:xx) argues that leadership is to be found throughout a school and is not the exclusive right of a few individuals. He writes:

Every person in the school exercises some form of influence over others and directs in some way the daily course of events ...

This links to the premise that power is present at all levels in a school. Layder (1997:107) comments:

...power is ever-present and everywhere in society. People are constantly subjected to the effects of power, but to varying degrees they themselves also have powers that they deploy to greater or lesser effect.

Fostering leadership, and consequently power, at many levels is an important part of a headteacher's role (MacBeath & Myers, 1999; Fullan, 2003).

Glatter and Kydd (2003:232) use the term 'Educational Leadership and Management' which they call 'ELM'. They also identify the complex nature of school leadership and management:

ELM practice occurs at many levels within educational organizations and beyond them. Within educational organizations it occurs at individual, group and organizational levels; beyond them at district and national education ministry level.

Fullan (2003) extends this thinking regarding different levels of leadership. He identified four levels of moral imperative for school leaders which he called 'individual', 'school', 'regional' and 'societal'. It is assumed that there is a hierarchy of moral purpose and that each level encompasses previous levels. There are also degrees of depth within each level. At the first and lowest level there is an element of making a difference to the individual members of staff. Fullan (2003) argues that the difference is made through personal care and attention but that it is not sustainable change as, although it may develop the individual to some extent, it will not influence the way that the school works. Although this may be generally true, development within the whole school situation is unlikely to take place without some

change to the individuals within the school. Arguably, this level assumes greater significance within a small primary school as the members of staff work closely together.

The second level involves making a difference in the school. Fullan (2003:41) explains:

At the school level ... the moral imperative of the principal involves leading deep cultural change that mobilizes the passion and commitment of teachers, parents, and others to improve the learning of all students, including closing the achievement gap.

Whilst Fullan (2003) distinguishes between these two levels in a hierarchical manner, it may be argued that there is a place for working at both of the levels concurrently within the school. There are small changes that may only be applicable to an individual in the school but several small changes will build together to become the second level. Instead of being hierarchical they are actually working alongside each other in an interlocking manner.

The third level that Fullan (2003) identified is a stage that involves making a difference regionally. At this level, headteachers are concerned with the success of other schools in their area as well as the success of their own school. In other words, the headteacher is making a difference regionally. At this level schools would work together to help one another. At present there seems to be a culture of each school working in isolation and even in competition with other schools (Bottery, 1992; Calveley, 2005). In order to work in a regional way there will need to be trust and confidence in each other. This will not be achieved easily in the present climate of falling school rolls and schools being judged by their position on league tables that have been compiled from test results which leads to a situation where schools are

competing against each other (Ironside and Seifert, 1995; Calveley, 2005). Fullan (2003:60) advocates the leaders of schools working together:

The new idea involves designing systems and providing resources so that leaders in one school can learn from leaders in other schools.

This notion of leaders learning from each other is echoed by Harris (2010:67):

System transformation is unlikely to be achieved by leaders of schools acting alone. Much will depend upon the formation of new networks, partnerships, alliances or federations to share leadership knowledge, to collectively address problems and to share expertise.

The challenge is to design a system that is both acceptable and useful to headteachers of small primary schools as these schools are often situated in rural areas and may be remote from other schools. This will be synthesised in the model of leadership that has been developed from this research and is shown in Chapter 7.

Good relations between a school and the community that it serves are important (Bowring-Carr and West-Burnham, 1997). This is an area that is being developed in primary schools and forms an important part of the inspection process in schools.

Ofsted inspectors evaluate:

... the extent to which the school has developed an understanding of the religious, ethnic and socio-economic characteristics of its community in a local, national and global context. (Ofsted, 2009: 52)

While this affects the whole school it will only be truly effective with the support of the headteacher.

Personal Reflection 3

This is likely to occur naturally in small primary schools as they are often located in rural areas and form an important part of their local community. I have been invited to open the village show in my capacity as headteacher of the village primary school.

Fullan (2003) has identified the fourth and highest level as the societal level. Headteachers and school leaders need to be aware of the bigger picture and how their school fits into society. This may be a new concept for primary schools as it implies more than just being a part of the local community served by the school. It involves the headteacher being aware of the social forces that shape the world and how to relate them to the life of the school. The headteacher needs to keep up to date with current political affairs and help the members of staff to make connections with school life (Stoll et al., 2003). This links with the 'Every Child Matters' agenda in the areas concerned with 'making a positive contribution' and 'achieving economic well-being' (DfES, 2004a). It also links to 'sustainable leadership' which is concerned with leadership that will secure the future of the school (Hargreaves and Fink, 2003).

2.6 The role of the headteacher as leader for learning

An important aspect of the headteacher's role is as a leader for learning. Gronn (2010:79) commented:

That which gives educational leadership its distinctiveness as a form of leadership is its leadership of learning.

Lambert (2005:88) puts forward the view that learning, teaching and leading are inter-connected:

To learn is to understand the essence of teaching; to teach is to understand the essence of leading.

Southworth (2005:86) also acknowledges the link between leadership and learning:

Learning lies at the heart of school leadership and improvement.

Southworth (2005) identified six levels of learning as ‘pupil’; ‘teacher’; ‘staff’; ‘organisational’; ‘learning networks’; and ‘leadership learning’. Each level is important in its own right but each is underpinned by the leadership level:

Leadership learning is necessary because creating learning schools rests, in large measure, on the quality of leadership (Southworth, 2005:88).

The role of the headteacher is crucial to guiding and supporting the whole school system. Fullan (2003:16) suggests that:

Standards, even when well implemented, can take us only part way to successful large-scale reform. It is only leadership that can take us all the way.

Arguably, the headteacher would achieve this by the use of their power to work with and through their members of staff. President John F Kennedy is quoted as saying: “Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other” (Middlewood et al, 2005:34). Bowring-Carr and West-Burnham (1997) develop this idea of the connection between leadership and learning further by referring to the headteacher as a steward of learning. This concept is extended to include teachers as stewards of learning by MacBeath and Myers (1999:17):

As in a sequence of Chinese boxes, Headteachers and senior management nurture the conditions in which teachers can be leaders while teachers in turn exercise stewardship so that their students can take up the running.

Although teachers are included as stewards of learning the role of the headteacher in encouraging the stewardship role of others cannot be ignored. As a steward of learning the headteacher needs to ensure that there are structures in place that demonstrate that learning is both valued and important. There is value in the headteacher modelling learning and changing the culture of the school from ‘do as I say’ to ‘do as I do’ which supports the idea of ‘first among equals’ (Ironside and

Seifert, 1995:244). The Headteacher also needs to consider the effectiveness of the learning environment which includes:

... supporting and involving staff in meaningful school-wide decision-making, and creating learning opportunities (for example, using staff meetings for learning). (Stoll et al, 2003:123)

In this context the headteacher is a leader for learning as opposed to a leader of learning but the members of staff also have a part to play. This is where there are links to the different leadership levels (Fullan, 2003). The headteacher has a facilitative role in the learning process and needs to consider how the curriculum can support the pupils' learning rather than defining the curriculum in terms of what needs to be covered (Stoll & Fink, 1989; Starratt, 2005). However, this may be more difficult under the current national curriculum orders (DfEE, 1999).

The headteacher has an important role in creating a suitable learning environment (Brighouse and Woods, 1999). Whilst it is agreed that the headteacher needs to have an overall view of the learning climate it is not possible to create an effective climate for learning without involving the other members of staff. Arguably, headteachers are being encouraged to let go of the reins and share leadership with their staff. This is a view that may be echoed by Hammersley-Fletcher (2007:20):

Whilst headteachers still bear ultimate responsibility along with, to some extent, the governors, they are expected to allow for a more flat management style.

The headteacher in a small school may find that this flatter management style which involves other members of staff occurs naturally, and is accomplished through a distributed leadership approach, as discussed later. However, the position of headteacher carries an element of power as Lukes (2005:76) comments:

Yet most of our actions bring in their wake innumerable chains of unintended consequences, some of them highly significant, and some of these seem obvious instances of power. Powerful people, for example, induce deferential behaviour in others but may not intend to.

Southworth (2005) has the view that school leaders use a combination of modelling, monitoring and dialogue in order to influence others. Modelling involves setting a good example. People watch the leader and it is noticed how they act in various situations and what they deem to be important. In order to monitor effectively, there needs to be an analysis of school performance which will include the analysis of test results, opinion surveys for stakeholders and attendance data as explained by Southworth (2005:79):

Learning is stronger and more effective when it is informed by data on students' learning progress and achievements as well as by direct knowledge of teaching practices and classroom dynamics.

In a small primary school it is likely that some, if not all, of these analyses would be carried out by the headteacher in the role of leader for learning. Southworth (2005:80) defines dialogue as:

...creating opportunities for teachers to talk with their colleagues and leaders about learning and teaching.

This may create a challenge for small primary schools with a number of part-time teachers whose working patterns may not overlap. Conversely, it may be easier in a small primary school as there are fewer people to accommodate and so it is possible for all of the staff to meet together and discuss such issues in a staff meeting.

Hammersley-Fletcher (2005) acknowledges the importance of the headteacher in a primary school whilst also identifying the importance of the members of staff working together. Likewise, Hackman and Wageman (2005:269) identified the

influence of the team leader as an important factor in the effectiveness of the organisation:

Team leaders engage in many different kinds of behaviors intended to foster team effectiveness, including structuring the team and establishing its purposes, arranging for the resources a team needs for its work and removing organizational roadblocks that impede the work, helping individual members strengthen their personal contributions to the team, and working with the team as a whole to help members use their collective resources well in pursuing team purposes.

While Hackman and Wageman were referring to leadership in the business sector this would also apply to the education sector. In a small school the team leader would be the headteacher and the team would consist of the other members of staff as there is only one team. This then links to the importance of preparation and training for leadership which is examined in the following section.

2.7 The impact of training and national leadership programmes

Strong leadership and good management are important in ensuring a broad and balanced curriculum in primary schools (Ofsted, 2003). The government introduced the Leadership and Management Programme for Headteachers (HEADLAMP) in 1995 (Kirkham, 1995; Brundrett, 2006). This programme gave a measure of flexibility to headteachers and governors in the choice of suitable and relevant training opportunities for the first two years of headship (Bush and Jackson, 2002). Consequently the focus on leadership issues was variable as the training covered both leadership and management issues (Brundrett, 2006). The HEADLAMP programme has been replaced several times with the latest programme, 'Head Start' being launched in April 2010. An overview of support programmes for headteachers can be found in Appendix C.

There has been a plethora of training and support programmes for new headteachers with the result that it could be said that there has been a lack of consistency. Apart from HEADLAMP, these programmes were overseen by the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) which was renamed as the National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services (referred to as the 'National College') in 2009. NCSL was established in 2000 with the intention of ensuring that school leaders developed the necessary skills and capability to lead their schools effectively. As the NCSL and subsequently the National College were set up by the Government, their neutrality from Government interference and policy could be in question. The Leadership Incentive Grant (LIG) was introduced in 2003. The LIG was intended to strengthen leadership at all levels but in 2006 it was only available to school leaders facing difficulties or challenging circumstances.

The National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) was introduced in 1997. Originally this training was centrally controlled but delivered regionally with a separate final assessment at a regional centre. The training programme was identical for each regional centre so it was not possible to take account of any specific needs of the trainees. The NPQH programme was restructured in 2001 and became competence based with school-based assessment. From April 2004 it has been mandatory for all new headteachers appointed to their first headship to either hold NPQH or to be undertaking the training for NPQH. From April 2009 new headteachers were required to have NPQH prior to taking up a first headship appointment. There has been some criticism of the programme including the distinction that NCSL has made between leadership and management (Bush, 1998;

Brundrett, 2006). A report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI, 2002:9) criticised NPQH training for not being able to meet the varying needs of the trainees:

Groups could include subject co-ordinators, newly appointed deputy headteachers, experienced deputies, acting headteachers and newly appointed headteachers, all from three different phases.

The experiences of a group of trainees drawn from one of the above groups would vary but when you add in all of the groups and up to three different phase groupings, it is extremely difficult to create one programme that would be appropriate for all of them. The NPQH does link to the National Standards for Headteachers (DfES, 2004). This brings it into line with the National Professional Framework for Teachers (TDA, 2007) which is a series of linked competences from initial teacher training to 'Core Standards' for Newly Qualified Teachers to 'Post Threshold', 'Excellent Teacher' and 'Advanced Teacher' standards.

The Leadership Programme for Serving Headteachers (LPSH) was for more experienced headteachers. It concentrated on leadership styles and leadership characteristics. There was a residential element which meant that the LPSH may not have been accessible for all headteachers, particularly headteachers of small primary schools who could have difficulty in covering an absence of four days. This programme, as with the NPQH programme, was generic rather than phase specific. The LPSH programme received some criticism for using mentors drawn from the business sector as Brundrett (2001:239) comments:

Although the introduction of the LPSH programme was less contentious than had been the arrival of NPQH, the requirement that the programme should include a business mentor who would support and advise candidates, rather than a professional mentor drawn from the education sector, caused some expressions of concern.

However, it has been seen in sections 2.2 and 2.3 that there are some similarities between leadership in the business sector and leadership in the education sector so a mentor from the business sector may complement the leadership of the headteacher. This programme was replaced by a programme called Head for the Future in 2005/2006. Again there was a residential element which might have deterred some headteachers. The final programmes for Head for the Future were in 2009 as the NCSL decided that the course was not appropriate for all headteachers in this generic format. To date no details about the replacement training are available, although the programme will build on the LPSH and Head for the Future programmes (www.ncsl.org.uk, accessed 29.03.09, 02.06.10).

It could be said that the above leadership programmes have helped to develop and sustain leadership within schools as Brundrett (2006:485) states:

... the lived experience of the school leaders surveyed and interviewed indicates that there is some emerging evidence that national leadership programmes are impacting positively on leadership in schools.

It is difficult to be more specific about the impact on schools due to the size of the survey. However, the survey suggests that school leaders had found that the national leadership programmes had been useful for their leadership practices.

A new programme introduced by the NCSL in the spring term 2007 was a leadership programme specifically for headteachers of small primary schools and involved four days of blended learning which included a residential aspect, interactive workshops, inter-school visits and access to an online community. It would seem that the number of places is limited as one Local Authority was invited to nominate nine schools to

participate. There were 45 small schools with 100 or fewer pupils in that Local Authority. The programme is only for experienced headteachers as one of the criteria to be accepted on the programme is that the headteacher must have been in post for at least three years. However, it will be shown in the research that the headteachers needed specific training for leading a small school when they were first appointed to their headship.

2.8 Styles of Leadership

There is clearly an abundance of styles of leadership that are discussed in the literature concerned with leadership in schools. There was a move away from using transactional styles of leadership and towards using democratic and so-called collegial styles (Gunter, 2001; Bush, 2003; Bottery, 2004) which has had a bearing on the choice of literature for this section. I point to what Bush (2003:64) terms as collegial models:

Collegial models include all those theories which emphasize that power and decision-making should be shared among some or all members of the organization.

It is less appropriate to focus on transactional styles as currently the training for headteachers promotes more democratic and collegial styles of leadership (DfEE, 200b). However it can create a false picture when leaders get too concerned with whether or not they are using a particular form of leadership. Hackman and Wageman (2005:272-273) comment:

If a leader manages, by whatever means, to ensure that all functions critical to group performance are taken care of, the leader has done his or her job well. Thus, a functional approach to leadership leaves room for an indefinite number of ways to get key group functions accomplished, and avoids the necessity of delineating all the specific behaviors or styles a leader should exhibit in given circumstances – a trap into which it is easy for leadership theorists to fall.

This would apply to leadership in general, regardless of context. Bush (2003:190) noted that the size of the school may influence the styles of leadership that are used:

Size may be a factor influencing leadership styles. It is easier to adopt a participative approach in small organizations while managerial leadership is likely to be an essential dimension in larger schools and colleges.

The collegial styles of leadership that are identified in the literature concerned with leadership in the education sector are discussed in the following sections but it must be remembered that leadership in schools may not fit neatly into one style or another but can be a hybrid of several styles.

2.8.1 Distributed and shared leadership

There has been an increasing amount of interest in the area of distributed leadership (Gronn, 2003a). Currie et al (2009:1738) identify a problem with the use of different terms being used to signify ‘distributed leadership’:

The boundaries of the concept, however, have been somewhat blurred by the range of different terms employed to describe leadership that extends beyond the individual located within the upper echelons of an organization.

The terms ‘shared’, ‘distributed’, ‘collective’, ‘democratic’, ‘devolved’, ‘participative’ and ‘collaborative’ have all been used to describe leadership that transcends beyond the headteacher and come under the broad term of ‘distributed leadership’ (Currie et al., 2009). According to the National College for School Leadership (NCSL, 2004) the term ‘distributed leadership’ is not a new idea and has previously been called delegated or shared leadership. However, it can be argued that they are not the same. ‘Distributed’ implies that it is transferred or shared out by the headteacher while ‘shared’ implies that there is no formal leader and so there is collaborative responsibility. Fink (2005:102) defined distributive leadership as:

... a network of relationships among people, structures and cultures (both within and across organizational boundaries), not just as a role based function assigned to, or acquired by, a person in an organization, who then uses his or her power to influence the actions of others.

It could be said that he is actually describing shared leadership with a collective responsibility for leadership rather than leadership being distributed by a leader.

Brighthouse and Woods (1999:45) are of the opinion that it is easier to share leadership in a small school:

Of course, the smaller the school or teaching unit, the more leadership, as well as work, can be shared.

While it is true that the leadership can be shared in a small school, it must be remembered that there are fewer people with whom to share it and less choice of sharing leadership according to people's strengths. Day et al (1998) suggest that the School Development Plan should be at the centre of the leadership structure with separate teams created for each project defined in the plan. The question is whether this system would work in a small primary school where all of the teachers would have to be involved in all of the projects or else they would work in isolation. In a small school there are fewer people to share the various roles which may make true shared or distributed leadership difficult.

Hammersley-Fletcher (2005:46) suggests that:

Distributed leadership is a model which advocates that people work together to develop vision and strategy for their organisation.

This fits with small schools where communication between people may be easier than in a large school and the members of staff would find it a natural process to be

involved in formulating the vision for the school. This implies that distributed leadership is more than simply sharing out tasks within the school which is a view that is echoed by Spillane and Timperley (2005:18):

... [Distributed] leadership involves dynamic interactions between multiple leaders involved in the execution of both separate and overlapping leadership activities. The important leadership task is to understand how it all works together.

This would support the view that the headteacher needs to have the overall picture of the school's vision and direction. In distributed leadership others are involved in decision-making (Harris, 2005) and it is probable that this is a natural process in small primary schools but there still needs to be a leader such as the headteacher to enable the process to be implemented and co-ordinated. Gronn (2008:154) highlighted a link between distributed leadership and democratic leadership:

...by de-monopolising leadership and potentially increasing the sources and voices of influence in organisations beyond just one, distributed leadership has helped widen the span of employee and member participation.

This view would seem to imply that distributed leadership may be difficult in small schools where there is a lack of multiple leaders. Harris (2010:59) sounds a note of caution about the use of the term 'distributed leadership':

One common misuse of the term is a convenient 'catch all' descriptor for any form of shared, collaborative or extended leadership practice

It would seem that Harris was of the opinion that there are specific attributes that set distributed leadership apart from dispersed or shared leadership.

MacBeath et al (2004:21) identified six categories for distributed leadership: formal, pragmatic, strategic, incremental, opportunistic and cultural. They concluded that the categories were part of the developing nature of distributed leadership and were neither fixed nor exclusive:

Each may be appropriate at a given time and in a given context. The most successful leadership would, we believe, convey an understanding of all of these different forms of distribution and be able to operate at each as appropriate to the task in hand.

This indicates that leadership styles are fluid and may be linked to context. Each of the categories represented a different process of distributing leadership as shown in Appendix D. This study was small with only eleven schools taking part and the mixed sample was drawn from all phases of schools. Five schools were primary or junior/infant schools so the findings may not be applicable to all primary schools regardless of size.

While the six categories may be viewed as separate they are also linked progressively. Formal, pragmatic, strategic and incremental forms of distribution involve the headteacher distributing leadership whilst opportunistic distribution involves teachers taking on leadership roles. Cultural distribution may involve everybody in the school community sharing leadership as a part of the culture underpinning the life of the school. These categories link the multi-faceted role of the headteacher (Webb and Vulliamy, 1996) with the chief executive role (Ironside and Seifert, 1995).

It has been recognised in a report by Ofsted (2003: paragraph 80) that leadership and management tasks need to be shared throughout the school:

It is no longer true – if it ever was – that leadership and management are the sole responsibility of the headteacher.

This has implications for schools undergoing inspections by Ofsted. The headteacher needs to be actively engaged in self-evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. An important document that underpins the inspection process is the

Self-Evaluation Form (SEF). The preliminary judgements by the lead Ofsted inspector are based on the SEF which is completed electronically through the Ofsted website and should be submitted to Ofsted prior to an inspection taking place. Whilst the headteacher may have overall responsibility for ensuring that the SEF is completed it is a document that involves the whole of the school community. The inspectors will use the SEF to formulate their initial hypotheses and so the key is to evaluate the impact of the types of leadership within the school on the learning of the pupils.

The subject co-ordinators in primary schools may be referred to as “middle leaders” (Hammersley-Fletcher and Kirkham, 2007). This term helps to foster the concept of distributed leadership that is shared between subject leaders. However, while this may be the case in larger schools, it is not necessarily true in small primary schools.

Hammersley-Fletcher and Kirkham (2007:426) write:

In the small schools, teachers carry multiple responsibilities and the role of middle leader is a somewhat redundant term simply on the basis of having only a limited number of people to lead. In addition primary teachers teach all subjects.

It could be said that leadership is distributed to all teachers in the absence of ‘middle leaders’ or conversely that all teachers are middle leaders which would suggest that the role of the headteacher is still necessary and is important as a facilitator. But there may be some tension in the changing nature of the headteacher’s role.

This type of leadership links distributed leadership to invitational leadership which is considered in the following section.

2.8.2 Invitational Leadership

Invitational leadership was developed by Stoll and Fink (Stoll & Fink, 1989; Stoll et al, 2003; Fink, 2005). Fink (2005:45) revised the original definition of invitational leadership that he had previously developed with Stoll:

Leadership is about communicating invitational messages to individuals and groups with whom the leader interacts in order to build and act on a shared and evolving vision of a *learning-centred* school.

Invitational leadership is built around the four basic values of optimism, trust, respect and intentionality (Stoll & Fink, 1989). These values are linked to each other and they are important for creating an effective learning environment. The headteacher needs to create a climate of optimism within the school. S/he also needs to encourage trust and respect amongst members of staff and pupils. The invitational leader offers four types of invitations as shown in Figure 2.3:

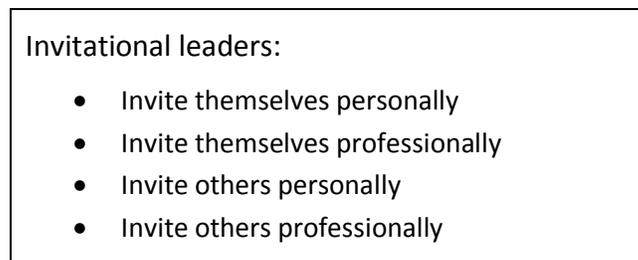


Figure 2.3: The four types of invitation given by invitational leaders
Source: Adapted from Stoll & Fink, 1989

It is appropriate that the first two forms of invitation are concerned with the leader inviting her/himself. The leader will have difficulty inviting others to develop personally and professionally if s/he does not initially attend to their own needs in those areas. In order to invite her/himself personally the leader needs to exhibit ethical standards and to act on these. S/he also needs to be a reflective thinker. The leader needs to have a sense of purpose and a vision as suggested by Stoll and Fink (1989:111):

Invitational leaders dream dreams of more beneficial futures for themselves and others.

These attributes will be necessary in order to be able to invite others to use their potential and to play a part in collegial leadership. Fink (2005:55) comments:

Invitational leaders recognise that people have free will and chose (sic) to be engaged, motivated or supportive, and they help them to make these choices by developing a context that promotes engagement, motivation and support.

A leader cannot invite others professionally without first attending to their own professional development. In order to invite her/himself professionally the leader needs to keep up to date with educational initiatives and educational literature. Adults learn effectively in groups and so networks and learning communities are important. This links to the regional level of leadership which is the third level identified by Fullan (2003).

The second part of invitational leadership involves inviting others in the school community and so it is linked to shared leadership as explained by Fink (2005:66):

Invitational leaders share leadership, delegate effectively, and hold people accountable for their actions.

It may be argued that the power resides with the headteacher as it is the leader who decides which aspects to delegate or distribute to others.

The importance of relationships is paramount when the leader invites others. The leader needs to be able to trust others and respect their decisions when leadership tasks are distributed and vice versa. Novak (2005:44) writes:

Invitational leadership is an attempt to focus an educator's desires, understandings and actions in order to create a total school environment that appreciates individuals' uniqueness and calls forth their potential.

The headteacher of a small school is in a good position to know the strengths of the members of staff and to develop their potential. Stoll and Fink (1989) suggest that invitational leadership is an inclusive style of leadership that will help to promote learning.

2.8.3 Transformational Leadership

Leithwood (1992, 1999) conducted studies in the use of transformational leadership in schools during the 1990s. He placed importance on lessening feelings of isolation by teachers working collaboratively and planning together (Leithwood, 1992:10). It will be seen in the research findings that this is an area that is difficult in small schools so this raises the question of whether small primary schools are able to utilise transformational leadership.

There are several interpretations of transformational leadership (Southworth, 1998) but one factor seems to be that it is linked to managing change (Southworth, 1998, Middlewood et al., 2005). Southworth (1998:45) writes:

Transformational leaders, while responding to the needs and interests of colleagues and followers, seek to move the organization forward. They transform the school by influencing the staff, providing a view of the future for the organisation and playing a key role in helping everyone to play a part in moving towards this new position.

Leithwood (1999:114) identified six dimensions in his model of transformational leadership as shown in Figure 2.4:

- Building school vision and goals
- Providing intellectual stimulation
- Offering individualized support
- Symbolizing professional practices and values
- Demonstrating high performance expectations
- Developing structures to foster participation in school decisions

Figure 2.4: Six dimensions of transformational leadership
Source: Adapted from Leithwood, 1999:114

The first dimension concerns the vision for the school. This is an important element of managing change and considering the future of a school. Davies and Davies (2005:11) write of the transformational leader:

...a leader is proactive about the vision and mission, shaping members' beliefs, values and attitudes while developing options for the future.

There are links to distributed leadership with the dimension of developing structures to enable other members of staff to be involved in decision-making. This is an important part of transformational leadership which Bass and Riggio (2005:3) develop further:

Transformational leaders help followers grow and develop into leaders by responding to individual followers' needs by empowering them and by aligning the objectives and goals of the individual followers, the leader, the group, and the larger organization.

Although Bass and Riggio (2005) were not writing about educational leadership this is an area where elements of leadership are not work-place specific.

2.8.4 Strategic Leadership

Strategic leadership underpins all types of leadership. It is not a new form of leadership and it can be said that there is a strategic dimension in any style of leadership. It includes the ability to link long-term visions for the school to daily work (Davies, 2005b). It could be said that having a vision for the school and translating it into practice is an important part of the headteacher's role and in fact

underpins the role. This links to the first dimension of transformational leadership (Leithwood, 1999) as shown in Figure 2.4. However, constructing the vision together as a staff team may be more effective and that links with distributed leadership.

Davies (2005b:9) states:

The importance of creating the strategy *with* others, and not just communicating it to others, may be the critical skill that strategic leaders deploy in determining the strategic direction of the organization.

Thinking strategically in this way also links to sustainable leadership and the longer-term future of the school. The strategic leader is able to focus on the whole school situation and how it will develop over the next few years. Davies (2003:303) comments:

[A strategic leader] can see the future, bigger picture for the organization as well as understanding the current contextual setting of the organization. Strategic orientation is the ability to link long-range visions and concepts to daily work.

When there are initiatives from central and local government such as the numeracy and literacy frameworks which have now become the Primary Framework, the headteacher needs to use aspects of strategic leadership in order to decide the future direction of the school. One problem is that the Central Government agenda tends to focus on short-term targets and these do not lend themselves to strategic working.

Davies (2005b:13) gives the following advice to strategic leaders:

What is important is that strategic leaders filter out the unimportant and make sense of the important for themselves and their organisations. The critical nature of their position often means that their interpretation of reality determines patterns of action within the organisation.

The headteacher needs to be able to interpret the reality for the school but also to share this interpretation with the other members of staff as they are the people who will need to take the necessary actions. This may occur naturally in a small primary

school as it may be easier to have strategic conversations with a small number of staff members. Alternatively it may be harder to be strategic in a small school as the organisation of the school can need to be changed each year.

2.8.5 Sustainable Leadership

Sustainable leadership also underpins other styles of leadership. It has been seen that the quality of the leadership is important (Bowring-Carr & West-Burnham, 1997; Stoll et al, 2003) but it is also crucial that the level of leadership is sustainable (Hargreaves and Fink, 2003). A school needs to be able to function effectively even when the headteacher is absent or if there is a change in headteacher. Sustainable leadership is essential for the school to continue to develop through several decades. Bowring-Carr (2005:122) likens the headteacher to a steward who is looking after the school for the future:

A steward has the over-riding aim of wanting to hand over the institution to the successor in the best possible shape.

Hargreaves and Fink (2003) have identified seven principles of sustainable leadership as shown in Figure 2.5:

- Sustainable leadership:

 - creates and preserves sustaining learning
 - secures success over time
 - sustains the leadership of others
 - addresses issues of social justice
 - develops rather than depletes human and material resources
 - develops environmental diversity and capacity
 - undertakes activist engagement with the environment

Figure 2.5: Seven principles of sustainable leadership
Source: adapted from Hargreaves & Fink, 2003

In order to achieve sustainability the leader needs to develop a curriculum that is accessible to all pupils so that learning is sustained as well as developing assessment strategies to monitor and motivate pupils to perform well. Within this area the headteacher needs to consider the use of performance data and value-added data to secure success over time. Leithwood and Riehl (2003:4) conducted research into successful school leadership with their studies of exceptional schools indicating that:

...school leaders influence learning primarily by galvanising effort around ambitious goals and by establishing conditions that support teachers and that help students succeed.

This method of sustaining leadership links to the notion of the leader being a 'steward' (Bowring-Carr, 2005) who encourages and enables others to produce their best work.

Successful school leaders respond productively to the opportunities and challenges that arise in the school as suggested by Leithwood & Riehl, (2003:8):

Leaders in highly diverse contexts help identify and implement forms of teaching and learning that are appropriate and effective for the populations they serve.

In order to sustain leadership, the headteacher needs to make connections between the past, the present and the future and help others to understand how these influence the life of the school (Fink, 2005). It is not sufficient to only focus on the present if leadership for learning is to be effective and sustainable. Shackleton (2005:4) highlights the importance of the leader having a vision for the organisation:

It [the vision] involves having a strategy or thinking strategically; it means having a view of where the organization should go or be or do; it means deciding what is important for the success of the organization; it involves envisaging the future.

Whilst Shackleton is referring to business leadership, the ideas could equally refer to educational leadership. The headteacher influences the direction of the school through his/her vision for the future (Bush, 2003). This concept is echoed by Davies (2007:17):

Sustainable leadership establishes a set of values and purposes that underpin the educational process in the school. Most significantly it is the individual passion and commitment of the leader that drives the values and purposes into reality.

When considering how to sustain the leadership of others in connection with distributed and shared leadership it is possible to learn from the behaviour of a flock of geese flying south. The geese support each other by taking turns to lead and if one falls behind another stays with it to support it until it is able to retake its place in the formation. Stoll et al (2003:114) may have been considering a similar idea when they wrote:

The leader creates an environment of safety, encouragement and mutual trust that sustains the group's community spirit over time.

The composition of the school staff team is important to the concept of sustainable leadership. Davies (2007:20) writes:

A key challenge for sustainable leadership is getting the right team and establishing the leadership capacity for the school.

Stoll et al (2003) also stress the importance of working together as a team. They use the metaphor of a jazz ensemble to describe sustainable leadership. The jazz group is able to perform at a high level even when the leader is not there because of the respect and trust between the members, as well as self-sufficiency. This also links back to the values element of invitational leadership. As both strategic leadership and sustainable leadership underpin all styles of leadership, there are implications both for the preparation and support of new headteachers.

2.9 Mentoring and Support Programmes for Headteachers

It could be said that the training programmes for headteachers are support programmes to some extent. The training programmes for newly appointed headteachers included an element of mentoring.

There are different forms of mentoring schemes which range from informal mentors giving advice and support to colleagues to more formal schemes where a mentor is appointed for a specific purpose (Hobson and Sharp, 2005). Headteacher mentoring is a specific form of mentoring between two equal partners and could also be referred to as 'peer mentoring'. There is no national scheme for the mentoring of headteachers although, as part of the support programme for new headteachers, NCSL had a 'New Visions' programme (see Appendix C). This programme was a means of providing new headteachers with:

Access to a tailored knowledge base ... coaching, peer mentoring, e-networks, shared enquiry and group problem-solving activities.
(Tomlinson, 2002:58)

Mentoring schemes form part of leadership development programmes in several countries which include the United States and Singapore (Bush and Jackson, 2002). Hobson and Sharp (2005) reported on a mentoring scheme in New York. The new principals had a mentor who acted as an advisor in addition to a 'buddy' who was an established principal from the same school district.

Coaching can be used alongside mentoring or it can stand as a support mechanism in its own right. Arguably, this is a practice that the education sector has borrowed from the business sector. Coaching can take different formats as headteachers can use coaching techniques to develop the team of staff members or headteachers can coach

each other. Hackman and Wageman (2005:275) determine that the timing of coaching is important when considering team coaching:

We posit that coaching interventions are more effective when they address issues a team is ready for at the time they are made and, moreover, that readiness varies systematically across the team life cycle.

A different form of coaching is called ‘executive coaching’ (Feldman and Lankau, 2005). This form of coaching involves an external coach coming to the organisation.

Feldman and Lankau (2005:832) state:

Executive coaching does not require the development of close, personal bonds; interactions between coaches and executives tend to be more formal and structured in nature. In addition, executive coaching is more likely to occur at midcareer rather than in early career.

Executive coaching is an element of business leadership and management that could transfer to educational leadership and management.

Mentoring and coaching practices can be the means of helping headteachers deal with the challenges of leadership. The next section examines the challenges that face headteachers of small primary schools.

2.10 Challenges to Leading the Small Primary School

There are several challenges that need to be considered in order to minimise their effect on leadership within a small school. These include pressure from local and national governments as well as legislations and innovations such as the national curriculum, literacy and numeracy strategies and the primary strategy (Middlewood et al., 2005). Hammersley-Fletcher and Brundrett (2008:13) write:

It is important to acknowledge the pressure placed upon head teachers. This is a time of mixed messages. Acting as an autocrat is almost frowned upon and distributed leadership is promoted as the key to success.

Headteachers may feel under pressure to adopt a philosophy with which they do not feel comfortable. In a small school there may not be a senior leadership team and so the headteacher could have to make such decisions alone. Conversely, it has been seen in section 2.8.1 that distributed leadership may occur naturally in a small school and so decisions are shared. However, the headteacher bears the ultimate responsibility in the school.

Leaders should beware of adopting every new initiative that comes along just for the sake of it. They need to develop the courage to act on what they believe is important for their school and to discard initiatives that will not benefit the learning culture of the school (Fink, 2005). This may not be easy or realistic for new, inexperienced headteachers as they assimilate a new role. However, experienced headteachers will be aware that some initiatives are statutory and others, such as the Primary Framework, are recommended but not statutory. This links to strategic leadership as the headteacher needs to lead the school in a strategic manner.

Bolam (2003:77) reported on a study into the training needs of headteachers in five European countries and he found that there were some similarities between them:

...three overall explanations accounted for the majority of difficulties identified by the heads: the complexity of their roles and tasks; changing external pressures and demands; poor access to professional training development and support, both before and after appointment.

Whilst this has implications for the training needs of headteachers it also links to challenges. These particular challenges could be overcome by the use of appropriate training programmes in addition to mentoring and coaching programmes.

The nature of learning is changing from a traditional subject-based system to a thematic system with the advent of the Government's 'Excellence and Enjoyment' strategy (Day et al. 1998). This is a major change for teachers who have trained since the introduction of the National Curriculum in 1988. This has implications for the continuing professional development of staff in schools. The process of testing pupils from Year 2 upwards may have the effect of creating a culture of 'teaching to the test' (Day et al, 1998). The headteacher needs to balance the problem of performance targets and league tables with effective learning. Fink (2005:xiv) blames educational leadership for limiting learning:

...the contemporary state of education internationally, and educational leadership in particular, stultifies teacher creativity and professionalism, and discourages people that have the ability and passion to lead our schools and educate our children for the emerging knowledge society.

It remains to be seen if the recent change in Government in 2010 will have a positive effect on educational leadership in the political arena as well as in schools.

Headteachers in primary schools often have to try to balance a teaching commitment with their leadership and management tasks (OFSTED, 2003). This is more so in small primary schools where the teaching commitment can be substantial. The teaching commitment is not necessarily too large a challenge to leadership in a small school as the headteacher is able to lead by example. It can become a challenge when it is a substantial proportion of the week. Fullan (1992:2) writes:

Heads are often overloaded with what they are doing or overloaded with all the things they think they should be doing.

When a headteacher has a high level of teaching commitment there is less time for other leadership and management tasks. This may then be one of the factors that could lead to a headteacher becoming overloaded.

The headteacher of a small school may be the only member of the senior leadership team and consequently there are few opportunities to discuss problems or worries with another senior member of staff. This can make the role of headteacher very lonely. This is recognised by Southworth (2004:140) as he writes:

In small schools the relative lack of other leaders makes their heads quite isolated.

This can be a challenge that needs to be overcome by new ways of structuring leadership in small primary schools.

2.11 Conclusion

The literature shows that there are conceptual and implementational links between leading and managing in the business sector and the education sector. However, it should be noted that the purpose of a business is to make a profit whereas this is not the situation for a school (Bottery, 1992). Nonetheless we have seen the introduction of marketisation and managerialism in schools thus making educational institutions quasi-businesses. In this chapter it has been seen that there are different levels of power being deployed through Central Government, Local Authorities, governors and headteachers in the forms of authority and influence. In an effective school the headteacher will hold both themselves and their members of staff accountable (Stoll

et al, 2003). According to Leithwood (1999) and Stoll et al (2003) it is important to involve teachers in decisions concerning the direction of the school.

The headteacher, as the leader, will need to consider if a particular practice is appropriate for the school rather than considering only if it is 'best practice' as designated in nationally available documentation. The headteacher can then use their legitimate power (French and Raven, 1959) to mediate the effects of change. If the practice does not fit with the values of the school it will not be an appropriate practice (Fink, 2005). The influence of the headteacher is an important factor in primary schools. This is recognised by Hammersley-Fletcher and Kirkham (2007:427):

Primary schools are very dependent on the leadership philosophy of the headteacher who still exercises an enormous power even if this is simply to 'allow' others to take responsibility.

According to the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE, 1997:29), "The quality of the headteacher is a crucial factor in the success of a school." This view is echoed by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED, 2000). Successful leaders understand the context of their school. Whilst leaders are able to have an influence on the school environment they cannot force effective and sustainable change. They need to use coercive power (French and raven, 1959) in order to invite others to change. It is important to consider the development of both personal and professional learning of all those involved in the life of the school (Stoll et al, 2003). Effective leaders adapt many styles of leadership depending on the situation and they are a combination of both leader and manager (Fink, 2005). While it is recognised that it is important to share or distribute leadership within a school it is difficult to

envisage a school where there is no overall leader. In a primary school culture the leader needs to have some educational background in order to both lead and manage the school effectively.

It is acknowledged that the leadership training programmes do have a positive impact on learning and teaching within schools (Brundrett, 2006) but one weakness may be that they are generic training programmes as opposed to phase-specific programmes. Also there may be a place for a training programme that is appropriate for leaders of small primary schools which is not only phase-based but also specific to the size of the school. It is yet to be seen if the new programme for newly appointed headteachers will meet this need. The recently introduced programme for headteachers of small primary schools is size specific but one criticism of that programme could be that it is only for experienced headteachers and so it is not open to all headteachers of small schools. It could be argued that headteachers of small schools need a specific training programme regardless of length of service, although it might be more needed when the headteacher is newly appointed.

Mentoring and coaching programmes are important in helping to lessen the feelings of isolation for new headteachers and for developing their confidence. However, it has been seen from the literature that there is not a consistent programme of mentoring for experienced headteachers. It could be said that headteachers of small schools feel isolated because they may be the only senior member of staff in the school and so they would benefit from a mentoring programme that continued after the first year.

One challenge or disadvantage to leading a small primary school is the effect of local and national government initiatives and legislation. This may have an impact on leading a school with few members of staff and a headteacher who could have a substantial teaching commitment. However, it is possible to overcome challenges and change them into opportunities for development.

These areas will be examined in more detail in the research. The issues raised in this literature review were used to inform the collection of the data, analysis of the data and conclusions.

3. Evaluating Research Approaches

3.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out and evaluates the methodology for the research. This research began in June 2006 with a search of the available literature. This was followed by the pilot study which was a piece of assessed work with the data collection taking place in September 2006 and the analysis and writing up stages being conducted between September 2006 and March 2007. The pilot study included an initial investigation into research methods. Both the literature review and the investigation into research methods were developed further between 2006 and 2010 to be included in this dissertation. The data for the main research were collected between July 2007 and May 2009. A programme of work from 2006 to 2010 is included in Appendix E.

This chapter begins by examining the philosophy underpinning the research before considering the design of the research project and the method that was undertaken. The theoretical framework that underpinned the data collection, the sample that was selected and the analysis of the data are discussed with a consideration of its validity and reliability. The ethical aspects of the study are also considered.

As the total sample comprises 44 headteachers, the findings from this research will be generalisable to all of the 48 headteachers of small primary schools in one Local Authority. The response sample totalled twenty-six headteachers. Four of the small schools were not included in the sample as they did not have a permanent headteacher at the time of the data collection. The research findings will lead to recommendations for changes to educational policy.

3.2 The nature of the research

While other approaches are considered in this section, this research takes a realist approach. Denzin and Lincoln (1998:8) state that:

Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry.

This research accords with Denzin and Lincoln's definition above as it is concerned with the nature of reality within small primary schools and the ensuing situational constraints. As it is important to select the most appropriate approach, or a combination of approaches, for the specific research project, there follows an examination of the main approaches for qualitative research that have been considered.

Ethnomethodology has its roots in the sociology tradition and is concerned with how people make sense of their everyday world (Garfinkel, 1967; Cohen et al, 2000).

Cohen et al (2000:24) write about ethnomethodology:

More especially, it is directed at the mechanisms by which participants achieve and sustain interaction in a social encounter – the assumptions they make, the conventions they utilize, and the practices they adopt.

Cohen et al (2000) highlight two forms of ethnomethodology. Linguistic ethnomethodology is concerned with the use of language and how conversations focus on more than the spoken words. Situational ethnomethodology is concerned with the social contexts of the participants. This in-depth study bears some characteristics of situational ethnomethodology as it is concerned with making sense of the social contexts of the headteachers but it is more focused on a particular aspect of the social context rather than on the whole social context.

The second approach that has been considered is phenomenology. Phenomenology is concerned with people as opposed to systems. This could be considered to be a strength of this approach to research (Cohen et al, 2000: Denscombe, 2003).

Denscombe (2003:98) states:

When dealing with the way people experience facets of their lives, phenomenology stresses the need to present matters as closely as possible to the way that those concerned understand them.

Phenomenology uses philosophical ideas to form a theoretical framework. This approach to research takes into account the reality for the person and their experience (Van Manen, 1990). The language that is used by the participants is important so the researcher tries to stay as close as possible to the original language used. Denscombe (2003:98) writes:

The task is to present the experiences in a way that is *faithful to the original*.

This seems to suggest that the researcher should not interpret or analyse the experiences and could be considered a weakness of this research approach. The research that is being undertaken is dealing with people and their experiences so it shows some elements of a phenomenological approach but it goes beyond detailed description as there will be some analysis and interpretation of the social context.

Phenomenography differs from phenomenology as the phenomenographer studies the experiences and thoughts of the participants in an empirical manner rather than in a philosophical manner (Marton, 1988; Boulton-Lewis and Wilss, 2004). This research approach was developed by a research group, including Marton, at the

University of Gothenburg in Sweden. Marton (1988:143) identifies the base on which phenomenography is founded in the following way:

When investigating people's understanding of various phenomena, concepts, and principles, we repeatedly found that *each phenomenon, concept or principle can be understood in a limited number of qualitatively different ways.*

Phenomenography makes use of contextual analysis and phenomenographers primarily use interviews which are analysed by arranging utterances into categories according to specified criteria (Tesch, 1990; Svensson, 1997). Marton (1988:145) writes:

Within phenomenography, thinking is described in terms of what is perceived and thought about; the research is never separated from the object of perception or the content of thought.

Richardson (1999) warns that there are limitations to phenomenography where it has been developed by subsequent researchers. These limitations include the reliance on interpretations by participants and researchers as well as the contextualisation of the experiences. However, taking these into account, phenomenography still remains a valid and useful research paradigm because it allows for explanation of the experiences of the participants.

While this research adopts many of the characteristics of the phenomenography approach as it is concerned with the way that headteachers experience leadership within small primary schools which could be described as a specific phenomenon, it goes beyond the phenomenographical approach as it is concerned with the cultural situation in small primary schools.

As has already been stated, this research takes a realist approach. Realism is a philosophy where the method, the nature of the object and the purpose of the study need to be considered together as well as the relationship between them (Sayer, 1992). Layder (1993:7-8) writes that the realist approach offers:

... a layered or 'stratified' model of society which includes macro (structural, institutional) phenomena as well as the more micro phenomena of interaction and behaviour.

Layder (1993:8) identified the importance of this approach when he commented:

...it [the realist approach] enables social science to address the problem of the division between macro and micro levels of analysis in sociology by concentrating attention on the organic links between them.

This research accords with Layder's definition of the realist approach as it is concerned with the links between the experiences and social interactions of the headteachers and their activities at the micro, school, level and the settings and contexts at the macro, Local Authority and Central Government, level.

It may be argued that while the realist approach shares some characteristics with phenomenography they are not the same thing. Svensson (1997:164) writes of phenomenography in the following way:

It is an empirical research tradition. This means that metaphysical beliefs and ideas about the nature of reality and the nature of knowledge do not come first.

The realist approach makes use of everyday experiences. It places importance on practice and what we learn from practice. One form of realism is referred to as 'critical realism' (Madill et al, 2000; May, 2001; Porter, 2002). This is where it is believed that a person's knowledge of their social world affects the way that they behave. May (2001:12) writes:

The task of researchers within this tradition is to uncover the structures of social relations in order to understand why we then have the policies and practices that we do.

Hammersley (1992) identifies two forms of realism which he calls 'ethnographic realism' and 'subtle realism'. Miles and Huberman (1994) identify a further form of realism which they call 'transcendental realism'. This form of realism involves finding causal explanations for events as well as providing evidence to show that each event is connected to the explanation. Hammersley (1992:196) notes that ethnographic realism involves:

... independent and unknown realities that can come to be known by the researcher getting into direct contact with them, for example through participant observation or depth interviewing.

Subtle realism is more closely aligned to the notion of grounded theory as it involves revising previously held views and beliefs according to the research outcomes. While the predominant methodology for this research does not use a grounded theory approach it does show some elements of grounded theory. Grounded theory originated from the work of Glaser and Strauss (1967) although it has been adapted and transformed so that the term 'grounded theory' means slightly different things to different people. Denscombe (2003:109) comments:

There has been a tendency for researchers to 'adopt and adapt' grounded theory and to use it selectively for their own purposes.

The grounded theory approach involves generating theories that emerge from the data and the collection of the data takes place throughout the course of the research and not just at the start of the research. Locke (2001:59) explains:

Grounded theory acknowledges its pragmatic philosophical heritage in insisting that a good theory is one that will be practically useful in the course of daily events, not only to the social scientists, but also to laymen. In a sense, a test of a good theory is whether or not it works 'on the ground'.

This implies that the research needs to be useful to people involved in the practice that is the subject of the research. This research will be useful to headteachers of small schools and so fulfils this criterion of grounded theory. Patton (2002:128 - 129) writes:

As a matter of philosophical distinctness, then, grounded theory is best understood as fundamentally realist and objectivist in orientation, emphasizing disciplined and procedural ways of getting the researcher's biases out of the way but adding healthy doses of creativity to the analytic process.

The above comment indicates that there is a link between grounded theory and the realist approach.

There is an acknowledgement within the realist tradition that it is impossible to conduct research that is not influenced to some extent by the values and preconceptions of the researcher. It is important to make any biases explicit as well as taking steps to minimise their influence on the analysis of the data (Patton, 2002). In this research it is acknowledged that I am also a headteacher of a small primary school and so it is difficult for my views to be completely eliminated. This is discussed further in sections 3.5 and 3.6.

I also considered the place of constructivism within the realist approach. According to Patton (2002:96):

Constructivism begins with the premise that the human world is different from the natural, physical world and therefore must be studied differently.

Within the realist approach meanings are constructed from the interpretation of the data to form a representation of reality (Hammersley, 1992; Patton, 2002). Hammersley (1992) questions whether research reports are constructed to reflect the

nature of the researcher and the research process rather than to represent reality. Descriptions of situations or cultures represent aspects of reality that are considered relevant to the research and this may be an area where it is an advantage to be an insider researcher as the culture is known to the researcher.

This research has drawn on characteristics from the previous research approaches that have been discussed but arguably, it falls into the realist approach. Patton (2002:96) writes:

So constructivists study the multiple realities constructed by people and the implications of those constructions for their lives and interactions with others.

This research has studied the realities surrounding leadership in small primary schools from the perspectives of the headteachers and has considered the interactions that the headteachers have with others. It is an in-depth study with both the collection and analysis of the data being carried out through a realist approach.

3.3 A Theoretical Framework for Reflexivity

The traditional view of research was that the researcher held an objective stance and the research process was an impersonal activity (Etherington, 2004). However, there is a place for acknowledging the effect of the researcher on the research process (Aull Davies, 1998). While ‘reflection’ and ‘reflexivity’ may sometimes be used interchangeably there is a view that they are not the same thing (Etherington, 2004). Patton (2002:64) suggests:

To be reflexive, then, is to undertake an ongoing examination of *what I know* and how *I know it* ...

We may reflect on our practice at a conscious level of thinking whereas we are reflexive when we form theories based on our reflections or our prior experiences. There is an element of reflection during the data collection part of this research and reflexivity is shown throughout the research but particularly at the analysis stage when synthesising the findings.

Reflexivity underpins all areas of a research project in an attempt to make sense of the research. Smyth and Shacklock (1998:6-7) write:

As we see it, the process of reflexivity is an attempt to identify, do something about, and acknowledge the limitations of the research: its location, its subjects, its process, its theoretical context, its data, its analysis, and how accounts recognize that the construction of knowledge takes place in the world and not apart from it.

As suggested by the previous authors, it is not sufficient merely to acknowledge the limitations of the research and the effect of the researcher on the research. The important factor is how we use that knowledge to make sense of the research and to aid our analysis and interpretation of the data. Throughout the research I have used my own experience as a headteacher to help to make sense of the data that has been collected.

According to Aull Davies (1998:21) reflexivity supports the realist approach to research:

...critical realism requires a continuing reflexive awareness as part of the condition of ethnographic practice, without allowing such awareness to blind us to the existence of a reality beyond ourselves which provides a legitimate basis for the production and critique of theoretical abstractions.

Adkins (2001:333) expands on this idea as she writes:

Reflexivity continues to be recommended as a critical practice for social research ... especially as it is often understood as an antidote to the problems of realism.

The realist researcher attempts to explain and interpret rather than focus on description. Reflexivity may be used as a tool in that process and help to bring a measure of objectivity to an approach that could be seen as based in subjectivity. In this research I have gone beyond a description of the events and have analysed and synthesised the data in order to interpret the situations shown in the sample schools.

There are contrasting views on reflexivity in a research project being objective or subjective. Denscombe (2003:300) states:

Reflexivity concerns the relationship between the researcher and the social world. Contrary to positivism, reflexivity suggests that there is no prospect of the social researcher achieving an entirely objective position from which to study the social world.

Thus, we do not start our research with a clean sheet; rather we bring our culture, social background and various experiences to our research design and execution.

However, Aull Davies (1998:7) puts forward the alternative view of reflexivity; that reflexivity may be an attempt to gain objectivity:

In its most transparent guise, reflexivity expresses researchers' awareness of their necessary connection to the research situation and hence their effects upon it. This has often been conceived in terms of the subjectivity of the researcher, with attempts being made, especially from a positivist orientation, to ensure objectivity.

This view is supported by Adkins (2001) who is of the opinion that reflexivity may not necessarily be subjective as opposed to being objective. It could be argued that, by the very nature of qualitative research, the researcher is both subjective and objective and this ambivalence must always be taken into account.

Denzin and Lincoln (2003) use the metaphor of '*bricoleur*' or 'quilt maker' to describe the qualitative researcher. The bricoleur image is further refined into various dimensions that include methodological, theoretical, and interpretive bricolage. The methodological bricoleur uses a range of methods including interviewing and in-depth reflexivity. The theoretical bricoleur uses a breadth of reading and interpretive paradigms to construct meanings that build on each other. The interpretive bricoleur acknowledges and uses the interactive process of research that is influenced by the identity of the researcher and the identities of the participants. Denzin and Lincoln (2003:9) write:

The product of the interpretive *bricoleur's* labor is a complex, quiltlike bricolage, a reflexive collage or montage – a set of fluid, interconnected images and representations.

While a mixture of these dimensions may be present in my research, it has been influenced by the interpretive dimension as it has taken account of the various identities of both the researcher and the participants.

3.4 The Place of Reflexivity in my Research

An element of reflexivity is present in each step of research from selecting the topic to be researched through to the final stage of writing up the research study (Aull Davies, 1998). Our experiences influence what we see or notice as well as how we use categories and codes in our data analysis. According to Savin-Baden (2004:370):

Data interpretation needs to be based predominantly in the experience and perspectives of the participants we are seeking to represent and understand.

Arguably, the perspectives and experiences of the researcher also need to be taken into account at the analysis stage. By reflecting on my own role as a headteacher and

a researcher I have attempted to avoid bias in the research at the design, data collection and analysis stages.

The writing-up stage has reflected my experiences as the researcher in addition to those of the participants. Denscombe (2003:88) writes:

As researchers, the meanings we attach to things that happen and the language we use to describe them are the product of our own culture, social background and personal experiences.

It is difficult to be completely objective as I am bringing my past experiences to the research but I am also taking account of the shared experiences with the participants. The choice of language will reflect our shared knowledge and may be understood by the researcher and participants in a way that is different for an individual who may be reading the research. It is at this stage that I needed to consider the purpose of the research and who is going to read the final report. This has influenced the style and language that has been used. It is intended that the research will be for the community of headteachers of small primary schools so the language used has reflected this community.

3.5 The question of identity

The question of identity of the researcher is important when considering theories of reflexivity so this is reflected by the use of the first person. The researcher has several roles which include researcher, co-inquirer, colleague, confidante and sympathiser (Savin-Baden, 2004) and I fulfil all of these roles. I was also acting in the role of mentor for some of the participants. Each of these roles will impact on the research to some extent; this may be from my viewpoint as the researcher as well as from the viewpoints of the participants. In addition there may be an impact on the

data that are collected. One of the participants was more reluctant than others to share her views due to the previous relationships in our roles. The effect of this was that I had to use more prompting in the interview to draw out the data and so I had to be careful not to lead the questioning and thus influence the answers.

It is also important to consider how the participants view themselves as this too will have an effect on the research data. I felt that the use of questionnaires alongside interviews would help to overcome this problem as that allowed for some distance between the participants and myself as researcher. The reflexive researcher reflects on how the research process affects those taking part and the meanings that are being constructed during the research. It is easy to misunderstand what has been said in an interview as meanings may be different for the researcher and the participants.

Savin-Baden (2004:377) writes:

Credibility in reflexive interpretation is about how we can have *communitas*, a notion of shared meaning and discourse particularly across life worlds.

Likewise the life and work experiences of the researcher can influence the research. Our experiences can support our perceptions but they can also affect or limit our perceptions so that we miss something out. It is possible to overlook important ideas, concepts and findings through over-familiarity of the situation (Hockey, 1993). It is difficult to be completely isolated from our research. Aull Davies (1998:3) comments:

All researchers are to some degree connected to, a part of, the object of their research. And, depending on the extent and nature of these connections, questions arise as to whether the results of research are artefacts of the researcher's presence and inevitable influence on the research process. For these reasons, considerations of reflexivity are important for all forms of research.

This is particularly relevant when researching in one's own practice area. This leads to a consideration of the researcher as an insider or an outsider (Hellowell, 2006) which is particularly relevant in this type of research and will be discussed in the next section of this chapter.

3.6 The researcher as insider or outsider

Insider research does not necessarily mean that the research is taking place in the researcher's own institution (Hellowell, 2006). The researcher may have a profound understanding of a community by belonging to a similar community. One advantage is that there may be easier access to the participants. In addition, the language of the setting is not alien to the insider researcher (Hockey, 1993). Conversely, as each setting is unique, the researcher will know the general but not the particular language of other settings. Hockey (1993:208) writes:

The main problem once access is gained by the insider researcher is, simply put, to *make the familiar strange*; to maintain enough distance so as to ensure that the analytical half of the insider/outsider coin operates effectively.

The problem of making the familiar strange may be partially achieved by designing the research away from the research settings. My research problem has been formulated from a theoretical base and so some of the relevant areas for research were defined prior to the gathering of data. However, I needed to be careful not to miss any unexpected data. Performing the analysis and interpretation of data away from the research settings also ensured a certain amount of distance and objectivity.

There are particular issues that may be encountered when conducting research with one's peers. Hockey (1993:212) writes of the traditional roles of researcher and participant compared to the role of the researcher and their peers:

In the case of peers and friends, however, it is very difficult to conduct research within such clearly defined boundaries. The role(s) of mutual friends influences the research scenario, so there is liable to be a blurring of formal (research) and informal (friendship) roles.

As the researcher I had to decide which role I was going to occupy, whether it was predominantly researcher, friend, colleague or a combination of roles. In the case of the interviews it was a combination of the roles but in the case of the questionnaires I was a researcher and a colleague. I needed to be alert to these roles and how they may impact on the data that is collected. This was overcome to some extent by using interviews with a group of headteachers and questionnaires with a larger sample. There is also the knowledge that there may be some peer assessment within the research as the participants are likely to take an interest in the research.

Hammersley (1993:219) argues that it is not necessary to be an insider researcher in order to understand a situation:

There are no overwhelming advantages to being an insider or an outsider. Each position has advantages and disadvantages, though these will take on slightly different weights depending on the particular circumstances and purposes of the research.

However, conducting research within an area that is familiar enables the researcher to have a particular understanding of it.

It is difficult for a researcher to be completely divorced from the situation that is being researched. The researcher is situated in the research and consequently has a personal stance in the research. The values of the researcher are brought to the research (Savin-Baden, 2004). Our experiences will shape the way that we view a particular situation and consequently affect the data that are collected. Denscombe (2003:300) writes:

A researcher can never stand outside the social world he or she is studying in order to gain some vantage point from which to view things from a perspective which is not contaminated by contact with that social world.

The researcher may switch between being an insider researcher and an outsider researcher. May (2004:156) identified this point by stating:

The point is that one cannot consistently be either inside or outside.

There are various permutations that will alter the insider-outsider position with various demographics such as age, gender and length of experience to be taken into account (Hellowell, 2006). In this research I was an insider through my position as a headteacher of a small primary school and an outsider as I was from a different school with a different length of experience from the participants in the research. I was a similar age and the same gender as the headteachers being interviewed but this bias was partly offset by including the other headteachers in the Local Authority who were sent questionnaires.

3.7 The argument for a survey or a case study

This research uses a multi-method approach. While it has drawn on the descriptive and interpretive aspects of a survey it has also drawn on the in-depth investigative elements of a case study. Yin (1994: 14) comments:

...case studies need not always include direct, detailed observations as a source of evidence.

The research is an in-depth study of leading the small primary school from the perspective of headteachers, with the intention of enhancing the understanding of policy-makers and of giving rise to possible changes to support the headteachers of small schools. As it is looking in detail at the perceptions of a group of people it has drawn on qualitative methods of data collection in addition to giving frequencies of

responses in some cases. Bell (2005:7) comments on the difference between quantitative and qualitative researchers:

Quantitative researchers collect facts and study the relationship of one set of facts to another...Researchers adopting a qualitative perspective are more concerned to understand individuals' perceptions of the world.

A survey is an investigation that does not show any type of intervention into the lives of those who are the subject of the study. Surveys are used to describe characteristics such as attitudes and opinions that are found in a population at a particular time.

Denscombe (2003:6) writes:

Surveys usually relate to the present state of affairs and involve an attempt to provide a snapshot of how things are at the specific time at which the data are collected.

This research set out to explore the headteachers' perspectives on leading small primary schools. Anderson (1990:8) refers to surveys as 'descriptive research' and he comments:

[Descriptive research] ...is the first and most elementary level of research activity, it is of major importance for understanding and the accumulation of knowledge.

In this research there has been an attempt to describe, interpret and understand the situation concerning leadership in small primary schools and so it bears some characteristics of a survey.

The research also shows some characteristics of a case study in that it provides an in-depth account of leadership in small primary schools. It may be possible to generalise from a case study but it is not possible to extend the findings to a wider population by the use of statistical inference. However, the findings or insights gained from a case study may lead to changes in educational policy making (Cohen

et al, 2000). The strength of the case study lies in the thoroughness of the investigation. Denscombe (2003:32) writes:

Case studies focus on one instance (or a few instances) of a particular phenomenon with a view to providing an in-depth account of events, relationships, experiences or processes occurring in that particular instance.

Case studies can be conducted using a group rather than an individual (Robson, 1993; Yin, 2003) which is the case in this research: it investigates and synthesises the leadership issues from the perspectives of the group of headteachers. Using a case study approach does not dictate a particular method of data collection and it is possible to use either structured or unstructured means (Robson, 1993; Denscombe, 2003). Yin (2003:1) sounds a note of caution for the researcher when he explains:

Using case studies for *research* purposes remains one of the most challenging of all social science endeavors.

Yin (1994:15) identified different applications for the use of a case study and commented;

The most important is to *explain* the causal links in real-life interventions that are too complex for the survey or experimental strategies.

However, it can be said that the case study needs to be more than just a description or account of the situation in small primary schools as it needs to be an analysis of the situation.

3.8 The Pilot Study

A pilot study was undertaken using one headteacher of a small primary school in the same Local Authority as the headteachers in the main study. The headteacher was selected as she was going to be on maternity leave during the main period of the research and would thus be unavailable to take part in the main research. This was a

useful and a necessary exercise as it was an opportunity to trial various aspects of the research project. This pilot study was written up as a report that was an assessed piece of work so there was an element of review by others. The first consideration was whether the literature had pointed to the right areas for the research. The pilot study focused on 'leadership for learning' which was too limiting so the research area was widened to include other aspects of leading small primary schools and the literature search was extended. The data collection tools also needed to be refined. An audit tool developed by the National College for School Leadership was used in the pilot study (see Appendix F). It was intended to compare the data with the data obtained from the interview as a method of triangulation. The data did complement the data from the interview to a small extent but it was time-consuming for the headteacher to complete the audit and the resulting data was difficult to analyse in a coherent fashion. I decided not to continue with this 'off the shelf' instrument of data collection as the gain was minimal and it did not warrant the extra time needed for the headteachers to complete it.

The interview yielded rich data that were relevant to the study but a second interview conducted by telephone was necessary in order to cover areas that had not been fully explored in the first interview as well as some clarification of answers being necessary. This helped to develop a more effective interview schedule to be used in the main research. Although the questions from the pilot study had been based on areas surrounding leadership, they had not been closely linked to the literature. The questions for the main research were firmly grounded in the literature base and linked to theories of leadership in primary schools. Each question had an identified

reason for asking it. This focus helped to ensure that each question was necessary to the research (see Appendix G).

There was evidence of different levels of leadership within the school but little evidence to show the place of the school within the local community so this indicated an area that needed to be probed within the main research. There was evidence of the headteacher using a combination of styles of leadership and this was an area that needed to be considered further with a larger sample of headteachers. The headteacher in the pilot study felt that the training for headship had been rather limited and there had been little support in the form of mentoring so these were areas to explore further.

3.9 Collecting the data

Following the pilot study I decided to use an accessible and manageable sample of ten headteachers for interviews in order to gain in-depth data and to send questionnaires to the remaining 32 headteachers of the small primary schools in the Local Authority. I did not include my own school in the sample but as I am also a headteacher of a small primary school within the same Local Authority I have included additional data from my own experiences in the form of ‘personal reflection boxes’. While these personal reflections are not part of the main data, they do add my own experiences as a headteacher of a small primary school. By including them in ‘personal reflection boxes’ I have acknowledged that they are my views and consequently they are subjective rather than objective. These ‘personal reflections’ accord with the realist tradition.

This is an in-depth study using qualitative and quantitative data but the main approach is of a qualitative nature and so I considered that it was appropriate for the interview to be semi-structured using open questions (see Appendix G). It is important to achieve a balance between subjectivity and objectivity when designing the interview schedule. Consideration needs to be given to the interviewer's role and how it influences the data that are collected (May, 2001). The person being interviewed needs to know and understand what is expected of them and the information that is required. May (2001:142) states:

Interviews are used as a resource for understanding how individuals make sense of their social world and act within it.

This supports the realist approach that has been used for this research. An interview enables the researcher to find out about the knowledge, values, attitudes and beliefs of the interviewees. An interview may be used to test out questions prior to devising a questionnaire (Denscombe, 2003). A questionnaire to be used with a larger sample was developed from the interview questions (see Appendix H).

One disadvantage of using interviews is that they are time consuming to administer. Time has to be allowed for conducting the interview but consideration also needs to be given to the time spent on travelling to and from the interview location. Another disadvantage is that interviews may be more prone to subjectivity and bias on the part of the researcher than questionnaires which may have closed-type questions (Cohen et al., 2000). Every research method has its own particular strengths and weaknesses and there is no single method that is suitable for all research (Lewis and Munn, 1987). Taking into account the strengths and weaknesses, using an interview was considered to be the most suitable method for gathering the necessary

information from the sample of ten headteachers. Lofland and Lofland (1984) consider that an interview could be thought of as a guided conversation with the interview schedule being a guide rather than a tightly controlled set of questions. That view may deceive interviewers into thinking that an interview is easy to conduct. Anderson (1990:222) puts forward the contradictory view that interviews should not be compared to conversations. He writes:

An interview is defined as a specialized form of communication between people for a specific purpose associated with some subject agreed matter. Thus, the interview is a highly purposeful task which goes beyond mere conversation.

I decided that the interview should be considered as more than a guided conversation but the structure should not be stifling and lead the participants down a particular route. I decided to use a semi-structured interview rather than a structured interview.

Cohen et al (2000:277) state:

Although the interviewer has little control over the unstructured response, it does ensure that the respondent has the freedom to give her [sic] own answer as fully as she [sic] chooses rather than being constrained in some way by the nature of the question.

One point that needed to be considered was that the data that are collected using unstructured responses are more difficult to code and quantify than data from structured responses (Cohen et al., 2000). But using structured questions with a 'yes/no/don't know' format forces interviewees into choosing a response that may not accurately reflect their opinions (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1989). It is possible that a semi-structured interview may not follow the exact order that is perceived by the researcher (Burgess, 1984) but this is not critical as the topics can often be covered in any order and it is more important not to interrupt the flow of the interview by

insisting on following the questions in order. Burgess (1984:111) does sound a note of caution:

... interviewers need to ensure that similar topics are covered in interviews where the data are to be used to make comparisons.

There were occasions when the interviewee expanded on the answer to one question and in the process answered a later question. In that situation it would have been pointless to insist on asking the later question. It is not so much the order of the questions that is important but that all of the questions are included during the course of the interview.

I decided to record the interviews with the permission of the interviewees, although still retaining their anonymity. This was to eliminate a certain amount of bias that could occur if I had tried to take notes as well as conduct the interview. I would have had to decide what seemed to be important to note down and some important data might have been missed or misrepresented. If I had tried to write everything down during the interview then I could not have given my full attention to the interviewee and an important comment might have been overlooked. My attention needed to be focused so that I would be ready to use probes to clarify responses. If the interviewer does not record or take notes during the interview then s/he has to try to write up the results of the interview at a later stage and memory can be very selective.

One disadvantage of recording interviews is that the recorder may inhibit some interviewees but this can be partly overcome by using an unobtrusive recorder and maintaining eye contact with the interviewee. Another disadvantage of recording interviews is the amount of time that is involved in transcribing the tapes (Powney

and Watts, 1987; Bell, 2005) but this is outweighed by the advantage that is gained by being able to listen to the tapes on numerous occasions and being able to hear the emphasis and intonations that are put on certain words and phrases.

Instead of the audit tool that was used in the pilot study I decided to use the most recent Ofsted Report for each school as documentary evidence. Although the reports were obtained from the Ofsted website and are in the public domain, the schools have not been identified in this research as that could also identify the headteachers. Data from the reports were used to supplement the data from the interviews. The reports were written by independent inspectors who had no connection with the schools and so they were able to provide an additional dimension. May (2001:191) writes:

Documents do not stand on their own, but need to be situated within a theoretical frame of reference in order that its content is understood.

One inconsistency with the Ofsted process is that each school has a different inspector and so there may be inconsistencies in the reporting of the data. The reports can only provide a partial picture of the schools at a specific time and each inspector will have had their own agenda for the observations and data collection during the inspection. However, the reports are powerful documents as schools and headteachers are judged by their contents. Denscombe (2003:215) notes that records:

... will tend to be selective in terms of what they report, emphasizing some things and ignoring others, and thus recording only part of the overall event. They will also tend to reflect a particular interpretation of what happened, recording events from a particular angle.

It is important to examine the document in terms of potential bias. The data that are recorded or left out will be informed by the political environment at the time that the

report is written. Taking into account the disadvantages, it was still felt that the reports would provide some useful and important insights into how leadership in the small primary schools is viewed by another researcher. These views may support or contradict those gained through the interviews but they should not be ignored as they provide supplementary evidence.

I needed to be careful that I did not assume the shared knowledge that exists and ensure that I collected the data by asking the relevant questions, particularly in the interviews. The data that have been gathered from the interviews, questionnaires and Ofsted reports have been supplemented with data that have occurred naturally during the course of meetings with other headteachers and various conversations with other headteachers of small primary schools as well as my own experiences. This data was collected through the use of field notes. I asked the headteachers for permission to write down their comments and to use them in the research so the headteachers knew that I was collecting this data in note form and the data set was the same set as used for the interviews. I checked with the headteachers that I had recorded their data accurately so they had the opportunity to amend any comment that they felt did not correctly represent their opinion. I reported the main findings to a group of headteachers at one of their support group meetings (see Appendix K).

3.10 The sample

The different types of sampling techniques can be divided into probability samples and non-probability samples. The main difference is that probability samples can usually be generalised to the wider population using statistical inferences whilst non-probability samples are not generalisable in a statistical manner. That is not to say

that it is impossible to make inferences from non-probability samples. Robson (1993:136) comments:

It may still be possible to say something sensible about the population from non-probability samples – but not on statistical grounds.

It is common to use non-probability samples when conducting small-scale surveys and case studies. Robson (1993:140) puts forward the view that this is considered to be acceptable:

...when there is no intention or need to make a statistical generalization to any population beyond the sample surveyed.

There was no intention to perform statistical analyses on the small data sets in this research and so it is acceptable to use a non-probability sample. The sample in this research was a non-probability sample which consisted of headteachers from one Local Authority. The individuals were selected according to criteria decided by the researcher (Burgess, 1984). This type of sample may also be referred to as a purposive sample (Robson, 1993; Cohen et al, 2000, Denscombe, 2003). The headteachers were selected as they were permanent headteachers of small primary schools in one Local Authority as the first of the criteria used. The other criteria were the size of the school being fewer than 100 pupils, accessibility and willingness to take part in the research. Figure 3.1 shows the sizes of the schools in the combined samples from both the interviews and the questionnaires.

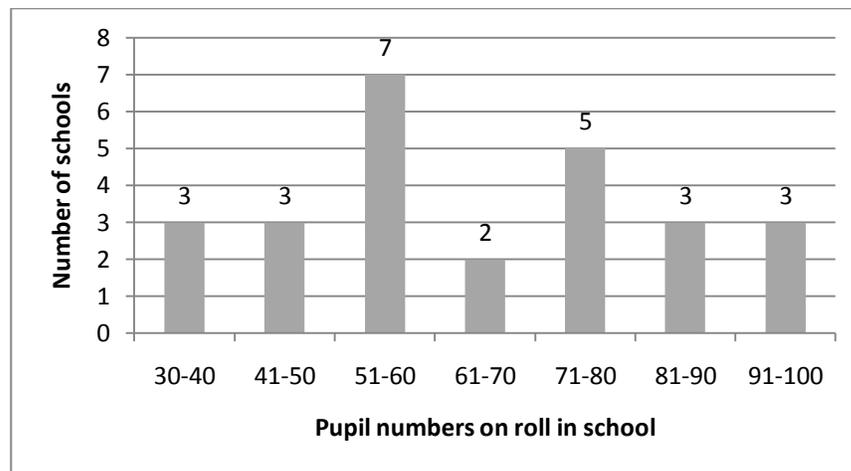


Figure 3.1: Sizes of schools in the sample

There were ten headteachers who formed the sample for interviews and these were selected according to accessibility and they were all within one part of the Local Authority so they were comparable with regards to LA support for that area. The questionnaire was then sent to all of the remaining permanent headteachers of small primary schools in the Local Authority. Thirty-two questionnaires were sent out and sixteen were returned which represented a good rate of return.

All of the headteachers were in a permanent post of headship, as opposed to acting headship. Most of the headteachers were in their first headship. One headteacher was in her second headship, both of her headship posts had been in small schools. The headteachers were from a combination of Community schools under the Local Authority control, Church schools, Foundation schools and Trust schools within the same Local Authority. This sample proportionately reflected the designation of schools within the Local Authority (see Figure 3.2). Within the Local Authority twenty-six of the small primary schools are classed as Community schools and sixteen are Church schools. In the sample, seventeen of the schools were Community schools and seven were Church schools.

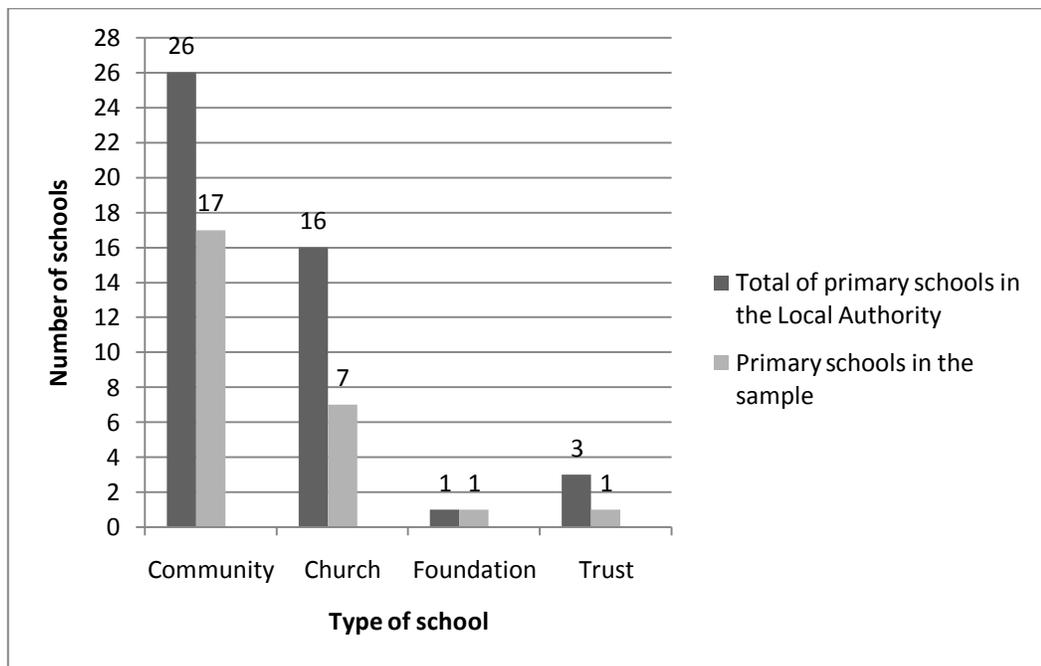


Figure 3.2: Designation of primary schools within the Local Authority and the sample

The sample allowed a comparison to be made between the different types of schools where appropriate. The fact that over half of the headteachers of small schools in one Local Authority were willing to take part in the research shows the value that they placed on the research. Several of the headteachers put their names and telephone numbers on the questionnaires and they added notes of encouragement.

3.11 Theoretical Framework for Analysis of the data

Once the data had been collected, firstly from the interviews and later from the questionnaires and Ofsted reports, it needed to be analysed. Hitchcock and Hughes (1989:73) write:

Analysis may be described as an attempt to organize, account for, and provide explanations of data so that some kind of sense may be made of it.

Tesch (1990:4) is of the opinion that there is not just one right way to analyse the data. She writes:

The only agreement we would find among qualitative researchers is that analysis is the process of making sense of narrative data.

People do not always say exactly what they mean and some degree of interpretation is involved on the part of the researcher. This is where some bias may be evident. Bias may be lessened if the interviewer and the researcher are the same person as the effect of body language during the interview and intonations give clues to the actual meaning of the interviewee's words. It may be useful to note any significant occurrences immediately after the interview as they may be forgotten at a later time.

Denscombe (2003:268) suggests:

Among practitioners of qualitative research there is a general acceptance that the researcher's self is *inevitably* an integral part of the analysis and should be acknowledged as such.

There are two contrasting views about the best time to analyse the data. Hitchcock and Hughes (1989) advise getting a feel for the data as a whole but not to impose categories on the data too soon. Delamont (1992) takes the opposite view and advises that the preliminary analysis of the data should begin as soon as possible. She recommends setting categories as an on-going activity which can then be reviewed. If there are too many categories in the beginning they can be combined at a later stage. This view is supported by Miles and Huberman (1994:50):

We strongly recommend early analysis. It helps the field-worker cycle back and forth between thinking about the existing data and generating strategies for collecting new, often better, data.

Both of these views were taken into account before I decided to begin to analyse the data as it was collected. I felt that leaving the analysis until all of the data were collected would be unwieldy and could prove to be a daunting task, whereas beginning to categorise the data from the interviews as soon as they were transcribed seemed to be more manageable. It is important to keep an open mind, so as not to

discount new categories, when the analysis begins before all of the data have been collected and so discussions with my supervisory team were important. A full discussion of the analysis process is given in section 3.12.

Silverman (1993) and Robson (1993) believe that quantitative methods such as counting can aid analysis in a qualitative study. Silverman (1993:163) writes:

...simple counting techniques can offer a means to survey the whole corpus of data ordinarily lost in intensive qualitative research.

Counting may be useful but the use of percentages can be misleading when there is a small sample and can create a false picture, depending on what is being counted. Actual numbers as opposed to percentages have been used in this research.

It is inevitable that a certain amount of bias will be evident as I had to decide how to code the data but the effects may be lessened to some extent if the codes are discussed with a colleague to gain a second opinion (Atkins, 1994). This is termed inter-rater reliability. The data analysis was discussed with the supervisory team. As stated in section 3.9, I also discussed the data analysis with a group of headteachers who had taken part in the interviews in order to check for accuracy of the transcripts as well as to ensure that I had not misrepresented their views in the analysis stage. An extract from the minutes of this meeting is given in Appendix K.

3.12 Method of Data Analysis

As already stated, the main data were collected through taped interviews. This meant that a decision had to be made between using verbatim or selective transcriptions (Fielding and Thomas, 2001). Verbatim transcripts can be laborious and time-consuming but they have the advantage of containing all of the text for analysis. I

decided to use verbatim transcripts in this research. The taped interviews were transcribed as soon as possible after each interview so that the main points were still clear in my mind. The tapes were listened to again alongside the subsequent transcriptions so that any errors could be corrected. This process was repeated several times until it was certain that the transcripts were an accurate representation of the interviews. I clarified indistinct responses with the headteachers concerned by telephone to ensure that I had an accurate representation of the interview. I then gave the headteachers the opportunity to check the full transcript of their interview.

The next stage was to read the transcripts. According to Dey (1993:83) reading is an important part of the analysis process:

Reading in qualitative data analysis is not passive. We read to comprehend, but intelligibility is not our only nor even our main goal. The aim of reading through our data is to prepare the ground for analysis.

Lewins (2001:310) also acknowledged the importance of reading the data several times at the analysis stage of research:

Discovery achieved by reading and re-reading is likely to be the most thorough method of exploring qualitative data.

Following this advice, the transcripts were read several times so that the content became familiar before coding took place. It was decided to use ‘template analysis’ in order to organise and analyse the data. King (2004:256) writes:

The essence of template analysis is that the researcher produces a list of codes (‘template’) representing themes identified in their textual data.

Following the advice given by King (2004) the topics for the questions in the interview schedule were used to develop the first level codes (see Appendix A). The transcripts were coded according to the themes that emerged from the data and from

the previous research of the literature which led to the second level codes (see Appendix B for an example). It was important to try to ensure that the content of the answers was coded and not an interpretation of the content. Charmaz (2003:258) identified that coding is an important part of data analysis as it:

...starts the chain of theory development.

When an interview contains open questions it is not possible to anticipate all of the answers that may be given so the coding scheme needs to be developed after the interviews have taken place (Fielding, 2001). Fielding and Thomas (2001:137) suggest:

The analytical challenge is the identification of thematically similar segments of text, both within and between interviews.

This may be considered as one of the most crucial parts of the analytical process. It is important to be familiar with the data in order to identify themes across several interviews and this may be where it is an advantage to be an insider researcher. My 'insider role' as the headteacher of a small primary school means that I am familiar with the social contexts which in turn enabled me to have a good understanding of the issues being presented through the data. The coding process was started after the first interview with additional codes being used when necessary with subsequent interviews.

The data from the Ofsted reports added to the overall picture of aspects of leadership for learning within the school. These data were also coded using the same themes as the data gained from the interviews. This use of different methods for data collection is referred to as 'triangulation' (Cohen et al, 2000; Patton, 2002; Denscombe, 2003). Patton (2002:563) writes:

Triangulation, in whatever form, increases credibility and quality by countering the concern (or accusation) that a study's findings are simply an artefact of a single method, a single source, or a single investigator's blinders.

Using different sources of data may produce different results but this should not deter the use of alternative data sources. However, if this is the case, it is important to understand and report the reasons for the differences (Patton, 2002). There may also be internal triangulation through the data if all of the participants give the same or similar answers to the questions. In this research the data from the Ofsted reports complemented the data obtained through the interviews and questionnaires. There has been a measure of internal triangulation as the respondents gave similar responses to the questions.

The data are the subject of three distinct chapters focusing on the areas that directly affected the headteacher, leadership structures and styles of leadership. The themes from these chapters have been used to build a new model of leadership which is discussed in the final chapter of this dissertation.

3.13 Validity and reliability

Cohen et al (2000) are of the opinion that there are potential sources of bias present in the characteristics of the interviewer, the characteristics of the interviewees and the content of the questions. There are advantages and disadvantages in the researcher and the interviewer being the same person. It is possible that s/he looks for data that fit the research but it cannot be denied that s/he is well informed about the project being studied. Burgess (1984) is of the opinion that there can be advantages to be gained from both conducting the research and writing up the report

when the researcher is familiar with the situation. But Walker (1985) feels that it can be difficult to be objective when conducting research in a familiar situation and that there may be a conflict of roles. The researcher who is familiar with the situation may have the advantage of a better understanding of the issues that are discussed in the interviews but s/he needs to conduct the research sensitively and with integrity.

Anderson (1990:13) writes:

Internal validity ... relates to issues of truthfulness of responses...

When the researcher/interviewer is familiar with the situation s/he may be in a better position to judge the truthfulness of the responses and particularly where there is an element of trust between the interviewer and the interviewee. This may also increase the reliability of the research. Hellowell (2006:487) states:

... I would contend that ideally the researcher should be both inside *and* outside the perceptions of the 'researched' ... both empathy *and* alienation are useful qualities for a researcher. I use the word 'alienation' here in its strictly Brechtian sense of distancing or making strange.

As the researcher, I am also the headteacher of a small primary school which gave me insider knowledge and empathy with the participants whilst I was also an outsider as I was not part of their school community so I was distanced from their situation to some extent.

Internal validity may also relate to causal effects between the results and the variables that have been investigated (Robson, 1993) but that is not appropriate in this study which is mainly qualitative in nature.

External validity refers to the extent that the results can be generalised to a wider population. As the sample is not a random sample it cannot be assumed that the results will be generalisable but they may suggest certain trends or patterns.

Face validity needs to be considered at the stage when the interview questions are formulated. Questions have face validity if they are asking what they are intended to ask (Marshall and Rossman, 1989). The questions were formulated carefully to ensure that they were asking for the required data without leading the interviewee into a particular answer and to make sure that they were not controversial in nature.

Reliability needs to be considered. Bell (2005:117) comments:

Reliability is the extent to which a test or procedure produces similar results under constant conditions on all occasions.

Reliability needs to be taken into account at the stage when the questions are formulated to try and ensure that any number of interviewees would understand the meaning of the questions in the same way. Shipman (1988:ix) writes:

Social research involves interaction between scheming researchers and thinking subjects. There is never complete reliability because that interaction can never be fully controlled.

Reliability cannot be completely guaranteed as interviewees are all individuals with their own characteristics but the interview will be as reliable as possible given those constraints.

3.14 Ethical aspects of research

There are some ethical aspects of research that need to be considered at the beginning of a study. Robson (1993:29) writes:

Ethics refers to rules of conduct; typically to conformity to a code or set of principles ...

This study does not involve any elements of experimentation with individuals and it is not an intervention type of study so there is not a need for any special safeguards for individuals. The headteachers were asked for permission to record the interviews but I was prepared to take notes should the interviewee be reluctant. As stated earlier, the headteachers knew that I was taking notes to be used in the research study during meetings and conversations and none of them asked me not to include their comments.

It was necessary to consider the principle of informed consent (Cohen et al., 2000). The headteachers needed to be informed about the purposes of the research before they were asked to take part and no inducement was offered to persuade them to take part. The headteachers were informed that the information provided in the interviews would be used in a report of the study but that no individuals would be identified by name. They had the right to withdraw from the project at any stage, however inconvenient that may be to the research. The headteachers have been referred to by the use of numbers as in 'Headteacher 1'. This system was further refined to differentiate between the responses from the interviews and the questionnaires so Headteachers I1 to I10 took part in the interviews and Headteachers Q1 to Q16 responded through the questionnaires. The Ofsted reports for the schools have been referred to using letters as in 'School A'. The numbers for the headteachers have not been linked to the letters for the schools in order to preserve anonymity for the headteachers.

It is important that the researcher maintains her/his integrity at all times and s/he should not make any promises about things such as confidentiality unless they can be kept. Honesty and integrity are paramount considerations. It is important to always behave in a professional manner when conducting research so as not to cause problems for future researchers. The question of anonymity arose at the writing-up stage. As part of the ethical aspects of research the participants were assured that they would not be identified in the research. However, even with the use of pseudonyms, it is difficult to conceal identities within a known group (Hockey, 1993). It is possible for individuals to identify themselves and even others within a close group. Although a close group of local headteachers was included in the sample, the sample also included a larger number of headteachers who did not belong to this particular group. It is possible that a participant is able to identify her/himself because s/he will know how they answered the questions but it should be difficult for other people to identify them. For this reason I have not included a complete transcription of an interview or questionnaire but I have included an example of a question and response from two transcriptions in Appendix I and part of a questionnaire response in Appendix J.

During the course of some interviews, a few of the headteachers revealed some information that may be considered to be of a sensitive nature. That information has not been disclosed in this study. However, this does show that the headteachers trusted me and it can be assumed that the data that I collected were valid.

3.15 Conclusion

This research has been developed from the pilot study which was a small-scale case study. It employs elements of both a survey and a case study, although it does not fit

exclusively into either category. It is an in-depth study that draws on qualitative methods of research in addition to quantitative methods. Qualitative research is a valid form of research that is appropriate for finding out how or why certain practices are used. It is important to investigate a practice in order to know how to improve it further.

Whilst the research displays some characteristics of ethnomethodology as it is concerned with how people make sense of their everyday world, phenomenology as it takes account of the experiences of the headteachers in the sample and phenomenography as it makes use of contextual analysis of the experiences it fits mostly with the realist approach to research as it focuses on the practice of leadership and what we learn from that practice in order to develop new theory. This judgement has been made taking into consideration each step of the research process from design to the methods of data collection, the analysis and synthesis of the data and the reporting of the data.

The influence or effect of being an insider researcher should not be underestimated. Our experience influences what we notice as well as how we use categories and codes. Experience can support perceptions but it can also affect or limit perceptions so that we miss something. It is possible to overlook important ideas, concepts or findings because of over-familiarity. We may look for certain things and then miss something that may be unexpected. It is important not to let the expected hide the unexpected so rigorous analysis is needed. The literature clearly identifies the importance of reflexivity in a research project, as discussed in this chapter. It is necessary to acknowledge both the limitations of the research and the researcher's

effect on the research but it is important to show how that knowledge has been used to make sense of the research. Reflexivity may be seen as a mechanism for bringing a measure of objectivity to a research project (Aull Davies, 1998; Adkins, 2001).

Arguably, it is not possible to completely distance oneself from one's research. So the position of an insider researcher needs to be considered at each stage of the research. There are various dimensions of insider and outsider roles that we bring to our research. These include age, gender, professional role and educational background. Each will affect the way that we relate to our participants and the data that are collected. In addition, they will have an impact on the way that the data are analysed and interpreted.

While it may be argued that most reflexivity will take place at the analysis and interpretation stage, it must be recognised that reflexivity will permeate every step of the research. There needs to be an awareness of how our personal perspective is influenced by our values and pre-dispositions and the ultimate influence on every aspect of our research from methodology to methods used, the analysis of data and the writing up of the research report.

While I may be considered to be an insider researcher as I am also a headteacher, it can also be argued that I cannot be a true insider researcher as I am not a part of each specific school. In this respect I am able to be part of the research and yet also distance myself from the research to some extent. However, it is acknowledged that it is not possible to take the "me" out of the research completely.

4. Beginning the journey: The Headteacher

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explores issues that directly affect the headteacher. These areas have been identified through the literature and through the use of template analysis of the data (King, 2004). The complete template that was used for the analysis is given in Appendix A and Figure 4.1 shows the areas that formed the section of the template to be used in this chapter.

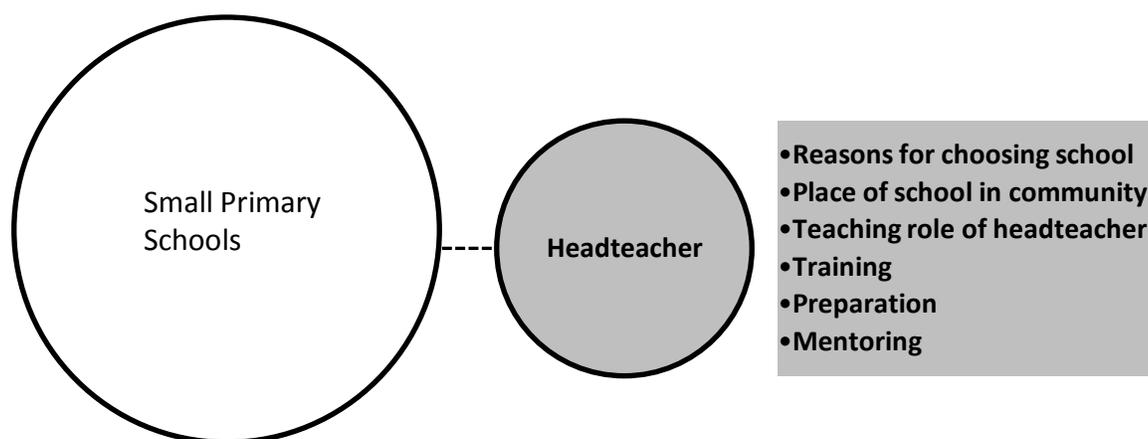


Figure 4. 1: Template for analysis of issues that affect the headteacher

All of the areas shown in Figure 4.1 have a link to the leadership of the headteacher within the school. The first part of this chapter will look at the background of the headteachers in the sample and how this may impact on the research findings. This will lead onto their reasons for choosing a small school, if that was the case. As the respondents identified that one reason for choice of school concerned the teaching commitment, this will be considered in more depth in the next section. The following

sections deal with the training and preparation aspects of headship in a small school. These will lead into a section about the headteachers' experiences of the mentoring system

4.2 Background

It was identified in chapter 3 that the sample was comprised of schools from one Local Authority as they were comparable with regards to the age range of the pupils, staffing needs and support from the Local Authority. The Local Authority has a large number of rural schools which tend to be small schools. Approximately a third of the small schools in the Local Authority are designated as Church schools and this was reflected in the sample of headteachers who took part in this research. Headteachers I1 to I10 took part in the interviews and headteachers Q1 to Q16 completed the questionnaires. While the interviews and the questionnaires yielded qualitative data the results from the interviews and the questionnaires were combined in the data analysis to produce quantitative data where appropriate.

Most of the headteachers in the sample were female with three male headteachers returning questionnaires. The headteachers in the sample had a range of experiences prior to their appointment to headship as shown in Figure 4.2.

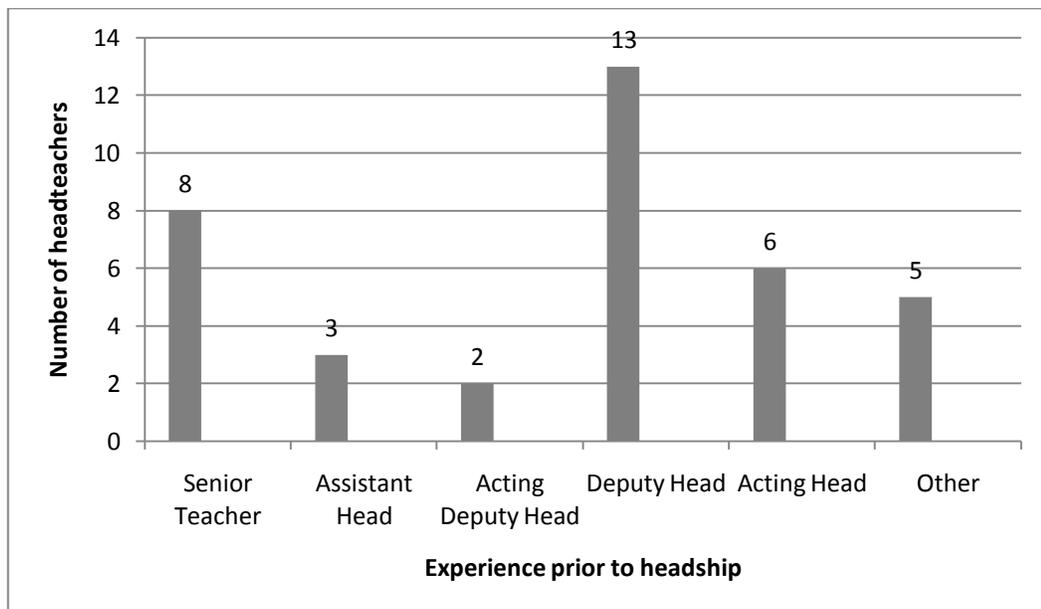


Figure 4.2: Headteachers in the total sample: their experiences prior to headship

Fifteen of the combined sample, which represents more than half of the headteachers had held the post of Deputy Head or Acting Deputy Head prior to taking up their first headship. These posts had been in larger primary schools. Six of the headteachers had gained experience through the role of acting headteacher. Eight of the headteachers had only had experience as a Senior Teacher but these headteachers did have experience of small primary schools. All of these previous experiences were in a senior leadership role which would provide some preparation for headship. Five of the headteachers in the sample came to their first headship from other experiences. These included being the co-leader of two federated schools, a consultant for the Local Authority, being the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator in a school and being a subject co-ordinator in a school. These experiences had a leadership element and would provide some preparation for a headship role.

The reasons that these headteachers gave for choosing a small primary school for their post of headship will be considered in the following section.

4.3 Reasons for choosing a small school

While six of the headteachers had not made a deliberate decision to choose a small school for their first headship most of the headteachers had deliberately chosen to lead a small primary school

There were various reasons given by the headteachers who deliberately chose a small school. These were coded into four main categories as shown in Figure 4.3.

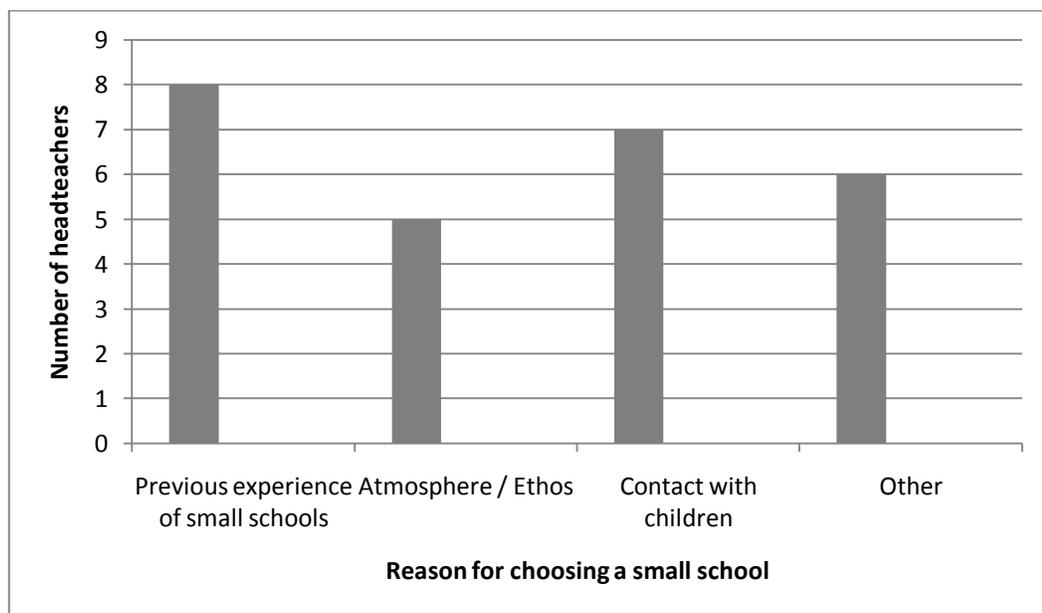


Figure 4.3: Reasons given by headteachers in the total sample for choosing a small school

These reasons will be considered in more detail in the following sections.

4.3.1 Previous experience of small schools

The main reason given by eight of the headteachers was that they already had the experience of teaching in small schools. Headteacher I2 said:

I wanted that experience because I taught in a small school in London and then I went to the big school and I thought it'd be nice to start off a headship in a small school.

This headteacher's comment seems to acknowledge that there is a difference between small and large schools. There is an underlying assumption in the comment that the headteacher thought that she would prefer a headship in a small school which may then lead to a headship in a larger school.

Headteacher I5 said:

Because that seemed the most appropriate. I had experience of small schools

Both of these headteachers recognised that they had already taught in small schools and had experiences that would help them. Headteacher Q11 had a similar reason for choosing a small school:

I was seconded as Acting Head to a small school for 1 term. I immediately realised it suited me.

This comment shows an underlying belief that a small school is different from a large school which this headteacher is in a position to articulate as she had previously been in a large school prior to being seconded to a small school.

These headteachers had already experienced the culture of a small school and so it could be said that they did not suffer the 'culture shock' that other headteachers would feel if they only had the experience of a larger school. This was acknowledged by Headteacher Q2 who had been a senior teacher in a small school and felt that being a headteacher in a small school would fit into her comfort zone.

Personal Reflection 4

This is the opposite of my own experience as I had never taught in a small school previous to gaining my current headship.

Headteacher I6 had not had previous experience of a small school:

I've never worked in a small school and I wasn't quite sure what to expect.

It could be argued that the 'not knowing what to expect' could affect the headteacher in one of two ways. Firstly, the headteacher could begin the new post with an open mind about the new role. Alternatively, the unknown aspect of the role could cause a certain amount of tension as each new aspect of the multi-faceted role is met for the first time with no previous experience to draw upon. This would then make the mentoring experience for new headteachers more important and this will be discussed further in section 4.7. Figure 4.4 shows the experiences of the headteachers relating to the size of school.

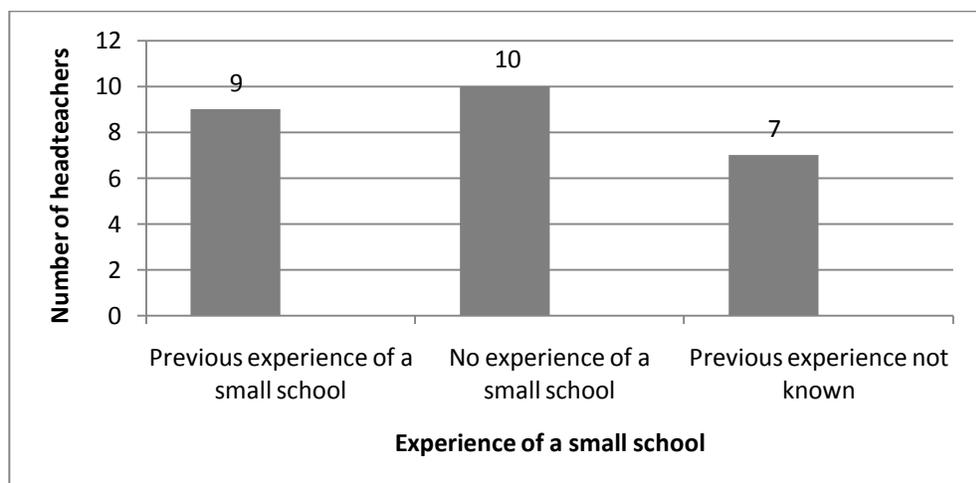


Figure 4.4: Experiences of headteachers relating to size of school

It can be seen that only nine of the headteachers said that they had previous experience of working in a small school and were therefore able to base their choice of school on actual experience and knowledge of small schools.

4.3.2 Atmosphere/Ethos

Headteacher Q8 identified that there is an ethos that is unique to small schools when she commented:

Also I enjoy the ethos and atmosphere a small school encourages.

This is a concept that will be explored further in this section.

It is difficult to define ‘atmosphere’ and ‘ethos’ as each person will have their own definition. There was an assumption among the headteachers that the atmosphere or ethos of a small school is important and is different from a larger school. Several of the headteachers gave this as a reason for choosing a small school. Figure 4.5 shows the responses for aspects of the ethos in small primary schools that were identified by the headteachers in the sample.

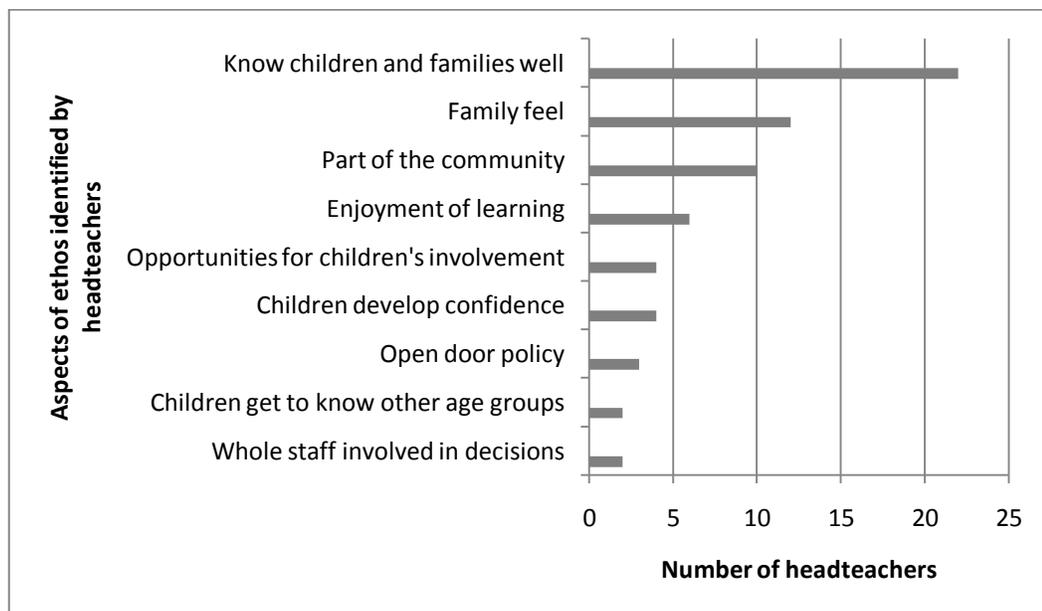


Figure 4.5: Aspects of the ethos in small primary schools identified by the headteachers in the total sample

This raises two questions: ‘what is special about the ethos?’ and ‘how is it affected by the influence of the headteacher?’ It is difficult to quantify ethos as it is not composed of a single factor but a combination of factors. A major element is the ‘family atmosphere’ that is evident in a small school.

Personal Reflection 5

This is often commented on by prospective parents and visitors when I show them round our school. Recently, I showed a new parent around the school and she commented that her older child had always been unhappy at his school and she wished she had changed him to our school but she thought all schools were the same.

Every headteacher who returned the questionnaires commented on the family atmosphere in a small school and that the overwhelming element was the fact that the children and families are known really well by everyone in the school community. Arguably, this is easier to achieve in a small school where there are not so many families. This was also my experience as shown by the following ‘Personal Reflection’ box:

Personal Reflection 6

A parent recently commented that she appreciated the support that I gave to her whole family when her husband was seriously ill which was in contrast to the lesser support that she received from the larger secondary school which her older child attends. The whole school community was affected by the knowledge that one of our pupils fractured his skull and was seriously ill in hospital. Many children from other classes made cards for him and parents and children read the daily bulletins that were put on the board in the playground. The pupil's parents thanked me for the support that they had received from our school at a difficult time for them.

The place of the school within the local community will be explored in section 4.4.

A further aspect that affects the ethos is “enjoyment of learning” which links to the “creative curriculum” promoted by Rose (2009). Several headteachers felt that it was easier to introduce the creative curriculum in a small school and commented that they were already working on this. This will be explored further in Chapter 5. The Ofsted Report for one school commented on how the climate for learning in the school helped the children to make good progress:

It is a happy school, with a very positive climate for learning where all pupils make good progress in both their academic and personal development.

Ofsted Report for School J

Many small primary schools have mixed age classes which used to be referred to as ‘family grouping’. This fosters the family feel of a school, although it can also be seen as a disadvantage of small schools. One headteacher commented that she did

not consider mixed age classes to be a disadvantage but that the parents had the opposite view. Some of the parents had been concerned that their children would be 'held back' because they were in a class with younger children.

Personal Reflection 7

This is the experience that I have just had in our school where one parent is considering changing their child's school because of the mixed age classes.

One reported advantage of mixed age classes is that the children are able to get to know children from other age groups. This also gives some children the opportunity to be the oldest in a class when they would normally be one member of their year group in a larger school with single age classes.

...I think those Year 3s who stay down with the Year 2s actually probably benefit the most out of all the children because they're the oldest ones for the first time and the only time in their life, they know where everything is and their confidence is boosted tremendously ...

Headteacher I10

This is linked to two other aspects of the ethos: 'helping children to develop confidence' and 'providing opportunities for the children to be involved'. In a small primary school there are fewer children and so it is easier to provide opportunities for all of the children to take part in activities such as a Christmas play or drama events. When the school takes part in sporting activities all of the children in a year group will take part and not just "the best". In this way children get used to performing in front of others and they are able to develop their skills in a safe environment. This was acknowledged by several of the headteachers in the sample.

The headteacher has an important part to play in influencing the ethos in the school.

Headteacher I6 commented:

I know it sounds a bit of a cliché but everyone needs to want to go to school, go to work, whatever, so I try to create an atmosphere where the adults enjoy coming to school as well as the children ... without being big-headed, I do influence that.

This headteacher has identified that she is responsible for the adults in school as well as the pupils and that she has some influence in creating the atmosphere in school.

This links to the positional power aspect of the headteacher's role (Calveley, 2005).

Headteacher I2 said that she influenced the ethos of the school by

... monitoring the programmes and things that happen in school

While it is acknowledged that this monitoring aspect would also happen in a larger school, it is the way that this occurs in a small school which makes it different. This headteacher carried out the monitoring role herself and so she was able to influence the other members of staff directly through these activities. Headteacher I6 felt that she influenced the ethos by the way she treated the staff and that she encouraged and motivated them. Arguably, the headteacher's role in creating the ethos of the school is greater in a small school where there are fewer people and each person is well-known by the headteacher. This is part of the leadership function of the headteacher in creating the school environment (Stoll et al, 2003). The headteacher's influence was highlighted in one school's report by Ofsted:

The headteacher knows the school well and in the short space of time since her appointment has injected vigour and adjusted priorities so that the right areas for improvement are tackled.

Ofsted Report for School D

It could be said that this was the manner in which the headteacher influenced the ethos of the school.

4.3.3 Other reasons for choosing a small school

The previous section was concerned with the ethos of the schools as identified by the headteachers in the sample. The headteachers identified other reasons for choosing a small school which have links to the ethos but not exclusively. These reasons included the headteachers wanting to keep contact with the children and so they wanted to maintain a teaching commitment:

I didn't want to give up the classroom... I enjoy teaching and I didn't feel I was ready to be an administrator

Headteacher I3

I wanted to keep my teaching commitment because I wanted to work with children

Headteacher I6

I wanted to keep a teaching commitment as that was why I became a teacher in the first place.

Headteacher Q8

These comments show that the headteachers wanted to keep a teaching commitment and to keep contact with the children which suggests that they felt that 'being a teacher' was as important as 'being the headteacher'. The comments also suggest that the headteachers placed value on their teaching. These data support the notion that a non-teaching headteacher becomes more of a manager as opposed to a "senior teaching professional" (Calveley, 2005:37). However, the role of headship carries an administration element and this may be more so in a small school when there are fewer administration members of staff. This will be explored further in Chapter 5.

Headteacher Q2 had not had previous experience of teaching in a small primary school but she deliberately chose a small school for a first headship. She commented:

I very mistakenly thought there would be less social problems in a small village school...

This demonstrates that although the headteacher had an idea of what she expected in a small school the situation did not match her expectations and that in fact there were similar problems as found in a larger school. This headteacher had not had the experience of being a deputy headteacher and this would point to a training issue which will be synthesised in a new model of leadership that will be built up throughout this study. Training issues will be explored further in section 4.5.

Headteacher Q16 chose a small school because of the wide range of experiences that she would have:

I felt I would be able to cope better, leading a larger school felt daunting at the time. I also felt I would learn so much more about all aspects of the job and be more hands on.

This headteacher identified that the headteacher of a small school will carry out tasks that may not be carried out by her counterpart in a larger school with the assumption that these experiences will be useful for the future. However, while this was the reason for choice of school, the reality of being a headteacher in a small school proved to be more demanding than this headteacher expected as she went on to say:

There's too much to do. It almost feels an impossible task at times and it is easy to overstretch yourself.

Headteacher Q16

Although this headteacher had been an assistant headteacher, it was in a secondary school as opposed to a primary school. The experiences of both of these headteachers show that there are implications for the training of headteachers as members of staff in large primary schools may not be aware of the culture found in a small school.

Headteacher I4 said:

I like to be able to know all the children and part of the community, the community feel of a small school.

Within this comment is an insight that the culture of a small primary school is different from that of a larger school. There is an assumption by the headteacher, which may or may not be entirely correct, that a small primary school is more of a community and that part of being a community is that you know each other well. The headteacher also referred to the place of the school in the wider community with the assumption that it is natural for a small primary school to be at the centre of the community. This view may originate from the situation where many small primary schools are rural schools in villages. This was seen as an advantage of small primary schools by the headteachers in the sample and will be considered further in the next section.

4.4 The place of the small primary school within the local community

Primary schools have an important place within the community (Hammersley-Fletcher, 2007). The headteacher may be referred to as the ‘steward of the common land’ (Bowring-Carr and West-Burnham, 1997:135). In this role of steward the headteacher forges links between the school and the community. Bowring-Carr and West-Burnham (1997:135) comment:

It is the headteacher who has to ensure that good relations and close contacts are maintained and improved, that each can serve and help the other, and that over as short a time as possible the boundaries between school and community become so permeable that they will eventually vanish.

The majority of the schools in this sample were rural schools and their headteachers worked hard to try to ensure that they were part of the village community as shown by the following comments:

We're trying very hard.. we invite the community in.. we invited them into the open days .. um we've local charity events and we invited them to come up and we're just going to support the WI, they're doing a ... um a clear up of the village so they want us to promote it ..

Headteacher I9

We're a big part of the village.. the old folks come in once a month for coffee and cake.. harvest festival .. we dance at the village fair .. the children enter the village show each year and we do lots of stuff with the village church.. there's going to be a playing field...so we're involved in planning with that.. we're linked with the village pre-school .. um we do a pancake race .. we're a focal part of the community

Headteacher I10

These comments show that the headteachers feel that it is important to be involved in activities within their village communities and that it is a two-way process with members of the local community going into the school and members of the school taking part in village events.

Since September 2008 'community cohesion' has been a specific focus in the Ofsted Framework for Inspection (OFSTED, 2009) so this is now an important focus for all schools to consider. The headteachers felt that this was part of the ethos of a small school which was also recognised in the latest Ofsted Reports for the schools. The following extracts from the Ofsted reports support the views of the headteachers in the sample:

There are many clubs, visits and other additional activities provided with help from the village, including many sports that enable pupils to play a full part in the school and local community

From Ofsted Report for School O

The school has good links with the local and wider community and is used for a range of activities.

From Ofsted Report for School Q

Children are involved in several community initiatives including the village carnival and through planting trees locally. This promotes community cohesion well.

From Ofsted Report for School S

They [the pupils] make a good contribution to the wider community through their choir and music festivals...

From Ofsted Report for School Y

The comments from the Ofsted reports identified that the schools used a variety of ways to link with their local communities. Headteacher Q6 felt that an advantage of small primary schools is that the school is “central to community life”. Headteacher Q9 commented that in a small school there is “a very good understanding of the local community and its needs”. Headteacher Q11 took this a step further by saying:

You get to be the heart of your community.

Headteacher Q13 commented on the support of the community for the school, with the recognition that community cohesion is a two-way process.

Personal Reflection 8

I can support the view of Headteacher Q13 that community cohesion is a two-way process as, in our school, we have found that while we support the local community, the members of the village community have supported our school events as well as helping us to develop an allotment plot in the village. I am often greeted by people from the village who consider me to be “their headteacher”. This did not happen when I taught in a large urban school.

Arguably, there is an assumption that this occurs naturally in a small rural school.

However, ultimately it does need to be driven by the headteacher in the same way

that the whole ethos of the school is influenced by the leadership of the headteacher.

Stoll et al (2003:105) express this view when they write:

Leaders need to learn how to make connections among all the people comprising the school community – pupils, teachers, support staff, parents – and between the school and the larger community.

Headteacher Q1 recognised the place of the school within the local community:

The school is a vibrant part of the local and wider community. We have open door policy and are welcoming to parents and other members of the community.

The headteacher's influence is important in having an 'open door policy' and for the school to become a 'vibrant part of the local and wider community'. While this is not unique to small schools it does seem to be part of the ethos of the small school which is often in a village community.

Personal Reflection 9

One of our governors recently went on governor training for 'community cohesion'. She reported back to the governing body that we were well ahead with this area and that it was largely due to my influence.

4.5 The teaching role of the headteachers

It was seen in Section 4.3.3 that some of the headteachers deliberately chose a small school because they wanted to keep a teaching commitment. The teaching role of the headteacher will be considered in more detail in this section. Ironside and Seifert (1995:244) described headteachers as 'first among equals' which acknowledges that they were 'head teachers'. Various government-imposed changes have had a direct influence on the role of the headteacher. Daresh and Male (2000:91) write:

The British headship has undergone radical change from being traditionally a teaching position to one of nearly full-time management. This transformation is based on a series of national government initiatives and legislative mandates which have attempted to mold [sic] schools into a market-place like environment.

However, this is not entirely true of headteachers in small primary schools. Daresh and Male's research was carried out in schools that had 300 or more pupils. In small primary schools headteachers usually have a teaching commitment as well as having to manage the government's initiatives. This causes a discrepancy between the perceived nature of headship in general and the reality of headship in a small primary school. Figure 4.6 shows the teaching commitments of the headteachers in the sample.

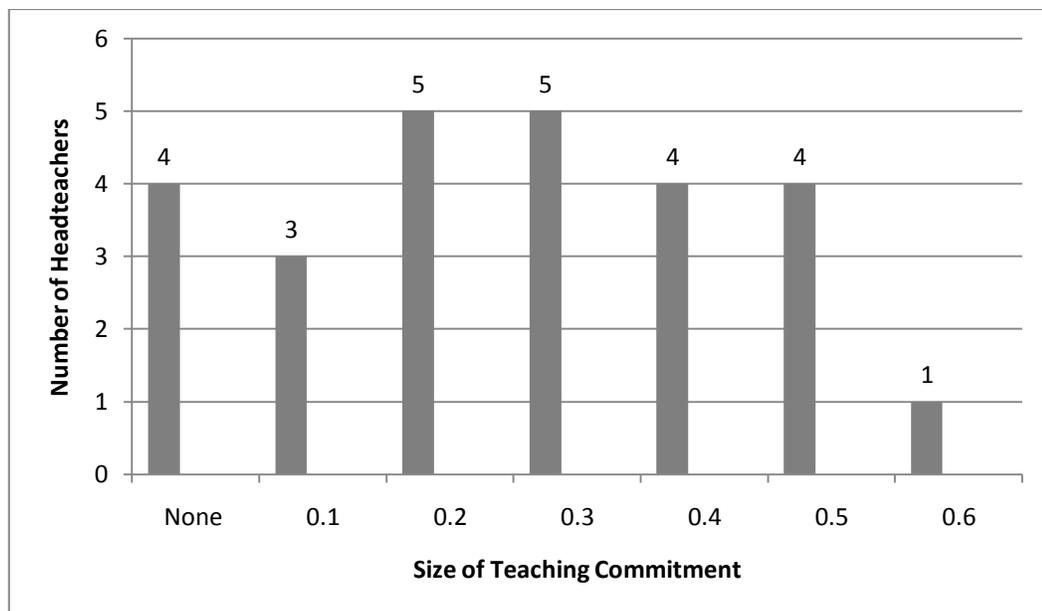


Figure 4 6: Teaching commitment of headteachers

The teaching commitment for one morning or one afternoon has been counted as 0.1 of the week. It should be noted that a teaching commitment of 0.2 could be one whole day of teaching or part of a day on two different days. This can have a significant effect on the workload of a headteacher. If s/he is teaching for a whole

day then there may be administration work to complete after school in addition to marking and preparation for the classroom. The headteachers in the sample found that the impact of managerialism has caused a tension in trying to juggle the teaching role with the leadership and management role. It was interesting that the headteachers who chose a small school because they wanted to keep their contact with the children actually found that the teaching commitment was difficult to maintain and they worked to reduce the amount of regular teaching time. Some of the comments were as follows:

I have half a day each week. I did have two afternoons a week but I cut that down

Headteacher I2

I've now reduced that to 0.3 but that varies [was 0.6]

Headteacher I3

Well, I've cut it down as much as possible because when I first started as head I was doing 0.4 and I had so many issues I was having to manage ... one of my Performance Management objectives was to cut it down to 0.1

Headteacher I4

I don't have a teaching commitment now because ... about three years ago now the job, as you must know, changed beyond recognition really and the governors decided that I would be more beneficial if I was out of the classroom. I felt I wasn't doing either role full justice really

Headteacher I7

Most of the headteachers had kept a teaching commitment of at least 0.1 and several of them covered classes when the class teacher was absent through illness or professional training. They said that they found that was more manageable than having a regular teaching commitment that was higher. This is a compromise for the headteachers who chose a small school deliberately because they wanted to keep a teaching commitment and keep contact with the children. They have retained a

teaching commitment that they feel is manageable when it is combined with the other aspects of their role as headteacher. This is a case where the necessary managerial role of a 'post 1988' headteacher (Calveley, 2005) has affected the preferred role of the headteachers in the sample.

Personal Reflection 10

My own teaching commitment varies between 0.3 and 0.4 with the majority of it being in Foundation Stage with the younger children so that a nursery nurse can take over if I am called away for other issues that may arise. It also means that I get to know most of the children well as soon as they enter school. This was a strategic plan for school organisation.

Some of the headteachers in the sample felt that the teaching commitment should not include a class responsibility as it entailed the additional workload of planning and preparation. It could be said that they were being realistic about combining a teaching aspect with the responsibilities of a headteacher.

I don't think you can have a proper teaching commitment as a head.

Headteacher I5

I'm quite happy to do the cover and save the money in the budget but you cannot, I don't think you can have any kind of a class responsibility. I mean I think it's one thing to go into different classes and cover but it's another thing to have to do planning and assessment and all of that kind of thing.

Headteacher I10

The headteacher should not have a class responsibility.

Headteacher Q2

These headteachers chose small schools deliberately because they already had the experience of teaching in a small school but they did not choose the school because

they wanted to keep a teaching commitment, unlike the previous group of headteachers who had reduced their teaching commitments.

The teaching commitment causes a dilemma for the headteachers. Teaching is one activity where headteachers can provide a model to the other members of staff and a teaching commitment gives credibility to the headteacher when s/he is discussing issues pertaining to teaching with the other members of staff. It also enables the headteacher to remain the “first among equals” (Ironsides and Seifert, 1995:244). However, it can be seen that the teaching commitment needs to be manageable, taking into account the other responsibilities of the headteacher. In the next section it will be considered how the headteachers in the sample were prepared for the role and responsibilities of headship.

4.6 Preparation for headship

4.6.1 National Professional Qualification for Headship Training

The main preparation for headship is the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH). At first sight it may be surprising that not all of the headteachers in the sample had gained the NPQH. However, the qualification was not mandatory until 2004. At that point in time a headteacher taking up a first headship had to either have gained the qualification or be registered on the course. It was not until April 2009 that all headteachers taking up a first headship had to actually have the qualification prior to their appointment so it is interesting to note that nineteen of the headteachers in the sample do hold the NPQH and only seven headteachers had not gained the qualification. The NPQH was originally intended to be mandatory at an earlier date but there were not sufficient candidates who had qualified and so there were not enough prospective headteachers to fill all of the vacancies.

The Headteachers in the sample had various lengths of service in the headteacher post ranging from less than one year to fifteen years as shown in Figure 4.7.

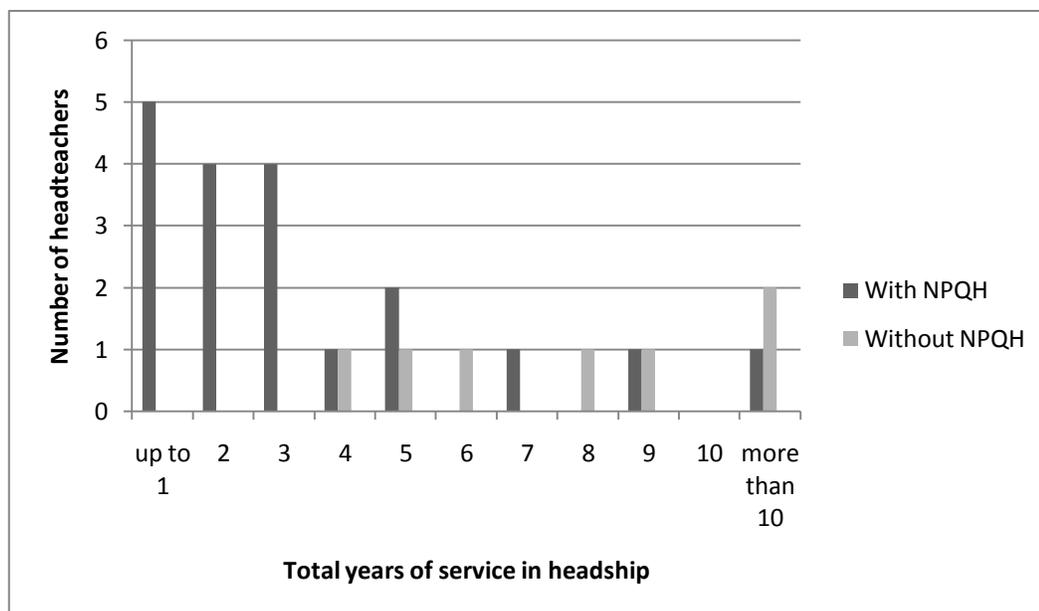


Figure 4.7: Total years of headship for headteachers in the sample with and without NPQH

It can be seen that thirteen of the headteachers had been a headteacher for at least four years. This means that they were appointed at a time when the NPQH was completely optional. Six of these headteachers had gained the NPQH qualification so this points to a number of them feeling that the training and the qualification would be useful. Figure 4.7 also shows the length of service of headteachers with and without the NPQH qualification. Of the headteachers who did not have the NPQH qualification one had been appointed approximately fifteen years ago, before the qualification had been developed; and the others were appointed to their first headships at a time when the qualification was optional. One had not been encouraged to take the qualification; one started the training but had to withdraw from the course due to school pressures.

Headteacher I3 had not undertaken training for NPQH when she was a deputy head because she had not been encouraged by her own headteacher. When she was asked about her preparation for headship she said:

I didn't do NPQH ... because it was difficult doing it at [*name of school*] ...it wasn't the sort of thing that was encouraged ... because of the time constraints and the work you had to do for it because I was a deputy with no non-contact time so to have something on top of that would have been difficult

It is unfortunate that the headteacher felt that the culture of the school did not support what she considered to be preparation for new leaders, particularly as her previous school was not a small school. However, supporting training for NPQH may prove more of a challenge in a small school where it can be difficult to cover absences for the 'face to face' and residential elements of the training. This was the case for Headteacher I6 who started training for NPQH during her first appointment for headship but she transferred to a more challenging school and found that she could not give her time and attention to completing the training. She said:

I started my NPQH at [*name of school*] and I had a lot of support from colleagues, people like you and then I wasn't able to finish it because I came to a school, a deprived school with far more issues than I'd been told it had and it was so challenging ... Yes it was too difficult, too challenging.

There is an acknowledgement here that the support of colleagues in the training is important. It is ironic that the training that should be helpful to new and prospective headteachers proved to be challenging with some headteachers trying to juggle the training with the actual job. This should not occur now that headteachers need to have the qualification prior to taking up their first headship.

There is the question of the usefulness of the NPQH training. The headteachers who had gained the qualification were asked in the interviews if they found the training useful. The headteachers found the training useful although it was also challenging. It was good preparation for headship but there were some areas that were missing such as finance. However, the area of finance may be difficult as each school's budget and financial situation is different. One headteacher inherited a deficit budget which is a difficult situation that would not be pertinent to all schools so it would be difficult to include it in NPQH training and more appropriate support could be provided through mentoring or coaching systems.

Between 2000 and 2009 the training changed so the headteachers who undertook the training in the first few cohorts were assessed under different criteria to the later cohorts.

Personal Reflection 11

I gained the qualification in a middle cohort. We had some 'face to face' training sessions where we met with other trainees to examine theories of leadership for each section and then had to complete school-based assignments. These were linked to the national standards for headteachers at that time (DfEE, 2000b). A member of my staff completed the qualification in a later cohort under the NCSL. Her training was based on the revised standards for headteachers and had fewer 'face to face' sessions and a major school-based project. She would have preferred more 'face to face' sessions and found it difficult to network with the other trainees in her group.

This makes it difficult to compare the experiences of the NPQH training. Of the headteachers in this sample, one was in the first cohort of the original programme,

one was in the first cohort of the revised programme, one was in a later cohort and one took the 'fast track' training and completed it in a faster time than usual. As these were all slightly different courses of training they are not entirely comparable but there were some common trends.

The impact of the training may be variable depending on which model was followed. The training was generic rather than phase-based. This was seen as a disadvantage by some of the headteachers. One headteacher felt that the secondary school teachers tended to talk down to the primary teachers and disregarded their ideas. There was a common feeling that the training should be phase-based so that it is more appropriate to either primary or secondary schools. However, this could be problematic due to resources and organisation considerations and it is possible that the trainees could learn from the different situations and the barriers between them could then be broken down. The training was not size specific which could also be considered a criticism of the training. If the trainee is already teaching in a small school then the school-based project will reflect small school issues but if the trainee is in a large school they may not appreciate the issues encountered in a small school. This indicates a need for the NPQH training to include some training that is specific to primary schools as well as training that is appropriate for different sizes of school.

This view is supported by Zhang and Brundrett (2011:7) who commented:

...whilst the achievements of the College [the National College] have been very significant, there is still a need to make programmes more context and phase specific and this imperative is especially relevant to the leaders of primary schools.

This awareness of context forms part of the training focus in the new model of leadership in Chapter 7.

NPQH training is intended to prepare headteachers for their first headship. The headteachers have access to further training after taking up their appointment. These training programmes are considered in the next section.

4.6.2 Training Programmes for New Headteachers

There have been several training programmes for headteachers on taking up their first appointment as identified in Chapter 3. The HEADLAMP programme came into effect in September 1995. Kirkham (1995:75) writes:

Ostensibly, this scheme [HEADLAMP] is designed to support newly-appointed headteachers in their first permanent headship

There may be the assumption that new headteachers have risen through the ranks of senior teacher to deputy headteacher to headteacher and so they would have some understanding of the leadership aspects of headship. The headteachers in the sample stated that they needed more support with management issues:

But as a new head I think it was more to do with people management
Headteacher I2

I had a lot of issues that I had to manage at this school and so I used
the support from the Local Authority an awful lot.
Headteacher I4

These headteachers identified areas where they needed some support and headteacher I4 made use of the expertise that was available at the Local Authority. Another headteacher highlighted the areas of finance, school improvement planning and knowing how to do the paperwork as areas where support was needed. This headteacher had not undertaken the training for NPQH where some of these areas would be covered. However, other headteachers who had completed NPQH training

also stated that they needed more help with understanding the finance aspects of their role.

Only one of the headteachers had been appointed before the introduction of HEADLAMP training. When she was asked about the help or support that she needed, she found it difficult to remember. She said:

I'm having a job to remember what was available ... well anything is useful ... but not like what's available now

Headteacher I5

It is a reasonable assumption that if she was unable to remember whether or not she needed support, then there were no major problems. The HEADLAMP training continued after the introduction of the NPQH, when it was organised on a regional basis prior to being taken over by NCSL, so that there was some funding for training for new headteachers. However, the HEADLAMP scheme had a measure of flexibility which meant that the focus on leadership training could be variable (Brundrett, 2006).

Personal Reflection 12

At the time that I was a newly-appointed headteacher I was able to use my HEADLAMP funding for training from a range of providers which included the Local Authority and courses provided by the NAHT. Consequently, I was able to use the total amount of funding (£2600) in the permitted time of two years. However, I did have to arrange to swap my teaching days with the part-time teacher when the training clashed with my teaching commitment in order to avoid incurring additional supply cover costs. This is not always possible, particularly if the headteacher has a high teaching commitment.

In 2003 this scheme was replaced by the HIP scheme which was overseen by the NCSL. While it is useful to have an amount of funding available for new

headteachers to use for their early training needs, it caused problems for some of the headteachers in small schools due to the restrictions placed on the funding once it came under the NCSL. Headteacher I3 said:

I didn't do very much of the HIP basically because I felt I couldn't afford the time out of school ... you know teaching 0.6 I would then had to have bought in supply cover because supply wasn't covered and at the time the budget was extremely tight

This headteacher has identified that it appears that the scheme may not have been completely appropriate to support headteachers of small schools as it does not take into account the cost of supply cover when the headteacher has a teaching commitment. Headteacher I4 expressed her disillusionment with the HIP scheme. She had used some of the funding on a mentor but the remainder of the funding had to be used on training through the National College for School Leadership. The NCSL training was not appropriate so she had used other providers for her training but could not access her HIP funding to pay for it. Recently the system was changed so that headteachers could use other providers. Headteacher I4 commented:

... I received an email to say you haven't used up all of your money, you've got £2000 left, you need to use it up by such and such a date which was 6 weeks away and you could now use the money for local provision ... they won't backtrack money so it's totally lost so I do feel disillusioned about that

This headteacher felt disillusioned by a system that should have been of help to her. The scheme has changed yet again so that headteachers may now access training from several providers and not exclusively from NCSL. However, the funding still does not allow for supply cover of a teaching headteacher which is a problem in small schools. The training issues that have been identified in this chapter are taken into account in the new model of leadership for small schools that is discussed in Chapter 7.

Headteachers were able to use some of their funding for training on a mentoring system. The experience of the mentoring system for the headteachers in the sample is considered in the next section.

4.7 Experiences of Mentor Programmes

Mentoring is an important part of early headship, and therefore early leadership, preparation. It now forms part of the Early Headship Preparation programme but it used to be an optional part of the HEADLAMP and HIP programmes with a cost implication. The term ‘mentor’ may mean slightly different things to different people and in different professions. Hobson and Sharp (2005:25) write:

Historically, the term ‘mentor’ has been used to denote a wise and trusted guide, advisor or counsellor.

This definition of a mentor may not fully describe the role of a mentor for newly-appointed headteachers. The mentor is usually another headteacher, although some mentors may be retired headteachers, so they have first-hand experience of the role of headteacher. This has advantages as well as disadvantages. The advantages include a certain amount of credibility as the mentor may have encountered similar problems or concerns to the mentee. A disadvantage is that there may be difficulty finding sufficient time to have meetings together at regular intervals due to both headteachers (mentor and mentee) having other commitments in their schools. This was highlighted by some of the headteachers in the sample:

Some mentors did not have sufficient time available to attend meetings/training.

Headteacher Q6

The main problem is that other heads are as busy as you and networking etc you feel you are encroaching on others.

Headteacher Q9

These comments suggest that the headteachers felt that the time factor was an important consideration in the mentoring system. The comment by Headteacher Q9 indicates that she felt awkward about taking up the time of other headteachers which may be a barrier to the headteacher seeking the help of a more experienced headteacher. This can be more of a problem in a small school where the headteacher often has a teaching commitment as shown in section 4.5.

Mentoring may take a form of coaching as the new headteacher is given support in their role. This links to the concept of ‘scaffolding’ that was espoused by Bruner (Hobson and Sharp, 2005; Bruner, 2006):

This scaffolding consists essentially of the adult “controlling” those elements of the task that are initially beyond the learner’s capacity, thus permitting him [sic] to concentrate upon and complete only those elements that are within his range of competence. The task thus proceeds to a successful conclusion. (Bruner, 2006:199)

It also links to what has been described as Vygotsky’s ‘zone of proximal development’ (Hedegaard, 2005). This refers to the gap between what a person may do with help and what s/he could manage without help. According to the theory a child is able to perform better when guided or helped by an adult than when they are left to work independently. This is equally applicable to the process of mentoring for adults. Hedegaard (2005:224) writes:

... the main characteristic of instruction is that it creates the zone of proximal development, stimulating a series of inner developmental processes.

A mentor should be able to guide the new headteacher and also to enable the inexperienced headteacher to cope with the demands of the new role. This would require regular meetings and time for the new headteacher to reflect on their practice. All of the headteachers in the sample had a mentor.

Personal Reflection 13

I started from the position that the mentor needed to have experience of small schools in order for the system to be successful. My own mentor had not had small school experience and I did not consider my mentoring experience was successful because of this difference in experiences. However, I have since acted as a mentor to headteachers in small schools and I feel that my experience of a small school was an important part of the process.

The experiences of the first seven headteachers to be interviewed showed that only one of the headteachers had found their mentor useful. When Headteacher I7 was asked if she had found the mentoring system useful she replied:

No, not really. She was very nice and we did have two meetings but that was it, it petered out then.

This headteacher only had two meetings during the year and the assumption is that the meetings were at the beginning of the year before they stopped altogether and so the headteacher did not find it a useful experience to have a mentor.

Headteacher I1 commented:

Yes I had a mentor. They had experience of small schools but we had very little contact. Overall it was very poor.

This headteacher said that she found that it was difficult to arrange meetings with her mentor because she had a class teaching commitment every morning at the time and found it difficult to fit everything in. As the mentor had experience of small schools this is contrary to my initial thought that mentors should have had the experience of working in a small school for the mentoring process to be successful.

There was no conclusive pattern in the experiences of the mentors; three had small school experience; two did not have small school experience; the experience of two

mentors was unknown. The data from the interviews showed that six out of the ten headteachers had not found the mentoring experience useful. The data from the headteachers who completed the questionnaires showed a completely different picture with only two out of the fifteen headteachers not finding their mentor useful. These data are shown in Appendix L. The data were then examined for any patterns such as type of school and length of headship. Firstly, there was no discernible pattern between the church schools and the community schools. Similarly regarding the length of service as a headteacher, again there was no clear pattern although all but one headteacher who had been appointed in the last two years found the mentoring system useful. It must be remembered that 'useful' is a subjective term but this suggests that the mentoring system in the Local Authority had been improved more recently.

The data for the whole sample were then explored with regards to the experience of the mentors and it was discovered that the one factor that was evident for the majority of the unsuccessful mentoring experiences was that the mentor did not have experience of small schools. In most of the successful pairings the mentor did have experience of small schools. This would seem to be an important factor that needs to be considered when pairing mentors and mentees. The pairing of mentor and mentee is important and should not be underestimated (Luck, 2003).

Several of the headteachers had had a problem with being allocated a mentor:

... they couldn't find a mentor for me so I was about a year before I actually got a mentor because no-one wanted to take it on, they said they had too much workload...

Headteacher I4

The mentoring system for new headteachers was intended to help the headteacher during the first year of headship so this headteacher had to cope without a mentor during that time. It is interesting that the headteachers who had been approached to act as a mentor had cited their workload as a reason not to take on that responsibility as this links to time issues. Newly qualified teachers have an entitlement to have reduced teaching commitment of 90% and this system would also benefit new headteachers with their mentors also being given a reduced working commitment. In this way there would be time allocated for the mentor and mentee to have meetings together as well as time for other support as necessary. This will form part of the support element in the model of leadership in Chapter 7.

One of the headteachers had a mentor who left and she was not replaced which left the new headteacher without mentor support. Headteacher I6 was allocated a mentor but the support was limited:

I was allocated a mentor. I saw her the term that I was leaving the school, when my first headship was finishing ... it would have been more useful if I'd seen her in the first term because when I first became a head the school had no school development plan, no policies, nothing.

There is the assumption that this headteacher had been let down by the mentoring system that was supposed to have given support in the early days of headship. Another problem with the mentoring system that was highlighted by the headteachers was the time aspect for meetings. A valuable part of having a mentor is having someone to encourage reflection on practice as well as providing a measure of challenge in a safe environment. Kirkham (1995:81) wrote:

Yet another value to be derived from mentoring among heads is the introduction of opportunities for increased reflection and individual

review of work. Mentors have the potential to draw out significant reflections from those with whom they work.

The interesting point is that there were nine headteachers who found the mentoring experience useful but still felt that the system could be improved. It is not surprising that the headteachers who did not find their mentor useful also thought that the system could be improved. The overwhelming message was that the mentoring system needs to be changed with only five headteachers being satisfied with the system and three were not sure. Obviously the problems with the mentoring system may not be confined to small primary schools but the effect may be greater in a small school as there are fewer people with whom to discuss and share problems.

The headteachers were asked how they would like the mentoring system to be changed. The answers were coded into six main areas as shown in Figure 4.8.

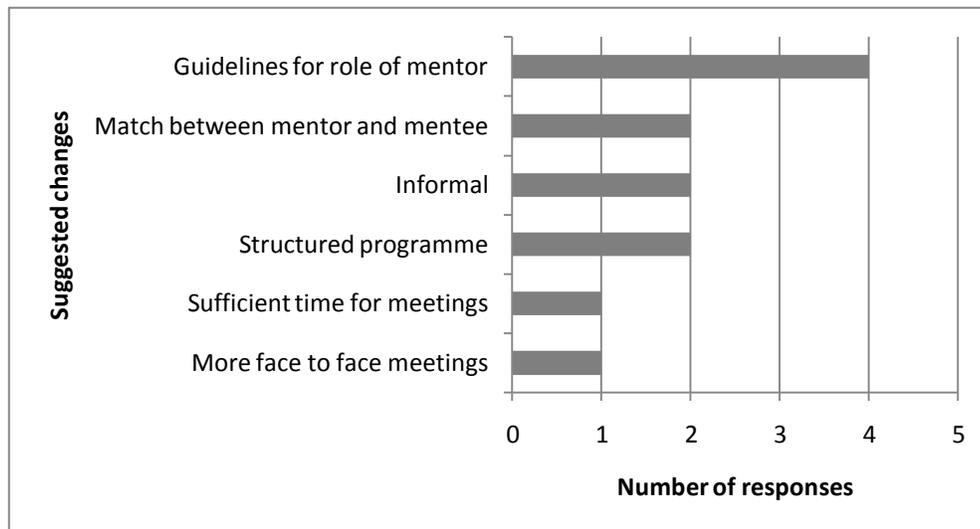


Figure 4.8: Suggested changes to the mentoring system as identified by headteachers in the total sample

One of the suggestions was to have more face to face meetings with the mentor. Linked to this is the need to have sufficient time for these meetings. This seemed to be a problem for the headteachers in the sample. There is a fine line between having

enough time to attend meetings and having sufficient meetings. This may be different according to the needs of individual headteachers. Kirkham (1995:82) writes:

Like all leaders, headteachers need to enjoy a secure environment where they can explore ideas and possible change with colleagues who understand their worlds and the issues that they regularly face.

This links to the headteachers belonging to a support group. Headteacher Q3 felt that the mentoring system should work along similar lines of a support group. She said:

I have found it very useful to attend headteacher groups and a more formal approach to this idea would work well.

Taking this comment into account, the new headteachers could be linked with other headteachers of small schools to form a support group or network which would help to answer the problem of the match between the mentor and mentee. This also links with the mentor having some experience of small schools so that they can understand the issues faced by the headteacher of a small school. This was deemed to be important by the headteachers in the sample.

Personal Reflection 14

A friend has just taken up his first headship of a small school in a neighbouring Local Authority and has had his first induction meeting cancelled twice. He asked me for some help and advice so we spent a morning during the half term holiday in his school where we were able to discuss some of his concerns. I was able to give advice from the perspective of the headteacher of a small school which was relevant to his needs. I was also able to use one of his ideas back in our school so there was an element of reciprocity. This is an example of how headteachers compensate for shortcomings in the system by using their own goodwill.

Hoad (2007:116) writes:

In a dynamic, reciprocal relationship the mentor facilitates the development of the trainee as s/he grows from novice to full practitioner, nurturing and challenging through a full range of responsibilities, thus linking theory to practice.

While Hoad was writing about the mentoring of trainee teachers, this is equally applicable to the mentoring of new headteachers who are 'trainee headteachers'. It seems strange that there is an entitlement for Newly Qualified Teachers to have a formal induction programme which includes a mentor while there is no formal mentoring system for a newly appointed headteacher which must be regarded as a weakness in the system.

Taking account of the suggested changes shown in Figure 4.8, the system needs to have specific guidelines for the mentor to follow which could be similar to the guidelines for the mentors of trainees and newly qualified teachers. This point was made by Headteacher Q13 when she was asked how the mentoring system could be improved:

More structure for the mentor, rather than moans and groans, i.e. like
NQT support

Headteacher Q13

It would appear that this headteacher had found that her mentor did not willingly give the necessary time to help and encourage the headteacher. The structure should include identifying a specific focus for planned meetings which are linked to the standards for headteachers. There should be some funding available for supply cover when the mentee or mentor headteacher has a teaching commitment. This could be

an element of the Early Headship Programme funding for headteachers of small schools or subsequent programmes that may replace EHP.

It would seem that headteachers are given mentoring help for one year and then left to find their own way. In a small primary school there is not usually a deputy headteacher to share the problems that are encountered and so the headteacher can feel isolated and alone. This was the situation for Headteacher I3 who said:

I was coming in when somebody had been here for 19 years and obviously done things their way and there were lots and lots of gaps. I tried to plug the gaps and looking at the direction that the school needed to take and having little time to do it. It was hard and I did feel isolated at times.

This also made it difficult for the headteacher to practise strategic leadership at the time. A point made by some of the headteachers is that they would welcome having the help of a mentor in subsequent years and not just in the first year of their headship. One headteacher said:

I need a mentor more now than I probably did when I started
Headteacher Q16

Headteacher Q14 wanted some help from the Local Authority. She said:

Someone 'popping in' say once a month for the first year or two

Headteacher Q4 also wished to have support from the Local Authority that was 'focused on leading small schools'.

Arguably, these headteachers would have benefited from a coaching system that could follow on from the initial mentoring system that is available for new headteachers. An experienced headteacher could act as a coach for specific problems or concerns and in this way the inexperienced headteacher would build up a wider network of support. While this would be of benefit to all headteachers it is especially

important for headteachers of small schools to alleviate feelings of isolation as their schools are often in rural areas.

Personal Reflection 15

I had a request from the headteacher of another small primary school to see if I could give some help with the preparation of their submission for attaining the Financial Management Standards in Schools (FMSIS). They had been in contact with a local secondary school but had found the situations were completely different owing to the sizes of the schools. The School Improvement Partner (SIP) from the Local Authority had suggested that they contact me as I had managed to achieve the FMSIS standards for our school. This was a situation where the SIP was able to use their knowledge of the small schools in the Local Authority so that they could arrange for specific support for a school.

The data have shown that headteachers wanted to have support, both from a mentor and from the Local Authority. These areas will be synthesised in the model of leadership for small schools which is developed throughout this study and is shown in Chapter 7.

4.8 Conclusion

In this chapter there has been an exploration of the aspects of early headship that may impact on the leadership of the headteacher. The headteachers in the sample had mixed experiences prior to headship but most of them had been in a senior position in their previous schools. This had been considered to be good preparation for leadership. The headteachers had not all had the experience of teaching in a small school but approximately three-quarters of them had deliberately chosen a small school for their first headship. One headteacher was in her second headship of a

small school which suggests that she liked small schools. This indicates a need to include aspects of leadership in small primary schools in the training for the National Professional Qualification for Headship in some format.

The headteachers in the sample acknowledged that there is an ethos that is peculiar to small schools. It was seen in section 4.3.2 that a large element of the ethos involved the ‘family atmosphere’ that was found in the schools in the sample. It could be said that the size of the schools and the influence of the headteachers both have a part to play in creating this ethos. The headteachers also placed importance on the place of the small school within the local community. Again this is dependant on the influence of the headteacher. These are areas where the strengths of a small school may be shared with colleagues in larger schools.

The headteachers were asked about their teaching commitment. However, although the question asked about the amount of time covered by the teaching commitment it did not ask how many days were covered within the proportion of teaching time. It may be interesting to explore this further in future studies. The teaching role of the headteachers was seen as both an advantage and a disadvantage. The impact of managerialism led to a strong feeling among the headteachers in the sample that there was a tension when there was a high teaching commitment which caused some difficulty in performing the leadership and management roles. Arguably, a teaching headteacher is able to model aspects of leadership for learning to other teachers. This will be considered further in Chapter 6.

The headteachers in the sample shared their experiences of the levels of support that they had received. The training support programme for newly appointed headteachers had been changed several times so that there had been three different programmes since 2003. There has been a further change with a new programme being launched in April 2010. This has meant that there has not been consistency in the support and training that has been offered by NCSL and subsequently the National College under the direction of Central Government. There was a general level of dissatisfaction with the available training and the way that the funding was organised. There were mixed reactions to the mentoring system for new headteachers but the research has shown that a new mentoring programme would be welcomed by many of the headteachers and there are recommendations for improving the current mentoring system in Chapter 7.

Similar problems may be encountered in larger primary schools but the effect is likely to be more concentrated in small schools as there are fewer people to dilute the problems. The size of the staff will also have an affect on the leadership structure in the school which is explored in the next chapter.

5. Travelling Companions: Leadership Structure

5.1 Introduction

This chapter investigates elements that affect the leadership structure in small primary schools. Figure 5.1 shows the areas that formed the template to be used in this chapter.

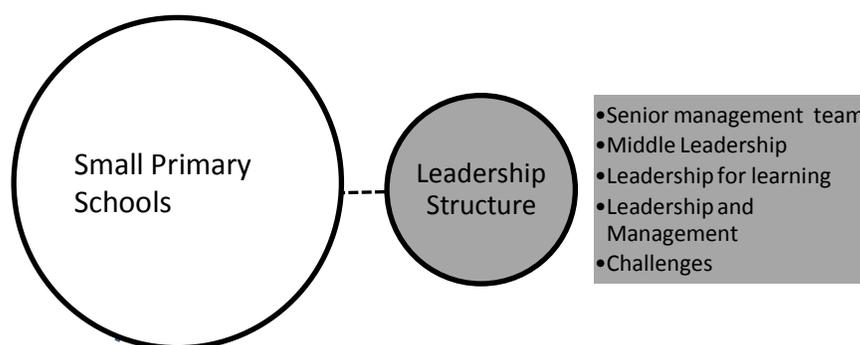


Figure 5. 1: Template for analysis of leadership structures

The role of the headteacher as leader encompasses many areas of the life of the school. As discussed in Chapter 2, Leithwood et al (2008) identified four categories of leadership practices as shown in Figure 2.2. These practices are linked to professional development. Leithwood et al (2008:31) write:

... the core practices provide a powerful new source of guidance for practising leaders, as well as a framework for initial and continuing leadership development.

The practices are also linked closely to the revised standards for headteachers (DFES, 2004b) which are divided into six key areas: 'Shaping the Future'; 'Leading Learning and Teaching'; 'Developing Self and Working with Others'; 'Managing the

Organisation’; ‘Securing Accountability’; and ‘Strengthening Community’. These areas encompass both the leadership and management aspects of the headteacher’s role thus linking leadership and management practices (Lewis et al, 2004). These areas of leadership will have an effect on the leadership structure in a small school which will be explored in the following sections.

5.2 Senior Management Team in Small Primary Schools

Due to the fact that there are fewer members of staff in a small primary school than in a large primary school the leadership structure is likely to be different. The leadership structures of the schools in the sample are shown in Figure 5.2.

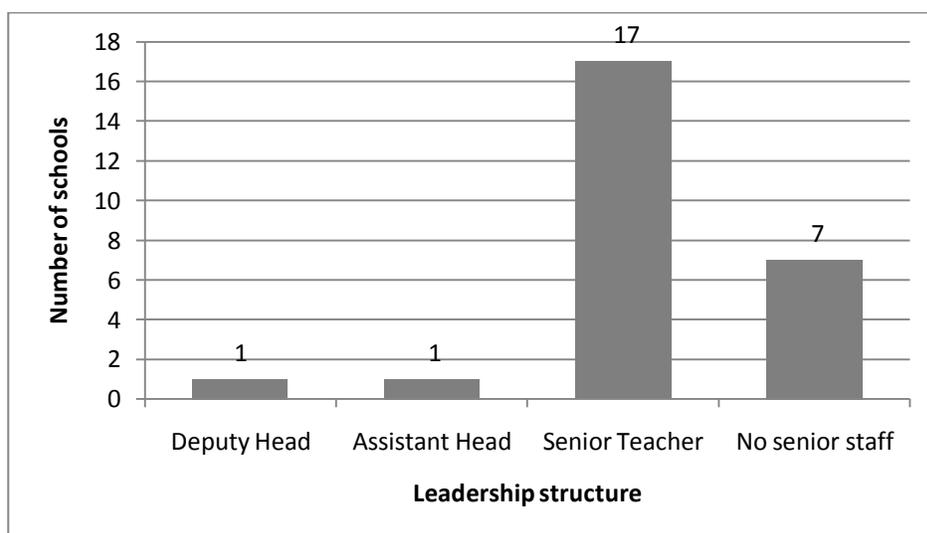


Figure 5.2: Leadership structures of schools in the total sample

It can be seen that very few schools had either a deputy headteacher or an assistant headteacher. It was not surprising that the schools which did have a deputy headteacher or an assistant headteacher were both larger schools with 90 to 100 pupils. One of these schools had a senior teacher as well as a deputy headteacher. There were also a number of schools who did not have a senior teacher. Taking this into account the data show that there were eight schools where there was no senior

member of staff other than the headteacher. This means that many schools would struggle to have a senior management team, sometimes referred to as ‘senior leadership team’. It may be argued that the two terms are not synonymous as ‘senior management team’ will have a predominant focus on management issues and ‘senior leadership team’ will focus on leadership issues. However, in practice the two terms do tend to be used interchangeably and so the term ‘senior management team’ has been used in this section. Half of the schools in the sample did not have a senior management team while the others had various compositions for their team. The situation for the schools in the sample is shown in Figure 5.3.

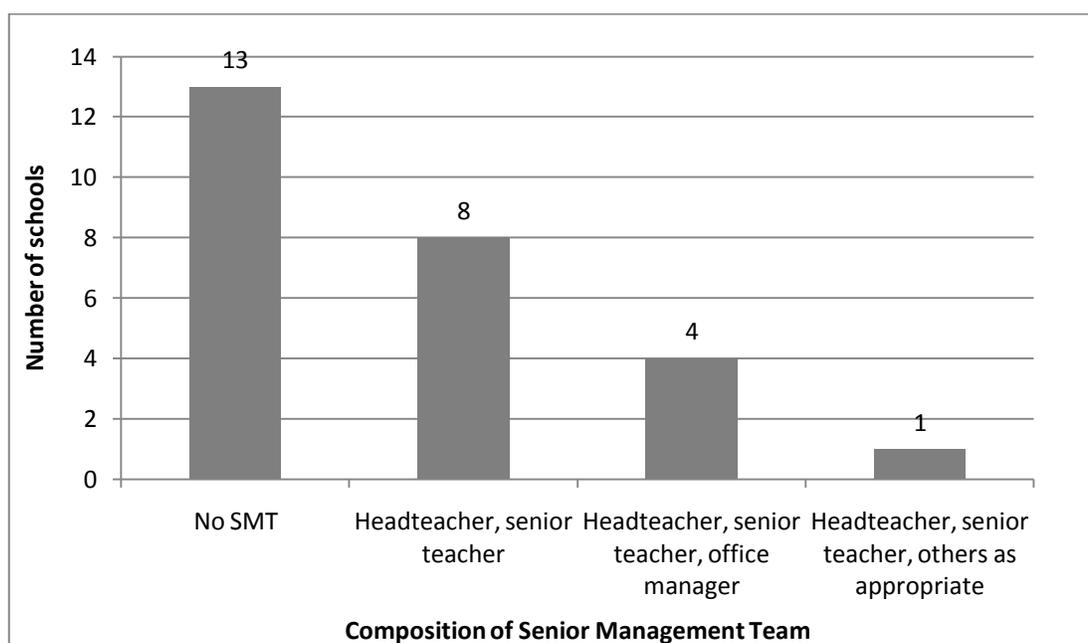


Figure 5.3: Senior Management Teams in the sample schools

One headteacher said that in her school the Senior Management team constitution is flexible as they involve the site agent if matters concerning the building were being discussed and the Foundation Stage teacher if they were discussing that area. This type of fluid team would seem to be an appropriate model for a small school to utilise and could be copied by other small primary schools.

Only one of the schools had a member of staff (a deputy headteacher) who is required to deputise for the headteacher in his/her absence. The other schools depend on the goodwill of the staff. Arguably, this gives the opportunity for all members of staff to develop their leadership capacity and to have leadership experiences that would not normally be available to members of staff outside of the senior management team. An alternative view is that this could be seen as exploitation of members of staff who subsidise the system.

The leadership structure in a small primary school tends to be a flatter structure rather than hierarchical. This was recognised by some of the headteachers who were interviewed:

I don't believe in hierarchy and I believe if my staff can do it I can do it and I want to show them that I lead by example.

Headteacher I6

I'm a very democratic sort of a head, we very much discuss things together so I don't see myself as I'm the boss. Whatever job I ask people to do, I'm quite prepared to do it myself.

Headteacher I7

An interesting point is that these headteachers spoke of not believing in a hierarchy and being part of a team but they used the word 'I' when describing the situation which suggests that they still see themselves as the person in charge. Headteacher I8 continued this theme when she commented:

I see myself as a team leader but I also see myself as part of the team. There's no room for people who aren't team players, we're all part of a team and from the caretaker up to me and I don't see myself as in my ivory tower.

Headteacher I8

Headteacher I8 did not elaborate as to how she would deal with a member of staff who was not a ‘team player’ but this is an example of the headteacher using positional power to achieve her aims for the school (Busher, 2006). Lukes (2005:68) comments:

...the power of the powerful consists in their being capable of and responsible for affecting (negatively or positively) the (subjective and/or objective) interests of others.

All of these headteachers felt that they were prepared to undertake any task within their school team and were in the position of “first among equals” (Ironsides and Seifert, 1995:244)

Personal Reflection 16

One of my teachers got upset when I was the first person to arrive at school and so I set out the chairs in the hall for a special assembly. She said that I was the headteacher and should not be doing such tasks. It took her quite a while to adapt to the way things operate in a small school.

Arguably, the schools that did not have a senior management team were more democratic as decisions that affected the day to day running of the school were made in staff meetings with all of the teaching staff involved in the process. In this way all of the members of staff become an informal senior management team. This will be explored further in Chapter 6 which deals with different styles of leadership.

As many of the schools did not have a formal senior management team, the role of middle leaders in a small school needs to be considered. This will be explored in the following section.

5.3 Middle Leadership

The subject co-ordinators may be classed as middle management leaders (Hammersley-Fletcher and Kirkham, 2007). As there are fewer members of staff in a small primary school this means that every teacher, in effect, is a middle leader and has at least one subject area to co-ordinate. However, in a small school with one teacher co-ordinating several areas of the curriculum it is difficult only to match teachers with their particular subject strength. This is recognised by Hammersley-Fletcher and Kirkham (2007:429) when they write:

While the leadership may be bestowed upon those with the knowledge and pedagogy of the subject as a strength, together with the ability to gain followership, such is less likely owing to the size and staffing of most primary schools than in larger organisations.

In practice each teacher has several areas of the curriculum to oversee. This situation can be affected adversely by having a Newly Qualified Teacher on the staff as they are not permitted to have a co-ordinator role. This was seen as a disadvantage of small schools by the headteachers in the sample.

Personal Reflection 17

In our school we have a teacher on maternity leave with her absence being covered by an NQT. The absent teacher is the co-ordinator for Literacy as well as Healthy Schools so the other teachers have to share those responsibilities, which then adds to everyone's workload.

While it could be argued that this may deter some headteachers from employing NQTs, there were two in the sample who were interviewed who did have an NQT on their staff. In both instances the headteacher was acting as the mentor for the NQT. This can be an added complication for an inexperienced headteacher who is trying to

understand a new set of responsibilities. However, in a large school this would probably be delegated to a deputy headteacher.

Personal Reflection 18

When I was the deputy headteacher in my previous school, which was a larger primary school, I gained experience of mentoring NQTs.

If the headteacher has come from the background of a deputy headteacher in a large school s/he will most likely have had this experience. In that instance it will not be a complication so much as one more task with which to cope. There is the possibility that headteachers may ‘discriminate’ against NQTs and consequently NQTs will start their teaching careers in larger schools and then they will not gain the experience of teaching in a small school, although there was no evidence to support or disprove this view.

It is acknowledged in this research that the workload is heavy when one teacher is co-ordinating several areas of the curriculum. The model of co-ordinator roles or subject responsibility needs to be adapted to the specific school context. As a result headteachers and senior management teams have to be innovative and develop their models for middle leadership and co-ordinators. One headteacher in the sample had developed a system where there is a senior teacher, who has the responsibility for being the ‘teaching and learning manager’, and other teachers then have a role for overseeing subject areas without the monitoring aspects of a co-ordinator role. The ‘teaching and learning manager’ monitored areas of the curriculum through lesson observations. This has lessened the load for the teachers but there needs to be a focus

on the priorities that are included in the current School Development Plan. The headteacher explained how this worked:

The teaching and learning manager was struggling a bit with all the foundation subjects until we clarified with her to just focus on the subjects that are in the school development plan as priorities to do the monitoring and it seems to be working.

Headteacher I4

This headteacher had made the decision not to focus on all of the subjects in the curriculum but to link specific areas of the curriculum to the school development plan. This is a new way of working for the teachers that has evolved from necessity and is still being developed but it could form the basis of a model that may be useful to other headteachers of small primary schools and so it forms part of the model of leadership in small schools as shown in Chapter 7. Headteacher Q2 acknowledged that she was still considering her preferred leadership model. She said:

We each have a core subject and are looking at working parties for arts, PE etc.

This headteacher has identified that it is not possible to give the same amount of attention to each area of the curriculum when there is a limited number of teachers and so she has prioritised the subjects of Mathematics, English and Science which have been categorised as ‘core subjects’ and is considering how to organise the other subjects in a manner that is workable in her school.

It may be possible to share these models with other headteachers of small schools in workshop sessions after headteacher meetings. Some schools have tried to ease the load by giving some areas of responsibility to Teaching Assistants. This is discussed further in the section dealing with ‘distributed leadership’ in Chapter 6.

The senior management team in schools is also responsible for introducing curriculum change, and this is a current challenge. Rose (2009) conducted a review of the primary curriculum and devised a model of six areas which are loosely linked to the six areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage (See Appendix L). There has been a lot of talk in primary schools about Rose's 'creative curriculum' and returning to teaching through themes or topics instead of distinct subjects. When she was asked about curriculum co-ordinators, Headteacher I3 said that they were looking at more cross-curricular teaching which would affect the co-ordinator roles. This is linked to leadership for learning which is considered in the next section.

5.4 Leadership for Learning

The headteacher has an important part to play in leading learning within the school as s/he is able to influence the other members of the school community in the learning that takes place. This links to the headteacher being in a position of power as identified by (Busher, 2006). Swaffield and MacBeath (2009:42) define 'leadership for learning' in the following way:

Leadership for learning is a distinct form of educational practice that involves an explicit dialogue, maintaining a focus on learning, attending to the conditions that favour learning, and leadership that is both shared and accountable.

There are various aspects of leadership that link to leadership for learning. These are monitoring, improving standards and creating the environment which link to the leadership practices identified by Leithwood et al (2008) that are referred to in Figure 2.2. Gunter (2006:262) writes:

Leader, leading and leadership are hollow unless we attach them to a purpose, and focusing on education means that this is located within learners and learning.

The headteachers identified various aspects of their role that showed elements of leadership for learning as shown in Figure 5.4.

<p>The role of the headteacher in leadership for learning is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • motivate others • inspire others • facilitate, enable others • develop staff • work alongside staff • work with governors • provide opportunities for others to lead 	<p>Developing others</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • influence the environment • identify areas for development • lead teaching and learning • monitor • have a clear vision 	<p>Developing the climate</p>

Figure 5.4: Leadership for learning: the role of the headteacher

Figure 5.4 shows how these aspects can be grouped into two main areas: ‘developing others’ and ‘developing the climate’. It is acknowledged that these aspects are not restricted to small primary schools. However, they will be considered in the next two sections in relation to small primary schools.

5.4.1 Developing others

An important part of the headteacher’s role in influencing ‘leadership for learning’ is to develop leadership skills in other members of staff. Headteacher Q16 saw her role of leadership as:

...to inspire and motivate others – staff, children, parents, governors.

The implication from Headteacher Q16 is that without inspiration and motivation the focus on education within the school would be difficult and she also included the children, parents and governors within this area. This headteacher also felt that it is

“easier to implement and manage change” in a small school. Headteacher Q13 also identified inspiration as an important aspect of leadership for learning. She described her role of leadership in the following way:

To be inspirational, creative, supportive and committed to the whole team, not just ‘every child matters’ but ‘every person matters’.

This headteacher has also acknowledged the political influence at this time by mentioning the ‘Every Child Matters’ agenda which has a political bias (DfES, 2004a). Headteacher I7 recognised that her influence was important within the context of ‘leadership for learning’. She said:

Well I think I have a great influence over that [leadership for learning] really because we’ve just started the creative curriculum and that was mostly because of my enthusiasm for it.

This headteacher went on to say that she used her influence to enthuse other members of staff and had then arranged for a teacher to go on a course to find out more about the creative curriculum. Learning does not just refer to the learning of the pupils but to the learning of everyone in the school. Swaffield and MacBeath (2009:32) write:

Leadership and learning are mutually embedded, so that as we learn we become more confident in sharing with, and leading, others. And as we lead we continuously reflect on, and enhance, our learning.

The headteacher has an important influence on the learning of the adults in school as well as that of the children. Stoll et al (2003:102) write:

If... the agenda for schools is about learning and time, it is important to concentrate on improved learning for everyone in schools. To achieve superior learning we must focus on the core leadership role of leadership for learning.

The headteachers in this study realised that continual professional development is important to the learning of the members of staff. However, the professional

development needs of staff members can be a problematic area in small schools. This was recognised by Headteacher I6:

Right, the barriers that the training has, one is monetary, that's financial. Two is when you have a part-time member .. "I don't work that day so I'm not going" when you've just paid for the course.

This headteacher went on to explain this comment as she found that part-time members of staff were reluctant to attend in-service training if it occurred on a day that they did not work in the school. The solution to this problem which has been used in some schools is to pay the member of staff for additional hours to cover the time spent on the training course but this is not always possible if the member of staff has other commitments. While it is true that there are financial implications for professional training for members of staff regardless of the size of the school, the effect is felt more in a small school as there is a smaller budget. It is also likely that there are more part-time members of staff in a small school (see Figure 6.5 for the number of schools in the sample with part-time members of staff) which will also have an effect on training as identified by Headteacher I6.

Headteachers I3, I4 and I7 linked the professional development needs of the staff to their 'performance management' so that they are asked to look for relevant courses to enable them to achieve their objectives. These also link into the school development plan. Headteacher I8 prioritised the training as there was an area that necessitated staff training so this was covered in her first year of headship. This was also the approach taken by other headteachers in order to make the most efficient use of the financial resources that were available. Headteacher I2 used an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the members of staff to guide the training needs when

she was first appointed to headship. Then she changed to training that was for the whole staff. She said:

Last year everybody identified their own training needs ... This year we're keeping whole school inset so we're doing different days across the year and using the budget in a different way.

While the training for the whole school may be more cost-effective there is a greater risk that this may lead to the school becoming insular. This headteacher explained that she varied the approach from year to year in order to use the context of the school priorities one year alongside the needs of individual members of staff another year. Headteacher I4 also commented on the fact that since the 'workforce remodelling' came into force it has been easier to include the teaching assistants in the training that takes place on the in-service training days at the beginning of each term. This gives value to training for all members of staff and not just the teaching staff. Arguably, it is easier to accommodate training for everyone in a small school as it is natural to all meet together. There seems to be a move towards 'in school' training in the schools in the sample. This is largely due to budget restrictions but also partly because the headteachers wanted the training to be relevant to the needs of their members of staff. Headteacher I6 said that the professional development courses provided by the Local Authority were not always relevant to the needs of the school as they needed some literacy training for teachers that were new to the school but the Local Authority had not designated the school as a 'targeted' school for literacy and so the training was not available for that particular school.

In view of the large number of small primary schools, it could be appropriate for the Local Authority to target some training specifically for staff from small schools.

5.4.2 Developing the climate

In order for 'leadership for learning' to take place the headteacher needs to ensure that there is an effective climate in the school. It was acknowledged by Headteacher I1 that being the headteacher of a small school is different from being headteacher of a large school:

A small school's different to a large school. The final responsibility is mine and to guide the teachers. I have to keep a close eye on the long term plans so everything's covered, check the books, observe classes, keep an eye on everything.

It should be noted that these activities also occur in larger schools but the point being made by this headteacher is that she has to carry out all of the activities herself as she did not have senior members of staff to take on some of the responsibilities. This links to strategic leadership which is discussed further in Chapter 6. It could be said that the influence of the headteacher is important as s/he can take on the entire leadership role as there are fewer people with whom to share leadership or alternatively s/he can encourage other members of staff to share in aspects of leadership within the school. In order to share the leadership the headteacher needs to foster an environment where the members of staff feel able to take risks and try new approaches. This is acknowledged by Swaffield (2008:332):

Unless people feel secure, they will not try approaches new to them since these are by definition untested and unproved, and a fundamental sense of security is essential if people are to embrace novelty willingly, and thus to learn.

It might be assumed that this may be easier in a small school as the headteacher and members of staff know each other well and can support each other. However, the closeness of the members of staff may hinder this process as everyone will know if a particular approach has not worked out as planned. Headteacher Q9 recognised that her influence on leadership for learning was important:

...my attitude and behaviour seem to have a great effect on staff. I feel I need to give direction yet allow others to suggest and change it if necessary.

The Ofsted Report for one school acknowledged the influence of the headteacher on the climate for learning within the school:

A positive climate for learning now exists because of the range of initiatives implemented successfully by the acting headteacher this term.

Ofsted Report for School H

It is necessary to prioritise areas to be developed each year in order to effectively utilise the expertise of the members of staff without overburdening them. This links to the idea of the headteacher being a 'steward of learning'. Bowring-Carr and West-Burnham, 1997:135) write:

The headteacher will, first and foremost, be the steward of learning. Through personal example, in conversations, in notes to other colleagues, in some of the items in agendas for meetings, in the school magazine – in every conceivable way – the leader will demonstrate an unending commitment to learning, personal and professional.

It might be suggested that it is easier to demonstrate this stewardship in a small school. It was seen in Chapter 4 that the majority of the headteachers in the sample had a teaching commitment. This is an area where the headteacher is able to be a 'steward of learning' through their personal example in the classroom. Headteacher I4 identified a commitment to developing learning within her school:

I did have in my first 2 years as head here a huge number of personnel issues that took up so much of my time I was very limited in the time I could spend on improving the teaching and learning and so it's really nice now that I can actually get on with that, get to grips with it a bit more.

This headteacher showed that there is also an element of challenge as there are issues that take time to sort out which leaves less time to spend on developing learning

within the school. In a large school some issues may be dealt with by a deputy headteacher but this is not possible in many small schools as it was shown in Figure 5.3 that only one school in the sample had a deputy headteacher. It could be the case that many of the issues are of a management nature and therefore there is an overlap between the areas of leadership and management in a small school as will be explored in the next section.

5.5 Leadership and Management

Although the research is looking at leadership in a small primary school as opposed to management, it has been seen in Chapter 2 that leadership and management are connected. They have different functions but it is sometimes difficult to separate the two elements (Lewis and Murphy, 2008). In a small school there is a large amount of management and administration work that is required of the headteacher, particularly as many schools only have part-time administration support. Sixteen of the headteachers in the sample had part-time administrators while ten of them had full-time administrators. In the schools with part-time administrators the headteachers covered administration tasks such as answering the telephone.

Personal Reflection 19

In my school I have an office manager for the mornings but I answer telephone queries and operate the door entry system from lunchtime onwards except when I am teaching in a class. On those occasions I have to deal with any messages that have been left on the answerphone after I have finished teaching. When I have contacted headteachers in other small primary schools I have found that they have the same situation.

Headteacher I3 found that when she was teaching every afternoon she was often called out of class to perform tasks such as:

... first aid or answering the phone, opening the door etc, etc. you've always got a disturbed afternoon.

This raises the question as to whether this is good use of a headteacher's time and expertise or could these duties be carried out by someone else. The answer is not as straightforward as one might imagine. The situation seems to arise mostly in schools without full-time administrators and so there is no-one else to carry out these tasks. On the positive side, it does mean that the headteacher knows what is going on in the school. The headteacher is a member of the school team and as such is able to undertake any role within the team. This is different from larger schools where there is usually full-time administration support.

Mick Brookes from the National Association of Head Teachers wrote:

While management without leadership is an option, leadership without management is not. (Brookes in the Foreword to Day et al, 2000:x)

It could be argued that it is not an option to have either leadership or management without the other in a small primary school as they both form part of the multi-faceted role of the headteacher. It is leadership that provides the vision for the future (Brookes, 2005) while management is necessary to enable the deployment of resources to achieve the vision. Headteacher I7 followed her predecessor's procedure of developing a five-year vision. She said:

She used to set a five year vision for the school and put all these things in she'd like to do and I've sort of done that but I really need to do it again because I think my five years are up. But I always have a vision to improve.

While this headteacher started by following her predecessor's practice she recognises that it is important for the headteacher to have a vision for the school. Lewis and Murphy (2008:135-136) refer to headteachers as being like 'branch managers':

They are handed down expectations, targets, new initiatives and resources – all of which may or may not be manageable in the context which includes the nature of the neighbourhood and the culture of the wider society.

One example of this concerns the 'Performance Management' of teachers. There is an expectation that all teachers undergo an annual formal review of their work. This review should be carried out by the headteacher or delegated by the headteacher to a senior member of staff. However, in a small school the latter may be difficult and so the headteacher usually has to conduct all of the reviews him/herself. There is supposed to be a limit on the number of reviews carried out by one person but when there are part-time teachers the headteacher could find that s/he is trying to complete a larger number of reviews than their counterpart in a large school who is able to delegate some of the reviews to a deputy.

Personal Reflection 20

In my school I am responsible for carrying out Performance Management reviews with a total of 5 teachers and in previous years it has been 6 teachers. Whereas at my previous school where there was a headteacher, deputy headteacher and a senior teacher I only had to carry out reviews with 3 teachers

The headteachers in the sample all had several management and curriculum subject areas for which they were responsible, some of which would be delegated to middle leaders in a larger school. The areas of responsibility for the headteachers in the sample are shown in Figure 5.5.

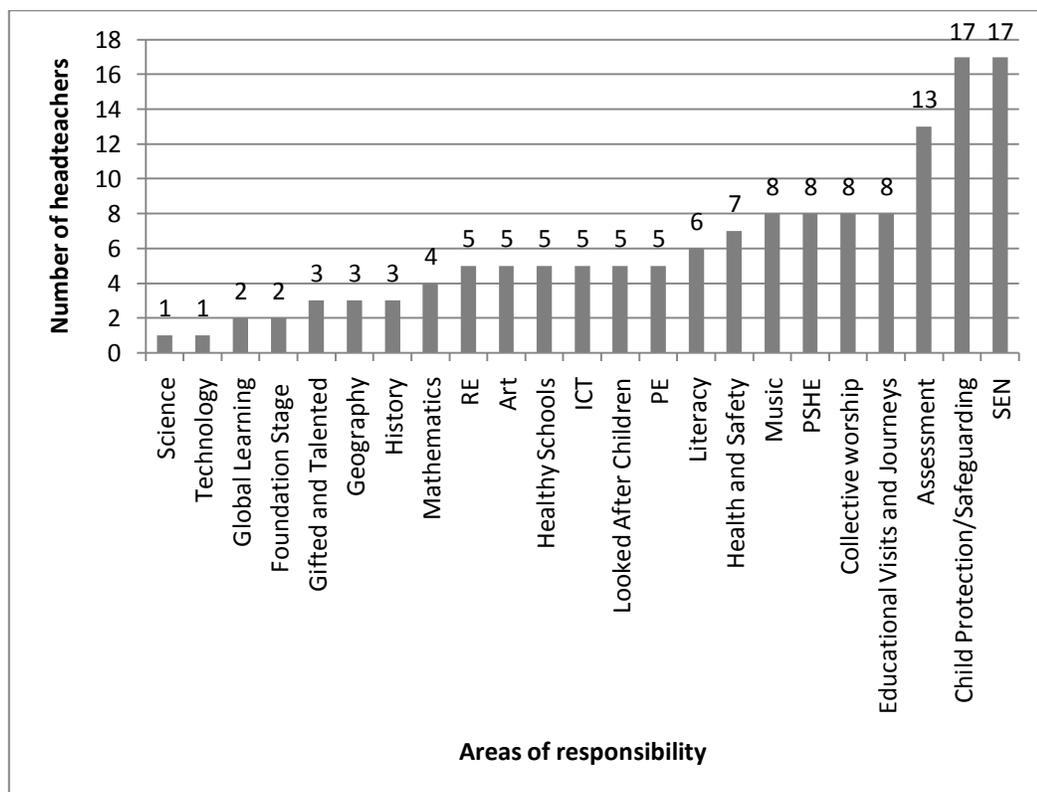


Figure 5.5: Areas of responsibility for headteachers in the sample

One of the headteachers said that they were responsible for two management areas but also all of the curriculum areas apart from literacy and numeracy. Headteacher I10 said:

I don't have any of the core curriculum subjects. I do the music .. I do the RE and the PSHE as the curriculum subjects but it's not that is it ...it's the others, the SEN, Gifted and Talented, Looked After Children, Child Protection, all of those... collective worship, health and safety, visits and journeys. What else is there? All those ones no-one else will do .. at the moment I'm doing Global Learning, school council...

It can be seen that 17 of the 26 headteachers in the sample were the SENCO for their school which is an area that would be distributed to a teacher in a larger school.

Headteacher I4 expressed some concern that management aspects changed every year due to fluctuating numbers and the effect on the school budget:

The funding is different every year if you have cohorts that are fluctuating. I mean we've got a cohort of 10 in Year 2; we've got 23 in Year 3... every single year you've got to reinvent the wheel about your structure - your classes and your structure.

This is a problem that will not be encountered in a larger school to the same extent.

The fluctuating numbers of pupils in each cohort means that the classes have to be changed each year so it means that the pupils do not remain in the same class group throughout their time in the school. This is a management task that the headteacher carries out each year once the number of pupils in the new intake is known.

When the leadership and management responsibilities are combined with the teaching commitment of the headteacher, there is the possibility of overstressing the headteacher. This is a point that was recognised by an Ofsted inspector:

In this small school where the headteacher has a major teaching commitment, leadership and management systems were severely stretched.

Ofsted Report for School Y

This could be said to be a result of LMS and the subsequent change in the role of the headteacher to encompass the role of a 'senior manager' (Calveley, 2005).

5.6 Challenges to leading a small primary school

The headteachers in the sample identified a number of challenges that may be experienced in small primary schools. Their responses were coded according to the categories shown in Figure 5.6.

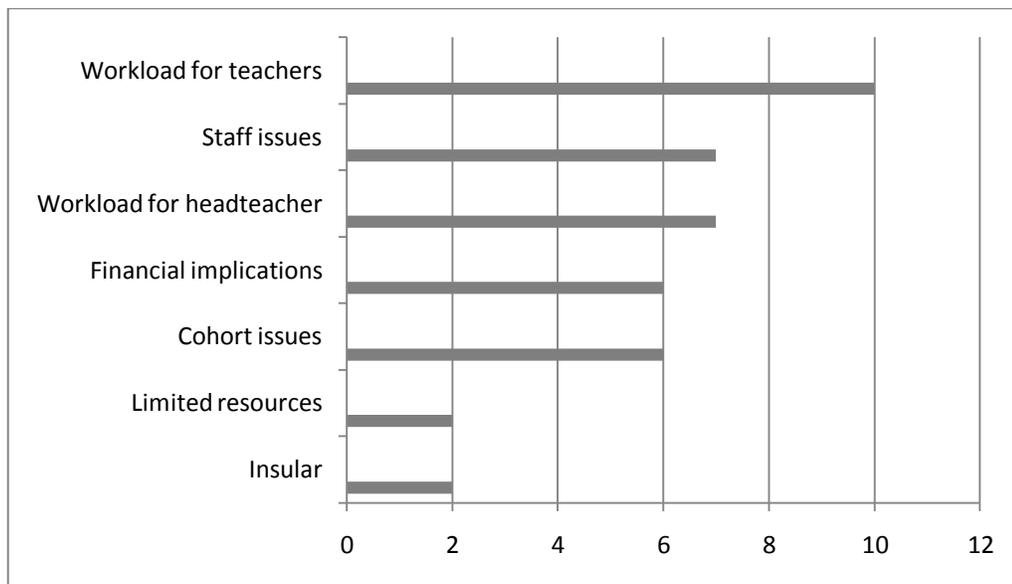


Figure 5.6: Challenges for small primary schools

5.6.1 Workload for teachers

A challenge that was identified by the headteachers was the workload of their teachers. They were concerned that their teachers often had several areas to coordinate. This meant that the headteachers tended to increase their own workload in order to reduce that of their teachers. Headteacher Q16 said:

I quite like the fact we have a strong team and little hierarchy but I tend to take a lot more on myself as I feel they should not be overloaded.

It can be assumed that when there are fewer members of staff in a school then each person's workload will increase. Headteacher Q13 saw this as a disadvantage of small schools:

There is a small team to do all the jobs and have all the skills.

This was recognised in some of the Ofsted reports for schools in the sample as shown by the example below:

Class teachers all carry several subject responsibilities
Ofsted Report for School L

Fifteen of the headteachers in the sample felt that their teachers needed to co-ordinate too many subjects which added to their workload. This links to the need for a new model for co-ordinators that was discussed in section 5.3. In a small school it may be possible to fulfil some aspects in a creative manner such as linking areas of the curriculum to the priorities in the School Development Plan and having a rolling programme so that all of the areas of the curriculum are covered over a two to three year period.

5.6.2 Financial implications

A major disadvantage of small schools is the impact that the number of pupils has on the school budget. Williams (2008:9) identified the financial restrictions imposed by the connection between the number of pupils and the size of the school budget:

This impacts in different ways through staffing levels, resources and ultimately the possibility of limiting pupil opportunity.

Arguably, this has the largest impact on a small school as the size of the budget is closely linked to the number of pupils. In the Local Authority in this research there is a funding formula to protect small schools to some extent as an additional amount is given for every pupil less than 150 on roll. In addition there is a formula for all primary schools to enable the class size initiative of a maximum of thirty pupils in each class in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. This formula is referred to as ‘ghost pupil funding’ (see Appendix N) and can work for or against small schools as one or two pupils can mean the difference between getting enough funding for a teacher or not.

Headteacher I10 criticised the funding formula for the budget as the school was going to be adversely affected for the next year when there would be seven fewer pupils:

...there're seven children less next year and the ghost funding goes from £34,000 this year to nothing; and you think they've got to look at the actual school and they've got to see that you've still got to have two classrooms ... so funding is a huge issue..

This is a problem that has arisen because the Local Authority has a rigid threshold for the funding formula. Headteacher I4 expressed some frustration with the financial restrictions caused by having a 'small school budget':

We have the same expectations of provision as the larger schools but not the funding to match it.

Headteacher I9 said that she would welcome some financial help from the Local Authority so that:

...you could get your staff together, liaising more...

Personal Reflection 21

At one time there was a grant that was administered by the Local Authority that was intended to support clusters of small schools. A group of small schools could decide on a project that would be of benefit to all of them and they could then put together a proposal for funding for the project. In this way one cluster of small schools was successful in accessing funding for three schools to work together to develop the area of dance one year and poetry a second year. The funding covered the costs of transporting the children and staff from two schools to the third school for workshops and the cost of bringing in professional expertise. In this way the group of schools were able to enhance the learning opportunities for the pupils and staff at all of the schools and they were able to network with each other. Unfortunately the scheme is no longer available.

This is an area that could be developed further so that small schools could have specific funding so that they could work together and form a network for the members of staff.

There is an argument that small schools are expensive to maintain and staff efficiently (Phillips, 1997). One of the judgements that Ofsted inspectors make is:

...how effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money (Ofsted, 2009).

Figure 5.7 shows the Ofsted judgements for 'value for money' for the schools in the sample.



Figure 5.7: Ofsted judgements for schools providing value for money

It can be seen that a high proportion of the schools provide good or outstanding value for money and only seven of the schools were classed as providing satisfactory value for money. None of the schools were considered to provide inadequate value for money. It could be assumed that this shows that the small primary schools in this sample do not provide poor value for money and so it can be said that they do deploy resources efficiently and effectively.

5.6.3 Workload for headteacher

It was seen in section 5.6.1 that the headteachers in the sample were concerned about the workload of their teachers but they were also concerned about their own workload. This is a huge problem in a small school.

It was seen in chapter 4 that the headteacher often has a teaching commitment in a small school. There is also the same amount of paperwork and administration as there is for a headteacher in a bigger school, although in some cases there are more administration tasks.

Personal Reflection 22

Linked to the workload of the headteacher in a small primary school is the issue of the pay scale of the headteacher. Headteachers' pay is linked to the size of the school so the headteachers of small schools have a higher workload than their counterparts in larger schools but actually get paid less. The headteachers at a recent meeting expressed their dissatisfaction at what they felt was an unfair situation.

Headteacher Q2 said of the workload issue:

The same bureaucracy has to be completed irrelevant [sic] to the size of your school.

Headteacher I8 said:

I mean sometimes I think there's jobs that if I was in another school I'd probably be giving to somebody else. I've got a secretarial background so that's a good thing.

Both of these headteachers acknowledged that there were tasks that they had to complete that would not be the responsibility of the headteacher in all schools. The difference in a small school is that many headteachers have to deal with the

paperwork themselves as they do not have full-time office staff. A positive aspect of this is that the headteacher has a good knowledge of all aspects of the school.

It was seen in Figure 5.5 that the headteachers are responsible for areas that could be considered management issues as well as a number of curriculum areas. The numbers of areas for which the headteachers are responsible are shown in Figure 5.8.

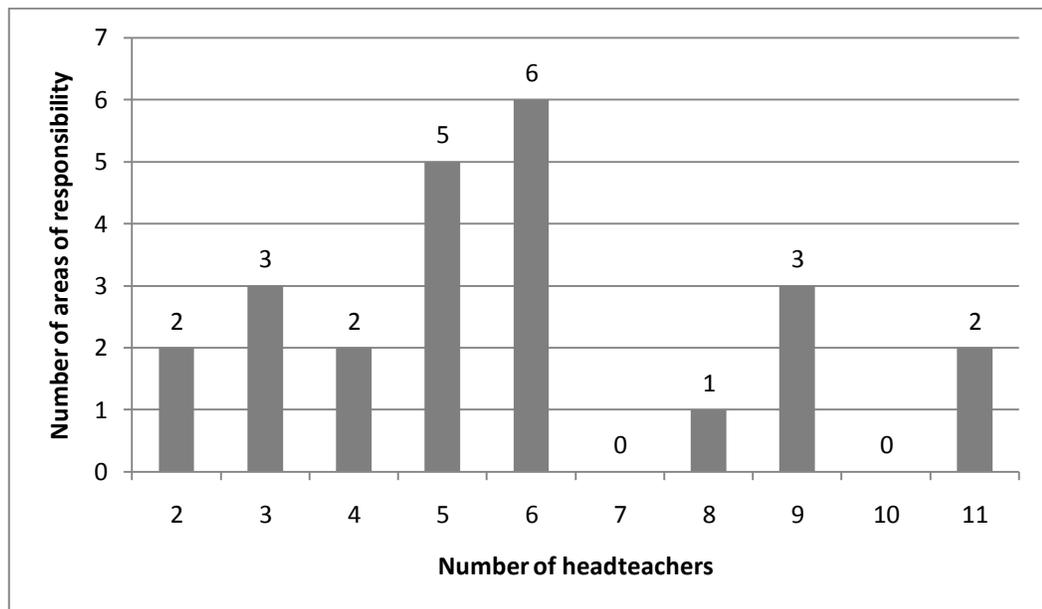


Figure 5.8: Number of areas of responsibility for the headteachers in the sample

One of the headteachers said that he co-ordinates half of the curriculum subjects but did not specify other management responsibilities. Another headteacher said that they were responsible for all areas apart from literacy, numeracy and science. These are not included in Figure 5.6 as it was not certain how many areas for which they were actually responsible. It can be seen that 17 of the headteachers in the sample said that they had five or more areas for which they were responsible. This represents a large workload for the headteachers.

While there are fewer pupils, there are still the same day to day issues that have to be dealt with as in a larger school. In a small school it is difficult for the headteacher to delegate responsibility for managing a difficult situation to another member of staff.

This is recognised by Cambell et al (2006:11):

In handling conflict the headteacher is ‘playing for higher stakes’ in a small school where lack of sensitivity in dealing with the issue may upset the balance of working relationships within the school.

Personal Reflection 23

Recently, a group of headteachers of small primary schools sat together at a meeting for all of the primary headteachers in the area and one of the headteachers told us about a problem she had with a member of her staff who was comparing her working conditions and pay structure with those of a similar position in a much larger school. The headteacher needed some information about the working conditions in schools of a similar size before she dealt with the problem in her school. This information enabled the headteacher to deal with the problem without upsetting the working relationship she had with the member of staff. These times at meetings are helpful for headteachers of small schools.

The element of the workload of the headteacher also received attention from the Ofsted inspectors when they inspected some of the schools in the sample as shown by the example below:

The constraints of a small school mean that the headteacher has a very heavy workload ...

Ofsted Report for School F

This may be where it is important for headteachers to have a network of other headteachers with whom they can discuss problems. Webb and Vulliamy have conducted research that shows that headteachers consider the pastoral needs of their

members of staff but feel that there is nobody to consider their own pastoral needs (Bloom, 2010).

Personal Reflection 24

A headteacher was trying to deal with a sensitive issue in her school. She could not discuss this with anyone on her staff as it affected them so she had a telephone conversation with me which helped her to realise that she was dealing with the situation in the only way possible.

5.6.4 Cohort issues

There are several challenges that are connected to the size of the cohorts in a small school. Part of the headteacher's management role involves analysing data as an element of their monitoring role. This also links to leadership for learning. Small cohort sizes skew the data and make meaningful analysis difficult, particularly when dealing with percentages of cohorts obtaining specific levels in end of Key Stage assessments. However, this is key data that is used to compare the performances of schools by Ofsted inspectors, Local Authorities and even parents when they are selecting a school for their child. All of the Ofsted reports commented that the schools were smaller than average for a primary school. The Ofsted inspectors reported on the standards of the pupils but very few of them drew attention to how the small sizes of the cohorts could adversely influence the results obtained in the end of Key Stage assessments. Arguably, the judgements on standards may be flawed without all of the relevant information being presented in the reports. Some of the Ofsted inspectors did draw attention to the small cohorts:

...although results vary from year to year due to the small cohorts, the standards achieved at the end of Year 2 in 2006 were exceptionally high in reading, writing and mathematics.

Ofsted report for School R

National test data in Year 2 shows that, with small groups, there has been considerable variation in the standards, including those achieved in the last two years.

Ofsted report for School T

There was only one Ofsted report that actually went as far as to say that the data from a small school could not be compared to national data with any degree of meaning:

The small numbers of pupils taking teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 make comparisons with national averages in any one year unreliable.

Ofsted report for School P

The teacher assessment results for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 in Year 2 are compared with schools nationally. These results use percentages of pupils gaining each level and within this comment from the Ofsted inspector is an acknowledgement that comparing percentages for small cohorts is unreliable as one pupil can have a disproportionate impact on the results. This has implications for the reporting of standards in the Ofsted reports for small primary schools. There needs to be some allowance made for these data comparisons being unreliable because the data set is too small when it is compared with national data and there needs to be an explanation given in the report for the schools concerned.

There were conflicting views with regard to the impact of small cohorts on the social aspects of children's development. Headteacher Q10 said:

Social options for small cohorts can be limiting for children. The older pupils begin to feel trapped and are ready to fly the nest.

Headteacher I9 commented:

.. too few for the children to have friends, they bicker at each other, especially Year 3 and 4. They need a larger network, they need more people to work with, a greater range and more diversity so they are more aware of the different cultures around.

However, other headteachers felt that the children developed better social skills because they were in a small group. Headteacher Q13 said:

[T]he children gain confidence and develop well.

Headteacher Q10 commented:

[T]he children feel safe and get to know and play with different age ranges.

It has been seen in this section that there are challenges that are caused by the small sizes of the cohorts. The next section will consider the challenge involved in having a small number of members of staff.

5.6.5 Staff issues

A small school is not only affected by the small cohorts of pupils but also by the relatively small staff. Williams (2008:9) writes:

A small staff not only limits expertise but also creates intense relationships and the possibility for conflict.

It is interesting that the question of ‘expertise’ with a small number of teachers was not considered to be an issue by the headteachers of the small schools that formed the sample. It could be argued that primary school teachers are used to teaching the whole curriculum and consequently develop their expertise in a wide range of areas. However, the matter of staff relationships was raised as a disadvantage of small schools. This is a point that was made by Headteacher I6 as she said:

A disadvantage is that everybody knows each other so it can become very much familiarity breeds contempt.

The above comment suggests that while it is an advantage that people know each other very well in a small school, this can also be classed as a disadvantage as people

can become over-familiar. This view is supported by Headteacher I2 who commented:

I think when people work together too long in a small school is that they lose that professional sort of courtesy .. on occasions because it's over-familiar, you get over-familiar with people and I've noticed that happening between staff here which has caused a few problems ...

Cambell et al (2006:11) write:

The management of conflict in a small school can make disproportionate demands on the headteacher. Dissension can have a big impact on relationships within the school as a whole and across the wider community.

The headteacher needs to be aware of staff dynamics so that they can utilise each member of staff to the best effect. In one school the headteacher had created the post of a senior teacher but then the teacher left to take up a post in another school. The replacement teacher was then the senior teacher as the other teachers did not have sufficient experience. The headteacher commented:

I don't think she's doing a particularly good job but I haven't got a choice.

In a small school it is not always possible to avoid each other so a disagreement can rapidly escalate whereas in a larger school it is often easier to avoid other people.

Headteacher Q1 said:

Staff issues can get out of hand as there's no way people can avoid each other.

Headteacher Q14 also supported this view when she said:

Staff must get on.

As part of their 'people management' duties, the headteacher needs to be sensitive to the feelings of the members of staff. One Ofsted report commented on a problem in the school that was associated with staffing issues:

The school's capacity for improvement has been limited recently by the pressures caused by significant staffing disruption.

Ofsted report for School Y

Another problem mentioned by Headteacher Q12 is staff absence in a small school. When one member of staff is out of school it is a large percentage of the staffing numbers. This can be through staff professional development courses or illness.

In a small school it may be difficult to give a Newly Qualified Teacher sufficient support and experiences. However, one school helped to alleviate this problem by linking with another small school so that the NQT could observe other experienced teachers in a different setting.

Personal Reflection 25

We used the same strategy with an NQT in our school so that he was able to observe an experienced teacher in a bigger school.

In this section there has been a consideration of one of the resources in a small school – the members of staff. The next section will focus on issues connected to other resources.

5.6.6 Limited resources

Linked to the small cohorts and small number of members of staff is the limited resources that may be available in a small school. This refers to space as well as other resources in the school. A problem that was identified by Headteacher I6 was that the costs of maintaining the building was a significant drain on the budget which had a knock-on effect on providing other resources for the school. She said:

I think the budget that a small school has should be for the teaching not for the maintenance. There should be a separate budget for all schools for maintenance because we don't buy resources full stop.

This is an important point as part of the school's budget is based on the number of pupils in the school but the maintenance costs can be as high as in a large school. Headteacher I6 also commented that there are not so many parents to call on in a small school. She said:

Having a small school you haven't got as many different parents to call on, to come and support you at events and in a small school in a deprived area where the majority of the parents aren't working I haven't got professional support from families which I'd like to have.

This problem was echoed by other headteachers in the sample.

Headteacher 13 felt that a disadvantage was that there is the possibility of over-reliance on the expertise of a few members of staff. She said:

...if we had four staff hopefully we'd have four different strengths, whereas we've got two and they are very good but I think sometimes you over-rely on the staff that you have.

This also links to the workload for teachers being high. However, there is a case for schools to work together to share resources such as expertise of members of staff through the use of joint projects that could be web-based. Headteacher I10 had developed shared pages on the Learning Platform (a virtual learning environment) with another small school so that the members of staff and pupils could work on a shared project. This links to the following section which considers the problem where a small school can feel insular.

5.6.7 Insular

One problem that may be encountered in a small school is a feeling of being insular. It can be easy to lose sight of the wider picture beyond the school for members of

staff as well as the headteacher. It is also easy to develop a narrow and detached view of the school and to become parochial in outlook as small schools are often in village locations that may be remote from other schools. This may also be coupled with a feeling of isolation felt by the headteacher.

Personal Reflection 26

A group of village schools are working with a secondary school to provide the core provision for 'extended schools' which is a government initiative. The headteachers meet together on a regular basis and so they are able to share both concerns and ideas with each other. This helps to lessen the feelings of isolation. The smaller schools are able to access the resources from the secondary school and the sixth form students have timetabled 'outreach' sessions when it is possible for them to work with the primary school pupils on activities such as sports and PE.

Several of the headteachers valued the support that they received from belonging to a support group for headteachers. Six of the headteachers are members of a group that is specifically for headteachers of small rural schools. However, some of the headteachers found that it was difficult to attend the meetings of their group and they would welcome some funding for supply cover. Headteacher I6 said:

I don't go to many of the heads' meetings because they're always on a Thursday and Friday and I can't afford supply and they won't give us supply. I did ask.

This has implications for the funding structure of small schools. However, while it is recognised that it is a benefit for the headteachers to belong to a support group there is also the danger that there are so many groups that a headteacher begins to feel overloaded as shown by the comment of Headteacher I7:

When I first became a head I was going off to different meetings, I didn't know where I was going. One was for the cluster, one was for the small schools and then it's the Learning Communities.

The groups need to be relevant to the needs of the headteachers or else they will not be a support. Headteacher I7 went on to say that she now only attends the meetings of the Learning Community as that is for all of the schools in that area. In one area there is a group of eight small, village schools that meet once or twice a term. The group is primarily a support group and the headteachers discuss any items of interest but also listen to each other's problems and give advice to each other. The meetings are usually after school with some at lunchtimes in order to avoid clashing with the various teaching commitments of the headteachers. However, this then relies on the goodwill of the headteachers as they are using their own time and some headteachers may have family commitments which would make attending meetings after school difficult.

It may also be a problem that teachers become insular in their outlook as they are not part of a year group team. This means that they do not often have colleagues with whom they can plan. The classes are usually comprised either of one class for each year group or mixed-age classes where the cohort is too small to make a class on its own. In either scenario there is not a parallel class which means that the teachers are not able to plan together. Headteacher I3 said:

...it's a problem when there's only one person [*in each key stage*] and particularly when they both have responsibility for the two age groups as well...

In that school there is a class for the Key Stage 1 pupils and another class for the Key Stage 2 pupils. In another school Headteacher I5 organised the classes into separate key stages deliberately to make planning easier for the teachers:

Well that's why I've got the three classes that cover the individual key stages so they are .. they can just focus on their key stage..

In some schools there were several part-time teachers which made planning together difficult:

They plan on their own. It's difficult to plan together because there's so few of us and the part-time staff are in school on different days.

Headteacher I1

Headteacher I9 covered the allocated time for preparation, planning and assessment for her members of staff which meant that the teachers were not able to be released from their classes at the same time. She said:

They plan separately because obviously they have to have PPA at different times .. and PPA tends to vary week by week, they're very good about that. As long as I provide it they don't mind when.

In one school the staff did manage to plan together for some aspects of their work:

...when they're planning their next learning journey they tend to work together just because they can bounce ideas off each other and everyone goes 'oh but you could do this and you could do that' but that's the limit and when it comes down to mid-term and lesson bit they don't.

Headteacher I10

This is a good compromise that could be followed by other small schools. It may be possible to use some time on the training days before term starts for planning together.

In another school the headteacher also covers the PPA time. She has organised it so that the teachers for the Year 3 and Year 4 classes are able to plan together. The teacher for the mixed Year 1 and Year 2 class plans on her own. However, the

teaching assistant is freed from class commitments when the teacher has PPA time so that there is the opportunity to collaborate over the planning.

Headteacher I10 worked closely with two other schools which helped to alleviate the problem of being insular in outlook. She said:

I've got a really good relationship with [*name of school*] and [*name of school*] so the three of us do quite a lot of stuff together, we're all close and we've done the 'Connecting Classrooms' project together which is the British Council stuff so we've arranged joint days when we've all gone to one of the schools and the children have all mixed in and done activities and stuff so that's been really good.

The advantage of small schools working together in this way not only helps schools to be less insular but also helps with sharing resources that otherwise may be limited. While ensuring that the school does not become too insular can be a challenge for headteachers of small schools, there have been creative methods of solving the problem.

5.7 Conclusion

The research findings have demonstrated that there are disadvantages or challenges to leading small primary schools but often these can be turned to advantages. A number of headteachers identified the effect that the funding formula had for the financial situation of a small school with a drop in pupil numbers causing a disproportionate effect on the budget that is available (see Appendix N). However, the research showed that most of the schools in the sample were judged by Ofsted inspectors to give good value for money.

There is a strong case for small schools to be organised into clusters or networks so that the headteachers can support each other. There is also the opportunity for the

other members of staff to network with staff members from the cluster of schools. It was seen in section 5.6.7 that a cluster of village schools had linked with a local secondary school for some 'Extended Schools' activities. This enabled the small primary schools to access resources that otherwise would be difficult to provide. The use of Information and Communication Technology would help to increase the effectiveness of the links.

The small sizes of some of the cohorts have been identified as a limitation or challenge for small schools. This may be another argument for schools to link together. This would enable them to work on a project together so that the children and members of staff could widen their networks. It was seen that, in the past, there was funding that a group of small schools could access through the Local Authority. Unfortunately this funding is no longer available but it was a cost effective method of developing the learning of the pupils and the members of staff in the cluster of schools. Two of the schools in the sample have been developing joint pages on their web-based Learning Platforms so that children from both schools can access the pages and add to them. The use of technology such as webcams and Information and Communication Technology could be used to develop the links between schools. If the primary schools were linked to the local secondary school there would be the possibility of sharing equipment. This would also strengthen the links between schools in different phases.

The headteachers in this study felt that it was important to consider the professional development needs of the members of staff but financial considerations and availability of relevant courses often formed a barrier that needed to be overcome.

Another area where it could be an advantage for several small schools to work together is in providing training for staff. In this way it is possible to share the costs of providing the training especially when it involves paying for professional services. As was shown in the research a group of small schools regularly join together to update the training for all of their members of staff in “safeguarding children”. By meeting together in one venue the members of staff from five village schools are able to network with each other and in this way become less parochial in their outlook. This may go some way to solving the problem of becoming too insular in outlook. This is another area that would benefit from linking a group of small primary schools with a larger secondary school.

The research found that there is often no senior management team in small primary schools. This meant that other members of staff could be given the opportunity to develop their leadership skills but it could be said that they were being exploited in order to subsidise the system. Some of the schools had developed a fluid team which included appropriate people on the staff, such as the site agent or office manager, to discuss specific issues. This is a useful model that could be copied by other headteachers of small schools. The model could be extended to include governors with specific areas of expertise.

The headteachers in the sample suggested that it is easy for members of staff to feel isolated as the school can become insular in outlook. One way to overcome these feelings is by members of staff coming together for some aspects of planning the learning and teaching to be covered. It may also be possible for this to occur across a group of schools on some occasions. The planning for themes could be undertaken as

a whole staff team during ‘staff meeting/training’ time while teachers plan for the day to day teaching with their Teaching Assistants where possible and the working pattern permits. In our school the teachers and teaching assistants are able to use times when I am conducting school assemblies to plan together which allows for part-time members of staff who are not present in the afternoons to be included.

The headteachers in the sample were concerned about the workload of the teachers as they had several curriculum areas to co-ordinate. The issue of subject co-ordinators needs to be addressed in a creative way. Each school will address this in their own way but headteachers need to know about various options before they can decide which is best for their particular circumstances. One method used by some of the schools in the sample was to focus on areas of the curriculum together instead of having co-ordinators for each subject area. This could be taken one step further by linking specific subject areas to be considered in the year to the priorities in the School Improvement Plan. Another model that was touched on by the headteachers but not yet developed is to link co-ordinators to areas in the ‘creative curriculum’ (see Appendix M). However, there are six areas of learning in the creative curriculum which means that there may still be more areas to be covered than there are teachers in the school.

As it is somewhat easier to instigate and manage change in a small school it is easier to introduce innovations such as the ‘creative curriculum’. It has been seen that a new model of middle leadership is required which may also be relevant to larger schools as well as to small schools. This leads onto styles of leadership which will be explored further in Chapter 6.

6. Choosing the Route: Styles of Leadership

6.1 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the different styles of leadership that are evident in small primary schools. Figure 6.1 shows the areas that formed the template to be used in this chapter.

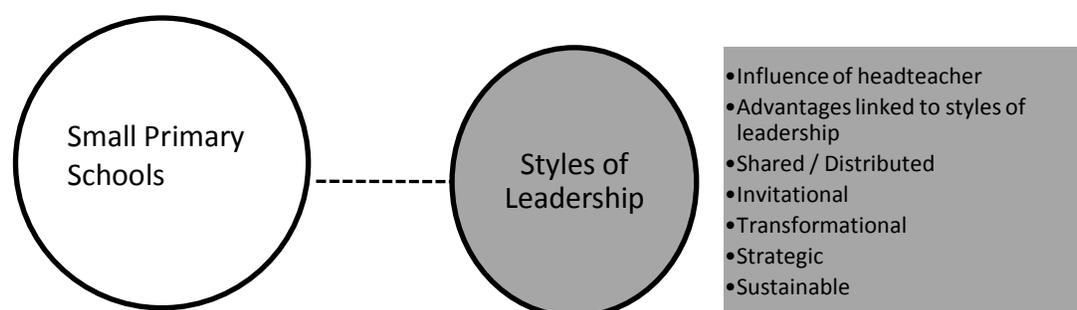


Figure 6.1: Template for analysis of leadership styles

It was seen in chapter 1 that leadership is important to the learning that takes place in a school. Swaffield and MacBeath (2009:32) write:

In schools, learning should be the prime concern of all those who exercise leadership, and learning should both set the agenda and be the agenda for leadership.

This links together the concepts of ‘leadership’ and ‘learning’. There is also an acknowledgment that leadership is undertaken by other members of the school community as well as the headteacher.

The main purpose of a school is to develop the learning of both the pupils and adults in the school. Consequently the influence of the headteacher is important as s/he

needs to promote learning throughout the school and ensure that the teaching is promoting effective learning. This is a point that was identified by Davies (2007:15):

Schools are living systems made up of people who can choose to contribute or not contribute, or choose to be positive to change or negative to change. Which choices they take can be influenced by the strategic leaders in the school.

While the headteacher is able to exert their power and influence through their position (Blase and Anderson, 1995) the other people in the school are able to exert their power through the way that they respond to the headteacher (Layder, 1997). It was acknowledged in Chapter 1 that the headteacher is not the exclusive leader. However, in a small school, the influence of the headteacher on other aspects of leadership cannot be ignored. This was recognised by Gronn (2003b:7):

For many current reformers, the key ingredient in the success of restructured schools is leadership, in particular the leadership of principals.

The first section of this chapter will be considering how the headteacher influences leadership throughout the school. It will also be looking at how this links with some of the advantages of small primary schools. This will lead onto the following sections which are concerned with the different styles of leadership and how these are evident within small schools. These styles of leadership were identified from the literature that is available as shown in Chapter 2 and are ‘shared and distributed leadership’, ‘invitational leadership’ and ‘transformational leadership’. This chapter will then consider ‘strategic leadership’ and ‘sustainable leadership’ which are not leadership styles on their own but encompass other styles of leadership in order to lead the school forward.

6.2 The influence of the headteacher

Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003:1436) identified that the everyday actions of the leader contribute to the leadership of the organisation:

Rarely accounted for in management and leadership studies, or usually neglected as being insignificant in leadership, are the many mundane and everyday activities such as administration, solving practical and technical problems, giving and asking for information, chatting, gossiping, listening and creating a good working atmosphere.

Although this is referring to management and leadership in the business sector, it is an example of how management and leadership in a small primary school has similarities to the business sector. Gunter (2001:97) commented:

The managerial division of labour seems to be a double-edged development. On the one hand it enables the work to be done but, on the other, it has distanced headteachers from teaching and made them managers of the conditions in which teaching takes place, such as the buildings and the budget.

The headteacher in a small school has a dual role of leadership and management which may be combined with a teaching role as identified by Wilson and McPake (2000:121) who write:

It is possible to conceptualize a dual role for headteachers as both leading professional and chief executive.

It was seen in Chapter 5 that the role of the headteacher influenced many areas of leadership within the school. These areas include ‘monitoring’ and ‘improving standards’ which are linked to sustainable leadership as explored in section 6.8; ‘motivating others’ and ‘understanding others’ which are linked to invitational leadership (see section 6.5); and ‘creating the vision’ which is linked to transformational leadership (see section 6.6).

There are implications for the professional development of all members of staff in order to prepare them to take on aspects of leadership. Hammersley-Fletcher and Brundrett (2005:61) write:

If leadership is devolved, shared or distributed rather than being seen to be a capacity exercised by one individual in a hierarchy, then questions about the qualities of effective leadership come to the fore.

At a conference for local headteachers, Desforges (2009) gave a formula for calculating 'capacity for leadership' as "capacity = skill x motivation x opportunity". In order to develop capacity for leadership, teachers must be given the opportunity as well as having both the skill and motivation to be a leader. The nature of the organisation in a small school means that there could be occasions when leadership is devolved to people who may not be effective leaders. The opportunity may be there but the skill and motivation may be lacking. This is considered further in section 6.4.

The influence of the headteacher should not be underestimated. Leithwood et al (2008:28) suggest:

Leadership acts as a catalyst without which other good things are quite unlikely to happen.

The headteacher does not need to do everything her/himself but s/he acts as an enabler for other members of staff. This is where the headteacher will use their power to work 'through' or 'with' others to achieve their aims which are dimensions of power identified by Blase and Anderson (1995). This links to the theories of distributed leadership as well as sustainable leadership and strategic leadership. This was acknowledged by the headteachers in this research. Headteacher I7 said:

... We've just started the creative curriculum and that was mostly because of my enthusiasm for it ...

Arguably, this is not exclusive to small primary schools but it may happen more naturally in small schools because of the closeness of the members of staff working together. This is a concept that will be explored further in this chapter.

Headteacher I6 commented:

I see the school as a system, we have a system with interlocking parts and we all need to work together. I see myself as a pivotal role in the middle.

This idea links closely with figure 1.2 in Chapter 1 which shows a linking structure for leadership that may be seen in small primary schools. However, the description given by this headteacher brings to mind a more complex diagram as there is a linking element that combines with the headteacher being at the centre. This has been represented in figure 6.2

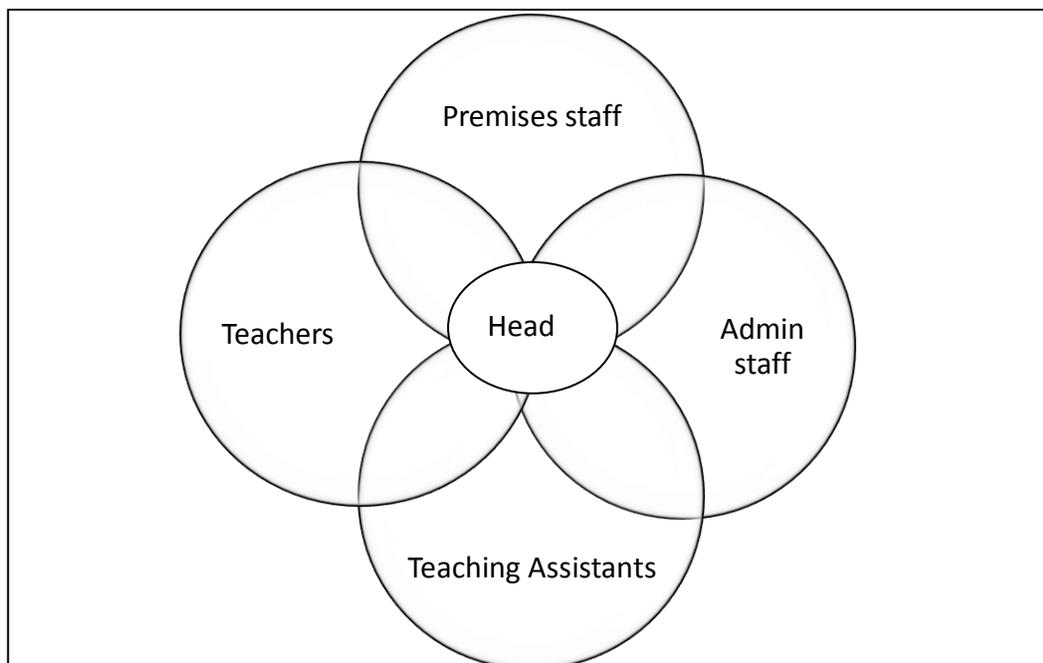


Figure 6.2: Leadership structure in one small primary school

Each of the groups interacts with the others with the headteacher influencing them from the centre. Although they have not been included in this diagram, there are external factors in the form of policies and initiatives from both Central Government and the Local Authority that will influence the headteacher. The headteacher also interacts with the school's governors who influence the leadership of the school. Figure 6.2 will form the central layer in the basic framework of a model of leadership in small primary schools that is developed further in Chapter 7.

6.3 Advantages of small primary schools for leadership

The current research identified that there were perceived advantages of small primary schools. The headteachers gave many advantages of small primary schools. Some of these were shown in Figure 4.5 in Chapter 4 as it was considered that they specifically related to the ethos of the schools. The remaining advantages have been grouped according to the type of issue and loosely linked to the styles of leadership that they epitomise. These are shown in Table 6.1.

Type of Issue	Advantages Identified by Headteachers	Notional Leadership Style
Organisation issues	Flexibility in organisation	Shared, Invitational
	Change can happen quickly	Transformational, Strategic
	Change is easy to implement	
	Easy to monitor and evaluate initiatives	
	Opportunities to teach creative curriculum	
Staff issues	Staff develop skills	Invitational, Sustainable
	Teamwork	Transformational
	Personalised learning	
	Everyone feels valued	
	Everyone has overview of the 'big picture'	
School issues	Communication is good	Shared
	Vision readily shared with staff, governors, parents, community	Transformational
	Whole school events are easy to manage	Invitational
	Opportunities to work with other small schools in cluster groups	Sustainable

Table 6.1: Advantages of small primary schools as perceived by headteachers

It should be acknowledged that this is a simplified assessment of the leadership styles and that there is some crossover between the categories. These issues will be considered briefly in the following sections before each style of leadership is considered in more depth.

6.3.1 Organisation issues

‘Flexibility in organisation’ is seen as an advantage of small schools but it can also be a challenge as the number of part-time members of staff often found in a small school can have the effect of limiting the degree of flexibility. Headteacher I6 used a flexible approach to the organisation of the senior management team:

...if I’m looking at literacy my senior management team would be my literacy co-ordinator, if I’m looking at numeracy it would be my numeracy co-ordinator .. it has to be flexible.

This is an area that would differ from a large primary school where there is an identified senior management team. Using this flexibility in organisation, the headteacher in a small school would choose the people with the most relevant experience at the time which links to both ‘shared leadership’ and ‘invitational leadership’. Headteacher Q6 identified flexibility in class structure as an advantage of a small school. With mixed age classes the children have the opportunity to mix with other age groups and gain experiences, such as taking responsibility, which they might not have in single age groups.

The issue of ‘change’ was identified by Headteacher Q4 who said: “Change can happen very quickly” and Headteacher Q11 who commented: “Positive changes are easy to implement”. Both of the headteachers felt that the size of the school contributed to change being managed in a positive manner. This also links to the ease of monitoring and evaluating initiatives, as identified by Headteacher Q9. One such

initiative was the introduction of the ‘creative curriculum’ as identified by Headteacher Q3 who said that there are “more opportunities for a truly creative curriculum.” All of these issues link to ‘transformational leadership’ and ‘strategic leadership’ which are discussed in sections 6.6 and 6.7.

6.3.2 Staff issues

The members of staff in a small school are able to develop skills that they might not experience in a larger school. This was recognised by Headteacher Q2 who said:

Your team can develop skills quicker than in a larger school.

This could be said to be a necessity in a small school as there are the same amount and variety of tasks but fewer people than in a large school. In a small school the members of staff tend to know each other well and are then able to offer support to each other and so they are able to develop their skills.

The issue of teamwork is important in a small school. As there are fewer members of staff they need to be able to work well together. Headteacher Q9 felt that a small school was conducive to creating “a good team spirit”. Headteacher Q8 commented:

We work superbly well as a team and have achieved success in many areas.

The small size of the team may be a significant factor in working well together. This was identified by Headteacher Q10 who said:

Small teams can be more coherent

These issues link to the areas of invitational leadership and sustainable leadership which are explored in sections 6.5 and 6.8 respectively.

Six of the headteachers identified ‘personalised learning’ as an advantage of small primary schools. In a small school everyone knows each other well and so it was perceived by the headteachers in the sample that it is easier to tailor the learning to the individual needs of the children. This will be explored further in section 6.6.

6.3.3 School issues

The headteachers felt that communication was good in small schools. It is not always the case that it is easier to communicate with everyone because there are fewer people but the size of the school does have a part to play. This also links to being able to share the vision with all of the stakeholders which is one of the elements of transformational leadership (see section 6.6).

Headteacher Q12 said:

Whole school events are easy to manage.

It is easy to include all of the pupils in activities such as school plays which in turn leads to everyone being involved and so it links to ‘invitational leadership’.

Several headteachers identified the opportunity to work together with other schools in cluster groups as an advantage of small schools. Sharing leadership widely, and in this case beyond the school, links to ‘sustainable leadership’ which is considered further in section 6.8. The following sections consider the styles of leadership in more detail.

6.4 Shared and distributed leadership

Shared leadership is emerging as one of the newer forms of leadership within the business sector (Crevani et al., 2007). However, it is a form that has been developing in the education sector for some time and, arguably, it could be referred to as a ‘current trend’ (Hartley, 2007). The National Standards for Headteachers (DfES,

2004b:9) identify a professional quality of headteachers as being to "...distribute leadership and management". It is important that the headteacher feels confident in his/her own ability as well as in the ability of his/her members of staff. In a small primary school the members of staff work closely together and so the headteacher will know the strengths and weaknesses of individuals and is able to share responsibilities of leadership accordingly. Hammersley-Fletcher and Kirkham (2007:428) write:

Shared leadership and working in a collegial way is one that sits happily with some primary teachers who had always, because of the relatively small size of many primary schools, tended to work closely with each other.

However, while it is true that teachers in small primary schools tend to work closely together, it is also possible that leadership may be distributed to people who are not suited to a leadership role. This was the case for Headteacher I7 who did not feel that she had a choice when appointing a senior teacher to replace a teacher with a management post who left. She said:

... the senior teacher that I've got doesn't really want to do it but it just so happens that I can't have anybody else ... the other Key Stage 1 teacher's very young so I couldn't make her in charge and the other two are part-time so at the moment I haven't got a choice.

The headteacher felt that the younger teacher needed to have more experience before she was given a senior post within the school. However, it could be said that by giving her the senior post then she would develop the necessary experience. This is a decision that needs to be made carefully by discussing the options with members of the governing body at the time and will be different for each school so it is actually context-led leadership. The headteacher needs to be certain that sharing leadership

aspects is effective and may need to act in various ways according to the situation.

This is acknowledged by Hammersley-Fletcher and Kirkham (2007:430):

At times, it may be appropriate for the head to act autocratically, at others more democratically or, indeed, in a more distributed manner.

The headteacher will need to take account of the context of the school when deciding on the appropriate way to act at any given time. This is a feature of the new model of leadership as discussed in Chapter 7. The headteacher has a key role to play in deciding when and how to distribute leadership. Headteacher Q8 said:

Leadership is dispersed, delegated, disseminated within the school and is encouraged by myself to all staff and children.

This headteacher has used several terms to indicate that she shares leadership to others within the school. This indicates that people have different interpretations of the terms that are used to describe leadership and so it raises the question as to whether the actual name matters. While the terms ‘shared leadership’ and ‘distributed leadership’ are often used interchangeably, Harris (2005) identified specific attributes that she considered separated ‘distributed leadership’ from ‘shared leadership’ as shown in Fig. 6.3.

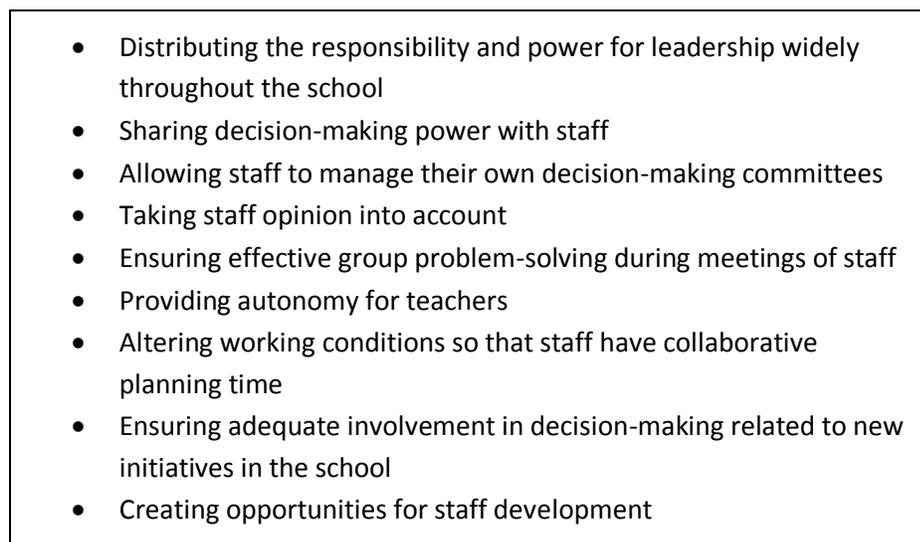
- 
- Distributing the responsibility and power for leadership widely throughout the school
 - Sharing decision-making power with staff
 - Allowing staff to manage their own decision-making committees
 - Taking staff opinion into account
 - Ensuring effective group problem-solving during meetings of staff
 - Providing autonomy for teachers
 - Altering working conditions so that staff have collaborative planning time
 - Ensuring adequate involvement in decision-making related to new initiatives in the school
 - Creating opportunities for staff development

Figure 6.3: Attributes of distributed leadership

Source: Adapted from Harris, 2005:168

There is a certain amount of overlapping between the attributes that are concerned with ‘decision-making’. Some of the attributes may be seen to some extent in the schools in the sample. However, some of them are inappropriate for the context of a small school so that raises the question as to whether it is possible to have distributed leadership in a small school. The answer depends on whether you need to fulfil all of the attributes before the style of leadership can be called ‘distributed’. Arguably it is possible to have a modified form of distributed leadership which suits the context of small schools, particularly as each headteacher will give their own interpretation to the attributes. The following sections will consider the attributes in more detail.

6.4.1 Distributing and sharing leadership

The first focus for distributed leadership in a school is concerned with the manner of distributing and sharing leadership. The first attribute that is likely to be evident in the leadership structure of a small primary school is ‘distributing the responsibility and power for leadership widely throughout the school’. Figure 6.4 identifies how the headteachers in the sample distributed responsibility for leadership throughout the school.

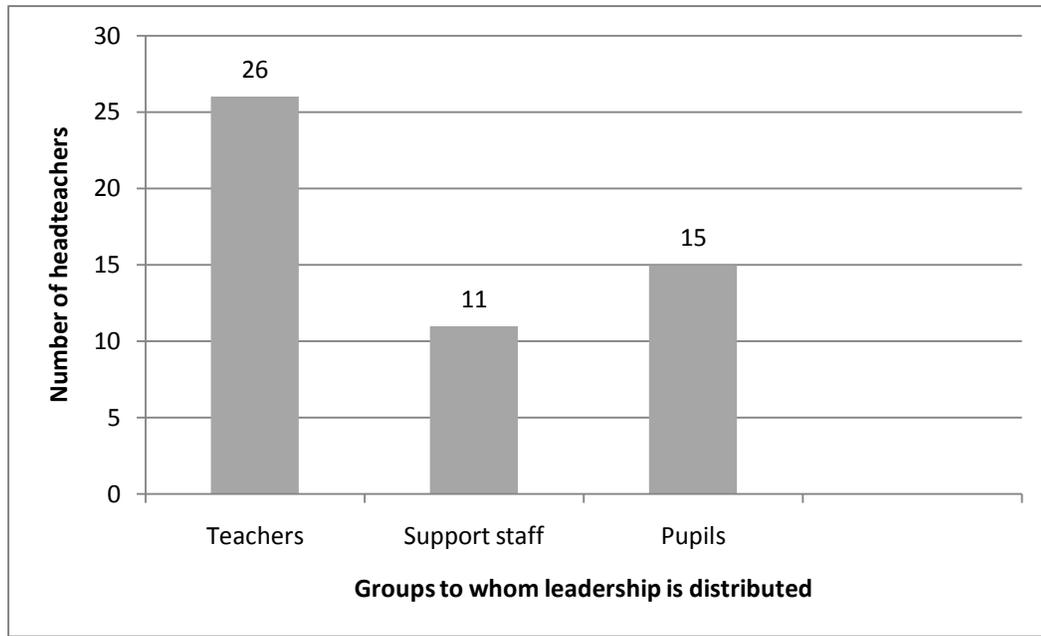


Figure 6.4: Distributed leadership throughout the school

All of the headteachers in the sample distributed responsibility for leadership to their teachers. This was also recognised in several of the Ofsted reports as shown by the following examples:

Teamwork is becoming a strong feature and responsibilities are being distributed effectively amongst staff to raise standards.

Ofsted report on School H

The comment from this Ofsted report indicates that the distribution of responsibilities is a feature of raised standards in the school.

Subject leaders work as a coherent team and responsibilities are both delegated and shared well. Class teachers all carry several subject responsibilities ...

Ofsted report for School L

There is an acknowledgement that while responsibilities are shared with the teachers the result is that each teacher then has several areas of the curriculum to lead. The inference thus is that this impacts on the workload of the teachers.

Leadership is shared throughout the staff and all are strongly committed to the school's success and improvement. Each takes on a range of responsibilities for aspects of the school's work and supports and guides others well.

Ofsted report for School P

It should be noted that the Ofsted reports are not consistent in their use of terms and have used ‘delegated’, ‘shared’ and ‘distributed’ which adds to the general confusion surrounding the use of the terms. Although this ‘distributed leadership’ was not commented on in all of the Ofsted reports it does not mean that it was not present. Nearly half of the headteachers in the sample said that they distributed leadership power to their support staff (TAs and LSAs) as well as teaching staff. Arguably, this is an area that separates large primary schools from small primary schools. In a small school it is a matter of necessity to distribute leadership widely throughout the school. Headteacher I7 distributes some of her responsibility as Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator to a Teaching Assistant:

...I have a SENCO Assistant now, a Teaching Assistant, Higher Level Teaching Assistant who takes on most of the admin but I oversee it ...

Administrative tasks are among the areas that were removed from the workload of teachers and headteachers under the National Agreement (DfES, 2005) and so it could be said that this headteacher is making effective use of a teaching assistant.

Headteacher I2 said:

...all of the LSAs have areas of responsibility within the school as well .. just low key ones like the library. One of the LSAs is responsible for developing SEAL, another one for Springboard [an intervention programme for mathematics] and another one for all the literacy side of things and our General Assistant in school has just taken responsibility for leading the School Council. She wanted to develop her skills in different ways.

This headteacher was able to use the expertise and enthusiasm of the teaching assistants to develop the organisation of the school. This was also the situation for

Headteacher Q6:

LSAs have been allocated different leadership areas, areas of responsibility eg. nurture group, school library.

Headteacher Q5 distributes responsibility for keeping the school website up to date to the office staff while Headteacher Q1 distributes responsibility for induction of new members of staff and staff well-being to the office manager. Headteacher Q10 also distributes leadership to both teaching and non-teaching members of staff. She said:

Teaching and support staff are given freedom and encouraged to take on initiatives and see them through.

Other examples that were given included a teacher taking responsibility for the school achieving Healthy Schools Status and a teaching assistant organising a daily 'walking bus' to encourage the children to walk to school. The nature of a small school enables these responsibilities to be spread to a wider group of staff members than would occur in a large school thus making use of expertise and interest while giving members of staff opportunities to extend their experiences. This is an example of the headteacher using the dimension of power as working through others (Blase and Anderson, 1995).

It could be said that distributing leadership to the non-teaching members of staff is enabling them to develop their skills whereas the equivalent members of staff in a larger school may not have the same opportunities as the teaching members of staff may be seeking to develop these roles. However, there is an ethical dimension to distributing leadership to Teaching Assistants and Learning Support Assistants which would need to be covered through the job descriptions for these members of staff. This also raises the question of exploitation of members of staff and relying on their goodwill.

The headteachers were asked about the ways that leadership could be seen within their schools. While the main focus of the research is dealing with the leadership of the adults in school, it is interesting to note that more headteachers said that they distributed leadership to their pupils than to their support staff. Fifteen of the headteachers in the sample said that they had school councils where the pupils were involved in leadership activities. This is an area where the headteachers allowed pupils to have a measure of power which loosely links to the referent power base where power may be wielded by a group of people (French and Raven, (1959) but is more closely linked to the ‘power with’ dimension (Blase and Anderson, 1995) where the pupils work with the headteacher to make decisions. Headteacher I10 said:

...they [*the school council members*] have lots of input into the sorts of things they want to do and what they like.

It is questionable as to whether this headteacher is allowing the pupils to have a leadership role as the inference is that while the members of the school council are given opportunities to give their opinions they do not actually make the decisions. Headteacher I6 involved the pupils in developing leadership skills through the school council as well as using the older pupils:

We use the school council and I use Year 4 a lot because I teach in Year 4 on Fridays so I ask for their ideas and we take them forward because I trust them.

The headteacher identified ‘trust’ as an important attribute when involving the pupils. An element of ‘trust’ is required when using the ‘power through’ and ‘power with’ dimensions (Blase and Anderson, 1995; Bottery, 2004) and it is also a feature of invitational leadership where the headteacher invites others to lead. Headteacher Q7 identified that leadership was distributed widely throughout the school, including to the pupils:

As we have only three classes the teachers are in fact not only subject leaders but leaders of key stages. The support staff all have key areas that they lead. The children themselves have leadership roles i.e. house captains, vice captains, play leaders, school council.

It could be said that the headteachers are distributing 'responsibility' rather than 'leadership' to the pupils in most cases. However, sharing responsibility could lead to sharing leadership as the pupils develop their skills in this area. Several of the headteachers said that they had school councils but they needed to develop that area further. There may be a case for schools to join together to provide training for their school council members as a cluster group. This would enable leadership to be distributed widely to members of the school community.

A feature of distributed leadership is that the headteacher involves other members of staff in making decisions. Hammersley-Fletcher and Kirkham (2007:432) suggest that:

Involving teachers in decision-making is likely to mean that they make more informed decisions and are more confident about their status and value to the school as a whole.

This was evident as the headteachers in the sample shared decision-making with their members of staff to some extent. This was recognised in the Ofsted report for one of the schools:

Staff feel valued and are being trained to play a full part in decision-making. Subject leadership has improved

Ofsted Report for School I

It could be said that it is the headteacher who uses their positional power and influence to enable members of their staff to feel valued and indeed this is connected

to the headteacher's own values. Lukes (2005:30) identified a link between power and values:

Indeed, I maintain that power is one of those concepts which is ineradicably value-dependent.

Headteacher I7 has developed a system for involving members of staff in decisions affecting school policies:

We always review policies together in a staff meeting ... but we've found that's very time-consuming so what we tend to do is we distribute the policies first so everyone can have a read and add various bits and then we come together formally as a staff and say right I want to change this and I want to change that ...

Arguably, if the members of staff have been involved in formulating the policies they are more likely to follow them in their practice. Headteacher I9 was a new headteacher and she acknowledged that she was also developing this area with the members of staff:

I started off in September by all the staff being there including the TAs and sort of going through the diary with my expectations for the term which they'd never been used to before, and the fact that they had an opinion, to say when would you like it ... when we do this ...

This headteacher was using her legitimate and expert power bases (French and Raven, 1959) in order to influence the change to a more inclusive style of leadership which could lead to distributed leadership. Headteacher I6 encourages members of staff to take an active part in decision-making:

I'd like to think that I don't only just come up with the ideas. I enthuse the staff and listen to their ideas. I encourage them. I don't like to dictate, I like to say "what ideas have you got?" or "we've got this coming up, let's have some staff ideas, let's put some ideas together" and we use each other.

It could be said that this headteacher has the ultimate power which she can use when necessary but that she prefers to encourage other members of staff to have some

input in decisions. Headteacher I3 voiced the opinion that it is easier to involve the members of staff in a small school and that she involved the staff through staff meetings and discussions. She said:

I feel it's the best way to do it and it's easy to do it in a small school. I know it's harder when you've got a bigger number of staff. I know it used to be quite difficult at [*a previous school that was larger*] because you'd have too many people having an input and when that input is negative it can pull people down whereas we try to be positive always.

Arguably, it is not the size of the staff that is important here but the quality of the input which depends on the personalities of the staff members. This is where the headteacher's use of power as a capacity is important in influencing the direction of any discussions (Lukes, 2005). While Headteacher I3 felt that involving other members of staff could be seen as an advantage of small schools Headteacher I2 felt that it could be a limiting factor of small schools:

Well, you don't get a balance; you don't always get a spread of opinion do you, like in a big school. But that's not always a bad thing because it means that we're all moving in the same direction ...

Arguably, getting 'a spread of opinion' is important when reaching a decision. One solution to having a breadth of opinion is for schools to work together in clusters for certain areas such as subject co-ordinators working on joint policies which can then be taken back to the individual schools and tailored to each specific school.

One problem that was encountered was getting all of the members of staff together at the same time as most of the schools had members of staff who were part-time. Figure 6.5 shows the number of schools in the sample with part-time members of staff.

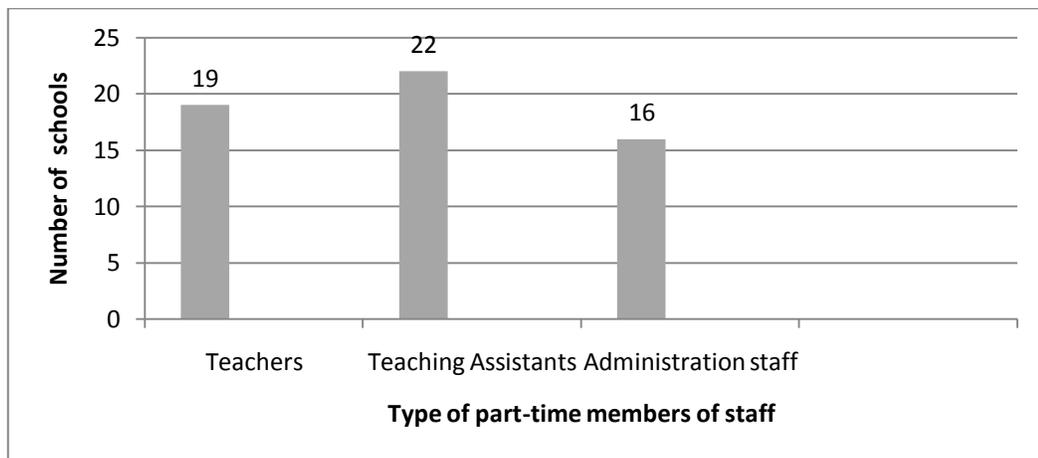


Figure 6.5: Part-time members of staff in the sample schools

Only seven of the schools did not have any teachers on part-time contracts and four of the schools in the sample did not have part-time Teaching Assistants. One of the schools had eight teachers but five of them worked part-time. While Headteacher I9 wanted to involve all of the members of staff in decision-making, she acknowledged the difficulty of getting everyone together at the same time:

...it can be quite difficult to get everybody there at the same times so we do have a notice board in the staffroom where we put dates up for the weeks but then the TAs can't be there because they're on playground duty ... quite often one of the TAs is only in for 2 hours in the morning and then the hour at lunchtime and then she's off so it's hard for me to liaise with her ...

Using a notice board in the staffroom is one method of keeping all members of staff informed about activities but does not necessarily involve them in the decision-making process so it is a one-way form of communication. This would point to needing to be creative about methods of involving non-teaching members of staff in decision-making.

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Teaching Assistants are contracted to attend In-Service Training days on a pro-rata basis according to their part-time contracted hours. We use that time for discussing policy decisions so that everybody can be involved in some of the decision-making.

It can be seen that this element of distributed leadership is likely to be present in a small school but that it does present some challenges that need to be overcome. There is not a single solution that would suit all schools but it should be possible for schools to share practices in network or cluster meetings.

6.4.2 Using staff opinion

The second focus for distributed leadership is concerned with the area of using the opinions of the members of staff. One of the attributes of distributed leadership that was identified by Harris (2005) was to ensure that there was adequate involvement in decision-making that was related to introducing new initiatives into the school. It is difficult to know how much involvement is considered to be 'adequate involvement'. Headteacher I4 said that being in a small school helped to ensure that discussions involved the whole staff. She said:

We discuss things as a whole school; make decisions as a whole school.

However, it is questionable if all of the decisions are made together as a whole school. Overbeck (2010:30) comments:

Groups naturally require organization and coordination. Direction is needed to ensure that the group meets its goals and does not waste resources or opportunities; such needs give rise to the emergence of power.

The headteacher is able to use his/her power to set the direction with the group of staff members and so use the 'power through' and 'power with' dimensions of power (Blase and Anderson, 1995) but it is the headteacher who is ultimately accountable to the members of the governing body, the Local Authority and Central Government. As already identified, it can be a challenge to get everybody together which was acknowledged by Headteacher I9:

...everybody should be involved I think, so it would be nicer to have some more TAs feeding in as well but that's quite difficult to get them... with their hours and their outside commitments at home. They've got family commitments and so they have to go.

It would appear that in a small school many decisions relating to new initiatives are made in staff meetings and consequently this ensures 'adequate involvement in decision-making'.

Linked to allowing members of staff to be involved in making decisions is the act of taking into account the opinions of the members of staff. Headteacher I2 said that her members of staff are involved in formulating school policy:

They are involved and it's done through staff meeting times and through negotiation and discussions...

Headteacher I5 said:

...we discuss things and I rarely make a decision just on my own

There is the underlying assumption that the headteacher usually involves other members of staff in decision-making but she will make a decision if she needs to. This is where this section differs from the section about involving members of staff in decision-making. The headteacher can listen to the opinions of the other members of staff but ultimately s/he has to make the final decision. This is where the other

members of staff have limited power as the headteacher has the positional power.

Bush (2003:98) comments:

A major source of power in any organization is that accruing to individuals who hold an *official position* in the institution. Formal positions confer authority on their holders, who have a recognized right to make decisions or to play a key role in the policy-making process.

6.4.3 Leadership and Management

The leadership and management aspects of distributed leadership need to be considered in relation to small primary schools. One aspect is concerned with how the headteacher creates opportunities for staff development. Headteacher Q16 saw part of her role of leadership as

... to give others the opportunity to lead ...

In a small school the members of staff are all part of a close team and so this helps them to have opportunities to develop their leadership skills if they wish. This was the situation in one of the schools:

The senior teacher leads maths and is actually developing new initiatives and methods to improve all teaching across the school.

Headteacher Q1

Headteacher Q1 also said that members of her staff lead in-service training within the staff team. It is possible that less experienced members of staff may have the confidence to lead training in a small school whereas they may not feel so confident in a larger school with more people. This attribute is linked to 'invitational leadership' and is explored further in the section 'inviting others professionally',

When considering the leadership and management nature of distributed leadership we need to take note of the nature of Ofsted and the inspection process. It is the headteacher who bears the brunt of the inspection process and is judged in the

‘Leadership and Management’ section of the report along with the governors. Figure 6.6 shows the grade that was given for ‘Leadership and Management’ in the Ofsted Reports for the schools in the sample.

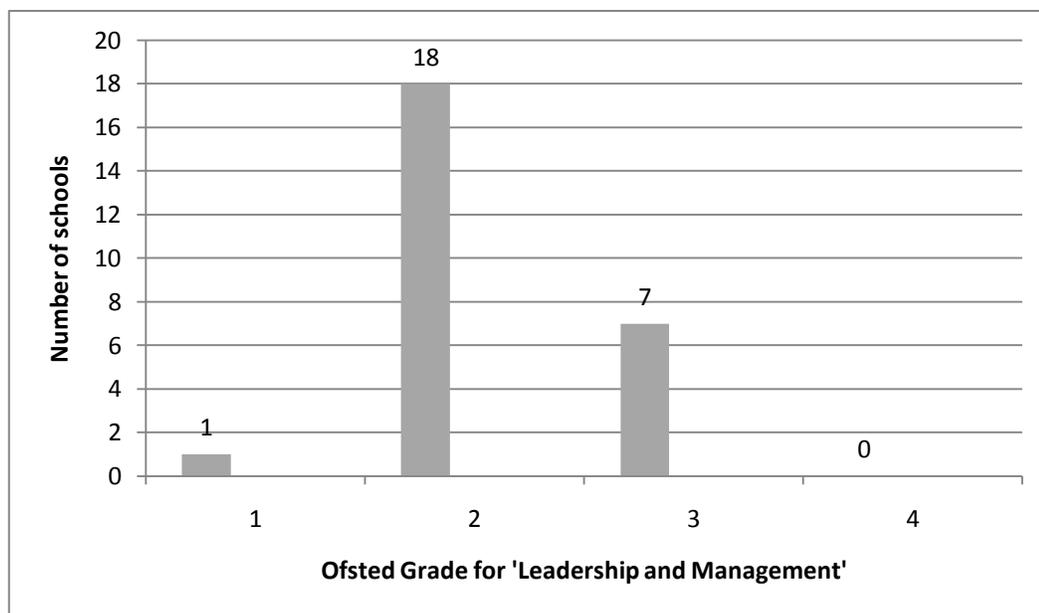


Figure 6.6: Ofsted grades for ‘Leadership and Management’ for sample schools

The grades are interpreted as follows:

1 is Outstanding; 2 is Good; 3 is Satisfactory; 4 is Unsatisfactory

It can be seen that none of the schools in the sample was judged to be unsatisfactory for ‘Leadership and Management’ while the majority of the schools were judged to be good with one judged as outstanding. This would indicate that the styles of leadership in the schools are effective and appropriate for small schools. Headteacher Q2 is developing the level of distributed leadership within the school:

The SENCO and Literacy subject leader are becoming more confident in their roles and leadership skills are being developed. In a year I should be able to have a model of distributive leadership.

It can be assumed from this comment that the headteacher recognises that distributed leadership does not just happen but needs to be developed.

6.4.4 Staff autonomy

It is difficult for headteachers to exercise true autonomy as they have to work within the constraints placed on them by Central Government and the Local Authority. It could be said that autonomy, particularly in primary schools, was reduced through the ERA with the advent of the National Curriculum and further reduced through the introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies and the primary strategy (Calveley, 2005). Arguably, it is somewhat difficult to provide complete autonomy for teachers as there could be a situation where every teacher is 'doing their own thing'. Taking an etymological level, according to an online educational dictionary the definition of 'autonomy' is as follows:

It [autonomy] can refer to one of the fundamental aims of human education but more often it refers to the extent to which a teacher, or equivalent, is able to exercise their own professional judgement, free of central direction or prescription
(<http://dictionaryofeducation.co.uk/default.aspx>)

Where there is an ethos of involving teachers in decision-making there is likely to be an ethos where teachers are comfortable about making suggestions regarding policies and practices within the school. In this way they may be exercising a degree of freedom of action or autonomy. Headteacher I10 said of her members of staff:

They're just totally involved really with everything we do and I think that's another sign of a smaller school... everybody knows everything...

However, 'being involved' and 'exercising autonomy' are not the same thing; although if the members of staff are fully involved then they may be beginning to show signs of autonomy. Headteacher I2 felt that the experience of the staff had a part to play in developing autonomy:

Well all of our teachers are incredibly experienced teachers, they're upper pay scale teachers so they have that experience to be quite autonomous whereas if we had a school of NQTs the structure of the school might have to change because they wouldn't have the experience to work in the way that we work here.

It would seem that this attribute of distributed leadership is dependant on the experience of the members of staff which calls into question whether it is possible to have true autonomy in a school. However, the headteacher has a part to play in helping staff to develop autonomy which is a characteristic of 'invitational leadership' (see section 6.5).

It could be said that allowing staff to manage their own decision-making committees is a method of ensuring staff autonomy. There was insufficient evidence in this research to suggest that there were decision-making committees in the schools in the sample. It would appear that there were not enough members of staff to form separate committees in small schools. The next section will consider how groups of members of staff were utilised in the schools in the sample.

6.4.5 Using groups of staff members

The first element of distributed leadership that has been identified as using groups of people is ensuring that there are opportunities for effective group problem-solving during meetings of staff. It could be said that this element of distributed leadership is happening as the headteachers used staff meetings for decision-making. Headteacher I6 had subject co-ordinators for literacy and numeracy but not for other areas of the curriculum. The members of staff worked on the subject areas together:

So we all work together so if we're looking at a subject area we'll look at the planning together and we'll look at resources together and we do it as a shared thing. That's the only way you can do it in a small school.

Headteacher Q1 identified that members of staff supported each other and shared teaching methods with each other so it could be said that this was one way of using group problem-solving.

Headteacher Q8 said:

We work superbly well as a team and have achieved success in many areas.

This implies that there are opportunities for problem-solving as a group as opposed to individuals working on their own.

The second element of distributed leadership in this section is concerned with altering the working conditions so that members of staff are able to have collaborative planning time. It was seen in Chapter 5 that members of staff can become insular in their outlook as there is not more than one class in a year group. Altering the working conditions so that staff can plan collaboratively has implications for the staffing structure as teachers will need to be released from their classes at the same time. It is not necessarily appropriate for teachers in a small school to plan together. Some of the headteachers have managed to arrange planning time for teachers in the same Key Stage. Headteacher I6 doubled up classes for planning time so that the teachers in Year 1 and Year 2 could plan together and likewise the teachers in Year 3 and Year 4. However, Headteacher I7 acknowledged that it was difficult for teachers to plan together but she did ensure that the teachers had time to plan with their teaching assistants:

It's difficult in a small school. They tend to do their planning on their own... and I give them time to plan for the following week with their Teaching Assistant in PPA time so the short term plans are done jointly with their teaching Assistant ...

This is not always possible due to the working pattern of the part-time members of staff.

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For instance, in our school the classes have a Teaching Assistant in the mornings but the teachers each have an afternoon for their planning so the Teaching Assistants would need to have their contracts altered which would have implications for the school budget. The teachers and the teaching assistants are given the Assembly times when they can discuss class issues or planning.

6.4.6 Types of distributed leadership

MacBeath et al (2004:22) recognised six categories of distributed leadership – formal, pragmatic, strategic, incremental, opportunistic and cultural. It would appear that some of these categories are suited to a small school's leadership structure while others are more suited to a larger school model.

It can be difficult to use formal distribution within the context of a small school. It was seen in Chapter 5 that only one of the schools in the sample had a Deputy Headteacher with one school having an Assistant Headteacher and seventeen schools having a senior teacher (see Figure 5.3). However, several of the schools also had Newly-Qualified teachers who cannot take on a subject co-ordinator role during their first year of teaching. These factors make formal distribution through designated roles difficult as recognised in the Ofsted report for one of the schools:

However, only the headteacher and one other teacher can take on subject leadership roles this year

Ofsted report for School C

This is where the schools need to find other ways of sharing the subject leadership roles. It might be considered that pragmatic distribution is more evident in a small

school rather than strategic distribution. However, due to the size of the staff, it may not be possible to devolve leadership roles for the reason of expertise but rather through necessity. It could be said that there are fewer opportunities for appointing members of staff to leadership positions in a small school as it was seen in Chapter 5 that most of the schools did not have senior management teams.

Incremental distributed leadership is linked to opportunistic distribution. However, with incremental distribution the headteacher makes a conscious decision to devolve responsibility to others. Headteacher I5 said that she aimed to make everyone a leader and she was asked if that was through the curriculum areas. She replied:

Well that's how it starts I think, get some expertise and then they get the confidence to do it and then gradually they do more, take on more...

This form of distributed leadership is also linked to invitational leadership which is explored in section 6.5. The opportunity to lead is present in a small school but the headteacher is dependant on the members of staff that are employed at the school. There is a danger that there may not be enough teachers who are willing to take on leadership roles when there is no financial gain. However, teachers in small schools are able to have opportunities that they would not have in a larger school as noted by Headteacher I10 when she talked about her senior teacher who had recently completed the NPQH training:

...she was the strongest candidate out of the group she was with ... I think that's really good and that's because of the experience she's had in a small school where she's had to do everything. She said some of the people there were deputy heads but they hadn't had half as much experience as her.

This is an argument for teachers from small schools developing the necessary skills to take on leadership posts such as headship in other schools. This links to a view of Hannagan (2002:63):

...a horizontal career is a good thing and prepares people well for the few senior management posts which do exist.

The opportunity is present in small schools for teachers who wish to develop their leadership skills and prepares them for the situation where there may not be as many middle leadership posts. They are then able to move directly into senior leadership posts when they become available.

Arguably, small schools should be working towards a system of cultural distribution.

Lewis and Murphy (2008:139) write:

A positive learning environment and a culture of trust is not built or sustained by one person alone and the detailed attention to teaching practice will (in most schools) only be achieved by a leadership team.

It has been seen in the previous chapter that most small primary schools in the sample do not have a senior leadership team so, in effect, the whole staff becomes “the leadership team”. This was recognised in the Ofsted report for one of the schools:

Staff work well together as a team which has helped maintain a warm and caring ethos, which is appreciated by parents.

Ofsted report for School T

This is an argument for distributed leadership permeating throughout the school and so occurring naturally in a small school whereas it has to be worked at in a larger school. The styles of leadership of the headteachers in the sample have shown many characteristics of distributed leadership but they have also displayed characteristics of other styles of leadership as shown in the following sections.

6.5 Invitational Leadership

Invitational leadership is concerned with the interactions between people. Fink (2005:66) writes:

Invitational leaders share leadership, delegate effectively, and hold people accountable for their actions.

It could be said that teachers should be asked to co-ordinate or lead subjects that make use of their subject knowledge and their personal interests. However, in a small primary school there may be as few as two teachers in addition to the headteacher so it has been a necessity for teachers to lead several areas of the curriculum which means that they will exhibit various levels of expertise in those subjects. This would seem to make it difficult to have invitational leadership present in a small school. However, Wilson and McPake (2000:129) were of the opinion that the organisation in a small school lends itself to an invitational style of leadership:

By working from within a small team, skilful headteachers in small schools ensure the active involvement of all and a greater degree of commitment to planned changes—a style which shares some of the characteristics of the ‘invitational management’ style...

Figure 6.7 shows the number of teachers that were in the sample schools.

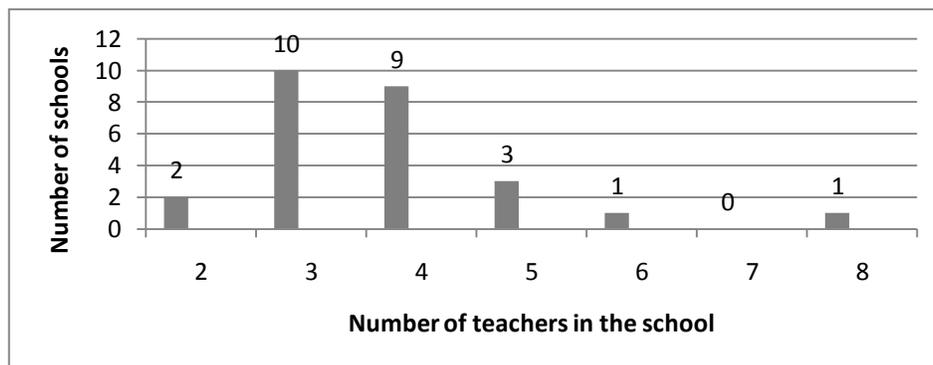


Figure 6.7: The number of teachers in the sample schools

It can be seen that most of the schools in the sample had either three or four teachers so they were relatively small teams. It might appear that this means that it is difficult

for the headteacher to invite others to share the leadership. It could be considered that while this may be true in some cases, the opposite can be evident in small primary schools. Indeed it may be a necessity to invite others to share leadership in a small primary school rather than in a larger school. Where there are fewer members of staff it is likely that they will meet regularly and make decisions together rather than a few people, such as a senior management team, making decisions that are then imposed on the whole staff.

There are four types of invitations that are given by invitational leaders, as shown in Figure 2.3, which involve the headteacher in inviting him/herself personally and professionally in addition to inviting others personally and professionally. These four invitations are explored further in the next sections.

6.5.1 Invite themselves personally

In order to invite him/herself in a personal manner, the headteacher needs to consider his/her ethical standards as well as being a reflective thinker. This also links to having a sense of purpose and a vision for leading the school. Fink (2005:68) writes:

School leaders must balance the necessity of preserving core purposes and values with the equally compelling obligation to engage all the key stakeholders to adapt to new contextual circumstances.

Headteacher I10 echoed the importance of having a vision for developing the school when she said:

You're the leader aren't you as in with the governors and staff and you are moving the school forward and you've got your vision and 'this is what I'm going to do' and 'this is how we're going to get there'. I do think it's really important that you do know where you're going and you've got a vision of where you want to go and what you want to do.

This is where the headteacher is using their legitimate power base (French and Raven, 1959). Bush (2003:101) comments on educational leaders:

Using their significant resources of power, they are often able to ensure support for, or compliance with, their preferred position.

Observations in the Ofsted reports also focused on the importance of the headteacher's vision as shown in the example below:

A strength of the school is that everybody is pulling in the same direction. This is because staff and governors share the headteacher's vision, who leads by example.

Ofsted Report for School W

Arguably, the headteacher needs to use their position of power in order to ensure that there is a shared vision for the development of the school. There is an emotional aspect to the leader inviting him/herself personally. Novak (2005: 50) writes:

A particular area of concern is paying attention to one's self-talk, what one says to oneself about oneself.

This is where a support group can be important. Several of the headteachers spoke of the value they placed on belonging to a support group with other headteachers of small schools. Headteacher I3 said:

I've found it useful even if it's only talking to people who have experience of small schools. There are actually more small schools than I realised, that are either this size or slightly bigger, so that is useful.

This headteacher had found that there were a number of small primary schools and so they were able to share their experiences.

Personal Reflection 29

I meet regularly with a group of headteachers of small rural primary schools. We discuss current educational issues but also support each other on an emotional level. We know that we can speak to another headteacher of a small school if we are concerned about an issue in school.

The second element of invitational leadership is also concerned with the headteacher inviting him/herself but on a professional level. This is considered in the next section.

6.5.2 Invite themselves professionally

This element of invitational leadership links to the way in which the headteachers keep up to date with educational initiatives. Novak (2005:51) writes:

An educator who is not moving forward runs the risk of being run over by events, in addition to becoming professionally obsolete.

This element of invitational leadership also links to belonging to networks with other headteachers. This is particularly important for headteachers of small schools as they strive to balance their leadership and management roles with a teaching commitment as seen in Chapter 4. It was also seen in Chapter 4 that the training opportunities for new headteachers were not always appropriate for headteachers of small schools and a criticism of the training for the National Professional Qualification for Headship was that it did not involve any size-specific training. To enable headteachers of small schools to invite themselves professionally there needs to be size-specific training as well as generic training.

Headteacher I4 said:

I still think the Local Authority has got a long way to go in understanding the constraints of small schools. For example, just simply with training and needing to go on all these primary strategy trainings.

The problem that the headteacher was identifying was that she was unable to attend all of the update meetings as it meant being out of school on too many occasions which had an impact on the rest of the school. In a larger school this would be shared with other members of the senior management team such as the deputy headteacher.

Personal Reflection 30

Recently I attended a seminar for writing the new self-evaluation form for Ofsted. Two other headteachers in our group of small primary schools were unable to attend the training so I was able to disseminate the training to them and ensure that they had all of the relevant information. This shows the importance of belonging to a cluster group.

These first two elements of invitational leadership have been concerned with the headteacher inviting him/herself. The remaining two elements are concerned with the headteacher inviting others in both a personal and a professional manner.

6.5.3 Invite others personally

In order to invite others personally, the headteacher needs to consider the emotional characteristics of others. Fink (2005:60) writes:

The essence of the educational enterprise is its essential humanity. We are not in the business of making cars or selling bonds or constructing buildings. Our jobs are to promote pupil learning and we do that by inviting others personally to see themselves as able, worthwhile and valuable.

This view is supported by Headteacher Q1 who said:

All staff are valued for strengths and I encourage them to support each other.

While there is an element of inviting the members of staff to support each other there is also an element of 'coercive power' which is used to manipulate the actions of others (French and Raven, 1959). Fink (2005) also identified a set of values that characterised this aspect of invitational leadership. These were trust, respect, optimism and intentionality. The Ofsted report for one of the schools recognised the presence of optimism amongst the members of staff:

Subject coordinators are given the licence to take a lead. This has raised morale and helped created [sic] a sense of optimism.

Ofsted Report for School D

Novak (2005:50) writes about inviting others personally:

Putting this into effect means practising common courtesy, keeping informed about what is happening in people's lives and letting people know that you appreciate particular things they have done.

The headteachers in the sample identified that two strengths of small schools were that everyone knew each other well and that there was a family atmosphere.

Headteacher Q14 said:

I often ask how staff are, is there anything I can do etc. I hope my staff see me as a friend as well as a leader.

This headteacher is demonstrating the 'working with' dimension of power (Blase and Anderson, 1995). Headteacher Q13 also emphasised this aspect of leadership when she was asked about her role of leadership within the school:

It's not just 'Every Child Matters' but 'Every Person Matters'. 'Emotional Intelligence' and 'well-being' are key to our operational function.

While this aspect is not exclusive to small schools, arguably it is easier to know each member of staff well when there are fewer people in the school. This would ensure that headteachers are able to invite others on a personal level.

6.5.4 Invite others professionally

After considering invitational leadership on a personal level the headteacher needs to consider the professional level. In inviting others in a professional manner the headteacher builds a team of members of staff who work together to develop their expertise in meeting the needs of the school. This was recognised in some of the Ofsted reports for schools in the sample as shown in the following examples:

Staff work well together as a team which has helped maintain a warm and caring ethos...

Ofsted Report for School T

Senior leaders work very well together...

Ofsted Report for School U

The headteacher has demonstrated a good grasp of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. She has quickly encouraged the staff to support a number of important innovations

Ofsted Report for School X

Headteacher Q7 experienced this form of invitational leadership when she was a teacher in a small school:

I graduated in 1998 as a mature student and spent my first 7 years of teaching working in a small school. This enabled me to gain experiences and insight into the leadership and management of schools which I feel I would not have got in a larger school.

The headteacher was then able to use her experiences of leadership and management when she was appointed as a headteacher of a small school.

Fink (2005:61) writes:

People must be able not only to trust the leadership, they must be able to trust the policies, practices, and routines that are established.

The question then needs to be asked as to how people can place their trust in policies, practices and routines. The answer lies in involving the members of staff in establishing them which also links to the elements of distributed leadership that involved staff in decision-making. Headteacher I3 said:

...the senior management team meets occasionally when the need arises whereas we do tend to do things as a whole staff and certainly I will ask what the whole staff feel about issues, policies or the curriculum ...

This headteacher is helping to develop the aspect of trust in policies, practices and routines by using the dimension of 'power with' other members of staff (Blase and

Anderson, 1995) as she uses their opinions. It should be recognised that the final decision still rests with the headteacher. Headteacher I5 said:

Well I think I aim to make everyone else a leader so I can oversee things, make sure things happen, encourage people to lead and do their best and not rely on me...

It could be thought that this headteacher is using the 'power through' dimension of power (Blase and Anderson, 1995) but she does still retain the ultimate power of her position as she oversees practices and ensures that they happen, presumably in the manner that she wishes. The headteacher of a small school is able to invite others professionally by ensuring that the members of staff work together as a team. This was recognised in the Ofsted reports for some of the schools as inspectors commented on the staff working together:

There is a sense of teamwork in the school. Staff, parents and governors are committed to school improvement

Ofsted Report for School F

The good leadership of the school is open and inclusive in its approach, and is well prepared to listen to a range of views and opinions both from within and outside the school. All staff are given responsibilities and encouraged to develop their ideas. The good teamwork fostered by this style of leadership is clearly one of the keys to the school's success

Ofsted Report for School K

Although the leadership styles of the headteachers in the sample have shown elements of invitational leadership they are not exclusive to this style of leadership. The following section will examine aspects of leadership which characterise transformational leadership.

6.6 Transformational Leadership

Leithwood (1999) identified several elements of leadership that are characteristic of ‘transformational leadership’ (see Figure 2.4). These elements have been categorised according to their main focus as shown in Figure 6.8.

Element of transformational leadership	Focus
Building school vision and goals	Developing the organisation
Developing structures to foster participation in school decisions	
Demonstrating high performance expectations	Modelling leadership behaviour
Symbolizing professional practices and values	
Offering individualized support	Developing people
Providing intellectual stimulation	

Figure 6.8: Elements of transformational leadership

Source: Adapted from Leithwood, 1999:114

Each focus in Figure 6.8 will be expanded in the following sections.

6.6.1 Developing the organisation

The first focus is concerned with how the organisation is developed. This particular focus of transformational leadership consists of two elements. The first area is concerned with building the school vision and goals. It is important that the members of staff create the vision for the school together (Hammersley-Fletcher and Kirkham, 2007). However, the headteacher needs to feel comfortable with the vision and will have a leading part to play in creating the vision. Hammersley-Fletcher and Kirkham (2007:431) recognise the headteachers’ influence in creating the vision when they write:

It is also unlikely that any headteacher would be happy to run a school where the teachers helped set a vision and development plan that was completely out of line with the headteacher's personal ethos and beliefs.

Headteacher I2 involved all of the members of staff when they developed their vision for the school. She said:

... we had our vision and values day where we all sat and talked about and brainstormed where we're taking the school over the next five years and we then had a second day where we followed that up and started looking at the nitty gritty of things.

Personal Reflection 31

We had a similar situation where all of the members of staff, both teaching and non-teaching, met with the governors and spent a day deciding on our vision and values. We were able to discuss various ideas which I put together into a vision and values statement which could then be shared with all of the stakeholders and amended so that we had a statement to which everyone had ownership.

In a small school it could be more likely that the members of staff will share similar ideas about the vision as they work closely together and a member of staff with vastly contrasting opinions is likely to change to another school. Figure 6.9 shows who was involved in creating the vision in the schools in the sample.

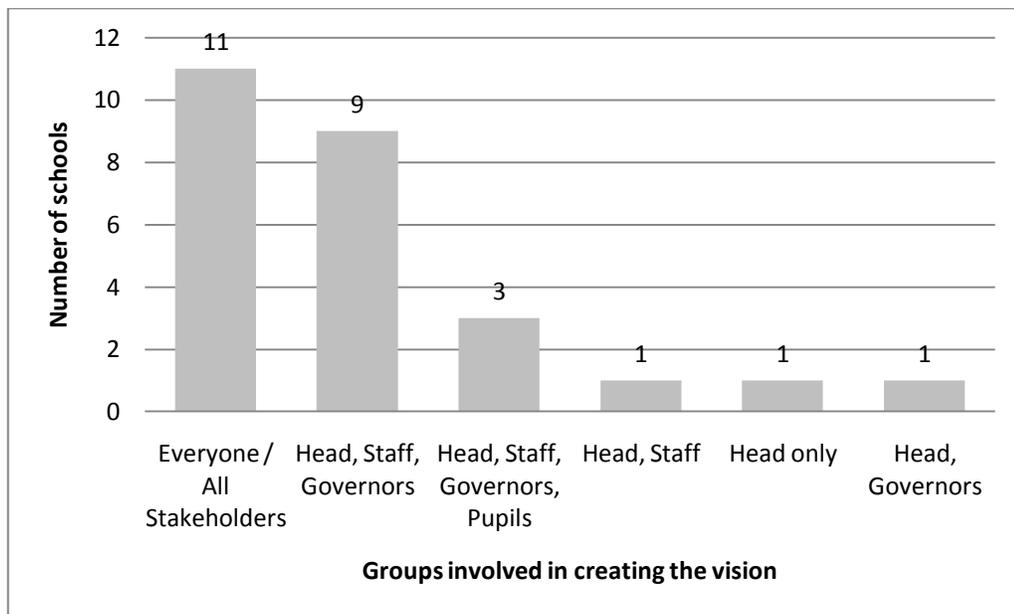


Figure 6.9: Creating the vision

Only one of the headteachers did not involve other members of the school community in creating the vision. It can be seen that the majority of the headteachers involved the members of staff and the governors, and over half of the schools also involved the pupils to some extent.

The headteachers shared the vision with other stakeholders in a variety of ways as shown in Figure 6.10.

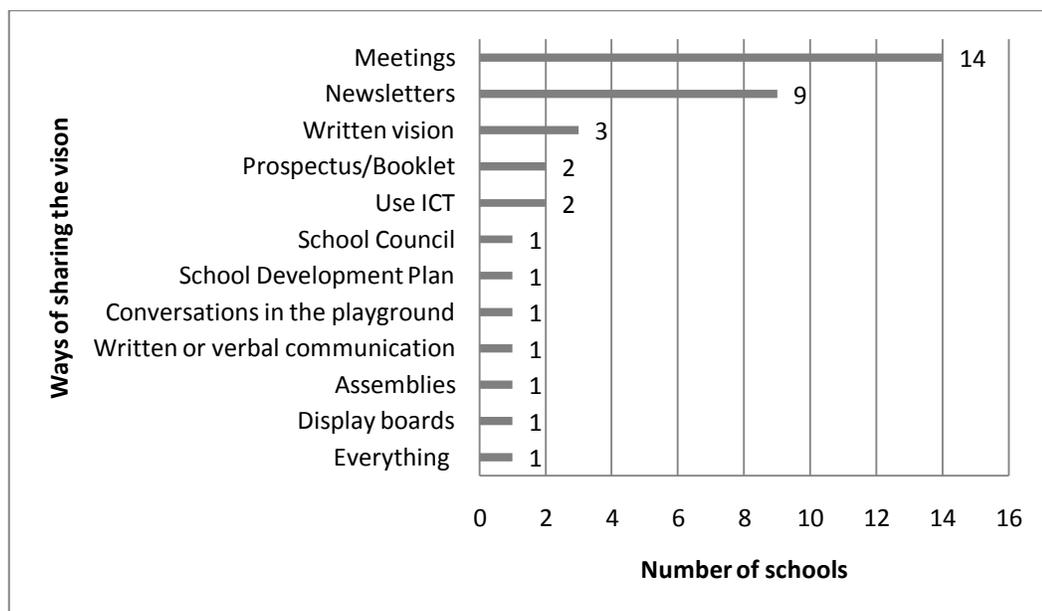


Figure 6.10: Ways of sharing the vision

It can be seen from the data that the use of meetings was a popular method for headteachers to share the vision with other stakeholders. They used a mixture of meetings with staff, governors and parents. While this would not necessarily be peculiar to small schools, it is easier to have meetings with the whole staff in a small school. Headteacher I9 said that she shared the vision “through everything that I do or try to do” which showed that she tried to live the vision through example. Headteacher Q15 used a combination of meetings and the use of display boards as well as assemblies which also points to the vision being an integral part of school life.

Sharing the vision is now an element of the new Ofsted Framework (OFSTED, 2009) which will give a new emphasis to this aspect of leadership for all headteachers. It would appear that a weakness of Ofsted policy is shown in the guidance for inspectors where there is an assumption that there are ‘leaders at all levels’ (Ofsted, 2009:38) as well as class teachers which could be said to be based on a model for a

large school but not necessarily the model evident in a small primary school. It was seen in Chapter 5 that the area of ‘middle leadership’ with subject co-ordinators can be difficult in a small school. However, the evidence suggests that the headteachers in the sample are involving other members of the school community in formulating the vision as well as sharing it widely with the school community as shown by the following examples from Ofsted Reports for schools in the sample:

Staff and governors express a shared vision for how the school can continue to improve

Ofsted Report for School I

Teaching and support staff share the headteacher's clear vision for the school's development.

Ofsted Report for School B

Working closely with the governors and other staff, the headteacher has established an extremely clear vision for school improvement.

Ofsted Report for School Q

These examples from the Ofsted Reports validate the opinions that were expressed by the headteachers as they have been noted by independent inspectors.

The second element in this section is concerned with developing the necessary structures in order to foster participation in school decisions. It could be said that the structures for encouraging participation in school decisions occur naturally within the small primary school. While some of the Ofsted inspectors recognised that the members of staff worked well together they did not specify what structures were in place:

They [*members of staff*] have blended successfully as a team and work well together.

Ofsted Report for School B

The teachers are now playing a fuller role in leading the work of the school and have valuable insights as to what the school can do to improve further

Ofsted Report for School K

It would appear that the main structure in place is having staff meetings where members of staff are involved in decision-making as seen in previous sections. However, a further structure could be present in the area of modelling leadership behaviour.

6.6.2 Modelling leadership behaviour

The first element of transformational leadership within this focus of modelling leadership behaviour could be said to be the main area which is concerned with symbolizing professional practices and values. The leader needs to inspire others to take on leadership roles within the school. Lewis and Murphy (2008:139-140) write:

Just as there is a wider recognition that all managers in any organisation have a leadership role so the literature on schools has taken further the thinking about how leaders need to inspire and bring all the staff into the process of mutual support, coaching and mentoring if they are to achieve effective school improvement.

A small school may help to provide opportunities for members of staff to be involved in coaching activities. Figure 6.11 shows the coaching opportunities that were identified by the headteachers of the schools in the sample.

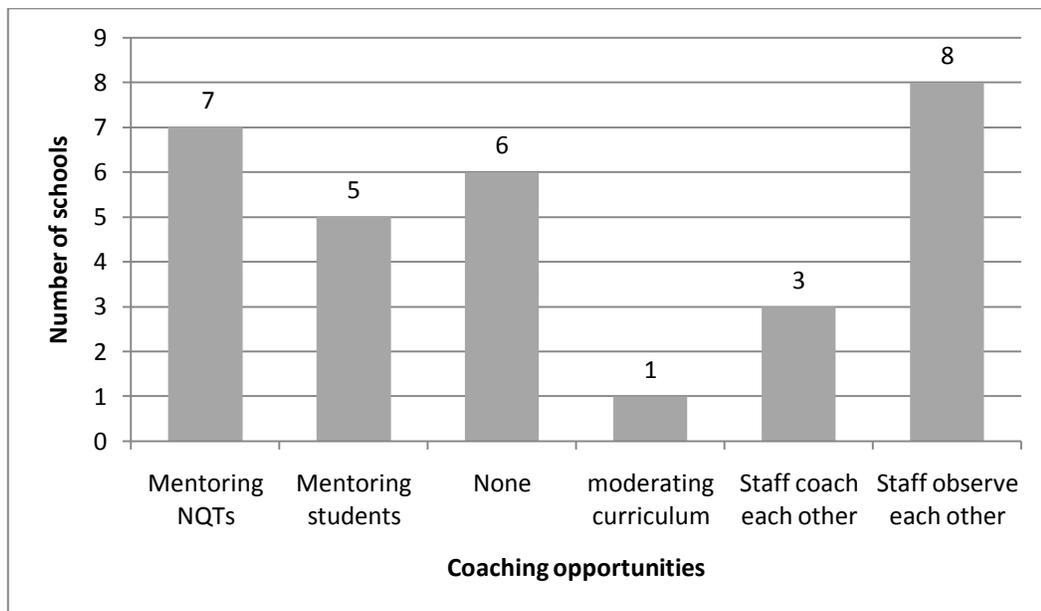


Figure 6.11: Coaching Opportunities identified by headteachers in the sample schools

It can be seen that some of the headteachers considered mentoring to be an opportunity for coaching. Mentoring newly qualified teachers or students provides opportunities for both experienced and inexperienced members of staff to share practices and values and to learn from each other. Lewis and Murphy (2008:139-140) write:

The enthusiasm and knowledge of newly qualified teachers and the experience and practical wisdom of mature teachers can all be brought to bear on the process of feedback, reflection and improvement.

It is not always possible to achieve a balance of mature teachers and newly qualified teachers in a small school due to the small number of teachers. This can be a limitation when there is a low turnover of members of staff.

Personal Reflection 32

In our school we had a stable staff with teachers who had been with us for at least five years. When a teacher went on maternity leave a year ago we were able to employ a newly qualified teacher to cover the absence. This has enabled the mature teachers to gain a different perspective as well as sharing their experience with the newly qualified teacher.

Several of the headteachers felt that coaching opportunities were provided for within their system of observations for monitoring purposes. When Headteacher I5 was asked if the staff had opportunities for coaching she said:

They do in .. I suppose through the observations, through sharing ideas ..

Headteacher I6 used a focus for observations which then became coaching opportunities:

...if we are looking for say behaviour management we observe each other and if we're looking at specifically speaking and listening the staff will all discuss what we've learnt together so it's not a critical thing, it's seen as a general support.

Headteacher I2 used the monitoring of work and lesson observations as coaching opportunities for members of staff:

...the subject co-ordinators monitor their own books and give feedback to ...like the science co-ordinator monitors hers and then she gives feedback to other people and the student co-ordinator, she obviously coaches the students and the NQTs in school if we've got any...

It can be difficult to allow for coaching opportunities in small schools and this can prove to be a challenge for the headteachers. Headteacher I1 found that having members of staff who were part-time was a particular challenge:

It's difficult in small schools with part-time staff. If staff visit other classrooms they usually do it when they're not timetabled in school and we have to pay them for extra hours.

This headteacher has identified that one of the difficulties is connected to having part-time members of staff which then links to financial restrictions. However, this does not need to be a barrier as the part-time members of staff can be released in the same manner as a full-time member of staff. Consequently this points to issues surrounding organisation in a particular school rather than the situation within small schools in general. Headteacher I4 is trying to develop coaching opportunities in her school but acknowledged that this causes a financial issue in small schools as the teachers need to be released from their own classes. She described the development of coaching:

Well what we've done so far because it's just in its early stages, the assistant head... she's done some coaching. She's observed the Year 4 teacher teach and the Year 4 teacher's observed her and they've worked together on what's an area to develop and then today they did a joint lesson. It's just at the early stages but there is a huge issue in small schools about release time and budget.

The research showed that not all of the headteachers had found coaching to be successful. Headteacher Q9 said of coaching opportunities in her school:

Have tried this but it didn't really work. Works well for positive issues but not so well with negative. However I do ask people to assist others but it does depend on personalities.

The above comment from Headteacher Q9 shows that the close relationships that may form when there is a small staff can make critical feedback more difficult. It could be said that the question of personality assumes greater importance in a small school as there are fewer people from whom to choose. It may be more effective for several small schools to work together so that members of staff are able to share

good practice across a network of schools and this would increase the level of expertise within all of the schools. However, this does not solve the problem of the financial restrictions that are caused by needing to release teachers from their classes.

The second element of transformational leadership within this focus is concerned with demonstrating high performance expectations. This element is linked to the previous element of ‘symbolizing professional practices and values’ as the practices and values will lead to high performance. Headteacher Q1 described her role of leadership:

A facilitator with expert knowledge and high expectations to develop all staff and provide best opportunities and environment that we can.

This is an area that was commented on by Ofsted inspectors within the context of teamwork and members of staff working together as shown by the following examples:

[Name of school] is a successful school because everybody plays their part in moving the school forward.

Ofsted Report for School G

Good leadership at all levels and satisfactory governance have ensured that the school has sustained good standards

Ofsted Report for School J

The headteacher's very good leadership has ensured that all in the school work as a very close team, committed to ensuring that pupils do as well as they can.

Ofsted Report for School M

This also links to invitational leadership as seen in the area of inviting others professionally. It also links to a further focus in transformational leadership which is concerned with developing the people in the organisation. This is considered in the next section.

6.6.3 Developing people

An element with the focus of ‘developing people’ is concerned with offering individualised support. Leithwood (1999) did not specify whether ‘offering individualized support’ applied to the adults in school, the pupils or both groups of stakeholders. In this research it has been interpreted as relating to both the adults and the pupils. Arguably, personalised learning could be seen as an element of transformational leadership. Headteacher Q8 said:

We know every child and can pull the appropriate strings of each child when needed.

This view is echoed by other headteachers in the sample as shown by the following examples:

We know each child incredibly well. It means we can identify strengths and weaknesses almost straightaway and if we find a problem then hopefully try and identify strategies and put things in place if they need.

Headteacher I3

...everybody knows everybody and the children feel very happy most of the time in their little cluster and you can provide an almost personalised curriculum. You know they’re not a one in a big class, they are very much individuals...

Headteacher I9

Headteacher Q11 echoed the comment above by Headteacher I9 when s/he identified an advantage of small primary schools as being able to provide “personalised learning opportunities for children.” By offering individualised support in the form of personalised learning, the teachers are drawing on elements of transformational leadership.

Several of the headteachers offered individualised support for the members of staff through the vehicle of professional development opportunities which in turn

encourages transformational leadership throughout the school. The professional development needs of teachers form the basis of their objectives in ‘performance management’ as shown by the research data. Headteacher I4 said of the professional development needs of her staff:

Well it’s through Performance Management really. It’s through the Performance Management which is linked to the school development plan so it’s prioritising those areas.

Headteacher I3 said:

That comes out through Performance Management and the sort of areas that people need to develop in and so looking at whole school issues.

There was also a link between performance management objectives for teachers and the priorities in the school development plan. It may be easier to develop individualised support for members of staff in a small school as there are fewer people to consider. The headteacher has an in-depth knowledge of the members of staff and is able to link school priorities in the school development plan with the performance management objectives of the teachers. However, the professional development needs of the teachers must be balanced against financial considerations as identified by Headteacher I3:

... basically it’s looking at whole school issues plus what the staff feel they need so it’s a bit of combination and then looking to see how much money we’ve got and working out priorities.

The second element of transformational leadership within this focus is ‘providing intellectual stimulation’. In order to provide intellectual stimulation the headteacher needs to take account of both the strengths and weaknesses of the members of staff. In a small school the headteacher has a good knowledge of each member of the school community and arguably, it is easier for the headteacher to use the individual

strengths of each person appropriately. This was acknowledged in one of the Ofsted reports:

...the headteacher has a very good knowledge of the strengths of the staff. They receive good support to improve their practice and performance management systems are used well to promote the school's priorities. All staff have many responsibilities and are undertaking their revised roles with developing understanding...

Ofsted Report for School M

The headteacher should be able to use his/her knowledge of the weaknesses of the members of staff for professional in-service training opportunities. However, this may be problematic as there will be financial implications and so the headteachers need to act creatively. There were occasions when groups of schools arranged training together for specific areas although this depended on the needs of the schools. Headteacher I4 spoke of a group of small schools working together:

I think it was 7 or 8 small schools and we did shared work on 'Shirley Clarke' [assessment] and we did some work on learning environment as well, some projects and I think we got funding for it and then that group folded.

Personal Reflection 33

It was seen in Chapter 4 that I worked with a group of headteachers from small schools for several years and we were able to access government funding through the Local Authority until the funding stopped. We were able to secure a grant for training members of staff from all of the schools in drama, poetry and music. One of the criteria to secure the grant was that we had to work together as a cluster of small schools. This had the advantage of members of staff meeting with a larger group of people so that they could share ideas and opinions. An added advantage was that it enabled the pupils to develop their social skills as they worked with pupils from other schools.

The headteachers in the sample linked the training needs of the staff to the priorities on their School Development Plan. However, this may have the effect of reflecting current government initiatives and be more restrictive than the headteacher would want. Hammersley-Fletcher and Adnett (2007:181) comment:

...the method of operation of bodies such as Ofsted and the publication of test results pose increasing restrictions on the ways in which teachers work and their freedoms to pursue interests that do not strictly reflect those of the centrally prescribed curriculum. The freedoms to lead schools creatively and act as a 'transformational leader' are similarly increasingly subject to these restrictions.

The authors recognise the restrictions that are a result of external factors. The headteacher has a juggling act to satisfy the Local Authority, the government and Ofsted as well as developing their school's individual ethos. Headteacher I6 reflected this view when she said:

We have an holistic ethos, we look at everything but we tend to look more at the arts and sports because I'm sick of literacy and numeracy rammed down my throat with families who've had experiences from school and won't hear the children read but they'll support us with our creative arts, dramatic arts and other things and I'd much rather have an enriched curriculum which we have all the time and the children learn far more from that.

This comment shows that the headteacher, who is experienced, has the confidence to make a decision concerning which policies to follow and is able to choose to lead her school in a particular way, regardless of the political influence, which links to leading strategically. This form of leadership is considered in the following section.

6.7 Strategic Leadership

Strategic leadership is not a leadership style on its own but encompasses areas of shared or distributed leadership, invitational leadership and transformational leadership. Davies (2003:295) writes:

In general terms it is possible to see strategy as a specific pattern of decisions and actions taken to achieve an organization's goals.

It has been seen in the sections dealing with distributed, invitational and transformational leadership that the headteachers involved other members of the school community in leadership activities. Hammersley-Fletcher and Kirkham (2007:431) write:

Strategy should be informed by knowledge of all members of the organisation and, when it is not possible to 'capture and centralise' the knowledge, the consequences can be lack of commitment. Consequently, all should be involved at the very bare minimum in the information-gathering stage of strategy formation.

It has been seen that the headteachers involved other members of staff and governors in creating the vision which was then shared widely among the school community. Headteacher Q5 said that everyone contributed to the vision and then it was sent out for comments. Headteacher Q6 said of her role of leadership:

Having clear vision for school, ensuring it is understood and shared by all stakeholders.

Personal Reflection 34

As identified in Section 6.6.1, we had a staff training day where all members of staff and the governors worked together to develop the school's values and vision. I then put all of the ideas together and wrote a 'vision and values statement' which was circulated to members of staff and the governors. It was amended several times before we were all satisfied that it was right for our school. This was working with a strategic style of leadership and is echoed by the research respondents as they shared their vision and values within their school communities.

The headteacher cannot lead in a strategic way in isolation. Davies and Davies (2004: 11) write:

...leaders need the skills to be able to influence people and their actions and they need to direct those actions through setting goals and creating meanings.

This is also the case with the headteacher who needs to be able to influence the staff and the governors in order to keep moving the school forward and developing the learning that is taking place. It was seen in Section 6.3 that headteachers identified the ease and opportunity to introduce change as an advantage of small schools. The creative curriculum may be easier to introduce into small primary schools and this links to the model in the Rose Review (Rose, 2009). This was a review of the primary curriculum that was undertaken on behalf of the government and links the curricula from Foundation Stage through to secondary education (see Appendix H). Several of the headteachers commented that they felt that it is easier to introduce initiatives such as the 'creative curriculum' in a small school. Headteacher Q2 said:

You can be really creative with learning and teaching, the creative curriculum.

Headteacher I10 also commented on the curriculum:

We now do the creative curriculum and the whole ethos is about having fun and enjoying their learning and being completely wowed by coming to school and it really is working. We started in September and the whole school is just alive really and the display and their classroom environments are just amazing.

Arguably, the headteacher in a small school is in a good position to influence others as s/he knows the other people well and when there are fewer people it could be said that it is easier to reach a consensus of opinion. Headteacher I10 said:

Everybody's there with me but I had to work very hard with the governing body because they were very much of the old school, rubber-stamping. And now I make them work; it took a while but they're great now, really good.

Headteacher Q7 had also had to put a lot of effort into influencing the governors:

I feel that during the past year I have had to work a lot with the governors to develop their understanding and knowledge about governance and leadership.

It is necessary to consider the strategic dimension of leadership in order to gain sustainable leadership (Davies and Davies, 2005) which is explored in the following section.

6.8 Sustainable Leadership

‘Sustainable leadership’ is a term that began to be widely used from the year 2000 among North American researchers in the educational field (Pepper and Wildy, 2008). It is important to involve all of the members of staff as well as pupils and governors in order to create sustainable leadership within the school (Davies, 2007). It was seen in section 6.3 that the headteachers distributed leadership widely throughout the school and so they were also showing elements of sustainable leadership alongside distributed leadership.

Hargreaves and Fink (2003) used seven principles to define sustainable leadership as shown in Figure 2.6 and reproduced below as Figure 6.12.

- | |
|--|
| <p>Sustainable leadership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creates and preserves sustaining learning• Secures success over time• sustains the leadership of others• addresses issues of social justice• develops rather than depletes human and material resources• develops environmental diversity and capacity• undertakes activist engagement with the environment |
|--|

Figure 6.12: Seven principles of sustainable leadership
Source: adapted from Hargreaves & Fink, 2003

Pepper and Wildy (2008:616) write of the principles:

They are based on the belief that educational leaders want to achieve goals that matter, inspire others to join them to attain those goals and create a lasting legacy.

This was shown by Headteacher I9 who has a focus on values in the school which is being embedded in the ethos of the school:

I do all the assemblies so a lot of the assemblies are based around the values. They're displayed around the school and I've also brought in the 'Golden rules' so it's making it very visual; and in the appraisals for the TAs and lunchtime staff get them to use them in dealing with the children and all the staff use them. That's what we wanted to do and everyone working together.

This headteacher has involved all of the members of staff in using the values. It can be seen that she used the vehicle of appraisal to tackle this with the support staff.

Davies (2007: 17) writes:

It is in the tackling of difficult challenges to change and improve, often by confronting unacceptable practices, that passionate leaders show their educational values.

It could be said that it is more difficult to make the 'difficult decisions' in a small school as the headteacher works closely with the members of staff without a middle tier of management. However, the headteachers were prepared to confront the difficult challenges when necessary. Headteacher Q14 said:

When hard choices or decisions need to be made I make them if they benefit the school.

Hammersley-Fletcher and Adnett (2009) identified that the various governments since the 1970s have paid lip service to delegating decision-making powers to schools through initiatives such as LMS while imposing constraints such as monitoring and target-setting. This could be referred to as 'centralised

decentralisation' (Calveley, 2005). The areas of target-setting and achieving FMSIS are the means that the Local Authority uses to hold the headteacher accountable. This can mean that the headteacher is trying to work within the constraints while retaining a measure of responsibility for developing the sustainability of the school. Davies (2007:19) writes:

A key question for sustainable leadership is when to make changes and what to give up to make space for the new activity.

While it is recognised that this would apply to leadership in all sizes of primary schools the implications are greater in a small school where the headteacher often has a large workload. Headteacher I7 found that she needed to relinquish her teaching commitment and become a non-teaching headteacher because headship has "...changed beyond recognition..." Headteacher Q16 was of the opinion that her role of leadership involved giving leadership opportunities to other members of staff in order to "... grow leaders of the future".

As part of her research concerning small schools in Scotland, Wilson (2009:821) questioned the sustainability of the job of a teaching headteacher:

Reluctantly, respondents expressed concerns which focused not on their leadership vision or style, which seemed eminently appropriate to their particular situations, but on the pressures of juggling, the need for additional resources, future recruitment difficulties and wider societal expectations of education.

This is reflected in the concerns of the headteachers in the sample. There has been a move towards creating federations of schools (Barker, 2008). This was raised at a meeting for a group of headteachers who had taken part in the interviews. They were of the opinion that federations were for financial reasons instead of educational

reasons and that federations were an answer by Central Government to meet the problem of not having enough headteachers. The headteachers felt that each school was unique and had its own particular ethos which would alter if the headteacher was shared by more than one school. The National Association of Head Teachers has also said that there should be one headteacher for one school (Barker, 2008).

6.9 Conclusion

In this chapter there has been an exploration of the various leadership styles that were identified in the schools in the sample. Arguably the influence of the headteacher underpins the ethos in the school which in turn has an effect on the styles of leadership that are evident within the school. This is linked to the legitimate power base of the headteacher (French and Raven, 1959) which places power in the position or role of headteacher (Blase and Anderson, 1995). Middlewood et al (2005) put forward the opinion that schools need to move away from the traditional hierarchical management model and move towards a flatter model that is more democratic. The evidence in this research shows that the latter model is already present in the small primary schools in this sample.

While shared or distributed leadership would seem to be a natural event in a small primary school, it can also be seen as a challenge. As there are fewer members of staff the headteacher has to ensure that they are matched to their capabilities and their strengths which can be problematic. The headteacher uses their legitimate power base to utilise the expert power base of the other members of staff (French and raven, 1959). In distributed leadership the headteacher needs to be confident in her/his role as well as being confident in the ability of the members of staff to take

on leadership areas. This is where it was seen in the research that the headteachers in the sample used the dimensions of power to work both with and through others (Blase and Anderson, 1995). There is a need for headteachers to plan for succession and sustainability which can be achieved through the vehicle of distributed leadership in combination with sustainable and strategic leadership.

There are fewer teachers in small primary schools which can prove to be difficult for the leadership organisation. It has been seen that this can mean that teachers are given responsibility for leadership because of availability rather than suitability. However, teachers may also gain experiences that they would not have in a larger school. The issue of subject co-ordinators also needs to be addressed in a creative way. Each school will address this in their own way but headteachers need to know about various options before they can decide which is best for their particular circumstances. One method used by some of the schools in the sample was to focus on linking areas of the curriculum together instead of having co-ordinators for each subject area. This could be taken one step further by linking specific subject areas to be considered in the year to the priorities in the School Improvement Plan. Another model that was touched on by the headteachers but not yet developed is to link co-ordinators to areas in the 'creative curriculum' (see Appendix M).

Although the various styles of leadership have been examined individually, it can be seen from the evidence contained within these data that each style is not mutually exclusive. There is some overlap between the styles and the headteachers in the sample have used a combination of them. There is room for a new dynamic model of leadership that encompasses a flexible approach combined with distributed

leadership and invitational leadership. This was seen in some of the small schools where they changed the composition of the senior management team to be appropriate to the needs at that time. This would alleviate the problem of not being able to have a senior management team because of the number of people available in the school. The team could use the expertise of non-teaching members of staff where appropriate so in effect any member of the school staff could be part of the team. This fluid model would link with the leadership structure shown in Figure 6.2 which is further developed in Chapter 7. It could also include governors to broaden the level of expertise that is available and to take account of the external context. This is a change that needs to be taken at the school level.

It could be said that the categories of leadership styles are static as they make forced distinctions in the current climate in small schools. It was seen in these data that the headteachers of the schools in the sample used a combination of styles rather than focusing on just one style of leadership. The training for new headteachers will need to be developed to take account of using a hybrid style rather than a single style of leadership so that headteachers are able to take account of the context of the school. While this would be of benefit to all headteachers it is particularly pertinent for headteachers of small schools. This will be developed to form a model of leadership for small primary schools which is shown in Chapter 7.

7. Conclusions

7.1 Introduction

The main aim of this research was to identify and synthesise current practice in small primary schools in order to be able to offer a model of leadership that is applicable to this category of schools and which has neither been previously investigated nor recognised. This aim was underpinned by a set of objectives that would add to the body of knowledge about leadership in small schools through the use of empirical data collected from a sample of small primary schools in order to examine the concepts of ‘styles of leadership’, ‘leadership structures in small schools’ and issues connected with headship. Throughout the dissertation I have taken an educational stance rather than a political stance, however there are political implications that arise from the educational emphasis. Additionally, the research demonstrated the reality that political environments cannot be separated from the educational context. The literature explores the strong link between managerialism and power with schools being subject to both policies and initiatives that are imposed on them through the political agenda of Central Government (Calveley, 2005). The research has drawn on the literature concerning levels of power with power being seen as situated within and outside the school (Busher, 2006). As will be demonstrated further in section 7.2, the dissertation has drawn on some of the more mainstream work on power including the work of French and Raven (1959), and Blase and Anderson (1995) in order to gain an understanding of the power relations in small primary schools.

It is evident that through centrally imposed initiatives such as the National Curriculum, league tables and financial monitoring and control both the Government

and the Local Authority are able to exert what Blase and Anderson (1995) describe as their ‘power over’ headteachers. As the case study evidence in the dissertation has shown, this form of centralised-decentralisation (Hoggett, 1996 in Calveley, 2005) and managerialism impacts on the leadership practices and styles of headteachers. Further, it could be argued that financial control, being linked to pupil headcount, has a greater impact on small schools than larger ones as the latter are more able to absorb fluctuations in pupil numbers.

While this research has taken the form of a case study, it has combined the descriptive and interpretive aspects of a survey with the in-depth investigative elements of a case study. It contains rich data which have been gathered through the use of interviews, questionnaires, Ofsted reports and ‘naturally occurring’ data. An element of reflexivity from the viewpoint of an “insider” researcher was evident in each step of the research from selecting the topic to be researched through to the analysis of the data and the writing up of the research (Aull Davies, 1998). The realist methodological approach allowed for an in-depth analysis of the situation in all of the small primary schools within one Local Authority. Although it could be argued that it is not possible to generalise from this research, as Cohen et al (2000) assert the insights that are gained from a case study may be used to influence changes in policy-making. Moreover, the findings provide a basis for further research that could be generalisable, as discussed further in section 7.3.

Although there is a substantial literature base for leadership and management theory in schools in general, virtually none was specific to small primary schools. However, it was seen in Chapter 2 that the theories surrounding management and leadership in

the business sector can be useful when considering both leadership and management in schools. While there was a view that business models are not appropriate for schools (Southworth, 2005), small primary schools are not entirely dissimilar to small businesses in their organisation as both need to be effective in their leadership and management with fewer people (Ang, 2000). It was seen that leadership and management are not the same thing but they are interconnected (Hannagan, 2002; Lewis et al, 2004; Kinicki and Williams, 2008). Leadership has been seen as a function of management (Lewis et al, 2004) and has been seen as a process rather than the role of one person (Lewis et al, 2004; Leithwood and Riehl, 2003). This was a view that was shown in the literature for both the business sector and the education sector. However, the practice of leadership in a small school has been seen to be closely linked to the headteacher's role. The research has shown that the role of the headteacher in a small primary school encompasses both leadership and management activities within the school and so the one person has a dual role.

The emphasis in the literature with respect to what is allegedly the most popular approach to leadership has changed over the years. Traditional leadership styles such as 'trait', 'behavioural' and 'contingency' styles are discussed in the literature relating to the business sector (Lewis et al, 2004; Kinicki and Williams, 2008). However, other styles of leadership have evolved – 'situational', 'empowerment' and 'transformational' – which the evidence from the current research identify as being more appropriate to leadership styles seen in the schools in the sample. It is evident from the research that the small primary schools in the sample used a hybrid of several styles, which is not unique to small schools, but they combined this process with a flatter structure as opposed to a hierarchical approach. In practice, the

headteachers did not place importance on identifying a particular style of leadership but instead they concentrated on the process of their leadership that involved different members of staff. This is an area where small schools have embraced the move from the traditional hierarchical structure to a more democratic structure as espoused by Middlewood et al (2005). Bush (2003:190) comments:

Size may be a factor influencing leadership styles. It is easier to adopt a participative approach in small organizations while managerial leadership is likely to be an essential dimension in larger schools and colleges.

In this research there was a combination of ‘distributed leadership’, ‘invitational leadership’ and ‘transformational leadership’ which in turn enabled the headteachers to lead in a strategic manner with a view to ‘sustainable leadership’.

The recommendations that have been made in chapters 4, 5 and 6 relate to a new model of leadership for small schools. Section 7.2 discusses this model and sets out the recommendations which encompass three separate levels: the school level, the Local Authority level and the Central Government level. These recommendations have been used to form the basis of the new model of leadership in small primary schools. Arguably, the recommendations may be interpreted as being prescriptive in nature but they have been derived from the research and the intention is to represent a normative situation from an educational perspective that does not take account of political policies or financial restrictions. I have concluded with a section that details areas for further research that have arisen from this investigation.

7.2 The Leadership in Small Primary Schools Model

As stated previously, the overarching aim of this research was to produce a new model of leadership for small primary schools. This model has been developed from

the recommendations that have been made in this research and links closely to the recommendations in sections 7.2.1, 7.2.2 and 7.2.3. The model embraces a hybrid of styles of leadership. It is not a static model in that it changes and evolves depending on the wider context in which the school and headteacher are operating; nor is it a ‘one size fits all’ model and headteachers will need to take account of the specific context of each school. This style of leadership is context-led which has implications for the content of leadership training. Figure 7.1 shows a representation of the model.

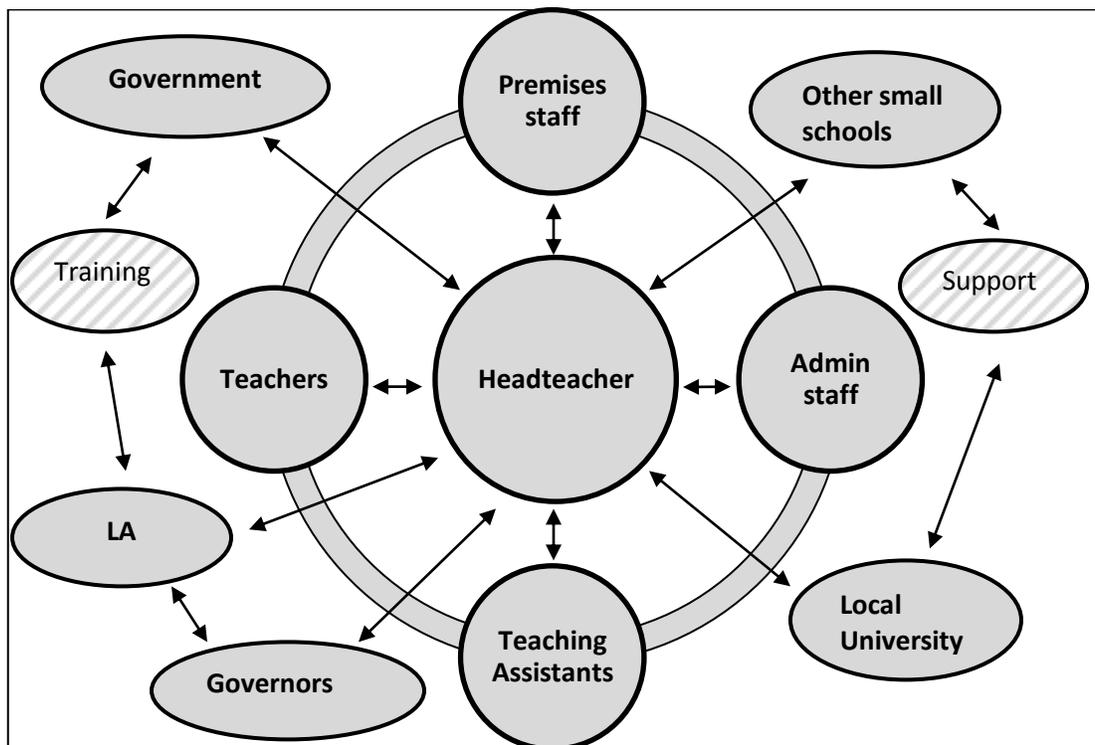


Figure 7.1: A New Model of Leadership in Small Primary Schools

This model has taken account of the complexity of power being located both within and outside of the school (Busher, 2006). The inner layer of the model identifies the interaction between the headteacher and the different groupings of members of staff within the school; it shows power being located within the school and is in accord with the ‘power with’ and ‘power through’ dimensions of power (Blase and Anderson, 1995). The outer layer involves groups that are external to the school

which is indicative of power being located from outside of the school and thus shows the ‘power over’ dimension of power (Blase and Anderson, 1995). The role of the governors is one demonstration of this. Although they have been located in the area of power that is from outside of the school as they are not employees of the school and they are in a position to influence the practices of the headteacher and consequently other members of staff, it is acknowledged that they will also have a part to play in the inner layer, although not necessarily on a daily basis. The amount of their contact that would fall within the remit of the inner layer will depend, to some extent, on the specific needs of the school at any given time. For example, there may need to be more contact just after a new headteacher is appointed but less contact when there is an experienced headteacher, thus demonstrating the fluidity of the model and the way in which it can change and evolve.

The outer layer is linked to the inner layer through the headteacher. This level combines the training and support elements of leadership within a small school and forms the strategic and sustainable aspects of leadership. The areas for the elements of ‘training’ and ‘support’ have been identified in Figure 7.2.

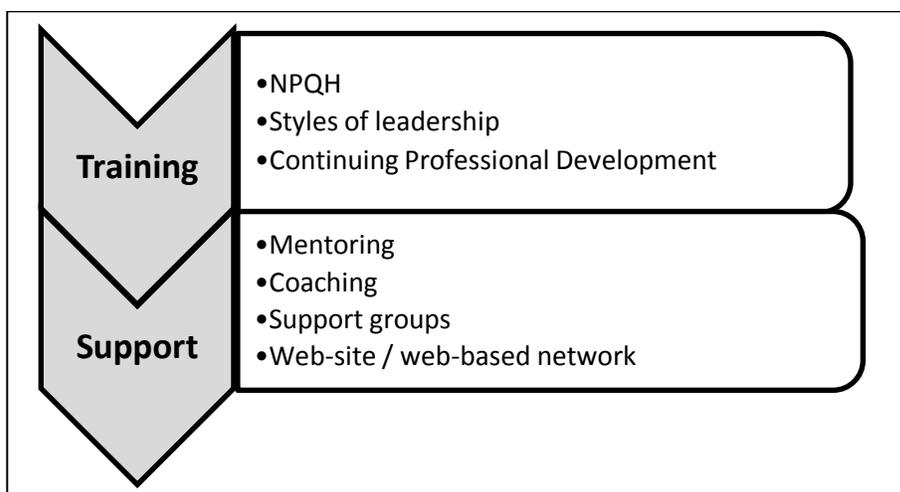


Figure 7.2: Training and Support in ‘Leadership in Small Primary Schools’ Model

While the support element has been placed with ‘other small schools’ and ‘local university’ it will also link to the ‘LA’ and the ‘Government’ areas that are shown on the opposite side of the diagram as there will be funding implications. In addition, the governors are located with the LA and the Government as they hold the headteacher accountable but they also have a role of support. (Gunter, 2001) In the same manner the training element is mostly connected to the Local Authority and Central Government but it also links to the local university and the support group of other small schools. In order to make this model workable, the recommendations in sections 7.2.1, 7.2.2 and 7.2.3 will need to be addressed. Both Central Government and the Local Authority need to review the funding mechanism for small schools to ensure that it is able to underpin the whole structure of the model. In reality, the current economic situation is unlikely to allow for a change in funding mechanisms and so it will be difficult to implement the recommendations in their entirety. This will be discussed further in the appropriate sections of this chapter.

The inner layer is interactive with power flowing from the headteacher to other members of staff. On a day to day basis the headteacher takes a fluid approach to leadership according to the context of the school at the time. Actions to achieve this will include the headteacher taking a dynamic approach to leadership by sharing leadership opportunities with the members of staff and inviting them to share responsibility for initiatives in school as well as sharing decision-making opportunities with other members of staff through time in staff meetings and on training days. The headteacher will be able to take into account the opinions and potential of other members of staff and governors in building the school vision and

values as a team. S/he will use the potential and expertise of staff members and governors in professional development opportunities by inviting them to lead training for others. In this way the headteacher is using the legitimate power base (French and Raven, 1959) which is power located within the position of headship. However, s/he is also using the concepts of 'power with' and 'power through' others (Blase and Anderson, 1995) by taking account of the various locations of expertise and potential within the stakeholders of the school. Arguably, it is the use of 'power with' and 'power through' that sets the small school apart from larger schools where the focus would tend to be 'power over' (Blase and Anderson, 1995).

A designated senior leadership team has deliberately not been identified within this model. It can be problematic forming a senior leadership team when there are only a few teachers at a school and, as evidenced in this research, often there is not a deputy headteacher or subject co-ordinators. The lack of a senior leadership team is a phenomenon that will need to be embraced by Ofsted as it will have an impact on the way that an inspection report is compiled for a small school without this layer of senior management. The context of the school requires a fluid leadership team to be used as identified by headteachers in this research sample. In the model the headteacher is the guiding influence and draws on all members of staff to form a leadership team that is pertinent to the specific area of development that is being undertaken at the time. In this way the skills and expertise of both teaching and non-teaching members of staff will be utilised. The model allows for governors with specific expertise to also be members of the leadership team, giving them a strategic role within the school context. Formal subject co-ordinators have not been identified as, in practice, all teachers have responsibility for one or more areas of the

curriculum. This is a limitation within a small school and so a compromise has to be reached. Some schools may group subjects together to form larger areas such as ‘humanities’ or ‘the arts’ and this will reflect the specific context of the school. Other schools will identify specific areas for development in the School Development Plan which will then provide the focus for that year and the other areas of the curriculum will have a lesser focus during that period of time.

Personal Reflection 35

This is the route that we have chosen at our school as we are starting from a base where our standards are good and so we do not need to focus on every area of the curriculum to the same extent.

However, the decision needs to be made in consultation with the governors and the school improvement team at the Local Authority so this is where there is a measure of overlapping between the outer and inner layers in the model shown in Figure 7.1.

By employing this model the headteacher is able to demonstrate or model expectations of high performance and professional practices and values through their own teaching commitment as well as showing their use of power as a capacity (Lukes, 2005) in order to influence the direction of developments within the school as identified in the School Development plan. However, it should be acknowledged that the constraints of the methodology used means that the research has limitations when applying the findings to all small primary schools. This research was based in one Local Authority and the model would need to be tested in other Local

Authorities, with further adjustments, before the findings could be generalised to all small primary schools nationally.

7.2.1 The school level

The first level of leadership is seen at the school level as shown by the evidence in the research. While writing about the situation in higher education institutions Shelley (2005) put forward the view that managers are constrained by external policies but that they are able to influence their implementation within the institution. This view also applies to headteachers in the school situation. It has been seen that the headteachers were concerned with the leadership of their schools as a main priority and, wherever possible, used their own power in order to influence the manner in which political policies are implemented within their school.

The research identified that the headteachers perceived that they had an impact on creating the ethos that they considered to be distinctive and important in small primary schools. A major argument for this was that the size of the school enabled the headteacher to know the members of the school community well. This accords with the view of Bush (2003:190):

It is straightforward to be sensitive to individual meanings in smaller schools...

It was also evident that the schools formed an important part of their local community which linked to the ‘community cohesion’ aspect of the Ofsted Framework for Inspection (Ofsted, 2009). Community cohesion is one part of the judgement focus in Ofsted inspections and as such is very important currently. Clearly, this links the educational emphasis with the political agenda. Such emphasis may well prove to be more challenging for a new headteacher who will need to

decide on his/her initial priorities and s/he needs to establish cohesion within the school environment before looking beyond the school. As such, they too are influencing the implementation of external policies. The main recommendations at the school level are shown in Figure 7.3.

- Work with other small primary schools for support
- Work with a group of schools for Continuing Professional Development or professional development of staff
- Work with a local university or secondary school

Figure 7.3: Recommendations at school level

These recommendations have a common thread of schools working together. Chapter 6 identified how some of the headteachers were of the opinion that federations of schools were for financial reasons as opposed to educational reasons. This highlights how, for some headteachers, their commitment to providing the best educational opportunities for their pupils may be at odds with the aim of the policymakers. Federated schools share a headteacher and in some cases they also share a governing body (NCSL, 2009). The headteachers felt strongly that schools could lose their unique identity if they were federated. Bottery (1992) and Calveley (2005) argued that schools are working in competition with each other which raises the question of whether the political stance could work alongside the educational stance with schools becoming federated in order to lessen the competition. While it is recognised that this is an emotive subject that is contrary to the views of headteachers in this research it does suggest that this is an area for further investigation in future research projects that are conducted with other groups such as governors and Local Authorities. However, while the headteachers in the research showed scepticism about federations, and understandably they wished to retain their individual seniority, it was seen that they were actively engaged in belonging to groups of schools working

together for educational reasons which was seen as a positive rather than a negative reason. It could be argued that the effectiveness of the partnerships is dependent on individual personalities and the balance can be fragile if several dominant personalities are involved.

This research identified several reasons for schools to work together with one reason being so that they can provide support for each other in the form of ‘peer mentoring’ or ‘multiple mentoring’ (Southworth, 1998; Hoad, 2007). The headteachers who belonged to a support group found this useful and in some cases it was considered to be more important than having a mentor who did not have experience of small schools. The evidence from the current research suggests that it would be beneficial for all small primary schools to be organised into “cluster groups” so that the headteachers have access to a support group for mentoring purposes and as a result mentoring will be an on-going process and not just last for the first year of headship. This is linked to the concept of ‘mentoring circles’ described by Darwin and Palmer (2009: 126):

Mentoring circles move away from the traditional dyadic model and, instead, use an innovative, group mentoring model. Mentoring circles typically involve one mentor working with a group of mentees or groups of people mentoring each other.

The cluster group would become the ‘mentoring circle’ or a ‘soft’ federation of schools that would be organised for educational reasons, such as support and professional development, to the advantage of the schools concerned and not for financial or political reasons. However, organising schools into cluster groups is not without difficulties as consideration needs to be given to practicalities such as the location of the schools and the number of schools that form the cluster. Too large a

cluster could become unwieldy and have a negative impact because headteachers may feel disempowered in a large group whereas too small a cluster could prove counter-productive if there is a dominant personality within the group.

A second reason for schools to work together is for the purpose of staff professional development. The professional development should be relevant to the needs of the schools in order for it to be an effective and efficient means of training the members of staff. Clusters of small schools would need to build a programme of in-service training needs together. It was identified in the research that some schools had joined together for training in specific areas such as 'Safeguarding Children'.

Personal Reflection 36

All of the teachers from a group of three small schools got together to discuss 'assessing pupil progress'. This enabled the teachers to work with other teachers who taught the same year groups and they were able to share ideas and experiences.

A clear advantage for small schools to work together in clusters is that the members of staff are able to work with a wider group to develop leadership expertise.

While, as stated earlier, some of the headteachers voiced the opinion that they felt that federations of schools were for financial rather than educational reasons, there could be advantages gained from small primary schools being linked with a local secondary school so that they are able to share expertise amongst the members of staff. This could be of mutual benefit as the pupils from the secondary school would benefit from working with pupils from the primary school especially in areas such as

physical activities and artistic activities. Whilst it is acknowledged that this may already be present amongst schools that are located within close proximity, many small primary schools are located in rural areas and so they are not close to a secondary school which makes this an area that needs to be orchestrated through proactive networking, instead of happening naturally. The location may cause problems for liaising with each other and organising transport for the pupils so there will also be financial considerations in a time of financial constraint.

The members of staff would also benefit from being linked with a local university that has an education department. In this way, teachers would be able to access mentor training at the university and the school would benefit from being involved in teacher training programmes by having students on school practices. While these links may already occur in an informal manner in some schools there would be a benefit from formalising the process so that the headteachers could access resources from the university library such as journals that they may not be able to access on their own. University links with schools have hitherto been funded to encourage strong and often large schools to collaborate with university departments for teacher training benefits, rather than to support the staff of small schools so this would be a new way of working together. Taking a practical stance, consideration needs to be given to the location of schools in relation to the university. It can be difficult to release teachers from their class responsibilities, as shown in the research, so a compromise may need to be found such as using the internet with 'webinars' as opposed to seminars and access to on-line resources. While this may not be as effective as 'face to face' sessions it would provide some support as well as training opportunities.

7.2.2 The Local Authority level

The schools in the sample were all from the same Local Authority but the recommendations are also, probably, appropriate for other Local Authorities. The research identified that the headteachers would welcome a higher level of support from the Local Authority. The main recommendations at the Local authority level are shown in Figure 7.4.

- Develop a local mentoring system
- Appoint a School Improvement Advisor to have responsibility for overseeing small schools within the Local Authority
- Support a Local Authority Association of Small Schools
- Provide training for headteachers of small schools
- Set up a web-based network for headteachers of small schools such as on a Learning Platform or web pages on the Local Authority website

Figure 7.4: Recommendations at Local Authority level

It is recognised that there may need to be some additional funding from the LA or Central Government so that these recommendations can be developed. As a consequence, it is unlikely that they could be implemented in the near future. However, it is possible to adapt the current systems of support and mentoring in a manner that redistributes current funding in a more effective way. The recommendation to develop the mentoring system has been identified at the Local Authority level although it is acknowledged that it could also be located at the Central Government level. Indeed, it overlaps both levels as there needs to be an entitlement for mentoring from the Central Government level but it should be administered at the Local Authority level. The research has shown that the headteachers would welcome more face to face meetings with their mentors. Linked to this is the need to have sufficient time and funding for these meetings. This is a

problematic issue as headteachers will require differing numbers of meetings so the feasibility of prescribing a set number of meetings would need further research to decide on an optimum number. One suggestion could be to have a core entitlement of a certain number of ‘face to face’ meetings which would be funded through a specific grant for new headteachers with the option of the headteacher “purchasing” additional meetings through the school’s budget.

A new mentoring programme, which could carry M level credits that would count towards a Masters level degree, should be linked to the national standards for headteachers (DfES, 2004b) which will then link the theory with practice. This is particularly relevant as headteachers’ performance management is also linked to the national standards for headteachers. It would also enable the headteacher who is acting as a mentor to gain in a professional capacity. While the existing system seems to be more informal, it would be desirable that a new system would have a measure of formality by being linked to the standards but also retain some of the informality so that it could be tailored to the specific needs of the headteachers. This is where an initial meeting between the mentor and the new headteacher will be important in deciding the areas of development that would comprise an ‘individual mentoring programme’ for the new headteacher. This would be relevant for all schools although it has arisen from this research into leadership in small primary schools.

The research identifies that headteachers would welcome a programme with three components: a mentor, a buddy and a support group. It is envisaged that each component would have a specific purpose as follows:

- The mentor needs to be an experienced headteacher, preferably, although not necessarily, with experience of small schools.
- The buddy would be distinguished from a mentor with a slightly different function. It is important that s/he is also an experienced headteacher but one who comes from a similar size of school. The purpose would be to provide support via email or telephone.
- The support group needs to be in the form of a cluster of small schools which can work together as well as to provide support for each other.

By utilising this three-stage programme it is possible to take account of the size of the school. The research showed that some headteachers would like to see the system extended beyond its current one year. A new format could incorporate using the mentoring component for one year and then to continue with the buddy and support group for a longer period of time which would then ensure that the system was suitable for headteachers at various stages of their development. A limitation to this system is that there needs to be sufficient experienced headteachers who are willing to act as a mentor and/or buddy. This was a problem that had been identified in the research with some new headteachers having difficulty finding a mentor. A compromise could be using headteachers who have recently retired; although they might not have the contacts and knowledge of current practices of a practising headteacher some issues of leading small schools are both generic and timeless and therefore still relevant.

It is imperative that there is someone at the Local Authority who has knowledge and expertise of leading a small school who would support new headteachers of small

schools. A well designed mentoring system would lead into a “coaching system” where the Local Authority builds up a network of headteachers with expertise in specific areas. Headteachers would then call on these “coaches” when necessary or they could be put in touch with each other through the School Improvement Partners at the Local Authority. This would clearly benefit all headteachers, but especially those of small schools as it would help to alleviate the problem of feeling isolated. If it is not possible to have a dedicated School Improvement Adviser for small primary schools then an alternative solution would be to second a headteacher for a specified number of days each term with the remit to work with the other headteachers of the small primary schools within the Local Authority. Once again, there would be financial implications to be taken into consideration and a compromise could be for schools to pay a subscription, based on the number of pupils on roll, for the service. However, this may deter some schools who are experiencing budgetary difficulties and as a consequence headteachers may be denied the support that they need.

While schools within a locality may organise themselves into support groups or networks, the establishment of a Local Authority Association of Small Schools (LAASS) would allow the provision of county support for all of the small primary schools within the Local Authority. The School Improvement Adviser with oversight of the small schools would have a role as an enabler within this association. There could be an annual conference for the headteachers where current issues are explored together and the implications for small schools can be discussed in a supportive environment. In the long-term this will require some funding to be available in order to release headteachers with a teaching commitment so that they are able to attend meetings and the conference. However, in the short-term within the current

economic crisis, headteachers may need to make their own arrangements for supply cover. A small subscription from each school would enable the initial setting up of the association and it is not unreasonable to ask schools to pay a small annual subscription to cover activities such as a conference.

The research showed that the headteachers of small schools wanted to have training that was size specific as well as phase specific. A clear solution would be for the training to be organised by the Local Authority which could be through the vehicle of the LAASS. This could be problematic as headteachers want different courses and it is questionable if it is practical to organise different training courses for schools in different phases as well as different sizes of schools. There is also the question of whether a school becomes ineligible for the training if they have just a few pupils above the threshold number. One solution could be the opportunity for on-line training which enables headteachers with a teaching commitment to take advantage of training opportunities, even when arranging absence during the school day is impossible or difficult.

The Local Authority should have a dedicated section for small primary schools on their website. This could take the form of a 'class' on the 'Learning Platform' or 'Virtual Learning Environment'. In this way the headteachers can provide support for each other and the Local Authority can provide web-based support. This would be particularly useful for the headteachers of small primary schools who cannot always manage to attend meetings due to a teaching commitment. The onus would have to be on the headteacher to log-on regularly in order to access the support. Once the system has been set up it would become 'self-managing' with the headteachers

uploading information for each other and information being added by the LA. It would have the additional advantage of becoming a form of network or ‘virtual cluster’ of small schools. This should be further extended to allow governor access.

7.2.3 The Central Government level

The third level for recommendations has implications for Central Government. Headteachers form the first layer of leadership at the school level. They interact with the Local Authority at the next level and both headteachers and Local Authorities interact with Central Government at the third level. It has been evidenced in the research that the headteachers have to deal with initiatives that have been legislated by Central Government. It has been seen that these include Ofsted inspections, in addition to curriculum initiatives and meeting exacting financial standards which are examples of ‘centralised-decentralisation’. The recommendations at Central Government level are shown in Figure 7.5.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a review of the pay structure for headteachers of small schools to take into account their responsibilities and workload in addition to the number of pupils on roll • Provide funding for specific projects for small schools working together • Provide funding for supply cover within the EHP replacement programme 	Funding implications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design training for NPQH to include size-specific elements • Return to NPQH training being organised at regional centres and independent of the National College • Train Ofsted inspectors to have an awareness of the difficulties associated with small schools and have direction on making judgements about small schools 	Training implications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amend initiatives such as FMSIS so that they meet the needs of small schools more equitably • Link groups of schools with a local university • Set up web-based support 	Support implications

Figure 7.5: Recommendations at Central Government level

It should be noted that the recommendations in all of the sections of Figure 7.5 have financial implications so it is unlikely that it would be possible to implement them at the present time. However, that is not to say that they should not be aired and, further, they could become areas to be considered at a Central Government level in the future. The research findings showed that the headteachers in the sample had a heavy workload, whilst their pay structure is lower than that of their counterparts in larger primary schools. The government should urgently conduct a review into this area and introduce a scheme that takes account of the leadership and management responsibilities of headteachers in small primary schools, not just numbers of pupils on roll. This does have financial implications and so it is recognised that this is unlikely to be implemented in the current financial climate but, as stated earlier, I am considering the research from an educational stance. It is also acknowledged that there are implications for terms and conditions of employment so the unions would also need to be involved in any negotiations.

The evidence showed that there needs to be the opportunity for clusters of small schools to work together on areas that are of particular interest to all of them. In the previous section it was recommended that schools form clusters for various purposes at the school level. That theme is continued in this section at the Central Government level as working in clusters of schools can work at various levels.

Personal Reflection 37

Some years ago Central Government provided funding for small schools to work together on joint projects. This funding was dependant on the schools producing an action plan that detailed how the project would impact on the schools concerned.

Clusters of schools should be enabled to work together on identified areas of professional development. This could be facilitated through the reinstatement of the ‘Standards Fund Small School Grant’ funding from Central Government for projects for small schools. This scheme was an effective method of helping schools to work in partnership with each other. It has a cost implication but this would be more economical than trying to provide funding for individual schools. This would have the advantage that schools would have to work together on a project and so ideas and examples of good practice can be shared by a wider audience of headteachers as well as expertise being shared between several schools. It would also have the effect of lessening the feeling of isolation felt by some of the headteachers, as evidenced in the research.

The second group of recommendations in Figure 7.5 is concerned with training issues. It was shown in the research that some headteachers were of the opinion that the training for the National Professional Qualification for Headship needs to be amended so that it includes issues concerning different sizes of schools. The training is generic rather than size or phase specific so it would be helpful to have an element of phase specific training. It is difficult to have size specific training as the trainees will not know to what size school they will be appointed for their first headship.

However, the research findings suggest that part of the training should include spending time in schools of different sizes. It should be possible to organise for NPQH training to include visits to schools of different sizes as part of the training. There should also be a 'buddy' system which pairs trainees from large schools with trainees from small schools. This would benefit all trainees as they will be able to share and understand each other's experiences. This could comprise a 'workshop' session as part of one of the modules that has a comparison of issues that may be encountered in different size schools with headteachers of small schools involved in the delivery of the session alongside their counterparts from larger schools. Ideally this would form an important part of the NPQH training as all of the headteachers in the sample were appointed to small schools for their first headship. This should also form part of the early training for newly appointed headteachers of small primary schools.

The training for NPQH and training for new headteachers come under the National College (previously known as the National College for School Leadership) which means that the training reflects Central Government policy and which allows the government to influence headteachers and assert power over practices in schools. Headteachers would benefit from the NPQH training being organised on a regional basis, at centres connected to universities, so that it is independent from the National College thus allowing for the development and maintenance of pedagogical standards in schools.

Linked to the preparation for headship is the training and support for newly appointed headteachers. It is clear that there has been a lack of consistency in these

programmes and following the formation of a new government in May 2010 it is likely to change yet again. It was seen in the research that some of the headteachers did not access their full entitlement to the particular programme, whether it was HEADLAMP, HIP or EHP, because supply cover was not included within the funding and so they could not be released from their teaching commitment. It is vital that the new programme includes an element of funding for supply cover when the headteacher has a teaching commitment. It also should have some training or support that is specific to small primary schools rather than being completely generic, supported by more web-based training materials that headteachers could access at a time when they are not teaching. This would also allow for training materials to be produced or adapted to the small school situation.

The Ofsted framework for inspecting schools (OFSTED, 2009) is the same for all schools regardless of phase or size. The training for the inspectors should, but does not, include issues that are pertinent to small schools as shown in this research. The research has identified the issue of subject co-ordinators having multiple areas to cover and factors surrounding small cohorts. The framework for inspecting schools needs amending in order to take into account these issues so that they are better reflected in the final report for the schools. There is currently a review into the Ofsted framework so there is an opportunity to replace the 'one size fits all' framework with a framework that takes some account of context. This is an area where the experienced headteachers of small schools could use their expertise and influence by training as Ofsted inspectors although they would not necessarily only inspect small schools.

The third group of recommendations in Figure 7.5 have implications for support for headteachers. It is clear that the Government's initiatives such as the Financial Management Standards in Schools need to be amended to be more relevant to the situation in small primary schools. The financial standards are lacking in that they do not take account of the staffing structure in a small school and the same criteria are applied to schools whether they have fewer than 100 pupils or more than 1000 pupils. Consequently, some areas of the standards are difficult for a small primary school to achieve. It is clear that the application of the standards need to be context specific so that they take account of the size and phase of the school. Pragmatically, it is recognised that there needs to be a measure of comparability between the standards for schools of all sizes so there will be some areas that would be common to all schools, regardless of size or primary or secondary phase; but there are some elements that are appropriate to the size of the school, such as an acknowledgement that small schools do not usually have a bursar and consequently those standards would not be appropriate for small schools.

Groups of small primary schools should be linked with a local university. One way is by linking groups of schools with the education department of a local university. In this way feelings of isolation felt by headteachers of small schools may be overcome and there would be a mutual benefit for the university and the schools. The members of staff would have access to a wide literature resource while the university would benefit from strong links with small schools and so their trainee teachers would be more aware of different sizes of schools. This would enable headteachers of small schools to tap into a source of current leadership and management issues in the appropriate journals which they may not otherwise be able to access. The schools

would be able to share their practice with the trainee teachers as well as gaining an insight into how they are trained. In this way the schools are able to show the trainee teachers the issues of teaching in a small school.

The final recommendation at Central Government level is to provide web-based support for the headteachers in small schools.

Personal Reflection 38

When I first became a headteacher of a small school there was a group for headteachers of small schools on the 'Talking Heads' section of the NCSL website. This group is no longer in existence. I get weekly 'Leadership Links' sent by email from NAHT which highlight current issues in schools. This is generic and not phase or size specific. I also have a monthly 'National College Highlights' sent by email from the National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services.

Web-based support should take the form of alerting schools to new initiatives. It would also provide useful links to resources such as appropriate journal articles. There should be a section where schools are able to share good practices that they have found to be effective and there would be the opportunity to share policies and other documents with each other. There should also be a 'chat-room' area where headteachers can have dialogues with each other. This links to "...an emerging information technology-based variation of mentoring known as Virtual Peer Mentoring..." (Eldredge, 2010:7). The use of technology in this way means that headteachers of small schools can keep up to date with initiatives and support each other at a convenient time thus negating the need for supply cover or arranging meetings around teaching commitments. However, it is evident that this is dependent

on the headteachers finding both the time and the inclination to access these resources.

In order to undertake these recommendations there needs to be a designated person or small group of people at the DfE (the DCSF changed to the DfE on 12th May 2010 after the recent change of government) who are charged with the remit to oversee small primary schools as a specific group of schools. They will need to liaise with the School Improvement Adviser with oversight of small schools at the Local Authority level which would then provide the link between the different levels. On a practical level, this person could be a seconded headteacher of a small school or a newly-retired headteacher employed on a part-time basis in a consultancy role.

While the research has clearly taken an educational viewpoint it cannot be completely divorced from the political situation as that inevitably has a bearing on the educational arena. One area that has not been discussed in this research is a consideration of the future of small primary schools. The current political agenda is to compel weaker schools to become academies under the care of an 'outstanding' school, as shown, (as shown in a press release from the Secretary of State for Education on 16th June 2011 (DfE, 2011)), in addition to some schools becoming academies in order to become independent of their Local Authority (Vaughan, 2011). However, small primary schools would have difficulty finding the additional personnel that would be required if they converted to an academy (Vaughan, 2011) which would question the viability of small primary schools. It is possible for several schools to convert to academy status as a group or cluster of schools and this may be how Central Government sees the way forward for small schools in the future.

The current research has shown, as one interpretation, that headteachers of small primary schools have to perform multiple roles; they often have a teaching commitment which some found difficult to maintain; and their schools are reliant on funding being linked to the numbers on roll and as a consequence they are underfunded. A radical approach to address these vulnerabilities could be to merge small schools with other schools under one headteacher so that they become the same size as a larger school. This would enable the schools to solve the problem of not having a sufficient number of personnel to form a senior leadership team and to carry out administrative and financial activities; the funding would be comparable to larger schools as it would be based on the combined roll of all of the schools involved. This would enable the headteacher to be a 'non-teaching' headteacher. However, this would be a solution based on political and economic grounds as opposed to educational grounds. It would be a short-sighted move to take this 'rationalising' route and not to invest in education for the future. It has been seen in the current research that headteachers disagree with this policy as they take an apolitical slant on the way forward and want 'clusters' of small schools to work in a supporting but not subsuming manner. The evidence from this research showed that the headteachers influenced the individual identity and ethos of their schools. Many of the small schools were in rural areas and they formed an important part of the local community. It is likely that these benefits would be lost if the schools did not exist in their own right with their own headteacher. There is a mismatch between the perceived way that the government would like to move schools, such as academies and federations, and the way that the headteachers in this research would like to move forward educationally.

7.3 The next steps: further study

This research took the form of a case study which limited the way in which the findings could be generalised to all small primary schools, although the schools were all comparable for the specific Local Authority in this study. There is an immediate imperative for headteachers of small primary schools to influence political changes while there is still a chance to do so and while they exist in their own right and not as part of a larger federation of schools. It would be relevant to conduct a national survey of the headteachers of all of the small primary schools in England in order to ascertain what the headteachers need for succession planning and which of the recommendations identified through this research they would like to see funded. An impact study could be conducted after the recommendations have been implemented. This would enable the establishment of a better educational stance within the political environment that surrounds it before considering further research from a political stance, or changes solely driven by political pragmatism.

While this research has identified leadership in small primary schools from the headteachers' perspective, it must be remembered that the headteacher's perspective is only one view out of several different views. Further research could be undertaken in order to consider leadership in small primary schools from the perspective of the governors. The governing body has been given more powers for leading the school since the Educational Reform Act of 1988 and the advent of Local Management of Schools. However, they still have to operate within certain parameters that have been set by Central Government. The headteacher of one of the schools engaged in this research recently approached me on behalf of her chair of governors as they wanted some information pertaining to governance of a small school. This was an apt

illustration of the need to include governance as a future direction for further research.

Linked to this area would be examining leadership in small primary schools from the perspective of Local Authority advisers. The Local Authority carries some influence over the schools in its care and control. There are some recommendations that concern the Local Authority level and so it would be relevant to conduct further research using the Local Authority perspective which would give a political stance. This study has not considered the stance of the unions and so further studies should include the views of the unions, particularly the headteachers' unions.

This research was not intended to be a comparative study of leadership in small primary schools and leadership in larger primary schools. However, this could be the focus of further research in the future in order to validate by comparison and to strengthen the model of leadership in small primary schools that has been identified and analysed in this research.

7.4 Concluding Remarks

There is a crisis looming where there are not enough headteachers to fill the vacancies that are occurring. There were 160 vacancies for primary headteachers advertised on the Times Educational Supplement website on 10th May 2010 (www.tes.co.uk/jobsearch accessed 10.05.10).

Personal Reflection 39

Since the beginning of this research the headteacher of one of the schools has left the school. The vacancy has been advertised twice with no applicants on either occasion. At a recent meeting for all headteachers and Chairs of Governors in the LA we were told that the age profile of the headteachers is such that many will be retiring in the next five years which will cause a problem for the LA.

The new model looks to ensure that there is a support mechanism in place for the headteachers of small primary schools and that will then assist with the recruitment and retention of the headteachers. It also highlights the need for human resources to be developed within the school and the need for the leadership of the school to be of a strategic and sustainable nature.

This research is increasingly timely following the recent general election in May 2010 as headteachers face a time of change and uncertainty in the current political climate. Arguably, the change of government is an ideal time to implement the recommendations that have been identified through this research. However, while it is unlikely that the recommendations that carry financial implications will be implemented during the current economic climate it could be said that it is short-sighted of the Government not to invest in the long-term future of education. A starting point could be headteachers and officers from the Local Authority considering how some of the recommendations could be implemented with minimal financial outlay. A 'working group' could be set up so that headteacher and Local Authority representatives can discuss and plan for the implementation of the recommendations made within this research as funds permit.

This research has added a unique contribution to the knowledge about small schools. In particular, it has added to the body of knowledge concerning leadership in small primary schools. The research has addressed the overarching aim of devising a new model for leadership in small primary schools through exploring aspects of leadership that are distinctive in small schools. Also it has identified key training and support mechanisms that headteachers of small schools considered to be valuable. The empirical research examined the question: what does leadership look like in small primary schools? It started from the premise, which has been borne out, that there is a leadership style that may be particular to small schools as it is context-led.

This research has important implications for Central Government and Local Authorities as small primary schools would seem to be the “forgotten sector” which is little valued and little understood. There is also a part to play for the trade unions, particularly the NAHT, as they have a role in supporting their members as well as raising the profile of small schools. The research has clearly shown that leading a small primary school presents challenges for the headteacher, due to the small number of members of staff, but these challenges can become opportunities when tackled by an appropriately trained and supported headteacher whose school is not expected to slot into a ‘one size fits all’ model.

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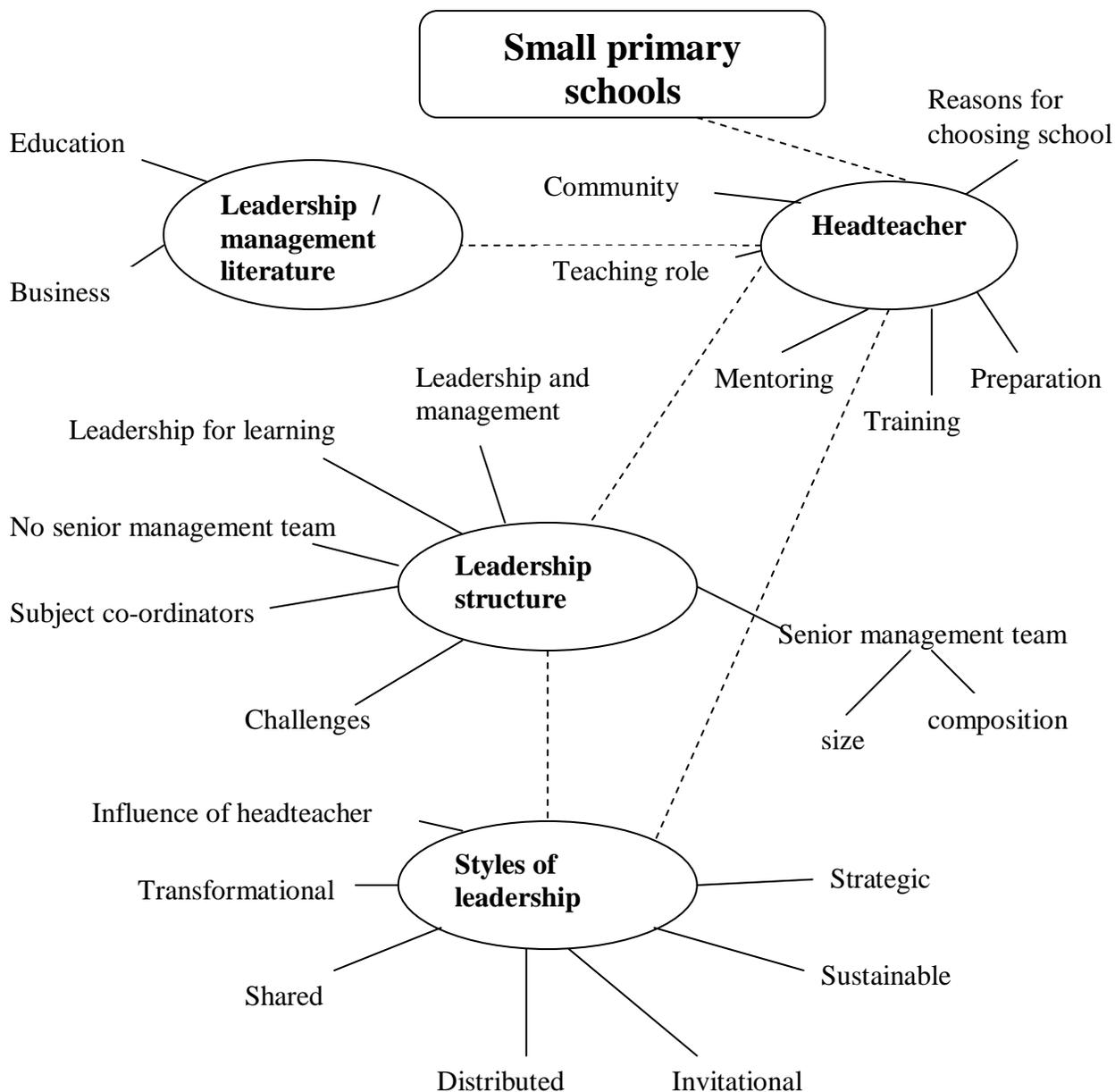
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Appendix A: Template for analysis of data: first level codes



Appendix B: An example of first and second order codes used in the data analysis

First order code: Challenges for small primary schools

Comments from interviews and questionnaires	Second order codes
Can become insular	Insular
Feeling of isolation	
Staff issues can get out of hand as can't avoid each other	Staff issues
Only 1 teacher planning per age group	
Fewer professional development opportunities	
Small team to share all the jobs and have all the skills	
Sickness absence has large effect	
When 1 person is out of school it is a high percentage of staff	
Staff must get on	
Teachers have to take on more leadership roles	Workload for teachers
Teachers need to co-ordinate too many subjects (4 responses)	
Lack of leadership team	
Multi-co-ordinator roles	
Leadership and management can fall to a few individuals	
Fewer people to share mammoth amount of paperwork	
Too much responsibility for everyone	Workload for headteacher
Workload for headteacher (4 responses)	
Teaching commitment of headteacher (2 responses)	
Not time to complete consultation documents and awards paperwork	Financial implications
Budget is tight (4 responses)	
Not having funding/building to introduce a pre-school	
Money not available for improvement	Cohort issues
Hard to analyse data for small cohorts	
3 year groups in a class is hard for teachers	
Loss of a small number of pupils can have a large effect on budget	
Older pupils begin to feel trapped – they're ready to fly the nest	
Social options for small cohorts can be limiting for children	
Unpredictable cohort sizes can have severe effect on budgets	Limited resources
Limited space	
Limited resources	

Appendix C: Overview of support programmes for headteachers

The HEADLAMP programme was replaced by the Headteachers' Induction Programme in 2003.

The HIP programme was designed to be more systematic than HEADLAMP and was overseen by the National College for School Leadership which was renamed as the National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services in 2009.

The HIP programme was replaced with Early Headship Provision which was due to be replaced with in April 2010.

HEADLAMP, HIP and EHP all carried an amount of funding to be used for leadership and management training for the newly-appointed headteacher.

EHP had less funding attached to it but incorporated an entire training programme called 'New Visions: Induction to Headship'.

Appendix D: A Taxonomy of Distribution

Type of distributed leadership	Process of distributing leadership
Formal distribution	through designated roles/job description
Pragmatic distribution	through necessity/ often ad hoc delegation of workload
Strategic distribution	based on planned appointment of individuals to contribute positively to the development of leadership throughout the school
Incremental distribution	devolving greater responsibility as people demonstrate their capacity to lead
Opportunistic distribution	capable teachers willingly extending their roles to school-wide leadership because they are predisposed to taking initiative to lead
Cultural distribution	practising leadership as a reflection of the school's culture, ethos and traditions

Source: MacBeath et al, 2004:22

Appendix E: Programme of Work Timeline

Year 1	May 06	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan 07	Feb	March	April
Work plan	Literature review Pilot study – collect data, analysis, write as assessed work										Methodology	

Year 2	May 07	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan 08	Feb	March	April
Work plan	Methodology		Interview 1	Data - themes	Interview 2	Data - themes	Interview 3	Data - themes	Interview 4	Continue data analysis		

Year 3	May 08	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan 09	Feb	March	April
Work plan	Interview 5	Synoptic account for Annual Progression		Data analysis themes	Continue data collection – interview 6 Write Intro			Data analysis Update lit review		Data collection - interviews 7,8 Data analysis		

Year 4	May 09	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan 10	Feb	Mar	Apr
Work plan	Interviews 9, 10. Questionnaires, Analysis, write up			Writing dissertation								

Year 5	May 10	June	July	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan 11	Feb	Mar	Apr
Work plan	Complete final draft		Submit 2 nd July	Viva	Revisions of chapters						

Appendix F: Extract from Audit Tool used in pilot study

The highlighting follows that of the headteacher. Handwritten comments have been added using a handwriting font.

1 Aims, Values and Culture

	Aims and values
Emerging	Aims and values refer to concepts such as high expectations, learning for life and quality teaching. They feature in a variety of documents published by the school such as staff handbooks, pupil diaries and the school prospectus.
Establishing	Aims and values impact on the day-to-day work of staff, pupils and are visible in the wider community. They are made real through, for example, the home-school agreement, PSHE work and regular assemblies. The school's mission statement refers directly to pupil learning and expectations. Work with staff and the wider school community regularly revisits the meaning of this.
Enhancing	<p>Aims and/or mission are distinctive, memorable and highly visible in every classroom and other central areas of the school. These central areas powerfully communicate a celebration of achievement and a learning ethos. Aims and values are used to stimulate dialogue at all levels. They are explicitly linked with principles of learning, planning and review processes.</p> <p>Co-ordinated visits to classrooms seek out evidence of pupil voice and responsibility in line with the school's aims.</p> <p>Staff explore and make regular use of individualised concepts such as 'performance-based lessons'.</p>

	People
Emerging	Learning and people are valued.
Establishing	<p>The school uses specific strategies to ensure that staff of the highest quality are consistently appointed.</p> <p>There is a strong emphasis on staff enjoying their work in a culture where learning expectations are high. Risks can be taken and mistakes can be made without fear of reprisal in the pursuit of excellence.</p>

Enhancing	Honesty, trust, respect, constructive criticism and celebration are effectively modelled by the leadership team and acted out across the school and in the wider community.
	Environment
Emerging	Some parts of the school environment show a good focus on learning but, overall, it is uneven.
Establishing	There is an explicit recognition that the school environment conveys powerful messages about learning and leadership. There are high expectations of both staff and pupils in this respect.
Enhancing	Determined leadership provides well resourced, rich learning environments. Planning and assessment criteria are consistently available in a language that is accessible to all.

	Learning teams
Emerging	There is a commitment to improvement and teamwork. Collaboration between staff occurs in some areas but often there is a sense that the set curriculum inhibits creativity and innovation and provides little space or time for experimentation and development.
Establishing	Staff work effectively in teams. There is a good learning and teaching focus to their work and clear arrangements for sharing good ideas. Staff routinely share good practice and a variety of forums exist specifically for this purpose. <i>Small school makes this difficult.</i> <i>No parallel classes</i>
Enhancing	There is a strong emphasis on learning teams, a determination to improve the school with high expectations of staff and governors. Systems are in place which promptly identify and effectively address poor or indifferent practice. Teachers have a degree of autonomy to experiment and take risks. Good practice is celebrated regularly and routinely and staff morale is high.

Appendix G: Interview schedule with references to the literature

	Question	Prompt	Reason for question	Theoretical references
1	How long have you been a headteacher?		Background, do experienced heads stay in small schools?	Number of years experience does not make a difference to organizational learning (Mulford and Silins, 2005)
2	Tell me about your experiences prior to headship	Previous role?	Background, preparation for headship	
3	Is this your first headship?	No – tell me about your previous headships, how many pupils?	Small schools for 1 st headship?	
4	Why did you choose a small school?		Background, reasons for choice	Size of school is important (Kimber, 2003; Mulford and Silins, 2005)
5	Tell me about the preparation you had for headship	NPQH? Other? What impact did this have?	Impact of training, preparation Levels of leadership	Positive impact of leadership training (Brundrett, 2006) Fostering leadership (MacBeath & Myers, 1999; Fullan, 2003) Sustainable leadership (Hargreaves & Fink, 2003; Hargreaves, 2005)
6	Tell me about the sort of help or support you needed for headship	Was this available? How useful was it?	Preparation, networks Sustainable leadership	
7	Tell me about your school	Size, organisation - classes No. of Teachers, TAs, Admin staff, how deployed?	Structure of school Levels of leadership	Leadership throughout the school (Fink, 2005; Fullan, 2003; Stoll et al 2003; Davies, 2005)
8	Do you have a teaching commitment?	How much? How do you feel about this?	Possible barrier? Levels of leadership	Balancing teaching commitment with leadership & management (Ofsted, 2003; Davies, 2005) Difference between leadership and management (Bennis & Nanus, 1985)
9	Tell me about your areas of responsibility	Curriculum areas? Management? How do you feel about this?	Workload of HT in small schools, possible barrier	
10	How do you see your role of leadership within the school?		HT as leader + influence Styles of leadership	Role of HT central to learning process (Fullan, 2003; Garratt, 1990) Strategic leadership (Davies &
11	How do you see your role within the context of leadership for learning?	Staff Pupils	HT as leader + influence Styles of leadership	

				Davies, 2005) Creating environment (Brighouse & Woods, 1999; Stoll et al, 2003)
12	Have you had access to any help or training in this area?	If so, what? Tell me about its usefulness, impact	Impact of training programmes	Brundrett, 2006
13	Are you aware of the training that is available to headteachers? Tell me about any you've accessed.	NCSL? How did you find out about it? Was there a cost implication?	Training issues + possible barriers	Quality of leadership is important (Bowring-Carr & West-Burnham, 1997; Stoll et al 2003)
14	Is there any other help or training that you feel would be useful in this area?	What? Why?	Training issues, suggestions for improvements	
15	Tell me about the ethos for learning in your school	What does it look like in your school? What are your priorities?	School climate + HT's influence	Inviting others (Novak, 2005) Ethical leadership (Starratt, 2005) Creating environment (Stoll et al, 2003) Leaders influence direction (Southworth, 2005; Harris, 2005)
16	How do you feel that you influence the ethos for learning?		School climate + HT's influence	
17	Are the pupils involved in decision-making?	How? School Council? Could this be developed further? How?	Levels of leadership	Starratt, 2005; Fullan, 2005; Fink, 2005 Learning is responsibility of everyone (Garratt, 1990)
18	Tell me how staff are involved in formulating school policy	Curriculum policies Decisions that affect day to day running of the school Are you satisfied with this or would you like to develop it further? How?	Is this a problem (barrier) in small schools? Levels of leadership	Leadership and management tasks should be shared throughout the school (Ofsted, 2003) Invitational leadership (Purkey & Novak, 1984; Novak, 2005) Leaders influence classroom practice (Southworth, 2005) Learning-centred leadership (Southworth, 2005)
19	Tell me about staff planning and evaluations	Do they plan together or in isolation? Opportunities for critical evaluation? Opportunity to review and develop shared practices? Could this be developed further? How?	Is this a problem (barrier) in small schools? Levels of leadership	

20	Tell me about any coaching opportunities in the school	Is there opportunity to observe other teachers? What is the impact on learning?	Is this a problem (barrier) in small schools? Levels of leadership	Modelling, monitoring and sharing practice (Southworth, 2005)
21	Tell me about the professional development needs of the staff	Teachers, TAs Is training available? External or internal? Barriers to accessing training?	Training issues + possible barriers	Levels of learning (Southworth, 2005) Distributed leadership (Harris, 2005) Empowerment by keeping up-to-date (Shackleton, 1995)
22	Tell me about the leadership structure in your school	Co-ordinators for all subject areas? How do the co-ordinator roles work? What responsibilities do they have?	Leadership styles and levels of leadership	Sustainable leadership (Hargreaves & Fink, 2003; Stoll, Fink & Earl, 2003)
23	Tell me about any other ways leadership can be seen in the school.	SMT? Who is in it? How does it work? Would you like to improve this model in some way? How?	Leadership styles and levels Suggestions for a improved model	Distributed leadership (MacBeath et al, 2004; Harris, 2005; Fink, 2005; Spillane & Timperley, 2005)
24	Tell me about your preferred leadership structure in a small school	How would you like to develop the leadership structure?	Suggestions for an improved model	Shared leadership (Day et al, 1998; Brighouse & Woods, 1999)
25	Do you have a policy specifically for learning?	Yes – what are the key areas? How was it devised? Who had input? No – what are your key areas for learning?	Leadership styles and levels of leadership Influence on learning	Learning central to growth of organisations (Garratt, 1990)
26	Tell me about any areas where you work with other schools	What schools are you linked with? How? What impact does it have? Is it useful? In what ways? Would you like to extend the links? How?	Networks – current practice and suggestions for improved model Levels of leadership	Maintain organisational integrity in face of competition (Parker & Stone, 2003) Distributed leadership across organisations (Fink, 2005)
27	Did you have a mentor when you were appointed to your first headship?	Did s/he have experience of small primary schools? Did you find it useful to have a mentor? How? / Why not? Was there a cost implication? If so, did you consider it good value for money?	Identify advantages/disadvantages of mentoring system Barriers to leadership?	Mentoring as a model (Garratt, 1990) Modelling and sharing practice (Southworth, 2005)

28	How do you think the mentoring system could be improved?		Improved model	
29	Tell me about any support for small schools that is provided by the Local Authority	What form does it take How useful is the support? How did you find out about the support? Could it be improved in any way?	LA present model of support Ideas for improved model?	Education treated as annual budget item and not an investment opportunity (Garratt, 1990)
	If none provided	Would you welcome support from the LA? What form would you like it to take?	Implications for improved model	Pressure from local government can be a barrier (Middlewood et al, 2005)
30	Tell how your school works with the local community	Would you like to develop this further? How?	Levels of leadership School's place in local community	Importance of good relations with community (Bowring-Carr & West-Burnham, 1997; Fullan, 2003)
31	Tell me about the advantages of small primary schools	What is the impact on leadership for learning?	Background	Successful leaders respond productively to opportunities and challenges (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003)
32	Tell me about any disadvantages of small primary schools	What is the impact on leadership for learning? Can this be overcome? How?	Barriers Suggestions for improved model	Difficult to separate leadership and management (Lingard et al, 2003)
33	Tell me about your vision for the school	How is it set? Who is involved? How is it shared with staff? Pupils? Governors? Parents?	HT's influence Levels of leadership	Leadership involves having a vision (Shackleton, 1995) Transformational leadership (Middlewood et al, 2005)
34	Do you have a mission statement?	What is in it? How was it devised? Who was involved? How often is it revisited?	Styles of leadership – staff involvement in setting direction of school	Leadership needs to be sustainable (Hargreaves & Fink, 2003)

Appendix H: Questionnaire developed from the interview schedule

Additional spaces for responses have been removed.

1	How long have you been a headteacher?	Years
2	Is this your first headship?	YES / NO
3	Did you choose a small school deliberately?	YES / NO
	If yes, please give reason(s):	
4	Tell me about your experiences prior to headship	
5	Tell me about your school.	
	How many pupils?	
	How many classes?	
	How are the classes organised (eg. mixed year groups, Key Stage, single year groups)?	
	How many teachers?	Full-time Part-time
	How many Teaching Assistants?	Full-time Part-time
	Number of Administration staff ?	Full-time Part-time
6	Do you have a teaching commitment?	YES / NO
	If so, what proportion of the week?	
7	Do you have NPQH?	YES / NO
	Tell me about any other preparation you had for headship	
8	What are your areas of responsibility?	
9	What training for headteachers have you accessed?	
10	Did you have HEADLAMP, HIP or EHP funding?	YES / NO
	Have you used it all?	YES / NO If no, do you expect to use it all? YES / NO
	How useful was it? 1 2 3 4 5 (1 = not useful, 5 = very useful)	
	Comments:	
11	Tell me about the leadership structure in your school	

	Do you have a deputy head? YES / NO	Do you have an assistant head? YES / NO
	Do you have a senior teacher? YES / NO	Do you have Co-ordinators for all subject areas? YES / NO
12	What is your preferred leadership structure in a small school?	
13	Did you have a mentor when you were appointed to your first headship?	YES / NO
	If so, did s/he have experience of small primary schools?	YES / NO
	Did you find it useful to have a mentor? 1 2 3 4 5 (1 = not useful, 5 = very useful)	
	Comments:	
	Was there a cost implication?	YES / NO
	If so, did you consider it good value?	YES / NO / NA
14	Do you think the mentoring system could be improved?	YES / NO
	If so, how?	
15	Would you welcome support from the LA?	YES / NO
	If so, what form would you like it to take?	
16	Tell me about any advantages of small primary schools • • • •	
17	Tell me about any disadvantages of small primary schools • • • •	
18	Tell me about your vision for the school	
	Who is involved in creating the vision?	
	How is it shared with stakeholders?	
19	Tell me about any coaching opportunities in your school	
20	How do you see your role of leadership within your school?	
21	Tell me about any other ways leadership can be seen in your school.	

Appendix I: Extracts from two of the interview transcripts

JR* How do you see your role of leadership within the school?

HT** How do I see it? Well I'm very reluctant to say a leader because obviously you are a leader but I think I'm much more of a .. I'm a very democratic sort of a head and I've done the LPSH and I came out as democratic .. we very much discuss things together so I don't see myself as I'm the boss and they're ... whatever job I ask people to do I'm quite prepared to do it myself .. it's that sort of leadership really ..

JR What about leadership for learning?

HT Well I think I have a great influence over that really because we've just started the creative curriculum and that was mostly because of my enthusiasm for it .. um I took a younger member of staff who didn't know anything about the creative curriculum .. I took her on a course last summer .. she was very excited about it. I spoke to another member of staff, she was very excited about it and we're going to do training in April, 2 days training with [REDACTED] but I didn't want to wait until then so I said let's start now so I brought them all on board even the reluctant one we had but she's now on board and we're all doing it. So I think I do try and lead um and we're doing lots of different things, we're doing art in a small group of schools and assessment for learning, things like that ...

JR Have you had access to any help or training in this area?

HT No I don't think I have really although I did find LPSH .. have you done that?

JR No I haven't

HT That's quite interesting actually and that helped me to decide what sort of a leader, leader in inverted commas, that I was because it's very, it's questionnaire so I had to go online to fill in the questionnaire, to answer questions about leadership, about the school, about the vision and all the rest of it and then we go back and get feedback which was really, really interesting because where I thought we were on those areas, various different things, the staff did as well and he said that was really good because it shows there's no area .. there's no major area for weakness, there's slight discrepancies, so I think that helped me define my role I think ..

JR So that helped?

HT Yes, I'd recommend it actually, it's quite interesting..

* JR – Interviewer

** HT – Headteacher being interviewed

JR* Tell me about the leadership structure in the school .. you told me you've got a co-ordinator for literacy, numeracy and science .. and a senior teacher .. is that your preferred structure?

HT** Yes .. and we've got Early Years – the Foundation Stage leader ...

JR So you just share the other subjects?

HT I said that would be the easiest thing to do but it's going to throw a whole new light on it now in September .. because we're not going to be doing QCA, we're going .. do you do the creative curriculum?

JR We're going towards that now ..

HT We went on 2 day training .. it cost us £2500 for us all to go but I think the TAs felt really valued and they're really keen, listening to it all and saying "we could do this" and "we could do that" so I'm hoping that .. so then we'll be looking at the subjects and really making sure that we've got coverage and um that they're resourced but the resources will come from all sorts .. there won't necessarily be a geography resource .. it'll be .. it will change the whole dynamics of leadership and the subjects ...

JR So what is your preferred leadership structure .. have you got a senior management team?

HT Not really, no .. well, [REDACTED]'s senior teacher but I think it's just different in a small school .. because I think in a small school it's a bit of roll your sleeves up and get on with it, you know ...

JR And you're happy with the way this works?

HT Yes, yes .. I mean sometimes I think there's jobs that if I was in another school I'd probably be giving to somebody else .. I've got a secretarial background so that's a good thing ...

JR Tell me how you work with other schools

HT Well we are, we're beginning to um .. we contact [REDACTED], that's nearest, we were going to have a Roman day with them but it all backfired and um .. we've got a bit of a problem with it but we're going to try and do some activities with them and I know [REDACTED] want to get involved with us so .. we're part of the Trust, we're part of the [REDACTED] Trust ...

JR Do you find that helpful?

HT Well it's only just started out at the minute so we're not really feeling the benefits just yet but hopefully eventually

* JR – Interviewer

** HT – Headteacher being interviewed

Appendix J: Example of part of completed questionnaire

2	Is this your first headship?	YES / NO
3	Did you choose a small school deliberately?	YES / NO
	If yes, please give reason(s): <i>I feel small schools provide a family type atmosphere, I wanted a teaching commitment in order to prevent me becoming the type of headteacher who asks too much of the staff.</i>	
4	Tell me about your experiences prior to headship: <i>I returned to teaching after time off for my child. I was too "expensive" to be "just" a class teacher and got a management role of KS 1 leader of a large school</i>	
16	Tell me about any advantages of small primary schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Easy to monitor and evaluate what is going on</i> • <i>Contact with all children which makes providing a good learning environment an easier task</i> • <i>Easier to create a good team spirit</i> • <i>All children known very well by staff and the other way round</i> 	
17	Tell me about any disadvantages of small primary schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Less people to share the mammoth amount of paperwork</i> • <i>We do not get the time to do consultation docs and awards in a bid to keep down paperwork</i> • <i>Fewer professional dev/career opportunities for the staff</i> • 	
19	Tell me about any coaching opportunities in your school <i>Have tried this but it didn't really work. Works well for positive issues but not so well with negative. However I do ask people to assist others but it does depend on personalities.</i>	
20	How do you see your role of leadership within your school? <i>A very important role in that my attitude and behaviour seem to have a greater effect on staff. I feel I need to give direction yet allow others to suggest and change it if necessary. All stakeholders need to be able to feel a key player to the school.</i>	

Appendix K: Extract from minutes of meeting

Meeting of group of headteachers on 20th October 2009

5. Any Other Business

JR wanted to check with us that she had interpreted the comments in our interviews in the way that we'd intended. She gave a short presentation of her research into leading small primary schools that she was going to give to the other students in her group at university in November. We all agreed with her results that showed that there is little support at the LA for headteachers and agreed with JR's recommendation that there should be more support such as an association of small schools. We talked about the different ways that some schools had said they used subject co-ordinators and agreed that it is a problem with teachers having lots of areas to be in charge of. We agreed that it depended on your staff and where your school was in its development so there probably isn't one way that would suit all of us all of the time. ■ said she had trouble getting to meetings when they clashed with her teaching which had also come out in the research. ■ said that it was important that we supported each other like we do in our group. ■ said that she hadn't realised how different it was being head of a small school until she took up the acting headship at ■. Everyone was pleased that we'd been able to help JR with her research.

Appendix L: Data concerning mentor experiences

Head	Had a mentor	Found mentor useful	Length of headship	Mentor had small school experience	Mentor system needs changing
I1	✓	X	5 yrs	✓	✓
I2	✓	✓	1.5 yrs	✓	X
I3	✓	X	4 yrs	?	✓
I4	✓	X	3.5 yrs	X	✓
I5	✓	X	15 yrs	?	✓
I6	✓	X	9.5 yrs	X	✓
I7	✓	X	7 yrs	✓	✓
I8	✓	✓	0.75 yr	?	✓
I9	✓	✓	0.75 yr	✓	X
I10	✓	✓	5 yrs	X	X
Q1	✓	✓	3yrs	✓	✓
Q2	✓	✓	2.5 yrs	✓	✓
Q3	✓	✓	4 yrs	✓	✓
Q4	✓	X	5 yrs	X	✓
Q5	✓	✓	2 yrs	✓	✓
Q6	✓	✓	2 yrs	X	✓
Q7	✓	✓	3 yrs	✓	X
Q8	✓	✓	6.5 yrs	✓	✓
Q9	✓	✓	8 yrs	✓	?
Q10	✓	✓	11 yrs	✓	?
Q11	✓	✓	13 yrs	✓	?
Q12	✓	✓	9 yrs	X	✓
Q13	✓	✓	2 yrs	X	✓
Q14	✓	X	1 yr	✓	✓
Q15	✓	✓	0.75 yr	✓	X
Q16	✓	✓	3 yrs	✓	✓

Key:

✓ - Yes

X - No

? - Not known

Appendix M: A Revised Primary Curriculum Model from the Rose Review

0-5 years	5-11 years	11-14 years
Communication, language and literacy	English, communication and languages	English
Personal, social and emotional development	Understanding physical development, health and wellbeing	Modern foreign languages
Physical development	Historical, geographical and social understanding	Personal, social, health and economic education
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Scientific and technological understanding	Physical education
Creative development	Understanding the arts	Citizenship
Problem solving, reasoning and numeracy	Understanding mathematics	History
	ICT across all areas of learning	Geography
		Science
		Design and technology
		Art and design
		Music
		Mathematics
		ICT

Curricular progression from 0-14

Rose, J. (2009) Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum: Final Report. DCSF Publications.

Appendix N: 'Ghost Pupil' Funding

The Infant Class Size Initiative means that there is a limit of up to 30 pupils in each Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 class (pupils up to the end of Year 2).

With the 'ghost funding' principle the number of eligible pupils is divided by 30 and funding is given for pupils up to the next multiple of 30. The amount of funding per pupil has been set at 1/30 of the salary for a teacher on pay point M6.

For example:

School 1:

The number of pupils in FS, Years 1 and 2 = 32 so there will be 28 'ghost pupils' (up to 60) and thus funding will be given for 60 pupils.

School 2:

The number of pupils in FS, Years 1 and 2 = 28 so there will be 2 'ghost pupils' (up to 30) and thus funding will be given for 30 pupils.

This means that School 1 will get approximately £28,000 for their "ghost pupils" and School 2 will get approximately £2,000 for "ghost pupils".