

**An Investigation into the reasons why deputy head  
teachers either decide/not decide to take the journey  
to headship**

**By**

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## **Abstract**

There has been a significant increase in interest in the recruitment crisis in the United Kingdom. Many schools have had to re-advertise jobs for head teachers. This study therefore focuses on why headship roles are proving to be so difficult to fill. What are the possible drivers or barriers that deputy head teachers face on their journey to headship? It also considers the support and guidance that head teachers give their deputies.

This is a qualitative study and data is gathered through semi-structured interviews carried out between January 2010 and May 2010 with head teachers and deputy head teachers from secondary schools in the south area of Birmingham. The study produced data that described the reasons why some deputies want to progress to headship (described as drivers) and why some do not (described as barriers). It also gave insight into head teacher's perceptions of the support that they provided their deputies and whether these correlated with what deputies perceived. In this first study three groups appear to emerge: those who want to progress to headship; those who do not want to progress to headship and those who are unsure about their progression. However barriers such as work life balance, being accountable and having low self-confidence interrupt the journeys of those deputy's not wanting headship and those who are unsure. For those deputies who do want headship, drivers such as the head teacher acting as a positive role model, having the opportunity to make a difference and having the oversight of whole school issues are the reasons why they want headship. Deputies who are

unsure about their progression interestingly cite all of the above barriers and one driver – having an oversight of whole school issues.

Formal and in-formal professional development such as the NPQH, coaching, mentoring, shadowing and the support of head teachers have all been identified as leadership learning opportunities for all of the deputies interviewed.

Applying established models of journey to headship such as Gronn's (1999) process of leader accession, a suggested extended model of 'accession' is offered for consideration and will be applied to deputy head teachers for the first time. It proposes that deputies who want to apply for headship go through Gronn's (1999) process of leader accession and continue on their journey to headship. These aspirants can be described as 'enchanted'. Those who do not want headship continue on in this stage and can be described as 'disenchanted' and those who are unsure have an interrupted journey mainly because of low self-confidence in their own abilities. This group I have called 'irresolute'. Whilst being subject to further research and development, these findings can be used to further understand the trajectory of deputy heads and has potential implications for the management of talent within organisations. This has important implications when developing potential leaders.

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Shaw (2006) states that, 'one in three schools is failing to appoint a head teacher when they first advertise, indicating a deepening crisis in leadership recruitment' (p.6). Similarly Rhodes and Brundrett (2005, 2006, and 2009) also write about a 'looming recruitment and retention crisis in the United Kingdom (UK)' (p. 1). A key factor in the declining number of head teachers is the age profile of the profession – a demographic 'retirement bulge' (IPPR, 2002; LDR, 2004; Ward, 2004) as 45% of the over 50s will be retiring in the next ten years. In recent years, the number of people taking early retirement after fifty five has also increased due to the demanding nature of the job and failure to achieve a successful work-life balance (Bristow et al., 2007). At the same time, not enough new leaders are emerging to replace those departing (Hayes, 2005; Hartle and Smith, 2004; Draper and McMichael, 2003, NSCL, 2007a; Bush, 2008b; Thomson, 2009; Thompson, 2010) state that given these trends, it is estimated that the number of school leaders retiring is likely to rise from 2,250 in 2004 to nearly 3,500 in 2009, dropping back to 2,500 in 2016. To address this shortfall, it is estimated that the number of school leaders will need to increase by 15 to 20 per cent by 2009. However the time taken to become a head teacher is typically twenty years as the average age of new heads is forty three, a figure that has not changed in over twenty five years (Earley and Weindling, 2004). This suggests that if

more head teachers are required the number of years it takes to progress to headship needs to be a lot shorter. This concern over leadership succession - especially the potential shortage of head teachers is reflected in the strategy of the National College of School Leadership (NCSL), which has made 'identifying and growing tomorrow's leaders' one of its key priorities (NCSL, 2007b).

This shortage is not only limited to this country but also to other western educational establishments (Fink and Brayman, 2006), with shortages being reported in the United States of America (USA) (Thomson et al., 2003); New Zealand (Brooking et al., 2003) and Australia (Gronn & Rawlings-Sanaei, 2003). The Netherlands, France, parts of Germany and Sweden also face an emerging leadership crisis based on teacher recruitment shortages (MacBeath, 2006). However, in contrast with western countries, most Asia-Pacific countries do not face this problem as there is a continuous supply of good teachers and central policies promote the forecast of leadership requirements. Coupled with this is that leadership talent is identified early in a teacher's career (MacBeath, 2006).

Therefore who will fill these posts? Deputy Head teachers are the obvious successors, but why aren't they coming forward? (Hayes, 2005; NSCL, 2010). They are behaving as 'sitting tenants' (Hayes, 2005) or 'career deputies' (MacBeath, 2011) which then has a 'knock on' effect on middle leaders not being able to progress to deputy headship. Therefore this study seeks to contribute to an explanation of why deputies are not coming forward

at this time. It also seeks to ascertain what levels of help and guidance deputies are getting. Are head teachers providing enough support and guidance and actively supporting their deputies' career development? Outcomes of this study will therefore contribute to the on-going research agenda and help shed light upon possible support and interventions useful in facilitation of transition to headship. The findings may be of importance to head teacher trainers, people working in local authorities, networks and other partnerships who are addressing the challenge of retaining and recruiting talented leaders to our schools.

The following works have been influential in helping to frame the study and specific reading around academic literature concerned with transition to headship both nationally and internationally. In particular 'the career pathways and professional lives' of senior leaders in educational institutions and their journey to headship. I will draw on 'professional pathways' which are theorised through the identification of phases or stages (Pascal and Ribbins 1998; Rayner and Ribbins 1999; Weindling 1999; Ribbins, 2003). There have been a number of attempts to describe the various stages or phases in a leadership career. Gronn's (1999) study of the life and career of Sir James Darling, a famous head teacher and educationalist in Australia, enabled him to identify four broad phases through which leaders commonly pass during the course of their life and career. These are depicted as formation (primary and secondary socialisation experiences), accession (preparing for and positioning one to be a leader), incumbency (becoming a senior leader) and divestiture (letting go after years of leadership). All of

these stages are focussed on head teachers' lives but the particular phase that this research deals with is with the accession stage. I will be researching deputies who are in post i.e. incumbent and who could potentially make the transition to headship. Gronn (1996) presents 'accession' as a:

stage of grooming or anticipation in which candidates for leadership roles rehearse their potential capacity to lead by direct comparison with existing leaders and the field of their prospective rivals for advancement (p. 34-36).

This specific phase is being studied as it is the most immediate experiences that may be the most influential on impacting on possible transition to headship.

Work carried out by Hayes (2005) will also be considered as he researches a picture of deputy headship in one London borough and examines how they are being prepared for headship. He uses terms such as 'sitting tenants', 'rising stars', 'ambitious deputy' and 'career deputy' to describe the different types of deputies in schools today. Other work that will be drawn on are ideas put forward by Draper and McMichael (2003) who describe incentives and disincentives that drive deputies to become head teachers. Gronn and Lacey (2004) put forward their notion of 'positioning' where aspirant leaders know who it is that they have to convince and 'that they are ready' to progress to headship. Work carried out by Browne-Ferrigno (2003) will also be consulted, where she looks at the nature of transformation that occurs as teachers learn to become principals. She found that: teachers' experiences in

informal and formal leadership, both prior to and while participating in a programme of leadership learning, help mould their conception of the job of headship; leadership programmes alone do not help incumbents to conceptualise the work of head teachers or to begin the necessary socialisation process; leadership practitioners begin initial socialisation, increases role clarification and develops skills and professional behaviours. To conclude she found that some teachers struggle to let go of their self - perceptions and adapt the identity of principal, which she felt was essential for transition to principal.

In the English national context I shall also be considering work carried out on the impact of the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH), which is one of a number of solutions that have been proposed within England that can help with the leadership shortages in schools. The NPQH is now also mandatory for the transition to headship. Does this qualification give deputy head teachers the confidence to progress? Other countries use alternatives to the NPQH which include assessment centres (Jackson and Kelley 2002); profiling instruments (Tomlinson and Holmes 2001); principal scouts (Tooms, 2001); and internship (Gray, 2001) will all be considered. How successful is educational leadership development and transition to head teacher from a global perspective – are other countries facing a similar problem with head teacher recruitment? Should we be looking at alternative models of leadership and reconceptualising the role? Is ‘shared’ leadership the way forward? Bush and Glover (2003); Court (2003); Harris and Muijs

(2005); PricewaterhouseCoopers (2007) have all explored the premise that school leadership may be 'shared' successfully. Should head teachers who are leaving the profession early be encouraged to renew and reinvigorate their professional performances so that they can help coach and mentor incumbents to headship? (Hertling, 2001). Finally, how important are head teachers themselves in the leadership development of their deputies? What on-the-job and off-the-job training is provided? (See Simkins, 2009) Has succession planning and the management of leadership talent been a success? Are head teachers happy and willing to take on the role of helping to ameliorate the leadership crisis?

In order to explore why deputies are seeking or not seeking headship and what head teachers are doing to guide them, the research will involve contacting secondary schools within Birmingham. Five head teachers and fourteen deputies will be interviewed. For this research a non probability sample called purposive sampling will be used, which is a sample, handpicked for the research. The leaders interviewed would be deliberately selected 'because they are seen as instances that are likely to produce the most viable data. In effect, they are selected with a specific purpose in mind, and that purpose reflects the particular qualities of the people or events chosen and their relevance to the topic of the investigation' (Denscombe, 2003: p.15). These schools have been selected as they are all large urban schools with over a thousand pupils and therefore will have at least two or three deputies.

The approach that will be undertaken in this piece of research is a qualitative or subjective approach. The methodology employed will be a case study involving five schools, which Denscombe (2003) describes 'is its focus on just one instance of the thing that is to be investigated' (p. 30). He continues to explain that a case study aim is to 'illuminate the general by looking at the particular' (p. 30). This approach enables the researcher to delve into issues in more detail and discover facts that might not have become apparent through other types of research.

In this research a semi-structured interview will be used as the research method to obtain fuller reasons as to what the career aspirations are of these deputy head teachers and whether their head teachers are helping them on their journey to headship.

A sampling frame which Denscombe (2003) describes as 'an objective list of the population from which the researcher can make his or her selections' (p. 17) will be obtained containing a complete, up-to-date list of all secondary schools in the Birmingham area. Each of the leaders will be approached by telephoning their personal assistants to explore whether they would be willing to be involved. This initial telephone call will be followed by a letter which will explain to all those willing to participate in the study, how they would be involved. They would be involved in the following way:

There will be a semi structured interview of about one hour. The main themes of the discussion would be listed in an interview schedule included with the

letter. I would also specify that I adhered to British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2000) code of ethics. This schedule would be intended as a framework and not a straight-jacket. Either party could introduce further issues or sub-issues and if the head teacher or deputy did not wish to discuss any particular issue, then this would be honoured.

The semi structured interview will be tape recorded and transcribed. It would then be sent to the leaders for any additions, revisions, excisions and for factual accuracy. Any changes will be made. It would also be possible for any particular leader to withdraw at any time and they would not be named in the final text. Semi-structured interviews with fourteen deputies and five head teachers will take place so the following research questions can be answered:

1. Why are Deputy Head Teachers seeking headship? What are the drivers?
2. Why are Deputy Head Teachers not seeking headship? What are the barriers?
3. What are Head Teacher's perceptions of the support that they provide for their Deputy Head Teachers?
4. What are Deputy Head Teacher's perceptions of the support they receive from their Head Teachers?

## **Structure of the thesis**

This thesis is split into six chapters. Chapter one forms the introduction to the subject area and explains what the broad aim of the study is and what the provisional research questions are. Key literature that has influenced the study and research methods are summarised and presented also. In chapter two I explain how the literature review was carried out and the literature and conceptual framework is discussed. The provisional research questions are revisited and refined. The third chapter explains the research design and the research approach taken, ending with how the data collected was analysed. Chapter four presents the findings of the research which are broken down into themes relating to the research questions. Chapter five discusses these findings whilst chapter six summarises them and concludes with how this study can benefit different audiences.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Introduction

There is not a great and wide ranging literature on deputy headship. An attempt was made to consult with journals that were published from 2000 onwards so that all information was up to date and relevant. However I found that there was not a 'plethora' of evidence produced on deputy heads as Southworth (1998) also states, 'Remarkably little is known about deputy heads' (p. 89). Ribbins (1997) also makes this point succinctly, 'head teachers are interesting: deputy head teachers, it seems are not. The former have routinely over the years, attracted the attention of biographers, dramatists and novelists; the latter have virtually been ignored' (p. 295). In the last few years research on a 'leadership crisis' has taken an upward trend which has been followed by an increase in professional, government and academic research publications.

A review of the literature on deputy headship and the training (internal and external) that is available to them is the main purpose of this chapter. A thematic approach is adopted. The review starts by outlining how the literature search was carried out and also states some key authors in the review.

## Literature search

Most of the literature for this study was found by searching the internet. The texts that were selected were found by searching the electronic literature and databases on the Birmingham University library catalogue, through ATHENS, the standard access management system for all UK Higher Education Institutes (HEIs). The range of aggregators used included ERIC, Emerald, Swetwise, Ingenta Connect and CSA Sage Education. Some of the key journals that I tried accessing were: Educational Management, Administration and Leadership, School Leadership and Management and Management in Education. Two key websites that were used were: the National College of Leadership for Schools and Children's Services (NCLSCS) at [www.nationalcollege.org.uk](http://www.nationalcollege.org.uk) and the DfES at [www.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.dfes.gov.uk).

Underpinning this study are four research questions. These are; why are deputy head teachers seeking headship? What are the drivers? Why are deputy head teachers not seeking headship? What are the barriers? What are head teacher's perceptions of the support that they provide their deputy head teachers? What are deputy head teacher's perceptions of the support they receive from their head teachers? The following publications are at the core of the discussion in this review; Draper and McMichael (1998, 2003), Hayes (2005), Gronn (1999), Ribbins (1997, 2003), Browne-Ferrigno (2003), James and Whiting (1998), Pascal and Ribbins (1998) and Rhodes and Brundrett (2005, 2006, 2008, 2009). In addition to these core authors, the review will refer to many more different types of literature.

The key words used in the search were: secondary school deputy head teachers, aspiring, distributed leadership, deputy head teachers, deputising, succession, senior management teams, succession planning, self - confidence and NPQH.

In this review there are four main areas of investigation; first, consideration is given to the problem of a leadership crisis, secondly, the reasons why deputies are or are not taking progression to headship. The third area focuses on the journey to leadership and the stages and phases that leaders progress through. This study focuses specifically on the second stage (accession) as outlined in Day and Bakioglu (1996) and Gronn's (1999) model: formation, accession, incumbency and divestiture. Lastly, what leadership professional development takes place and is it successful.

### **Leadership crisis**

Headship is not only seen as unattractive in the United Kingdom (UK). It has become less and less attractive option in other countries also. Recruitment and retention and leadership management have become a growing concern in Australia (Cranston, 2007), the USA (Goldhaber et al., 2008) and Canada and New Zealand (McBeath, 2006). Succession planning has become increasingly important in the UK because schools are failing to appoint a head teacher when they first advertise (Shaw, 2006). The age profile of the profession, influenced by the post-war 'baby boom' means that a significant number of head teachers are likely to retire in the near future (IPPR, 2002;

LDR, 2004; Ward, 2004; Bush, 2011). Head teachers also serve a long apprenticeship (on average 20 years) as teachers and deputies before becoming head teachers, 'making the route to the top swifter would render it more appealing to younger teachers' (NCSL, 2007c p. 7). Finally, there are regional variations as in certain parts of England e.g. inner London; it is very difficult to attract suitable candidates. These factors underpinned the National College's Succession Planning Strategy, designed to alleviate the problem and provide a secure supply of qualified heads (NCSL, 2007c). The College's approach involved the provision of funding to enable Local Authorities (LAs) to enable them to find their own 'local solutions' to the problem. There are two main strategies available to identify potential school leaders. The first strategy is to 'self-nominate' by applying for available posts and submitting themselves for selection. This approach is typically used by education systems with a high degree of decentralisation (Bush, 2011). The main limitation of this strategy is that insufficient, well-qualified candidates may submit themselves for interview. Thomson (2009, p. 36-7) stated that relying on individuals who saw themselves as potential leaders was a 'risky assumption', as they may not do so for a range of reasons, including family responsibilities and work-life balance. These problems do not arise in the same way in centralised systems; this is a planned approach leading to central decisions about who should be considered for promotion being made (Bush, 2011). In centralised systems, the bureaucracy defines criteria for leadership succession in selecting candidates for preparation. Many countries adopt this approach e.g. Singapore (Chong et al., 2003), Belarus

(Zagoumenov and Shalkovich, 2003), France (Laford and Helt, 2003) and the Seychelles (Bush et al., 2008). The main advantage of this approach is that it may reduce the 'chance' element, and provide potential for a smooth leadership succession. However one of the disadvantages of this approach is that it tends to reproduce the qualities of the existing group of head teachers, what Thomson (2009) describes as 'cloning', and Gronn and Ribbins (2003) a 'leadership cohort' that is predominately male and from a narrow social base i.e. it does not facilitate equal opportunities (Bush, 2008b).

The National College has however encouraged LAs to think of their own solutions to the leadership crisis in their areas, rather than to impose a centrally-determined model. These local solutions include the notion of 'growing your own' leaders, where 'leadership development should not be left to chance, but should be part of a planned effort all levels from the broader organisation through to the leader (Thompson, 2010 p. 98).

Incumbent school leaders have therefore been encouraged to adopt a more proactive stance towards the identification, development, succession and also the retention of leadership talent amongst the school community (Rhodes and Brundrett, 2012; Rhodes et al; 2009; NCSL, 2006; NCSL, 2007c). This Rhodes and Brundrett (2012) call 'talent management' which is about head teachers being able to identify, support and retain the right people by managing their leadership roles at all levels in school. Commercial organisations have used this approach, which has proved to be highly

effective in retaining talented people (McCall, 1998; Wolfe, 1996; Hirsch, 2000; Byham et al., 2003; Rothwell, 2005). These organisations have used measures such as financial, organisational and psychological incentives (Berger and Berger, 2004). The National College's Succession Planning programme has enjoyed success. Between 2007 and 2009, problems in appointing to secondary school headship diminished (NCSL, 2007c). These improvements have resulted from 'local solutions' such as talent identification approaches, leadership development programmes and in some parts of the country, new models of leadership. Rhodes (2012) states that 'amidst this potentially productive work, the nature of leadership talent management in schools remains under explored' (p.2).

### **Talent Management**

Blass (2007) defines talent management as follows:

Talent management is the additional management processes and opportunities that are made available to people in the organisation who are considered to be talented (p. 3).

He states that every organisation, be it in education or business has a talent management system. Within any organisation talented people can either be developed or inspired or suppressed and ignored in terms of development opportunities. It is usual for high performers with high potential to be the focus of talent management (Blass, 2007). This is not only one definition of talent management as the term can vary between organisations within education. Rhodes (2012) cites Lewis and Heckman (2006) when suggesting

three further understandings; talent management as a collection of Human Resource Management (HRM) practices such as recruitment, development and succession management; talent management as a focus on developing and growing internal talent pools as part of succession and workforce planning; talent management with a focus on the direct management of talented individuals, both high performers and those with high potential, who are to be encouraged and rewarded perhaps at the expense of low performers who may be replaced by those with greater perceived talent. In summary, reference is made to the potential of candidates and in particular high potentials. Talent management is therefore concerned with identifying talented people and ensuring that they have support and encouragement throughout their time in post. This perspective of talent management is only one of six that Blass (2007) identifies. He states that these strategic perspectives shape the way in which the talent management system can be viewed, implemented and put into operation in each organisation. The various perspectives and ways in which they can impact on talent management are outlined in table 1.

Table 1: Blass's (2007) perspectives of talent management.

Perspective	Core belief	Recruitment and selection	Retention	Succession Planning	Development approach
<b>Process</b>	Include all processes to optimise people	Competence based, consistent approach	Good on processes such as work-life balance and intrinsic factors that make people feel they belong	Routine review process based on performance review cycle	Personal Development Plans and development reviews as part of performance management.
<b>Cultural</b>	Belief that talent is needed for success	Look for raw talent. Allow for introductions from in-house.	Allow people the freedom to demonstrate their talent and to succeed and fail.	Develop in-house if possible.	Individuals negotiate their own development.
<b>Competitive</b>	Keep talent away from the competition	Pay the best so that you attract the best. Poach the best from the competition	Aim to be the employer of choice as good people like to work with good people.	Geared towards retention – letting people know what their target jobs are.	Mentors used to build loyalty. Both planned and opportunistic.
<b>Developmental</b>	Accelerate the development of high potentials	Ideally only recruit at entry point and then develop.	Clear development paths and schemes to lock high potentials into career paths.	Identified groups will be developed for each level of the organisation.	Both planned and opportunistic.
<b>HR Planning</b>	Right people in the right jobs at the right time	Target areas of shortage across the company.	Turnover expected, monitored and accounted for in plans.	Detailed in-house mappings for individuals.	Planned in cycles according to business needs.
<b>Change Management</b>	Use talent management to instigate change in the organisation	Seek out mavericks and change agents to join the organisation.	Projects and assignments keep change agents, but turnover of mainstay staff can occur.	Can be a bit opportunistic initially until change is embedded.	Change agents develop others who align with them and become the next generation of talent.

The development perspective could apply to schools as this perspective proposes that talent management is about accelerated development paths for the highest potential employees (CIPD, 2007). The same personal

development process is applied to everyone in the organisation, but accelerating the process for those with potential to progress 'all the way to the top'. Who are these people with high potential or talent?

### **Leadership Talent Management in Education**

Talent may mean different things to different people and to different organisations. In music and sport, talent is associated with performance and often attracts the 'halo' effect of stardom. In education being gifted indicates that a student is of high academic ability and being talented that he/she has high ability in a vocational sense. According to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), 'talent consists of those individuals who can make a difference to organisational performance, either through their immediate contribution or in the longer term by demonstrating the highest levels of potentials (CIPD, 2007 p.3).

If talent can be identified in music, sport and education then it is perceived that education professionals can identify leadership talent amongst their peers. Rhodes et al; (2008) report that middle leaders and classroom teachers from schools in the Midlands and North West England were able to state what they perceived as indicative of leadership talent. These included characteristics such as vision, people and communication skills, professional values, enthusiasm and initiative. This is also demonstrated in leadership fast-tracking programmes as there is an understanding that talent or potential talent can be recognised, developed and advanced (Rhodes, 2012). How can

someone who is talented be identified? What criteria do decision-makers use to identify an individual with talent or potential talent? Rhodes (2012) cites Watts, (1999) where he states that decision makers have to be aware of 'homophily'. This term refers to people associating with people like themselves. This may, in some cases be influential in decisions relating to the talent or potential talent of an individual as decision makers may more readily relate to someone like themselves and rank them more highly in their thinking. Rhodes et al; (2008), state that a reflection of 'homophily' could be when decision makers have a 'gut feeling' when identifying talent in their peers. If this is the case then it presents a less than ideal basis for talent identification.

Davies and Davies (2010) cite a Hay Group (2008a) suggesting that headship potential, specifically in academies may be seen in 'early warning signs'. These signs include peers taking the initiative, being highly self-motivated and resilient and appearing confident. A Hay Group (2008) adds to this list of signs and suggests that 'thinking beyond the boundaries', 'curiosity and eagerness to learn', 'social understanding and empathy' and 'emotional balance' are other characteristics to look out for. All of these signs refer to potential rather than proven competence. Rhodes (2012) warns that 'a record of performance in a particular context may or may not ensure continued performance in a new role and an individual's capacity for future growth may or may not be realised when associated with a new set of colleagues in a new environment facing new challenges' (p. 3). MacBeath (2006) also warns

that context is important and that talent may not be easily transferred from one context to another.

If talent or potential talent can be identified in people then would it be beneficial to have a list of core skills and behaviours made available to the school teaching community? Perhaps every school needs to identify for itself what talent is and how and who to identify as talented or as having high potential. If a middle leader wants to identify what additional skills and behaviours are needed to progress to senior leadership then these should be made available. However Rhodes (2012) cites Cheese et al; (2008) who cautions that employing the best talent has limited worth if it is not aligned; committed and motivated with organisational goal. Perception of talent is likely to be linked to school objectives or it might not be identified as talent at all. In some schools, talent may simply be an ability to purvey and ensure compliance with government policy and the standards of the day. The ability to perform to a high level seems firmly linked to 'talent' and 'potential'. Perhaps leadership talent resides in knowing how and when to ensure followership coupled with the confidence and self-belief to do this.

### **Self-belief and the journey to headship**

An individual can display leadership potential and once he/she has, then there is a responsibility to find ways to better attend to their development (Fink and Brayman, 2006). Southworth (2002) claims we should avoid adopting a one size fits all approach to leadership identification and development. Developing potential leadership can be made more difficult if

the identified individual has low self-belief in their ability to take on a leadership role.

There are two sides to self-belief:

First, self-efficacy is the belief that individuals have in their own ability to succeed in specific situations. It plays a major role in how goals, tasks and challenges are approached. The concept of self-efficacy, as proposed by Bandura (1986, 1997) has served as the basis for most research on teacher efficacy. Bandura understood the expectation about one's efficacy to consist of 'people's judgements of their capabilities to organise and execute courses of action required to attaining designated types of performances' (Bandura, 1986, p. 391; 1997, p. 3).

If an individual has a high self-efficacy then they are likely to believe they can perform well in all situations. Difficult tasks are viewed as challenges to be mastered rather than something to be avoided. They quickly recover their sense of efficacy after failures or setbacks. Failure is attributed to insufficient knowledge and skills which are acquirable. In contrast, individuals who doubt their capabilities may shy away from difficult tasks. When faced with difficulties they may dwell on their personal deficiencies, on the obstacles they may encounter rather than concentrate on how to perform successfully. They may be slower to recover their sense of efficacy following failure or setbacks (Bandura, 1994). In these terms, increasing an individual's feelings of self-efficacy appears to be potentially important element in talent

management and the success of the leadership journey. Persistent low self-efficacy may lead to the avoidance or withdrawal from a leadership journey.

Second, self-esteem results from the way aspirant leaders and hence potentially deputies, compare themselves with others within the school. Self-esteem has been defined as a 'positive or negative attitude towards the self' (Rosenberg, 1965 p. 30). Deputies that compare themselves negatively are more likely to have low self-esteem and may not want to progress to headship. However, deputies who are confident in their own abilities accept their strengths and weaknesses, and who feel encouraged may have much higher self-esteem. Griffiths (1993) presents a theory of self-esteem drawing on understandings of identity and suggests that self-esteem should not be understood only in terms of mastery and achievement but also in terms of 'belonging'. Belonging or not belonging to groups that an individual wishes to belong to, such as a cadre of leaders at work, are seen as essential to self-identity and self-esteem. A challenge for the management of talent as well as for self-management appears to reside in the understanding and opportunity to 'act' in ways that fosters entry to such groups and assumes that the required 'act' is not overtly contrary to the true self and results in the pursuit of an identity destructive to the individual.

The term self-efficacy also relates to an understanding of self-belief.

Bandura (1989, 1997) states that people's beliefs about their efficacy can be developed by four main sources of influence; mastery experience, vicarious experiences, social persuasion and psychological arousal.

Mastery experiences are experiences that are gained when success is achieved. The perception that a performance has been successful raises efficacy beliefs and helps in the development of a strong sense of self-efficacy. Alternatively, failure lowers efficacy beliefs and contributes to the belief that future performances will also be low (Bandura, 1993).

Bandura's (1989, 1997) second source of efficacy beliefs is through the vicarious experiences provided by social models. Seeing people similar to oneself succeed by continuous effort raises observer's beliefs that they also possess the capabilities to succeed. However there is also a negative effect as if others are observed to fail even having tried extremely hard, this lowers observer's judgements of their own efficacy and undermines their efforts. The impact of modelling on perceived self-efficacy is strongly influenced by the perceived similarity to the models. Observers also seek models who possess the competences to which they aspire.

Social or verbal persuasion is a third way of strengthening people's beliefs that they have what it takes to succeed. It refers to the feedbacks from others (Bandura, 1986). Bandura (1994) states that if people are persuaded verbally and that they possess capabilities to master given activities, they are more likely to exert greater effort and try to succeed. If people harbour self-doubts and dwell on personal deficiencies when problems arise then they will not try

hard to succeed and will avoid challenging activities and consequently give up quickly in the face of difficulties.

The fourth way of modifying self-beliefs of efficacy is to reduce people's stress elements at work and at home. Bandura (1997) termed it as physiological arousal which refers to the actual physical reaction an individual, would have to an event or action. People interpret their stress reactions and tension as signs of vulnerability to poor performance. He also stated that mood also affects people's judgement of their self-efficacy.

Positive mood enhances perceived self-efficacy, whereas despondent mood diminishes it. Therefore in order to succeed people need to be able to perceive and interpret emotional and physical reactions and be able to deal with them effectively.

Bandura's (1994) thinking on self-efficacy and how it affects individuals either positively or negatively is beneficial to this study as I want to determine what factors either motivate or demotivate deputy head teachers from progressing to headship. Possessing a high self-efficacy is an important aspect of Gronn's (1999) 'accession' stage, but what happens to those deputies who do not possess a high self-efficacy? Do they still see themselves as candidates for headship? Should head teachers be doing more to motivate their deputies to apply for headship? Deputies have made the journey from teacher to middle leader and then deputy having proved their credibility along the way. Therefore why are some deputies finding the transition to headship more of a challenge? Why don't they have more confidence in themselves?

The place of self-belief as a factor in the management of talent and the journey to leadership warrants further attention

### **Deputy Head teachers – the natural successors to avert a leadership crisis?**

Despite the importance of deputy headship in schools, the role of deputies and their career experiences has received relatively little attention in the literature of educational management (Garrett and McGeachie, 1999; Harris et al., 2003 Hausman et al., Ribbins, 1997). A previous small-scale review of the literature on deputy head teachers highlighted the paucity of research evidence in this area (Muijs and Harris, 2002) and consequently every effort was made to include as much relevant material as possible. Too much of the school leadership literature has relied upon the accounts of head teachers to define effective leadership in action (Rasik and Swanson, 2001; Owens, 2001; Morrison, 2002). By comparison, the concentration on other established school leaders such as the deputy has not been forthcoming (Ribbins 1997). This literature search therefore concludes that finding out about deputies is not easy and that they have been under researched. Also that more literature can be found on primary school deputies than secondary school ones.

The deputy's role is perceived by many of its role incumbents as a transitory phase and a reward given to an effective teacher on his/her way to headship (Glanz, 2004). However, where the career experiences of deputies have been concerned, contradictory evidence is suggested. Harvey (1994) found

that 44.2 per cent of those questioned found that deputy headship had been a stable phase in their career and they expected to remain in their role for the remainder of their work career. The role for these deputies was terminal rather than transitory. In contrast, other studies have shown that more than 80 per cent of the deputies aspire to headship (Austin and Brown, 1970; Marshall, 1992).

### **Profile of applicants seeking headship**

The following data is collated from the annual survey undertaken by the Education Data Surveys (EDS) on behalf of the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) and Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL). The survey tracks actual recruitment to school leadership roles each year, providing information about the candidates who are actually being appointed by governing bodies. The following most up-to-date table provides a snapshot of how the recruitment market is assessing how candidates meet headship standards (NCSL, 2010, p. 13).

**Table 2: Age on appointment of secondary school head teachers in 2005-6**

<b>Age on appointment</b>	<b>Secondary Heads (%)</b>
Under 35	2%
35-39	10%
40-44	23%
45-49	39%
50+	26%

**Table 3: Gender on appointment of secondary school head teachers in 2005-6**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Secondary schools</b>
Female	38%
Male	62%

**Table 4: Job role prior to appointment to head teacher in 2005-6**

<b>Job role prior to appointment</b>	<b>Secondary schools</b>
Substantive head teacher already	18%
Acting head teacher	19%
Deputy head teacher	54%
Assistant head teacher	4%
Other	10%

Table 2 illustrates that more men than women were appointed as head teachers in secondary schools and that the majority had progressed from deputy head (see table 3 and 4). Candidates who have had a period as an acting head teacher also appear to do well. This may be due, in part, to the additional confidence that a candidate can gain from a period of acting headship, encouraging them to step up to a head teacher role on a permanent basis. The age profile shows that over 60% were aged between 40-50 years of age (see table 2). Some of this data correlates with Draper

and McMichael (2003) and James and Whiting (1998), who produce a profile of likely applicants for headship. In both studies they are: younger rather than older (younger being between 40-50 years of age) men rather than women (especially so in the secondary school sector); have been a shorter time in post; consider themselves ready; include headship in their career plans; take a strategic view of career development; do not fear the administrative burdens of headship; are undeterred by the possible effects of their quality of life; accept the loss of contact with children; have the positive encouragement of their head teachers and are confident individuals.

Evidence suggests, for example, that a significant number of school leaders have paused before headship – at deputy head and other senior leadership team level. Surveys of graduates of the old-style NPQH programme, for example, suggest that around half have not moved on to headship and a significant proportion have no immediate plans to do so (NCSL, 2003).

Evidence also suggests that the longer an individual stays at deputy level, the more likely they are to assume the stance of being a 'career deputy'. In one survey, almost three quarters of deputies who reported no plans to take up headship had been in deputy roles for ten years or more (Mori, 2005). So if their aspiration for headship could be re-kindled, such a group could provide a valuable source of potential candidates.

## **Deputy headship: tasks and responsibilities**

One key assumption made about deputies is that they aspire to headship and that their current role is an important stage in their development as an aspirant head teacher (West, 1992). What exactly is the deputy's role in relation to a head teacher? To many staff, the deputy head teacher is the person appointed to the school staff to understudy and deputise for the head teacher whenever necessary. Coulson (1976) examines 'the conceptions of primary school heads and deputy heads for the role of the deputy head ...in order to discover how , and to what extent, staff leadership functions are divided between the head and the deputy' (p. 37). He states that:

In general, deputy heads agreed that leadership (behaviours concerned with organising, directing and evaluating) is more appropriate to the head and that administration is more appropriate to the deputy ... In most schools, delegation to the deputy head appears to be limited, mainly involving the performance of routine tasks on the head's behalf.

Richardson (1973) in her study of Nailsea secondary schools found that deputies and head teachers within the study viewed themselves to be trapped in straitjackets – the one as 'the administrator', the other as the 'carer' (p. 218). Similarly Todd and Dennison (1980) make a similar point, they argue that the job of:

Deputy Head teacher has not been clearly defined, and in part this has arisen from a similar lack of role definition for head teachers, who have tended to exercise the powers of a paternalistic autocrat. As a result head teachers have viewed their deputies as extensions of themselves, and in doing so have deprived them of an authentic role ... many (complain) they were frequently reduced to carrying out a few minor technical or clerical duties which did not encourage, or even allow, the use of initiative and expertise (p. 304).

Having viewed these two points, it is hard to deny Coulson's (1976) claim that 'deputy headship often appears to be neither intrinsically satisfactory, nor an adequate preparation for headship, since the aspiring deputy rarely has the opportunity to make the type of decisions which will face him after promotion' (p. 46).

However Jayne (1996) talks more positively about the roles of head and deputy head as 'varyingly described as complementary, yin and yang, or the leadership partnership' (p. 317). She prefers using the word 'associate head' rather than 'deputy head' as (citing West, 1992) she claims that the word deputy can have many meanings such as: deputy as head's deputy (this is a more traditional role), deputy as prospective head (preparation for headship) and deputy as deputy-head-of-school (the emergent role). Jayne (1996) prefers the last definition to describe what the relationship should be between head teacher and deputy. West (1992) develops this idea and uses the analogy of head as pilot and deputy as co-pilot of the school.

Hayes (2005) also states that the ideal model for any relationship between head teacher and deputy should be a 'symbiotic one where the deputy and the head teacher draw on each other's strengths and each uses their own individual assets to augment the skills of the other' (p. 23).

The following four factors that underpin a successful relationship between the head teacher and deputy have been identified by Rutherford (2005), who has borrowed from Southworth (1995) and Hughes and James (1999): shared

values and vision, close personal and professional relationships clarity about the boundaries between the two roles and provision of non-contact time for the deputy. Garret and McGeachie (1999) cite three additional factors: quality time, sufficient funding and the willingness and ability of the head teacher to support all aspects of a deputy's role.

In conclusion, there isn't really a clear and consistent definition of the deputy's role in school as the variety of tasks and responsibilities vary between primary and secondary deputies. In Hausman et al.,'s (2002) study, most beginning deputy headships did not understand the nature of their role and often lacked skills to perform it effectively. A universal definition of deputy and its underlying responsibilities is not achievable due to the dominant influence of the head. The role of the deputy is related to and heavily influenced by the head's role (Garrett and McGeachie, 1999; Ribbins, 1997) and the 'unequal power and authority distribution between the head and deputy has been retained' (Hughes, 1999 p. 85). Consequently the tasks and responsibilities of deputies vary from one school to another, and are assumed to be vague and unclear (Bush, 1981; Harris et al., 2003). The relationship that exists between a head teacher and deputy is likely to be very important to a deputy's progression.

## **Terms used to describe deputies**

The literature has highlighted the different terms that researchers have used to describe deputies e.g. Hayes (2005) uses the terms 'sitting tenants', 'rising stars', 'ambitious deputy' and 'career deputy', whilst James and Whiting (1998) found that deputies varied in their position of what they call their 'career anchorage' in regard to headship. They use terms such as 'active aspirants', 'potential aspirants', 'unpredictables', 'unavailed aspirants' and lastly 'settlers'.

Deputies who are waiting to retire and 'counting the days' can be described as 'career deputies' (Hayes, 2005; MacBeath, 2011) or 'settlers' (James and Whiting, 1998). Goldhaber et al., (2008) described 'career deputies' as people who do not want the responsibility of leading a school. Whilst deputy head teachers who are still very enthusiastic but have decided that headship isn't for them yet can be described by Draper and McMichael's (1998) familiarisation hypothesis where they claim that the least time you are in post, the greater the likelihood that you will apply for head teacher and the longer you stay in post the least likely, as you become too comfortable in post.

Deputies that do not want to become head teachers, and do not want added pressure and a bigger work load are described as 'sitting tenants' (Hayes, 2005) or 'settlers' (James and Whiting, 1998). Deputies who have a definite career plan are described as 'rising stars' and 'ambitious deputy' (Hayes, 2005). Many may need someone to guide them and give them helpful advice as they seek transition to headship.

## **Drivers to seeking headship?**

There is very little written about why deputies progressed to headship.

Ribbins (1997) recalls reading Peter Lawley's book on *Deputy Headship* in the secondary school which he claimed was the first book of its kind and that was in 1988. He also states that, 'literature on deputies and deputy headship is far more modest than that available on heads and headship' (p.296). This backs up my own findings. Deputies who aspire to headship are described by James and Whiting (1998) as active aspirants, 'deputy head teachers who are currently actively seeking headship posts' (p. 356) and potential aspirants who are, 'deputy head teachers who have not yet applied for headship but envisage doing so in the future' (p. 356). Hayes, (2005) would describe them as 'rising stars'. A number of authors (Ribbins, 1997; Hayes, 2005; Draper and McMichael, 2003) agree that one of the main reasons that deputies did progress to headship was because of positive role models. Ribbins (1997) in his study claims that a deputy's relationship with their head teacher is a key dimension to their evolving role. He goes on to write how several of the heads in his study had good memories, as deputies, of their head teachers and the part which they played in preparing them for headship. In order to progress to headship, deputies have to feel that they have had 'grounding' and have felt that they have been 'groomed for headship'. Deputies also learn not what to do which works out positively for them in the long run.

Ribbins (1997) in one of the interview transcripts makes the following point:

'I learnt more from her than others... She taught me how I should never allow myself to be. Her lack of appreciation of others was a great lesson... Whilst you do not have to be the first on site and last

off to prove you are a good head, it does help to be there at the end of the day' (p. 303).

Hayes (2005) also makes a similar point:

'deputies will acquire their perception of headship mainly from their head teacher, and their decision whether to become a head is, to a large extent, going to depend on the image of headship that is presented to them on a daily basis' (p. 7).

Both sources highlight the fact that head teachers are key influencers of deputies progressing onto headship.

Draper and McMichael (2003) profile those who are very likely to apply for headship as people who have a strategic approach to their career with headship in their sights, feel they are ready and not put off by the job. They are people who want positive opportunities for autonomy, control and for introducing one's own ideas. This correlates with evidence put forward by the National College (2008) who state that:

The key attractions to the role of head teachers are the intrinsic rewards of the job i.e. the opportunity to shape a school; to influence children's lives; and to make a difference at a strategic level (p. 2).

They are also well supported by their heads who give them 'rotated' leadership roles where they gain experience of budgets, the curriculum and introducing new initiatives. Ribbins (1997) talks of 'cross-fertilisation' where he believes there should be a degree of shared responsibility for major aspects of the school. If this happens then deputies are going to be better

equipped and more confident of moving on. This also correlates with what Draper and McMichael (1998) state in their study of all deputies in the Lothian Region. They interviewed deputies in 134 schools with 150 or more pupils about their possible motives for seeking headship. One of the main factors to emerge was their own self assessment of their experience in management in all aspects of school functioning. This had encouraged them to apply as they felt confident in all areas of school management. Deputy head teachers can also receive specific training; the NPQH (National Professional Qualifications for Headship) provides a practical introduction to the post whilst the Head Teacher Induction Programme (HIP) provides continued training for new heads and the LPSH (Leadership Programme for serving Head teachers) provides training for Head teachers who have been in post for some years. This professional training may be viewed as a good driver to seeking headship as it is reassuring to think that training is provided throughout a head's career.

## **Barriers to seeking headship?**

More was written about the barriers to headship than the drivers to seeking headship, indicating possibly why there is a leadership crisis at the moment. Deputies who do not want to progress to headship can be described as settlers 'deputy head teachers who have never applied for headship and do not envisage doing so in the future' (James and Whiting, 1998 p. 356) or 'career deputies' who are becoming 'sitting tenants' (Hayes, 2005). The relationship that a deputy has with the head teacher and the types of experiences and opportunities that are given to them are key factors in deciding whether a deputy will go for promotion or not. Hartzell, Williams and Nelson (1995) suggest that deputies would be well advised to: know their head teacher, especially with regards to understanding the difficulties and role conflicts inherent to the position, the head teacher's working practices character; understand the reciprocal nature of the head teacher and deputy relationship, in which the head teacher relies upon the the deputy as well as vice versa; clarify explicitly their role and what is expected from them; take the initiative and deliver solutions along with problems. Evidence would suggest that where deputies build up strong relationships with their head teachers then the possibility for broadening leadership responsibilities and extending responsibility for developing the school is increased (Marcoulides and Heck, 1993).

Crawford (2007) talks about emotional relationships being the core of school related work – relationships that occur between teacher – student and teacher-teacher. Providing an image of self-control and emotional coherence

is also extremely important for a head teacher to portray. In research carried out by Crawford (2007) three important qualities emerged: emotional regulation in leadership; emotion-weighted decision making in leadership; and the emotional context of leadership. Emotions can help the smooth running of the school but can also hinder it and it is the head teacher's role that is pivotal in this regulation. Head teachers have to regulate their emotions and keep them under control in all situations if they want to portray a certain image. They may have to act the head teacher role or 'put on a positive face' in order to hide their true feelings (Crawford, 2007). Therefore emotional regulation is about the head teacher's personal capacity to manage emotion and to help others manage emotion.

Leaders not only use their experiences to lead, but they lead from themselves as people, their past experiences and their personalities and life experiences (Dillard, 1995). For some head teachers, any display of emotion, either in themselves or others, may be thought of as inappropriate. This emotional side of decision making can be both positive and negative.

Crawford (2007) believes that emotional context is a fundamental key to life lived groups. A clearer understanding of the emotional context of their leadership makes the head teacher effective as a people manager. This can sometimes be achieved quickly, but the emotional context of some schools is difficult due to the lack of emotional regulation in the lives of other members of the school group, whether they be staff, students or parents. Staff

cohesion, openness and having emotional commitment to the school are all important factors in moving a school forward and being an effective leader. Head teachers are emotional beings which is not always apparent in the educational leadership literature. Head teachers must attend to how they feel about themselves as leaders, which then in turn helps them engage with the feelings of the school community (Crawford, 2007). This also concurs with the view of Pascal and Ribbins (1998, p. 22):

It doesn't matter how many courses you've been on, and how much you know intellectually about the process of being a head if you don't develop an appreciation of yourself as a person ... you will never make a good head.

In conclusion, to be an effective head teacher you have to be in tune with your emotions and those of the wider school community as without emotion and feeling, the task of leadership would become undoable. You have to believe in yourself and the decisions that are made and ensure that your outward emotions are kept in check as the school community ultimately look to the head teacher in times of crisis. This emotional cost of headship may communicate itself to a deputy head teacher and may then become a barrier to their progression

Negative role models and a negative experience of working as a deputy can be detrimental. The head teacher remains the main gatekeeper to leadership functions in the school and if the head teacher does not support a strong leadership role for the deputy, it is unlikely this will happen (Southworth, 1995; Purvis and Dennison, 1993). Hayes (2005) demonstrates this by

stating 'some deputies are given low-grade tasks and do not receive the support and encouragement from their head teachers that will lead them towards headship' (p. 3). Ribbins (1997) also makes a similar point by stating that the experience of being a deputy is not always helpful preparation because of the lack of direct leadership experience some deputies encounter in the role. In a secondary school, there can sometimes be up to four deputies which in itself can cause problems for the role of the individual deputies; roles may include 'pastoral deputy', 'curriculum deputy', 'school improvement deputy' and 'professional development deputy'. If these roles are not rotated then each deputy may feel 'trapped in a straightjacket'. However Draper and McMichael (2003) state that deputies in their research found that in larger schools there was a move away from the more authoritarian patterns of headship to more collaborative, participant management. This in turn gave deputies more opportunities to have influence over various school initiatives. Consequently some potential heads find they already have the scope to put their ideas into practice and contribute to school developments. Thus there may be fewer incentives for people to seek headship itself. In a secondary school with a number of deputies, can all achieve headship? If a head teacher is expected to act as a 'mentor', can he/she do this successfully with three or four deputies? If a head teacher is absent then a deputy is expected to 'step in', thus giving valuable experience. However again this could be problematic, as which deputy would receive this valuable experience? It is all well and good that deputies receive as much training as possible whilst in post, but Ribbins (1997) makes the point that,

'more deputies burn out than either heads or classroom teachers, despite the well-documented concern about these other groups. Deputies are the silent minority, the forgotten troops in the education army, suffering the most casualties, providing the most support and receiving none of the glory' (p. 300). It would appear then that deputies might receive different experiences which all depends on the school that they are at and the head teacher they work with.

Another barrier that has been identified in the literature is the fear of failure that some deputies may face. Draper and McMichael (1998) talk of the 'daunting elements to headship which may in themselves prevent even the well prepared and widely experienced deputy from applying for promotion' (p. 165). James and Whiting (1998) also found in their survey of 366 deputies in England and Wales that deputies did not aspire to headship because of the 'increasing concerns for the wide variety of expectations placed on head teachers today which can, in their view, be a major influence on job satisfaction and work performance' (p. 359). The primary deputies in this survey didn't like the 'notion of the changing role of the head from leading practitioner to chief executive' (p. 359), and this was a key inhibitor in not seeking headship. Smithers and Robinson (2007) also state that when asked how their role had changed during their time in post, English head teachers were able to cite fifty eight types of externally imposed demands. They were unable to think of any demands that had been taken away from them.

It would appear that some deputies would rather 'settle for the supportive role of deputy rather than the isolated and highly accountable position of head' (Draper and McMichael, 1998, p. 161).

A further factor which arises as to why deputies may not go for headship are external factors such as the scale and pace of central government initiatives, which all have to be responded to. There are governors, parents, the government, the LEA (Local Education Authority) and Ofsted (Office in Standards in Education). MacBeath (2011) states in his paper that in England and Wales the second main factor to recruitment difficulties was accountability, 'particularly in relation to the vulnerability of the heads to sacking in the light of poor results or a bad inspection (Ofsted) report' (p. 107). The Children Act 2004 followed the green paper 'Every Child Matters' (ECM) that was published in 2003 after the death of Victoria Climbié. The Act was accompanied by the publication of 'Every Child Matters: Change for Children' in 2004 which suggested five 'outcomes' by which schools would be accountable and subject to inspection. These were: be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic wellbeing. A study for the National College on the impact of the ECM policy (Kirwan and MacBeath, 2008) identified eight key factors that head teachers would be accountable for; navigating national, local authority and community politics; engaging commitment of staff, students and partners in a vision of the purposes and ethos of the school; shaping school culture and ethos proactively around children's needs; creating structures that distribute

leadership, spread responsibility and foster trusting relationships; managing workforce remodelling; placing high priority on the professional development of the whole staff; managing external relationships and ensuring sustainability of commitment, finance and resourcing.

Head teachers are not left alone to get on with the job and deputy head teachers may feel there is too much public accountability (Draper and McMichael, 1998; MacBeath, 2011). Crawford (2003) also makes a similar point where she states that the head teacher in particular is accountable, through such markers as inspection and league tables, for the success or failure of their school and takes everything as a very personal responsibility. Gronn (2003) views the past and current climate for educational leadership as 'greedy work', as it demands more and more of head teachers as individuals. James and Whiting (1998) in their study state that deputies didn't want the ultimate responsibility; they were 'apprehensive of failure and the public disclosure of mistakes, and dubiety or uncertainty, of their proficiency to fulfil the role of head teacher' (p. 360). This is interesting as deputies should be getting feedback on their performance through performance management, which should be highlighting strengths and areas for development.

Draper and McMichael (1998, 2003), Browne-Ferrigno (2003), Hayes (2005) and James and Whiting (1998) all explain the personal dimension as being a factor that might deter deputies from seeking headship. These other reasons

include: impending retirement, family commitments, illness, relationship losses, dependant relatives, family relationships and relocation. All of these factors as well as the others discussed previously have had a part to play when a deputy decides whether to go for headship or not.

Finally, deputies also decide not to progress on further because that is as far as they want to go (Hayes, 2005; Draper and McMichael, 1998, 2003; Goldhaber, 2008). Their career stops at deputy teacher level and it as far as they wish to go in career terms. The appreciation of this is not always easy for senior managers who themselves have been quite ambitious with their career decisions. It is clear that a number of people do not wish to keep going up the ladder. Bobbit, Faufel, and Burns (1991) produced an early model of career patterns where they identified stayers, movers and leavers. This was further developed by Draper, Fraser, and Taylor (1998) who suggested there were three different career strategies from which teachers choose, staying (in the classroom), moving (continuing to apply for promotion) and leaving (teaching).

## **The Deputy Head teacher and Accession**

There has been some debate about different phases or stages that head teachers go through in their lives and careers (Pascal and Ribbins, 1998; Rayner and Ribbins, 1999; Weindling, 1999; Ribbins, 2003). However this is not true of deputies. Gronn's (1999) study of the life and career of Sir James Darling, a famous head teacher and educationalist in Australia, enabled him to identify four broad phases which leaders commonly progress through during the course of their life and career:

**Formation** – primary and secondary socialisation experiences (childhood to adulthood)

**Accession** – preparing for and positioning one to be a leader.

**Incumbency** – becoming a senior leader.

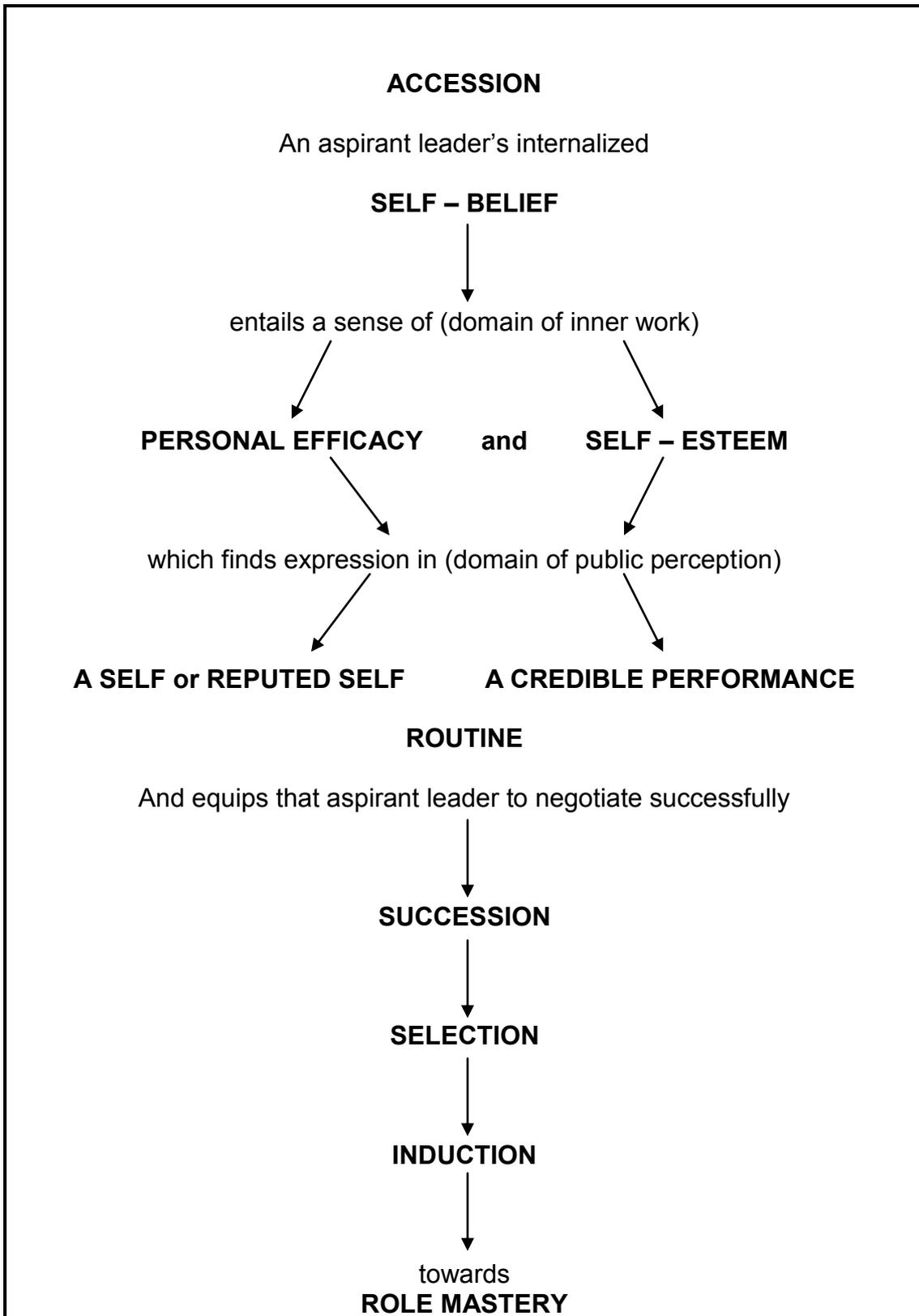
**Divestiture** – letting go after years of leadership.

Following on from the formation stage of the model, those who are to become candidates for headship must first go through a number of years looking for advancement within the profession and therefore working up from a teacher to deputy head teacher. They seek experience in one or more leadership roles and, in due course, begin preparing for promotion to headship. This phase is described as accession. Diagram 1 illustrates Gronn's (1999) process of leader accession (p. 46). This stage is developmental, geared as Pascal and Ribbins (1998, p.20) state to the gaining of two crucial tasks:

- First, the preparation and construction of oneself as a creditable candidate for office. Assessors need guarantees that aspirants or potential leaders are reputable; i.e. that their reputations are unblemished.
- Second, assessors also need to be assured that aspirants or potential leaders are highly credible and that they have acquired a marketable performance routine to convince prospective talent-spotters, appointment panel members and selectors.

Individuals during the second stage of 'accession' pursue leadership positions and experiences that will prepare them for future headship roles. Similarly Gronn (1999) states that this is a stage of 'grooming or anticipation' where aspirants ensure that they experience a range of leadership roles, where they can 'rehearse or test their potential capacity to lead by direct comparison with existing leaders' (p. 34-36). Gronn (1999) also states that this is a period of time for aspirants to publically display themselves which he compares to 'wing stretching' and 'preening' in the animal world (p. 36). It is also a time where aspirants become alert to vacancies and openings and if the right job is advertised they may begin their search. Gronn (1999) states that at this time aspirant leaders have to learn to position themselves or 'to jockey with one another for preferment' (p. 38) awaiting a call to office.

**Diagram 1: Gronn's (1999) process of leader accession**



Gronn (1999) suggests that if a candidate for a leadership role wants to progress, he/she will need to have a deep sense of individual self-belief.

According to diagram 1 (p. 46) if a deputy possesses self-belief then he/she needs to persuade 'patrons, sponsors and strategically positioned organisational tribal elders' (Gronn, 1999 p. 38) that they are ready. This correlates with one of Browne-Ferrigno's (2003) four key elements -'initial socialisation'. Aspirants also become more aware of potential vacancies that may arise. Finally, they then have to negotiate successfully, succession, selection, induction and role mastery.

Ribbins (2003) and Coleman (2002) note that only some leaders actually see this stage as one of calculated planning in order to pursue a headship role. Coleman (2002) continues to state that leaders are genuinely surprised sometimes (because of their lack of planning) at finding themselves a head teacher. Whilst Gronn (1999) states that this stage is more likely to be interrupted for women than for men, because of competing demands such as having children and family formation.

Deputies have to have a self-belief that they can progress to headship and that they have the backing and confidence of their head teachers and peers – that they have transformed from teachers to deputies and then ultimately head teacher (Gronn, 1999). Browne-Ferrigno (2003) also suggests that teachers (deputies for this study) have to go through a transformation and

assume a new identity before progressing to headship. A yearlong investigation, using a case study design was carried out with eighteen respondents who were engaged with a programme of preparation for headship. The results showed that transforming from deputy to head teacher was stimulated by four main catalysts: role conception, initial socialisation, role identity transformation and purposeful engagement.

Do deputies understand what the roles and responsibilities of a head teacher are? What makes a good leader? Are there any barriers that will hinder them from progressing because of their conception of what a head teacher's role is? Browne-Ferrigno (2003) calls these 'stumbling blocks to assuming principalship'. Other 'impediments' that Browne-Ferrigno (2003) state are: youth, inexperience and family responsibilities that stop becoming a principal a viable option.

Deputies then start taking part in leadership learning opportunities in and out of school, actively engaging in diverse professional activities such as participating in committees, task force groups, and professional training activities. They work closely with principals and administrators on various projects understanding the need for changed professional behaviour appropriate to the role of principal. This Browne-Ferrigno (2003) describes as aspirants taking part in initial-socialisation activities. Role- identity transformation is the mind-set shift from teacher to educational leader. For this study it would be the mind-set shift from deputy to head teacher. Having completed internal and external training have perceptions of what a head teachers job role entails shifted and are deputy head teachers more confident

about making the transition? More importantly do deputies see themselves as an aspirant head teacher? The following quote makes this point succinctly:

There's another thing that my principal has mentioned to me. She said there will come a time in your life when you know that you are no longer a teacher and that you are an administrator ... But now that I look back, I can pinpoint that time as being the middle of this past summer: It's not that I didn't think of myself as a teacher, but I saw myself in a different role. It was an ideology or paradigm shift that helped me to see myself in that new perspective, which led to my professional growth ... I'd say the shift came (mostly) from me, just the way I viewed myself (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003 p. 490).

The mind-set shift from deputy to future head teacher also marks the time when a deputy head teacher starts actively seeking headship posts. This, Browne – Ferrigno (2003) calls 'purposeful engagement' where professional growth is indicated by a desire to gain knowledge, confidence, support and the skill set required to achieve the transition to headship.

Finally, respondents had to have a clear purpose of why they were completing graduate education as Browne-Ferrigno (2003) found in her study that 'only those with clearly defined post-program goals showed the most evidence of sustained engagement in their learning and enthusiasm about their future (p. 496).

The framework is useful as it allows access to perceptions of whether deputies feel prepared in terms of knowledge, skills, understanding, confidence and the desire to progress onto headship. In these terms, it is of

value in questioning deputies and head teachers about their perceptions of what the barriers and drivers could be to progressing to headship.

### **Preparing leaders from a global perspective – leadership learning and talent management**

It has been widely agreed that the school leader is a key factor in school effectiveness (Rutter et al., 1979; Mortimore et al., 1988; Teddlie and Springfield., 1993). However Hallinger (2003) has argued that, prior to the 1990s, little interest was shown in school leadership programmes except for North America (Hallinger, 2003, p. 4). Leadership development has now, become a major focus of educational systems around the world, but still remains under-examined and under researched, in many countries (Brundrett and Crawford, 2008). But why has this occurred? Brundrett and Crawford (2008) state the reasons why quite succinctly:

The reasons for this are complex and culturally specific but focus around the fact that traditional conceptions have tended to view the role of head teachers and principals as leading practitioners rather than as financial or resource managers. The dramatic shift to forms of site – based management that emerged as a transnational trend during the 1980s and 1990s caused a paradigm shift in the perceived role of principals, who suddenly found it necessary to acquire skills in financial and human resource management and leading an organisation in the context of a rapidly changing environment, in addition to supervision of curriculum and pedagogy that would inevitably have formed the focus for their initial professional training (p. 2)

As a consequence there have been many leadership development programmes that have been developed around the world, each creating quite different programmes, depending on the cultural contexts of their different

countries. In the UK it is the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH).

The leadership development programmes of three different countries will be examined next to ascertain how these countries recruit and help incumbents progress to headship. These countries have been chosen as a cross section of the world – one country in the UK, one in Europe and New Zealand being the third one. Findings may be beneficial for my research.

### **Preparing leaders in Scotland**

Scotland's equivalent to the NPQH is the Scottish Qualification for Headship (SQH) which has been described as a 'benchmark qualification' designed to enable participants develop the competences needed to meet an identified standard. The SQH was then, after consultation, followed by the Standard for Headship (SfH) in 1988 (SOEID, 1998) which provided a framework for describing the practice of leadership and identified standards of performance in four key management functions. It also provided a framework for developing aspiring head teachers. The SfH became mandatory for all new head teachers in 2005 (SEED, 2005). The SQH was designed to enable aspiring head teachers to meet requirements of the SfH before they applied for headship. If successful, participants would also be awarded a postgraduate diploma as well as the SQH, which would give them a professional as well as academic qualification. This is one of the distinctive features of the programme. SQH participants are selected and sponsored by their education authorities. They must be registered with the General

Teaching Council for Scotland and have at least five years teaching experience. They also need to have successfully undertaken leadership and management tasks in school and be able to obtain access to an appropriate work environment to enable them to understand whole school leadership opportunities.

A problem arose when the attainment of the SfH became mandatory as it presented the Executive with a problem because the only way of demonstrating attainment of the standard was by gaining the SQH. The number of people completing the programme particularly from the primary sector, was never going to be large enough to fill the number of vacant posts in the future. An alternative route was proposed, which would sit alongside the SQH and interact with elements of it (SEED, 2006). This route would include support through mentoring and coaching supported by the attendance at personal development courses.

Overall leadership development in Scotland has progressed and the relationships developed between universities, education authorities and schools have been to the benefit of individuals, schools and the system as a whole (Brundrett and Crawford, 2008).

### **Preparing leaders in Greece**

The Greek education system consists of three main levels: the national (the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs); the Regional (the regional education authorities) and the school level (the head teacher, deputy head teacher and teachers) (Saitis, 2000 and Saitis and Menon, 2004). The

greatest power rests with the Ministry, which makes decisions on the curriculum, time allocated to subject areas, subject specific books, subject bibliographies for teachers and models of assessment (Pigliaki , 1999). At regional level, responsibility lies with the directors of primary and secondary education, who co-ordinate the education offices in their regions, supervise head teachers and maintain and look after school buildings. They also report back to the Ministry. Any institutional level school head teachers, with their deputies are responsible for the administration of the schools. However schools do not have decision making autonomy. Therefore, head teachers in Greek schools spend their time on procedural matters as they hold very limited powers. The deputy head teacher is responsible for substituting for the head teacher during absence. Saitis (2000) states that many head teachers do not show confidence in their deputies, entrust them with power or encourage them to advance their skills as they are seen as 'threats' to their authority.

In order to become a head teacher in Greece there are no formal requirements to demonstrate ability to lead, manage or develop educational establishments (Kabourdis and Link, 2001). Practitioners have to reach maturity in teaching experience – the number of in-service years (minimum twelve years for head teachers and ten years for deputies) and their selection is made by the regional director only. Heads therefore have to have several years of service in the educational system prior to being appointed, and their experience is limited to teaching and does not include any managerial

responsibilities (Saitis and Menon, 2004). Head teachers do not receive any formal training before or after being appointed to headship.

In conclusion, leadership training in Greece has been underdeveloped due to the centralised nature of the education system since they note the main responsibility of the head teacher is to implement ministerial directives and ensure that teachers are doing their jobs. No compulsory training is expected to become a school leader. In research carried out by Papanau, Persianis, Pigiaki and Siatis (Brundrett and Crawford, 2008), all have pointed to the fact that there needs to be decentralisation and that there should be a power shift away from the Ministry of Education to the head teacher. This will not only revive the educational system but will bring it into line with other European countries. In-service training and further training and development are also recognised as being important steps to take in order to help leadership development.

### **Preparing leaders in New Zealand**

As is common in Australia and Sweden there are no mandatory programmes of principal preparation in New Zealand (Bush and Jackson, 2002). The minimum requirement to become a principal is teacher registration, whereas in several states in the United States and Canada; it is an appropriate Master's degree (Bush and Jackson, 2002).

In 2002, the government established a single national induction programme open to all first-time principals which is still offered today. A challenge has been meeting the needs of first-time principals from a very diverse group of

people e.g. different sectors, school types, language of instruction and the prior experience and qualifications of the principals themselves. There are two main languages – Maori and English and different types of school include: primary, secondary, intermediate, middle, composite, private and integrated (Bush and Jackson, 2002).

As well as the school context being diverse, the wide variety of principal backgrounds include: first time principals with over twenty years of experience, to less than ten years. Many have no prior senior management experience and so are appointed to schools with less than fifty students.

Range of formal qualifications include at the highest a Master's degree (which only a small percentage possesses), to Bachelor's degree to undergraduate diploma (Robinson et al; 2006). This diversity of schools and principals required a single induction programme that would provide for different learning needs. It had to be individualised and flexible.

The induction programme is voluntary and participants are not formally assessed or recognised through the award or qualification (unlike the UK and Scotland). It is an eighteen month programme consisting of four components: residential courses, mentoring, On-line learning and research and evaluation. It was felt that these strategies did not attend to the individual and did not help each principal reflect systematically about their learning needs.

Therefore a self-evaluation tool was developed called the Self-Assessment of Leadership of Teaching and Learning (SALTAL), to assess principal's current capability as leaders of teaching and learning. SALTAL had been designed to give principals and their mentors an early indication of the extent to which

each new principal met criteria for good practice in leadership of teaching and learning (Brundrett and Crawford, 2008).

In conclusion, New Zealand is trying to cater for the diversity of participants on their induction programme. The SALTAL tool is one of the most important strategies used providing a more individualised induction experience.

Reliability and validity have been improved and it has been assessed not only as a valuable form of self-assessment but also as a guide to formulating learning goals. Work is on-going with more emphasis being placed on choice, individual mentoring goal-setting and targeting specific support (Robinson et al; 2008).

Research then has shown that from a global context, preparatory training is quite different, infrequently inadequate and professional development and renewal is often episodic and uncoordinated (Petzko et al; 2002).

Having an overview of leadership learning opportunities in other countries may be beneficial when discussing how deputies in the UK view their own perceptions of the support they receive from their head teachers and their governments.

In the UK, the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) is the main leadership development programme that aspirants need to gain before progressing to headship.

## **National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH)**

In England deputy head teachers have to complete the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) which commenced in 1997 as a complex, centrally controlled but regionally delivered, programme of training and development for aspirant head teachers that originally encompassed an allied, but separate, system of assessment (Brundrett, 2001). It was described as 'daunting' and charged with neglecting theory with pressure to cover content, insufficient prior learning and a failure to acknowledge diversity among aspiring head teachers (Downes, 1996; Revell, 1997; Lodge, 1998; Bush, 1999). In England, Earley and Evans' 2004 study reported that only 17% of head teachers said they had been well prepared for their role. In 2001, in response to these criticisms the NPQH was reviewed and completely restructured. The new scheme was more competence based and more focused on schools with a school-based assessment process, which was more challenging, individualised and focused on school improvement (Tomlinson, 2004). Tomlinson, in 2004 described it as 'genuinely and internationally cutting- edge (p. 231). Brundrett (2006) evaluates the impact of the NPQH on deputy head teachers in ten schools and elicits rich data, which may reflect the fact that the NPQH is one of the most established and longest running of the NCSL programmes. The people interviewed were able to see how important the NPQH had been in developing their strategic thinking and levels of confidence. In contrast, Holligan et al. (2006) found that when newly appointed head teachers were asked to indicate their level of confidence in relation to 26 aspects of leadership and management, the

following issues consistently reoccurred and were highlighted as problematic – transforming the school workforce, budgets, dealing with underperforming staff, managing premises and dealing with their own work-life balance.

NPQH has since then experienced additional changes and has been a mandatory qualification for all those seeking headship since 2009. It takes more account of individual personal and professional needs identification and is closer to the day-to-day work of school leaders. It is also only open to all those aspirants who are within 18 months of their first headship. This revised version may improve the 43% that Davies (2007) reported as progressing to headship within five years, in his study.

Other countries around the world use different approaches to identify and develop leadership capacity. These include: assessment centres which involve candidates completing a number of different tasks as part of a selection process. Tasks include individual or group work, presentations and role-play. Therefore an assessment centre is a diagnostic tool for determining the presence and strength of leadership skills (Jackson and Kelley, 2002).

Another approach used is the use of principal scouts where head teachers themselves can serve as 'scouts' for identifying and encouraging leadership potential (Tooms, 2001). Finally, internships which are usually up to a yearlong have been found to be among the most effective strategies for developing leadership capacity (Gray, 2001).

If after completing the NPQH not enough candidates are ready for headship then can approaches used by other countries help?

### **Profile of NPQH graduates**

The following data is collated from the research undertaken by the National College in 2007(NCSL, 2007d).

**Table 5: Age of NPQH candidates on graduating in 2007**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Percentage graduating</b>
20 – 29	3
30 – 39	43
40 – 49	38
50- 59	15
60 - 69	negligible

Overall, most NPQH graduates are over 40 when they first acquire the qualification. However, 2007 was the first year in which most new graduates were aged under 40. Analysis of the National College’s NPQH database also reveals that; more women (65%) hold the NPQH than men. Women however are still underrepresented at senior levels in comparison to the proportion of women in the teaching workforce as a whole. The database also reveals that around 40 per cent of all graduates are deputy head teachers and 20 per cent are assistant head teachers.

Among deputy head teachers, aspiration towards headship appears to be greatest for those relatively new in the post (up to five years' experience as a deputy) and least for those who have served as a deputy for 10 year or more (NCSL, 2010). This will be of help within my own research when viewing the age profile of deputies in the sample.

It is clear therefore that NPQH graduates are all very different and are at various stages on their journey to headship. The National College (NCSL, 2010) identify three groups of aspirants and the level of support that each group would require. The 'active job seekers' are those candidates who are actively seeking headship jobs and would make good candidates for short-term acting headships if such opportunities became available locally. The second group are those candidates who have no immediate plans for headship. Survey data (NCSL, 2007a) suggests that from every 100 NPQH graduates who have not reached headship, 23 say they may possibly consider applying for headship at some future date. If just eight of this group could be persuaded to change their minds then this would be equivalent to over 1000 additional candidates for headship at national level (NCSL, 2010). The National College (2010) state that it is this group that is vital to boosting the number of candidates in the short term. The group would require interventions such as confidence building, mentoring, coaching and secondment programmes. The last group identified is the 'not intending to apply for headship' group. This group would be important as the group could provide useful information about the perceived barriers to headship. This could then inform future succession planning.

Why go through the NPQH if deputy headship is as far as a deputy wants to progress? If deputies have seen the benefit of NPQH and have learnt from the experience then what is it that holds them back? James and Whiting (1998) suggest that 'early and sustained career counselling' (p 361) is required. Rhodes et al. (2009) also make a similar point:

The deployment of national aspirant headship programmes in advance of NPQH could perhaps be employed at the right time in aspirants' career development to raise confidence and help overturn the route to derailment resulting from earlier damaged professional growth (p. 436).

This would enable better career management and progression.

### **Leadership learning**

The head teacher is an important element within a school that has the power to enhance the leadership skills of others (Dimmock, 2003). Zhang and Brundrett (2010) therefore suggest that attention should now turn from formal leadership development to real-world leadership learning within all schools. Billett (2008) and Zenger et al., (2000) claim that leadership development should be connected to the workplace and therefore can be described as 'on-the-job' learning. Southworth (2002) also reports that head teachers learn most and develop their leadership practices by 'doing' the job. This is reiterated by Elmore (2004) who states that successful school leaders' professional learning begins from the inside out with school staff, not with external mandates. Hartley and Hinksman (2003) identify 11 approaches to leadership development, only one of which is 'formal courses'. Simkins

(2009) states that on-the-job and off-the-job learning should not be viewed as alternatives but as potential complements. Hallinger & Snidvongs (2005) highlight the strategies of in-school coaching and networks of professional support. This is supported by Zhang & Brundrett (2010) who state:

Given these strategies, it is mentoring, coaching and apprenticeship that lie at the centre of supportive headship which is justifiable through social learning theories ... the work of Bandura (1977) posits that people learn by observing the behaviour of others as well as the outcomes of those behaviours (p. 155).

There are many different types of work-based learning (or on-the-job learning). Woodall and Winstanley (1998, p. 187) identify three categories: learning from tasks (including projects, shadowing, job rotation and secondments); learning from another person (including coaching, mentoring and role-models); and learning from others (task forces, action learning and networking). Alternatively Eraut (2007) distinguishes between learning as a by-product (such as working alongside others and taking part in group activities); or individual learning activities located within the workplace (such as giving and receiving feedback and questioning); and finally learning at or near the workplace (coaching, mentoring and being supervised). Drawing on these ideas the NPQH then draws upon a combination of learning from another person (the coach) and learning from tasks within a school which is on-the-job learning.

There has been a growing interest on school leadership mentoring and coaching. Positive reviews of mentoring are put forward by Bush (2008a) and Bush and Glover (2004) who state that mentoring is highly successful in promoting the development of practising and aspiring leaders. This is because mentoring is viewed as a relationship between an experienced person and a less experienced one. Mentors answer questions concerning the tasks that their mentees need to succeed in reaching their goals. Another model of mentoring is that of apprenticeship (Bush & Jackson, 2002). Crow (2005) describes effective apprenticeships as providing an opportunity to encourage broad experiences that promote new ideas, creativity and risk-taking. An example of this (until recently) is the way an established member of staff becomes a head teacher. This is mainly by means of on-the-job training through an apprenticeship model (Weindling & Dimmock, 2006). Bush (2008b) has noted that 'heads serve a long apprenticeship (on average 20 years) as teachers and deputies, before becoming head teachers' (p. 54-5).

Coaching is another aspect of school leadership preparation. The term coaching can be described in many ways. The most obvious definition is of a one-to-one development relationship between coach and coachee. Goleman (2000) has described it as a leadership style whilst Whitmore (2002) has described it as 'a way of managing, a way of treating people, a way of thinking, and a way of being' (p. 18). Holmes (2003) states that success in coaching depends on four factors: the focus of the coaching; the personal

competence of the coach; the skills and attitude of the coachee; and the context of the school.

This growing interest in coaching and mentoring has caused the DfES (2005) to commission the development of a coaching and mentoring framework which schools are starting to adopt (Simkins et al., 2006).

### **Nurturing self-belief through coaching and mentoring**

Professional development that includes coaching and mentoring have become extremely important in schools in this country as well as abroad (Rhodes et al; 2004; Kennedy, 2005; Bush, 2008b; Rhodes 2012). Existing school leaders may act as coaches or mentors for members of staff at their own establishments or for other schools. This type of professional development can help those seeking further leadership roles make the journey to headship if they are deputy head teachers (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003; Stead, 2006). However if aspirants are to be successful in their journeys, mentoring and coaching that is of high quality is needed. If aspirants are not progressing to headship because of self-belief issues then it is important for coaches and mentors to know this and act upon it. Coaches and mentors need to know that raising self-belief is important to include in the dialogue between coach and coachee and mentor and mentee. They need to know how and what to do to increase feelings of self-belief. However what if promoting self-belief in incumbents is misplaced? This may result in arrogance and unrealistic leadership claims. Low quality coaching and mentoring, Ellinger et al; (2008) found could result in poor communication

and a relationship that might be domineering and authoritarian instead one which is democratic.

The context in which coaching and mentoring takes place also needs attention as not all coaches and mentors will be able to help raise self-belief in others. Training may need to be provided as not all of them will have the necessary skills. Will support sessions be formal or informal? Will time be allocated where feedback can be shared and actions plans discussed.

However, will admitting that your self-belief needs raising be seen as a shortcoming or been seen as someone taking part in self-reflection and being honest about themselves. The school culture therefore would have to be supportive.

To summarise, those aspirants who have low self-belief would benefit from high quality and competent coaching and mentoring to raise these feelings, which could then be of help to progressing to headship. Raising self-belief could potentially determine their willingness and determination to continue on their journey and become head teachers.

Another approach to encouraging aspirants is identified by Draper and McMichael (2003) who talk about how 'acting headships' (which are posts that give some insight into the experience of headship) could be an opportunity for development. It is seen as 'an opportunity for development, for familiarisation, for the accrual of skills and experience which would impact on future career decision making and future applications' (p. 189). These posts need to be taken seriously and appropriate induction, preparation and

support needs to be provided so that 'acting heads' get a true experience of what it is like to be a head teacher. These posts should not just be seen as 'caretaker' posts but should be counted as truly professional development experiences. If more head teachers are required in this country then these candidates will need to be handled sensitively at the end of the post to help them progress onto headship. If this is a positive experience, then further head teacher posts may prove to be attractive. Good candidates need a realistic view of the job and support from a mentor who would preferably be an existing head teacher or someone who had retired. Hayes (2005) argues that deputy headship should be considered a training post, which would ideally be a temporary post of about five years. (This correlates with what is happening in industry). If the deputy had no interest then he/she would become a 'senior teacher', with no loss of pay or status. This could however lead to too many senior teachers and not enough deputies.

Hayes (2005) also believes that more control is needed by local authorities, to 'track' career progression of deputies from their first appointment to their move into headship.

Fast track was established in 2001 by the Department of Education and Skills (DfES), the management of the programme transferred to the NCSL in 2005. This programme was established to shorten the time taken for senior teachers to achieve transition to headship (NCSL, 2007b).

To address this 'crisis in recruitment' the NCSL advised ministers that there needed to be more fast tracking of those with leadership potential, which means: Early identification of talent, and mentoring and coaching these individuals, and providing them with many opportunities to lead – in their own school and other schools – to broaden their knowledge of school contexts and types and to increase the number of head teacher role models they can draw on (NCSL, 2007b p. 15).

This scheme was replaced by 'Accelerate to Headship' which was introduced in 2009 to identify up to 200 outstanding teachers and fast-track them to leadership positions within four years. One of the reasons that this new scheme was introduced was because 'only 176 people had been recruited to headship or deputy headship roles' under the old scheme (NCSL, 2007b). The new programme combined in and out-of-school training and started in January 2010. No financial incentive was given to complete this course as it had for the old one. There are two main routes through the new scheme: the first one, Tomorrow's Heads, encourages teachers, former teachers and non-teaching professionals to apply. Unqualified teachers could include: people who work with children such as business managers, governors or worked within children's services. The second route is through Future Leaders which encourages teachers who are committed to working in challenging urban schools. Professionals who progress through either of the routes would still have to apply for and complete the NPQH.

Associate Head teacher programmes have also been offered. In September 2010 (in Birmingham) four places were available for the 2010-2011 cycles. It was open to deputies with NPQH who were considered to be within twelve to

eighteen months of gaining their first headship (NCSL, 2010). The programme is based around an internship/placement for deputies who have the potential to lead challenging schools. A part-time or full-time placement has to be undertaken across a school year. They work alongside the head teacher and gain valuable first-hand experience of headship in a context.

Some examples of how these opportunities could be utilised:

- Two deputies swap for a full year and take on a more strategic role in the new school.
- A deputy could be placed in another school as associate Head teacher.
- A deputy (already part of a federation) moves to a partner school for a full term as an associate head teacher.

For the first two points deputy duties can be back filled, thus creating further succession opportunities within the school, especially for assistant heads.

These various leadership learning opportunities will be examined in this research where strengths and shortcomings will be identified. This review will then be used when discussing the findings.

### **Alternative models of leadership that could help a deputy's journey to headship**

Another solution to the leadership crisis and in helping incumbents with low self-confidence is to adopt new approaches to reconceptualising the role of head teacher (Norton, 2003; DiPaola et al., 2003). A number of educational leadership researchers (Bush and Glover, 2003; Court, 2003; Harris and

Muijs, 2005; PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2007) have all explored the premise that school leadership may be 'shared' successfully. Researchers have found that the impact of head teachers on the improvement of schools may have been misinterpreted (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2000; Wallace, 2002). Therefore on the strength of this a set of new leadership practices has been identified which all have a team approach to leadership. These include: 'participative, teacher, collaborative and dispersed leadership (Orchard, 2010). Gronn (2003), Harris and Chapman (2002) go further and suggest that to be at its most 'effective' school leadership should be 'distributed'.

Leadership can be 'shared' for 'instrumental or intrinsic' reasons (Court, 2003; Hatcher, 2005; Woods 2004). An 'instrumental' reason could be for practical reasons such as being unable to attract a candidate for a headship role at a school. An 'intrinsic' reason could be when a whole school community takes part in the decisions regarding school matters such as monitoring of student's work so that examination grades can be improved. In this situation the decision-making power has been loosely 'distributed'. If this was to be the case then, a 'teacher leadership collective' (Court, 2003) could replace the head teacher.

Therefore what alternative models do we have where leadership might be 'shared'? Could these models help or hinder the head teacher recruitment crisis in this country.

Three models will be discussed, all sustained by head teachers of some kind even if they are assumed rather than stated. This sharing of school

leadership responsibilities may encourage those incumbents who have low self-confidence and who state that 'accountability' and having the sole responsibility of a school are factors that have deterred them from progressing to headship.

### **Three models of 'shared' school leadership**

#### **Federations**

Court (2003) describes a 'federation' as a group of schools who share a head teacher. This is the opposite to the traditional role of head teacher who has sole responsibility for one school only. If a federal model was to be adopted then the day-to-day running of the school would be managed by a 'senior' deputy while a head teacher who is deemed as very successful would take control at a 'strategic' level of a group of 'failing' or 'underperforming' schools. Federations were first introduced to address the problem facing the recruitment of suitable leaders (PricewaterhouseCooper, 2007). Federations were politically popular as they could be seen to be making savings to the education budget by reducing the number of senior staff (senior leadership team consisting) 'without damaging teaching quality' (Oliver, 2009).

To date federations have proved unpopular as they have been found to be 'unworkable and inappropriate (Smithers and Robinson, 2007). There is little wonder that practitioners have not been convinced by this option as the demands imposed on head teachers are so great already. Federation heads would have to shoulder more responsibility still.

The role of federal head can be equated with that of a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) overseeing the daily organisation and management of a group of companies. However, if a CEO 'performs' poorly he/she could be relieved of their position and the reputation of the company could be damaged. This scenario cannot occur in state schools as the education of future generations has to be respected and maintained.

In defence of this model PricewaterhouseCooper (2007) have suggested that this 'shared' leadership model could have certain advantages, which include a wider range of senior staff whose knowledge in finance, human resources and project management could be shared. This contrasts with individual schools that all would need to recruit individual experts with the knowledge and skills required to join the senior leadership teams. Non-teaching staff with technical professional knowledge might also be employed by several schools thus making it cost effective.

Working within a federation can be viewed as undemocratic as decision making powers are not extended to every one directly interested in the schools (Court, 2003). Orchard (2010) illustrates this quite succinctly:

Indeed, with the responsibility for setting the strategic direction located firmly with the federation head and divorced from day to day administration, opportunities to do so could be more restricted still than on a conventional headship model. (p. 4)

Finally, would working within a federation encourage an incumbent to progress to headship?

## **Collaborative leadership**

This is similar to the federal model as 'sharing' takes place across rather than within schools. This type of leadership brings people with formal responsibilities from individual schools together so that differing expertise can be shared and solutions to problems can be sought (Court, 2003).

Each school (which is usually of equal status) however does retain its own identity and independence. In a federation, the status of schools in relation to one another is unclear. Examples of collaboration between schools include: formal leaders of equivalent status meeting as partners to plan and implement activities that support Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of teachers in a cluster of schools.

Responding to the 'Every Child Matters' (ECM) agenda (DfES, 2005), schools need to collaborate and network, both with each other and with professionals from other children's services (DfES, 2004), in support of children with specific, complex needs. PricewaterhouseCoopers (2007) call this 'multi-agency managed model':

In terms of raising standards of pupil achievement, the most important element of this model relates to its formal recognition of the links between children's educational outcomes and their social outcomes (p. 11).

This collaborative leadership model appears to be a more democratic way of leading where resources can be pooled together for the benefit of every one

(Woods, 2005). It is also another model which may be more attractive to the incumbent with low self-confidence.

### **Co-headship**

This is yet another example of 'sharing' and takes place within one school. Harris et al., (2006) compare it to 'marriage', whereas executive leadership is a form of bigamy where the head belongs to two schools in quite different ways. One of the many solutions that PricewaterhouseCoopers (2007) put forward to address head teacher recruitment and retention was co-headship, where the responsibilities would be split between two people and no one. Court, (2003); Leithwood and Jantzi, (2000) equate this to a 'job-share'. This would certainly offer one solution to the criticism made that head teachers have far too many demands imposed on them (Gronn, 2003; Orchard, 2002). It would also allow for task sharing to take place depending on each of their specific skills and expertise. Another advantage could be that very experienced practitioners, for example head teachers close to retirement, might regard co-headship as a reason for continuing and extending their working life, perhaps on a part-time basis. Another option could be that head teachers who are 'ready to retire' could support the younger, less experienced colleague by using their wisdom and competencies in mentoring and coaching the next generation of leaders (Hertling, 2001). For this 'job-share' to work, both parties would need to get along and share complimentary, rather than overlapping, professional skills. Retiring head

teachers themselves can play an important part in the professional development of aspirants. Those coming to take senior leadership positions for the first time are looking for supportive, well informed help and advice from those who have rich experiences and practical wisdom. Experienced head teachers also benefit from this exchange by new appointees sharing their new ideas and thinking. Such exchanges benefit both parties which could in the future lay a strong, professional base for the recruitment, retention and development of head teachers (Hertling, 2001).

Another advantage could be the 'sharing' of pressure that head teachers sometimes feel when the school has been inspected – either by the Local Education Authority (LEA) or OFSTED. Formally it is the responsibility of the Chair of the Governing Body who has the ultimate responsibility. However this is not the perception of deputy head teachers who do not want to progress to headship (Draper and McMichael, 1998; James and Whiting, 1998; Smithers and Robinson, 2007). These group of incumbents stated that being personally accountable for 'their' schools success or failure in inspections was very daunting and one of the barriers to headship. Co-headship therefore might prove more attractive to individuals who want to progress to headship.

Head teachers therefore have an extremely important role to play in their deputies' progression. Many leadership learning opportunities are available e.g. coaching, mentoring, networking and shadowing. In a study by Rhodes and Brundrett (2009) support for leadership learning was identified as one

important aspect of encouraging deputies. This encouragement plus how head teachers carry out their own roles could go some way to counteracting the growing disenchantment with leadership reported in other studies (Draper and McMichael, 2003; Fink and Brayman, 2006 and Hargreaves and Fink, 2006).

## **Summary of main points**

The papers were reviewed thematically and the following themes emerged:

### **Drivers to seeking headship**

The literature review confirmed that deputy head teachers were more likely to apply for headship if they: had had the experience of working with head teachers who acted as positive role models; had a strategic approach to their career and wanted opportunities for autonomy, control and the introduction of their own ideas; were given a 'rotative' leadership role, where he/she could experience dealing with budgets, the curriculum and staff development (all aspects of management). Finally, having access to the right training also played a role in whether deputies sought headship or not (e.g. NPQH).

### **Barriers to seeking headship**

The literature review confirmed that deputies decided not to become head teachers because of: a fear of failure because of a wider variety of expectations placed on them such as the scale and pace of central government initiatives with too much public accountability; their actual readiness for headship because of the lack of experiences and opportunities that they have had whilst in post and not being given the experience of different roles; negative role models that their head teachers provided them which deterred them from headship; the emotional cost of headship that is communicated to deputies; personal reasons such as impending retirement, family commitments, illness and relationship losses; little self confidence in their own capabilities which makes it difficult to progress and easy to stay in post. Finally it is as far as some deputies want to progress in their career.

## **The Deputy Head Teacher and accession**

The review also discussed Gronn's (1999) process of leadership accession where incumbent head teachers decide whether to progress to headship or not. If they do decide then they have to look for advancement first and then develop networks of peers, mentors and patrons and learn how best to position themselves so that they are not overlooked. Incumbents have to have self-belief in their own abilities before viewing headship as a possible role for them. They need to go through a transformation and assume a new identity before progressing to headship (Browne-Ferrigno (2003). This process of leadership accession is important as it will offer a conceptual framework to analyse the reasons why some deputy head teachers decide to progress to headship whereas others do not.

The researcher has emphasised the importance of the accession stage of Gronn's (1999) model as she is interested in what encourages or hinders deputy head teachers in their transition to headship. The formation stage (Gronn, 1999) was not included, as this stage deals with primary and secondary socialisation experiences. Whilst these early experiences may be influential in value formation and possibly early establishment of self-confidence, in order to achieve deputy headship he/she will have necessarily progressed through various roles, identity formation and re-formation and may have developed the necessary self-confidence to support progress and make transition. What then specifically may hinder some deputies in their journey and transition to headship whilst others appear to view the accession to headship as their next desired step in career progression?

## **Leadership learning that takes place within schools**

The review ends with the various types of leadership learning opportunities that take place that help an incumbent head teacher on his/her journey to headship. Deputy head teachers have to complete the NPQH (compulsory from 2009) and are encouraged to do so but only if their head teachers feel they are within 18 months of becoming a head. There are opportunities for work-based learning with examples including: mentoring, coaching, shadowing, networking with other schools/leaders and secondments. These leadership learning opportunities are important to include so that I can ascertain what guidance and support is given to deputy head teachers by their head teachers. If deputy head teachers have access to all of this training then why is there a leadership crisis – why are deputy head teachers not progressing to headship? Is their talent not being managed and nurtured by their head teachers?

In chapter three research methods are outlined and discussed in more detail, highlighting their strengths, weaknesses and appropriateness to this study.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN**

Having formulated the 'problem', the aims and research questions for this research, the next stage is to place it in a wider framework of understanding and identify the particular philosophical approach that will be undertaken.

### **Wider Frameworks**

The cognitive interest that this study seeks to explore is what Habermas (1971) describes as a practical interest, which relates to how we understand each other and relationships. This type of knowledge is about understanding and interpreting why we do what we do and how we relate to one another. It is not about predicting, testing or hypothesising as one would if one had a technical interest. This kind of knowledge is created by a hermeneutic or interpretive mode of enquiry. This scheme also represents a hierarchy, from the lowest technical to the highest emancipatory (seeking reflection) to remedy injustice and then action it. Put another way this means that technical and instrumental issues logically require the empirical form of knowledge (mainly quantitative data) and practical issues to do with inter subjectivity logically require the application of the interpretative form of knowledge (mainly qualitative data). Alternatively Wallace and Poulson (2003) suggest five different sorts of 'intellectual project'. They would describe this research as 'knowledge-for-understanding', which focuses on understanding the reasons why deputies do/do not progress onto headship. Equally, Ribbins and Gunter (2002) also identify five key kinds of knowledge domain: conceptual, critical, humanistic, evaluative and instrumental. The researcher

would describe this research as humanistic research, which Ribbins and Gunter (2002) state ‘seeks to gather and theorise from the experiences and biographies of those who are leaders and those who are led’ (p. 375). They continue by describing each of the domains in terms of seven major factors: the purpose, the focus, the contextual setting, the methodology and methods, the audience for the research, communication and the impact of the work. What is entailed by humanistic research is set out in Table 6.

**Table 6: The humanistic knowledge domain**

Factors	Humanistic
Purpose	To describe and analyse, and through this contribute to enabling and improving. Theorizing from empirical work.
Focus	Major focus is of leaders, leading and leadership. Focuses on how the individual engages their work and professional experiences.
Context	Mainly school context.
Method	Case study work, qualitative, often uses biography and interviews.
Audience	Targeted at all as professional researchers.
Communication	Reporting to research community, policy makers and practitioners.
Impact	Intervention in practice by enabling descriptions of professional practice.

Having referred to the wider frameworks of Gunter and Ribbins (2002), Wallace and Poulson (2003) and Habermas (1971), this research can be described as a practical interest where I am looking for knowledge-for-understanding and can also be described as humanistic research.

## **Philosophical Approach**

The reason why the research questions in this study have been formulated in the way that they have is because of the epistemological and ontological position the researcher holds.

Ontology is the philosophical study of reality and being. It derives from the Greek *ontos* – being, and *logia*- study. In essence, ontology is the exploration of the fundamental things that exist in the world. It is to do with matters regarding reality and truth – so what can be said to really exist, or be? There are two differing positions. From one stand point it can be argued that reality and truth is just around us and it just exists. It is a ‘given’ reality. For example, people who are very religious would hold with the belief that God really exists. Alternatively, it can also be argued that believing in God is the product of individual perception.

Epistemology is the philosophical study of knowledge and knowledge claims. As with Ontology, there are two differing positions. Knowledge is either solid or concrete with facts and figures. For example, if one suggests that God really exists then where is God? What evidence is there to suggest that God really exists - i.e. can we see God? Scientist’s would subscribe to this belief and quantitative methods would be used. In contrast, it can also be argued that knowledge is subjective and is based on one’s experience. For example, I have not seen God but I have experienced him through prayer which suggests God may exist – normally researched using qualitative methods. Therefore research can be approached from two perspectives – subjective/interpretive or objective/positivist.

The research questions demonstrate that the researcher wants to find out what individual deputies perceptions are multiple realities – where different groups of people ‘see things differently’, and therefore my epistemological approach lies in the qualitative/subjective position which is one of description and interpretation rather than measurement and prediction. Denzin (1989) puts it thus: ‘In social life, there is only interpretation. That is, everyday life revolves around persons interpreting and making judgements about their own and others’ behaviour’ (p 11). Usher (1996) also states quite succinctly why an interpretative approach has been chosen

Interpretative epistemology in social and educational research focuses on social practices. It assumes that all human action is meaningful and hence has to be interpreted and understood within the context of social practices. There is a questioning of the wholesale application of methods appropriate to the natural sciences since such methods, it is argued, cannot elucidate the meanings of human actions. If the concern rather is with meaning within social interactions then confining research to the observable or empirically ‘given’, as a positivist epistemology does, is necessarily to miss out the most important dimension in social enquiry (p 18).

The researcher will also want to draw out general themes and findings. A research strategy based on this premise can be classified as post-positivist. We are in the world of consensus, of ‘shared realities’. Trochim (2002) argues that one of the most common forms of post-positivism is a philosophy called critical realism. A critical realist believes that there is a reality independent of our thinking about it that science can study. This is a contrast to subjectivists who would hold that there is no external reality. A post-positivist critical realist is critical of our ability to know reality with certainty. Where the positivist believed that the goal of science was to uncover the

truth, the post-positivist critical realist believes that 'the goal of science is to hold steadfastly to the goal of getting it right about reality, even though we can never achieve that goal' (p. 2). The post-positivist emphasises the importance of multiple measures and observations, because all measurement is fallible. Each of these multiple measures may possess different types of error, and Trochim (2002) stresses the need to use triangulation across 'these multiple errorful sources to try and get a better bead on what is happening in reality' (p. 2). Triangulation involves multiple methods of data collection (on the same topic). Another reason why ontologically and epistemologically the researcher will be taking an interpretive approach is because she thinks she would find it impossible to adopt the orthodox stance of complete neutrality and impartiality. This means that the researcher would want to engage in a reflexive approach. Mason (1996) makes the point quite clearly.

Qualitative research should involve critical self-scrutiny by the researcher, or active reflexivity. This means that the researcher should constantly take stock of their actions and their role in the research process, and subject these to the same critical scrutiny as the rest of their 'data'. This is based on the belief that a researcher cannot be neutral, or objective, or detached, from the knowledge and evidence that they are generating. Instead, they should seek to understand their role in that process. Indeed, the very act of posing difficult questions to oneself in the research process is part of the act of reflexivity (p. 5-6).

The researcher chose not to subscribe to the objectivist/positivist approach, because this research favours experiments involving the collecting of data using statistical data. Therefore the epistemological approach that the

researcher will take will be one of description and interpretation rather than measurement and prediction; a qualitative or interpretive approach will be used.

### **Research Methodology**

What is distinctive about qualitative research is that it has its own special approach to the collection and analysis of data. In this type of approach the researcher's self plays a significant role in the production and interpretation of qualitative data. The researcher's identity, values and beliefs cannot entirely be eliminated from the process. According to Denscombe (2003) 'the researcher's self is inevitably an integral part of the analysis, and should be acknowledged as such' (p. 268). He states that there are two ways that qualitative researchers can deal with this involvement of the self. On the one hand they can exercise sufficient control over their normal attitudes to operate in a detached manner, so that their investigation is not clouded by personal prejudices. On the other hand, they can celebrate the extent to which the self is intertwined with the research process. There are those that argue that their self gives them a privileged insight into social issues, so that the researcher's self should not be regarded as a limitation to the research but as a crucial resource. This is the case with some feminist and 'race' inequality research where these researchers argue that in order to undertake this kind of research you have to be either a female or black.

Another approach that could be adopted is the mixed methods approach.

That is qualitative and quantitative methods used together. Creswell (1998)

describes at least three kinds of research design that uses mixed methods; he describes these in terms of design triangulation, explanatory design and exploratory design:

In a design triangulation, the researcher simultaneously collects qualitative and quantitative data. S/he then compares results and uses the findings to see if they validate one another. In the explanatory design, the researcher collects and analyses quantitative data and then obtains qualitative data to follow up and refine the quantitative findings. In the exploratory design, the researcher collects qualitative data and then uses the findings to give direction to quantitative data collection (cited in Fraenkal and Wallen, 2003: p. 443-444).

Design triangulation would suit the research questions that the researcher will be exploring. A telephone conversation followed by e-mail will be used to elicit information on age, number of years spent in post as deputy and whether NPQH training has taken place or not. This would give the researcher a sample of deputies, which she would then interview using semi-structured interviews.

### **Research instrument**

In this research a semi-structured interview will be used as the research method (rather than a questionnaire) to obtain information to find out about deputy head teachers' careers up to the present time, as such information could provide evidence of why they will or will not progress onto headship. The interview method was chosen as it has a number of advantages over other methods such as the questionnaire. The main advantage is that detailed responses can be collected from interviewees. Questions can also

be re-visited if clarification is needed about specific answers. Interviews also allowed respondents to discuss their own personal experiences and perceptions. The advantages and disadvantages are summarised and applied to the researcher's own work in Table 7.

**Table 7: Advantages and disadvantages of the use of interviews**

**(adapted from Denscombe, 2003)**

<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
Detailed responses ensure that there is depth.	This method can be time consuming – contacting interviewees, gaining consent, spending one to one and half hours with each head teacher and deputy, transcribing and coding of interview data.
Valuable insights gained from interviewees	Difficult to compare data with non-standard responses.
Interviewees are able to elaborate on and highlight significant issues that are important to them.	The effect of the interviewer: responses are based on what interviewees say rather than what they do or did.
Flexibility allows questions to be asked randomly depending on responses.	Upholding privacy – particularly as all deputies and head teachers come from schools from the same part of Birmingham. Some may know each other, and what the interviewer might say afterwards – even though confidentiality has been promised.
Taking part in an interview and having time to reflect on their careers and their journey so far can be a rewarding experience for the interviewees.	Reliability: consistency and objectivity may be hard to achieve because of interviewer bias.

Therefore this approach will be adopted because the researcher wanted the interviewees to feel free to say whatever they wanted.

## **Management of the Project**

### **Identifying a sample**

For this research a non probability sample called purposive or judgemental sampling will be used, which is a sample that is hand picked for the research. The researcher does not have access to the whole population and cannot state the likelihood of an individual being selected for the sample in this way. The researcher applies his/her experience to select the cases which are – in the researcher's judgement – representative or typical. The leaders interviewed would be deliberately selected 'because they are seen as instances that are likely to produce the most viable data. In effect, they are selected with a specific purpose in mind, and that purpose reflects the particular qualities of the people or events chosen and their relevance to the topic of the investigation' (Denscombe, 2003: p.15). In principle, probability samples (where the researcher has access to each individual person or school in the population from which the sample is being drawn, with each member of that population having exactly the same chance as being selected as every other member) are much to be preferred, both because they are more likely to result in a sample which is representative of the population as a whole. However for this research it is important to use the best (most representative) sample the researcher can within the resources and possibilities available. The sample would include fourteen deputy head

teachers and five head teachers who all work in the Birmingham area.

Nineteen, one hour semi-structured interviews would need to be undertaken.

The South Birmingham network consists of thirteen schools ranging from one grammar, one church school, and several single-sex schools with a few likely to become academy's in the future. The remainder are secondary schools of various sizes. All schools in the network were approached via letter and telephone call. From the thirteen schools approached the head teachers from the following schools were able to take part - one small school (below 800 pupils), 1 medium school (800-1200 pupils) and 3 large schools (over 1200 pupils). The reason why these schools were accepted as the sample was mainly due to the number of deputies that could be interviewed as the larger schools were able to provide three or four deputies whilst the smaller schools could provide one or two. The researcher wanted to collect as many possible different types of view. They were also acceptable as they are all comprehensive schools and all within the local authority. They all present different challenges and are deemed by Ofsted to be 'good' effective schools with similar types of governance. The district ranges from the Birmingham suburbs to the outer suburbs. Interviews took place between January 2010 and May 2010. Table 8 details the size and type of school accepted to make up the sample.

**Table 8: Size and type of school that make up the sample**

	Type	Admission	Gender	Age	Size of school
School A	Community	Comprehensive	Boys	11-16	Small
School B	Community	Comprehensive	Mixed	11-16	Medium
School C	Community	Comprehensive	Girls	11-18	Large
School D	Community	Comprehensive	Mixed	11-18	Large
School E	Foundation	Comprehensive	Mixed	11-18	Large

### **Access**

Access is extremely important if the research study is to be a success.

Blaxter et al. (1996) define access:

As part of the process of planning and managing your project, you may already have approached the key individuals or gatekeepers involved in enabling you to access the documents, people and/or institutions you need for your research... (p. 142-143).

Just because your initial contact within the organisation has given the go-ahead to your research plans, this does not mean that the data collection process will be smooth and trouble free...Every time you meet another individual, or meet with the same people again, within that organisation, you will need to engage, whether explicitly or implicitly, in a renegotiation of access (p. 145).

The leaders in this research should be easily accessible as they all work in the Birmingham area. Each of the leaders will be approached to explore whether they would be willing to be involved. This will take the form of an initial telephone call followed by a letter explaining an agreed set of ground rules. Also as a teacher, access may be made easier especially if other schools in the Birmingham area realise that other schools are taking part and the results of the research may be of some benefit to them as findings would be fed back to all schools who had taken part. It is at this stage that the

researcher needs to establish her own ethical position with respect to this proposed research.

### **Piloting**

Bryman (2008) contends that it is always desirable if at all possible to conduct a pilot study before administering an interview. He further argues that piloting the instrument not only ensures that questions operate well but also has a role in ensuring that the research instrument as a whole functions well. Piloting should weed out inappropriate, poorly worded or irrelevant items, highlight design problems and provide feedback on how easy or difficult the questions were to answer. This researcher conducted a pilot study at one school. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with the head teacher and two deputy head teachers. The interviews were tape recorded, transcribed and analysed. During the pilot study, both the head teacher and deputy sought clarification on some questions so changes to interview questions were made to better elicit responses in relation to the research questions. This also eliminated any misunderstanding on the wording of the questions. The pilot study was not included in this main study but it helped to refine questions for the main study. As Bryman (2008) states, '... questions that seem not to be understood or questions that are often not answered should become apparent' (p. 248).

This researcher found the pilot study very helpful as a confidence booster. The interview transcripts were carefully studied and at the same time the researcher reflected on the whole process, thinking of how that could have been done better.

Piloting should also take place of administrative procedures and guidance to participants to ensure that these too work efficiently and in the way intended by the researcher. It should enable the researcher to estimate how long the survey is likely to take, how the people will react, how much it will cost and what to include in the interviews (Bryman, 2008). This is indeed a valuable point but in this study it did not have a significant bearing because there were no huge costs involved. As stated earlier the researcher used a tape recorder and the only costs in monetary terms were travelling costs and blank cassette tapes whose value were insignificant. The five schools were all in urban areas within the West Midlands and the travelling costs were very low.

### **Summary and lessons from the pilot study**

The interview schedule was piloted at one school to assess the; appropriateness of the questions and the meanings attributed to them by the respondents; clarity of the questions; feelings and attitudes of interviewees about answering them; amount of time to allocate to each interview and my own interviewing skills.

From the pilot study, the researcher learnt the following lessons after self-assessment; not to talk at the same time as the interviewees as this caused problems with transcribing when the two voices came out together; to be aware of any background noise which could affect the clarity of the recording and to re-assess questions that need to be clarified to improve informants' understanding.

## **Ethics**

Ethics refers to rules of conduct followed throughout the research process (Robson, 2002). Researchers should be ethical and should ensure that research is carried out properly by adhering to a set of 'codes' or 'rules of conduct' throughout the research process. It is the researcher's responsibility to ensure that their methods of data collection are of as high a quality as possible both in terms of design and content, and as unobtrusive and inoffensive as possible. Therefore the researcher will need to ensure that she:

- Respects the rights and dignity of those who are participating.
- Avoid any harm to the participants arising from their involvement in the research process.
- Operates with honesty and integrity.
- Obtains consent of all respondents before carrying out the research.

In order to protect myself and participants the researcher will become familiar with the British Educational Research Association's (BERA) ethical

guidelines for educational research (2004). These guidelines embody the key points of some data protection laws and human rights legislation as well as trying to establish a standard of conduct that is both moral and professional. The researcher will try and adhere to the following three principles:

### **1. Protecting the interests of the participants**

This will be achieved by ensuring that participant's identity is kept anonymous if they wish and also by ensuring the confidentiality of information that is given. It is usually possible to guarantee confidentiality that individual answers will be seen by no one other than the researcher (respondents should be made aware of quotations from interviews being used, even if they are being anonymised).

### **2. Avoiding deception and misrepresentation**

This will be achieved by allowing participants access to transcripts so that amendments can be made. They will also be told what the research is, why it is important and how it is going to be disseminated.

### **3. Ensuring participants give informed consent**

Participation in the proposed research project will be voluntary with participants having sufficient information about the research to arrive at a reasoned judgement about whether or not they want to participate. A consent form will be produced with details about the participant's contribution, the right to withdraw, confidentiality and the security of the data. It will then be

signed by both parties and will then be a formal agreement confirming that the participant has been informed about the nature of the research (See appendix 1). This protects the researcher from any possible accusation that he or she acted improperly when recruiting people to take part in the research. Guaranteeing true anonymity for participants with a small and specific sample can be difficult (Denscombe, 1998) however attempts have been made to ensure that no individual is identifiable. No one else has had access to the original tapes and transcripts which have been coded to preserve the individual identities.

### **Conducting the interview**

The researcher travelled to the interviewee's place of work which provided a 'safe' environment for them to answer questions on a one-to-one basis. Interviewees hopefully felt more comfortable and less self-conscious. This also enabled the researcher to interview the head teachers and deputies on the same day, saving time. One-to-one interviews had many advantages over group interviews. Some of these include that: interviewees may feel more at ease speaking in a one-to-one situation about their career history and what their future aspirations are. This is a very personal exercise which interviewees may not want to do in a group situation. Another advantage was that the researcher would have the opportunity to obtain detailed information about their feelings, perceptions and opinions. Asking more detailed questions and clarifying ambiguity is easier in a one-to-one interview. Another advantage was that the researcher had the opportunity to observe

the interviewee's social cues such as voice, body language and facial expressions which enabled me to continue with the interview. Finally, another advantage was that for the interviewer, it was easier to understand one person's ideas than different ideas coming from different sources in a group interview.

The researcher had to ensure that the questions that deputies and head teachers were being asked were 'fit for purpose'. The questions could not be too complex, particularly those raising multiple themes, which could prove discouraging and confusing. Lengthy questions can mean that the interviewer spends too much time talking and the interviewee too little. The number of questions also had to be right as too many may risk harrying and antagonising interviewees. The researcher used verbal and non-verbal signals to let the interviewee know how the interview was progressing as they all really wanted to give detailed responses to help her. If interviewees spent too much time on a question or went 'off track' then the researcher had to use phrases such as 'Can I stop you for a moment? So what you are saying is that ...'

### **Managing the recording and transcription of tapes**

Tape recording the interviews was going to be the best option as the researcher did not have another person with her who could have taken notes. Writing the notes down during the interview would also have proved difficult as the researcher is not a short hand specialist and therefore a lot of what interviewees had stated would not have been written down and valuable

information could have been lost. This would have given a very partial record of the interview. The tape recorder that the researcher used was borrowed so therefore she had to have a practice run through so that she could identify any problems beforehand. The quality of the recording was also critical as then transcription would be very difficult.

Transcription of tapes was carried out immediately after the interview. It was typed, printed and filed away ready for analysis. Transcriptions were emailed to head teachers and deputies so that they could see what they had stated was correct and then to give their consent for this information to be used within my study.

### **Reliability and validity**

The authenticity and quality of educational research can be judged by the procedures used to address reliability and validity. Reliability relates to the probability that repeating a research procedure or method would produce identical or similar results. It provides a degree of confidence that replicating the process would ensure consistency.

A measure is reliable if it provides the same results on two or more occasions, when the assumption is made that the object being measured has not changed... If a measure, or indeed a series of measures when repeated give a similar result, it is possible to say that it has high reliability. (Scott and Morrison: 2006, p. 208)

In this research, a semi-structured interview was the research method used. The nature and applicability of reliability procedures depend on the type of interview being carried out. In structured interviews, where the questions are

predetermined, the approach of reliability is similar to that of a questionnaire survey. When conducting a semi-structured interview, the participant is able to respond in his/her own way, and is able to contribute to shaping the conversation. What they want to say becomes as important as what the researcher wants to ask. Therefore it is more difficult to ensure reliability because of the deliberate strategy of treating each participant as a potentially unique respondent and opinions, ideas and perceptions change often quite quickly.

Scott and Morrison (2006) note that a research finding might be reliable but not valid and 'thus of no worth to the researcher' (p. 208). The term validity is used to judge whether the research accurately describes the phenomenon that it is intended to describe. In terms of research data, the notion of validity hinges around whether or not the data reflect the truth, reflect reality and cover the crucial matters. In terms of the methods used to obtain data, validity addresses the question, 'Are we measuring suitable indicators of the concept and are we getting accurate results?' Denscombe (2003) puts it thus, 'The idea of validity hinges around the extent to which research data and the methods for obtaining the data are deemed accurate, honest and on target'. (p. 301)

There are several types of validity, but the main distinction is between internal and external validity. The main potential source of invalidity in interviews is bias. 'The sources of bias are the characteristics of the interviewer, the characteristics of the respondent, and the substantive

content of the questions' (Cohen and Manion, 1994: p. 282) They suggest careful formulation of the questions and interviewer training as possible solutions, but bias is likely to be endemic, particularly in semi-structured interviews, and is difficult to eliminate. The risk of bias could be reduced where transcripts or the researcher's notes are returned to the interviewee for confirmation or rejection. Silverman (2001: p. 176-177) says that researchers must avoid the 'special temptation' of 'anecdotalism', where 'a few well-chosen examples' are used to illustrate the findings. He argues that triangulation could improve an answer. Cohen and Manion (1994) define triangulation as:

... the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour... The use of multiple methods, or the multi-method approach, contrasts with the more vulnerable single-method approach that characterises so much of research in the social sciences... triangular techniques attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint (p. 233).

External validity relates to the extent that findings may be generalised to the wider population. It is usually applied to positivist research and not in interpretive research. However Yin (1994) states that the problem of generalisation can be minimised by replicating the study in another similar setting. This process should then lead to wider acceptance of the external validity of the findings. In small scale research this would be too expensive and time consuming. By interviewing fourteen deputies and five head teachers in the South Birmingham area, could my findings be generalised to the wider West Midlands area?

## Triangulation

Flick (2002) points out that the term triangulation is used in social research to refer to 'observation of the research issue from at least two different points ... (and) is most often realised by means of applying different methodological approaches' (p, 178). He draws from the work of Denzin (1989) who understood triangulation as a validation strategy and distinguished the following four different forms of triangulation:

- Triangulation of data – combines data from different sources and at different times, in different places or from different people.
- Investigator triangulation – is characterised by the use of different observers or interviewers to balance out the subjective influences of the individuals.
- Triangulation of theories – approaching data with multiple perspectives and hypothesis in mind.
- Methodological triangulation – this could be achieved by using the same method on different occasions or different methods on the same object of study (Cohen et al, 2000).

Flick (2002) highlighted two criticisms levelled against Denzin's (1989) perspective of triangulation. First, it pays little attention to the fact that every different method constitutes the issue that it seeks to investigate in a specific way. Second, it is noted that theories and methods should be combined carefully and purposefully with the intention of adding breadth and depth to

our analysis but not for objective truth. As a result of these criticisms there was a shift in the perspective of triangulation where it is 'now seen less as a validation strategy within qualitative research and more as a strategy for justifying and underpinning knowledge by gaining additional knowledge' (Flick 2002, p. 179). In the light of the theoretical shift in the perspective on triangulation, this researcher applied triangulation not only as validation strategy but also for gaining additional knowledge about the research subject. Following Denzin's (1989) forms of triangulation, this study applied triangulation in the first form that is triangulation of data. This was done by comparing and contrasting responses from head teachers and their deputies.

### **Analysis of data**

In the analysis of qualitative research, a series of deliberate, critical choices about the meanings and values of the data gathered has to be made. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) describe this collection of processes as bricolage – 'a pieced-together, close-knit set of representations that are fitted to the specifics of a complex situation' (p. 5) and go on to look at the key skills of the bricoleur:

The... bricoleur is adept at performing a large number of diverse tasks, ranging from interviewing to observing, to interpreting personal and historical documents, to intensive self-reflection and introspection. The... bricoleur understands that research is an interactive process shaped by his or her personal history, biography, gender, social class, race and ethnicity, and those of the people in the setting. The product of the bricoleur's labour is a complex, quilt like bricolage, a reflexive collage or montage – a set of fluid, interconnected images and representations... connecting the parts of the whole. (p. 9)

Before analysing data that will be produced, the following advice from Denscombe (2003 p. 269-270) will be followed. He states that all materials should be in a similar format (all A4 or record cards) which will help with storage and when sifting through materials. Notes should be collated in a way that allows notes and comments to be added alongside. Each piece of 'raw data' material should be identified with a unique serial number or code for reference purposes (this also helps with preserving anonymity). Finally a back-up copy should be made of all original materials (field notes, transcripts and tapes) as qualitative data tend to be irreplaceable.

Once data has been collected and read, sense needs to be made of the vast pages of transcript. There are three approaches that could be used to analyse the qualitative data that will be produced. The first one is explained by Gunter (1999) who uses a tabular format (matrix) with interviewees (deputy head teachers and head teachers) along the top and themes/issues that have been identified down the left-hand side. When a particular theme/issue crops up in the data this should be highlighted in the matrix with ticks and additional notes. The matrix should help to see patterns forming which should help with analyzing the results of the interviews.

The results could then enable the researcher to discuss any findings under the headings of: the drivers and barriers to deputies seeking headship; the barriers and drivers to deputies not seeking headship; head teacher's perceptions of the support they provide their deputies; deputy head teacher's perceptions of the support they receive from their head teachers; deputies perceptions of leadership learning.

The second method is the interactive model which Miles and Huberman (1994) define as 'analysis consisting of three concurrent flows of activity; data reduction, data display and conclusions drawing/verification' (p. 10). They state that data reduction involves the process of selecting and simplifying written –up field notes or transcriptions which is happening continuously throughout the life of the research anyway.

Even before the data are actually collected, anticipatory data reduction is occurring as the researcher decides (often without full awareness) which conceptual framework, which cases, which research questions, and which data collection approaches to choose. (p. 10)

Therefore data reduction is part of the analysis and not something separate from it. It is a form of analysis that 'sharpens sorts, focuses, discards, and organises data in such a way that final conclusions can be drawn and verified' (p. 11).

Underlying key issues could then be grouped together ready for data display which Miles and Huberman (1994) state is, information that is organised and consolidated so that conclusions can be drawn easily. They argue that extended text can be dispersed, poorly structured and bulky to take in. They suggest instead matrices, graphs, charts and networks. Post-it notes could also be used to identify underlying themes and dilemmas. The third flow of activity is conclusion drawing and verification which will occur during the research process itself and definitely at the end when findings will be theorised. Miles and Huberman (1994) also stress that conclusions have to be verified. Colleagues should, amongst themselves, be able to review and

critique findings. Every effort should be made to replicate findings to ensure reliability and validity. This could be achieved by sending copies of the findings to the interviewees (as an executive summary) and by attending meetings to present the findings of the study.

Qualitative data analysis has some advantages and disadvantage and these are summarised in Table 9.

**Table 9: Advantages and disadvantages of qualitative analysis (adopted from Denscombe 2003. (p. 280 – 281)**

Advantages	Disadvantages
The descriptions and theories are 'grounded' in reality, i.e. the analysis has its roots in the conditions of social existence.	It may be difficult to generalise from the data and therefore may be less representative than qualitative research.
There is a richness and detail to the data which enables a sound analysis of the subtleties of each individual's life story.	Interpretation is intertwined with the 'self' of the researcher. The findings are a creation of the researcher rather than a discovery of fact.
There is tolerance of ambiguity and contradictions which reflects the social reality of what is being investigated.	There is the possibility of decontextualizing the meaning. Providing quotations in the analysis may well take the spoken out of context and the meaning becomes lost.
There is the possibility of alternative explanations because it draws on the interpretative skills of the researcher rather than the presumption that there is one correct explanation.	There is a danger of over-simplifying the explanation if anomalies are identified and do not 'fit' with the themes constructed.

### **Role of the researcher**

Qualitative research assumes that the researcher is an integral part of the research process. As opposed to research conducted in the positivist paradigm where the researcher is separated from the phenomenon being

studied. The researcher in the phenomenological interpretivist paradigm interacts with the participants to understand their social constructions. In this study, the researcher was the primary means of data collection, interpretation and analysis. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) state that any qualitative research is influenced by the personal biography of the researcher who speaks from a particular class, gender, racial, cultural and ethnic community perspective (p. 29). Denscombe (2003) also reiterates this point:

In particular, the sex, the age and the ethnic origins of the interviewer have a bearing on the amount of information people are willing to divulge and their honesty about what they reveal. The data, in other words, are affected by the personal identity of the researcher. (p. 169)

The researcher is a Head of Department in a school in the suburbs of Birmingham and has held this position for over fifteen years. This could have an effect on the nature of the data that emerges. With some questions to do with progression, deputies may feel awkward or defensive especially when they are asked about what help and guidance their head teachers give them. There is a possibility that interviewees might supply answers which they feel fit in with what the researcher expects from them. The quality of the data may suffer as a consequence of this. Therefore the researcher has to try to be objective and neutral and assume the role of researcher and distance herself from the object of the study.

This chapter has chartered my approach to knowledge that explains the foundations of the research approach that has been adopted.

The chapter concludes with the important concepts and practice involved in ethical considerations of the research, how reliability and validity was embraced and finally how the data collected will be analysed.

In the next chapter after having interviewed both deputies and head teachers the information that has been collected will be presented as findings.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS**

### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings from fourteen one hour semi-structured interviews undertaken with deputy head teachers and five one hour semi-structured interviews with head teachers. Interviewees all came from five secondary schools from the South Area Network of Schools located in the south of Birmingham. The schools were chosen for their diversity so that a broad range of possible perceptions could be captured. Interviews took place between January 2010 and May 2010.

Table 10 illustrates the demographics of the sample of deputies interviewed which also illustrates the potentially wide base of perceptions held. Three groups appear to emerge from the sample:

### **Group 1**

This group consists of four deputies (deputies 7,8,10 and 11) who appear to want to progress onto headship. This group are all in their thirties, with more men wanting headship than females. All have between two to four and half years' experience as a deputy head teacher.

### **Group 2**

This group consists of six deputies (deputies 1, 4, 9, 12, 13 and 14) who appear to not want to progress onto headship. This group consists mainly of respondents who are in their fifties, with one exception, a female teacher in

her mid-thirties who has only been a deputy for eighteen months. All other interviewees have been deputies between ten to sixteen years.

### **Group 3**

This group consists of four deputies (deputies 2, 3, 5 and 6) who appear to be undecided about their progression. The group consists of females with between one to seven years' experience as deputy and all aged between thirty and forty.

**Table 10: Characteristics of respondents (deputy heads)**

School	Age	Gender	Years as deputy	Headship as the next step	Encouragement/support of head	NPQH	Route to DHT	Job role as DHT
DHT 1	Over 50	F	16	No	Yes	Yes	Head of Year and Head of Department	Curriculum, inclusion and finance
DHT 2	Early 40s	F	6	Undecided	Yes	Yes	Head of Department	Curriculum and managing different subject areas
DHT 3	Late 30s	F	3	Undecided	Yes	Yes	Head of Department and Assistant head	Pastoral teams and line manage different subject areas
DHT 4	Late 40s	M	13	No	Yes	Not yet	Head of Department and line managing different subject areas	Curriculum, ICT development
DHT 5	Early 30s	F	1	Undecided	Yes	Not yet	Head of Department and Assistant head	Pastoral teams and inclusion
DHT 6	Early 40s	F	7	Undecided	Yes	Yes	Head of Department and Assistant head	CPD and line manage different curriculum areas
DHT 7	Late 30s	M	2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Head of Department, Head of year and Assistant head	CPD and line manage 3 different subject areas
DHT 8	Early 30s	M	3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Head of Department and Assistant head	Curriculum and subject line manager
DHT 9	Mid 30s	F	18 months	No	Yes	No	Head of Department and Assistant head	Data and Technology, subject line manager
DHT 10	Mid 30s	F	4 ½	Yes	Yes	Yes	Head of Department	CPD and line manage different subject areas
DHT 11	Mid 30s	M	2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Head of Department and Assistant head	Staff professional development and subject line manager
DHT 12	Mid 50s	M	10	No	Yes	Yes	Head of Department	School buildings, budgets
DHT 13	Late 50s	M	16	No	No	Yes	Head of Department	Curriculum, timetable
DHT 14	Late 50s	M	15	No	No	Yes	Head of Department	Curriculum

**Table 11: Deputies and their corresponding Head teacher**

<b>Head teacher</b>	<b>Deputy Head teacher</b>
1	7, 10
2	2, 3, 14
3	4, 5, 6
4	1,12
5	8, 11, 9, 13

In order to analyse responses from all interviewees and answer research questions, table 11 illustrates deputy head teachers and their corresponding head teacher.

At the end of this chapter each group will be analysed to identify commonalities and differences between the responses given by informants.

The findings for each group are broken down into key themes which are related to the research questions. They are also supported by quotations from informants and tables. These themes are:

- Drivers to headship.
- Barriers to headship.
- Head Teacher's perceptions of support/guidance given to Deputy Head Teachers.
- Deputy Head Teacher's perceptions of the support/guidance they receive from their Head Teachers.

In the text the respondents are referred to by a two part alpha/numeric code.

The first part of the code identifies the interviewee e.g.

- HT – head teacher
- DHT – deputy head

The second part of the code, the number referring to the 20 people interviewed e.g. DHT 1.

Three groups emerged from the sample: group 1 (deputies wanting headship), group 2 (deputies not wanting headship) and group 3 (deputies who were undecided).

### **Group 1**

Fourteen DHTs were interviewed with only four stating that they were seeking or would be seeking headship in the near future. Table 7 illustrates this by showing DHTs 7, 8, 10 and 11 as those wanting to go onto headship. All DHTs had progressed from heads of department with one also having had experience as an assistant head. The job roles assigned to them were all staff development connected with one DHT also having responsibility for the curriculum. All DHTs were responsible for line managing different curriculum areas. The transcripts of these four DHTs gave rise to the following drivers:

- Positive role model of head teacher
- Ambition to succeed
- Having the opportunity of making a difference/power to make change

and the following barriers to headship;

- Family commitments and work life balance
- Type of school and location

- Age
- Money remuneration

Table 8 illustrates the HT attached to each of their DHTs and will be referred to again when discussing what their perceptions of support/guidance were in regard to their own DHT.

## **Theme 1 - Drivers to headship**

### **Positive role model of head teacher**

When asked about why respondents wanted to go for headship, all DHTs acknowledged that it was their own head teachers (past and present) who appeared to play an important role in fostering their decision in becoming a head teacher. Modelling appeared to play a part e.g.

... so the head's been fantastic – she's been really good, really, really good actually in terms of just her modelling what she does and letting us see what she does and speaking in a way that makes me think a little bit more of what I do rather than telling me... she has been a fantastic modeller of what good leadership is (DHT 8)

They're all good role models aren't they in the fact that they are doing it on a daily basis so you learn every hour and xxxxxx would support in any way she could (DHT 11)

They all referred to having an effective head teacher. This was paramount as it gave confidence and showed DHTs a way of working with people that they would want to emulate. Their perceptions of a good head teacher were:

He is incredibly honest to the children as well which I thought was incredibly important and always honest with people and to the staff as well (DHT 7)

... a really strong, strong visionary but not an ego head. Not one of those people who said, it is all about me and after I leave the school will fall. Very honest, brutally honest I think at times (DHT 8)

I'd like to teach – xxxxx does and I think that's incredibly important and I think when I become a head teacher I'd like to teach as well because I think it's important for staff to see you've been teaching because how can you encourage staff to improve their game as a teacher? (DHT 7)

In conclusion, positive role models have given this group of DHTs common traits that they think a good HT should possess; honesty, integrity, commitment, positive attitude and generosity.

### **Ambition to succeed**

Another driver that this group spoke of was ambition to succeed. All had progressed from teacher to head of department and then senior teacher, all in a relatively short time span. Each stage of their career had been planned and each DHT had got to where they were because of their ambition. This can be illustrated by the following quotes:

I do want to be a head. I think I need a few more years as deputy in this school. I'm 37 at the end of this month and my goal is to be a head by the time I am 40 (DHT 7)

My thoughts are that I will be at the school for another 3 years and I will probably therefore be looking for the next stage of my career which will potentially be headship. I've recently spent a little bit of time talking to existing heads, finding a little bit more about it' (DHT 11)

I want to be a head teacher by the time I am 48 and do two schools before I retire (DHT 8)

However one DHT did not have a career plan and admitted 'I don't have a career plan. I've never had a career plan and have been very comfortable

with that' (DHT 10). She appeared to be more cautious and wanted to wait for opportunities to arise rather than have a set time plan for her career development.

### **Having the opportunity of making a difference/power to make change**

At this stage of their career all of the DHTs interviewed appeared to be autonomous and were generally very confident and competent at what they were doing within the school. Their day to day professional life was usually much easier now. There was an overwhelming feeling that they were ready to take the next step and were ready to start thinking about what it would be like to have their own school. They wanted the power to make changes but were constrained by the role of DHT. The following quotes illustrate these points effectively:

It would be good to say right this is where we're going. Let's go this way rather than have to get my decisions ratified by somebody else and the whole consultation process. To have these ideas and not have to have them ratified by somebody who is above you could be good' (DHT 7).

The power to make change, the final decision as far as you can be. As a deputy you go so far but ultimately you contribute to a vision but it's not your vision ... it's somebody else's and if the school turns it's not you turning the school round necessarily (DHT 10)

One DHT also stated that there were things he would do differently if he were to become head teacher. Therefore he would take some aspects of his time under his HT but not all of them.

There's also stuff that I would like to do differently and I would say – I like that but I would also try this, I would do that. There's a lot of things

I would take to a new school with me which would be great so I'm ready to sort of have that and have your own baby so to speak with my own philosophy, which is slightly different to my heads (DHT 11).

The ability to influence the lives of other people and especially children was DHT 11 main focus.

What's driving me really is the desire to be in a position that I think will have a bigger impact upon the lives of children... I think I'd like the challenge now of being in charge of a school and making decisions myself (DHT 11).

All DHTs in this group appeared to be ready for their own school and having had very positive role models were eager to find a school and start making a difference and impacting positively on pupils' lives.

Although there was a general agreement that they wanted to take on headship, they did also have reservations (barriers) that they recognised, but they appeared not to be unduly influenced by these. They were, however aware of them.

## **Theme 2 - Barriers to headship**

### **Family commitments and work life balance**

All DHTs in this group appeared to have certain barriers that they had to face and address before taking on headship. All respondents had young children and were also lucky to have very supportive partners. All stated that family commitments and their work life balance sometimes made them feel uneasy about taking on headship.

...your life changes so much doesn't it, I mean we've got Millie who's four and probably five years ago I was dead set I was going to be a head by this time, but now as I get older, the stresses, I've gone grey, I'm thinking, yeah I can see, I can honestly see why there are some deputies who want to stay as deputies. (DHT 7)

When you go home in teaching you take your laptop with you and you're still carrying on, I don't know what it is. My wife's a teacher as well and she said to me if we both go into teaching there would be loads of assets but you can't sort of turn off can you and that is a barrier because like most people who've got a family we've got our own lives and it's finding that balance – that's a very strong barrier. (DHT 7)

One DHT speaking with a HT on a head shadow asked him about how he coped with balancing school and home life. Surprisingly his response was 'I don't know why you are expecting one – I never expected one, I didn't have one, I still don't have one – I came into the job not expecting one', thus illustrating that maybe family life does have to take a second place to heading up a school.

Family especially spouses can also be drivers as DHT 7 states

...I'm reasonably important here and make important decisions but at home she makes all of the decisions – she's quite a good driver. She allows me to spend the time in school and allows me the time at home and that's incredibly important. (DHT 10)

Sometimes solutions have to be found so that one member of the family can progress further.

My wife and I were both assistant heads. We had our first child and we were both told you won't be able to both carry on being in positions. We're both pretty organised and we thought we will, if anyone can do it we'll be able to but it became quite apparent that we couldn't – that's quite really hard to take really. My wife became part-time so that I could continue (DHT 11)

Only three DHTs cited work life balance as being a problem to overcome.

The following two quotes illustrate that a DHTs job is a good grounding for balancing work at school and home.

I think I'm as busy now as I would be as a head. I can't work anymore than I'm working now. (DHT 8)

I do think that if you've done your DHTs job correctly and your HTs been leading correctly, I don't think you've got to work that much harder. I think you've just got to work differently on a different level. (DHT 8).

### **The type of school and location**

All DHTs in this section appeared to have pondered what type of school they would want and the area it would have to be in. It would also have to be the right type of school with few problem areas to sort out if they were to take it on.

There are a lot of people in the profession who say if you're going to think of headship you need to think really carefully – it's a dog eat dog world – don't take a job in a school that's not in a middle class area, that isn't stable, don't take a job in a notice to improve (NTI) school, don't take a school where the CVA is a bit dodgy and this is not from fellow professionals alone but also unions. (DHT 10)

I want the right school and the right school might not be available now or in 18 months so I'm not being forced into a school that I desperately don't want. (DHT 8)

When probed further as to what type of school would entice him DHT 7

stated:

I'd like a 700-800 pupil wise school, 11-16 and preferably not sixth form – just primarily because it's the most informative and most moulding sort of age really isn't it and also that size 700-800 means that you can get to know all of the pupils – you're going to be guiding these children in their career paths and in their life chances. (DHT 7)

This group of DHTs was very sure about what it is that they required of a school, its clientele and the problems that they might be inheriting. They all wanted the types of schools that they were in currently working in.

Others in this group would also not move areas because of family commitments and would therefore have to wait for headships to come up within the areas that they lived in.

We want to stay in the Midlands now. I don't like getting to know people intimately within the local authority so that's why I move around. I don't like the politics you often get within Local Authorities – as they can have their favourites. (DHT 7)

I would probably not move, I think circumstances dictate that – all of my family come from around here and as my wife works part-time we would need them. (DHT 10)

Therefore although these DHTs were ready to take on headship they would need the right school, in the right area with characteristics very similar to their own schools.

### **Worries about age**

All of the DHTs in this group were aged between their early thirties to mid-thirties and therefore if they went for headship, they would potentially have up to thirty years of leading a school or schools before retirement. DHT 8's worry as well as DHT 7 was that their ages could be a barrier for them as both were in their thirties and as DHT 11 states:

For me that's what I'll be faced with, I suppose another barrier. I've got 30 more years of work. If I become a Head in 18

months, that's 29 years I would be Head and I don't know whether that's possible.

DHT 10 had an alternative view point and did not agree that age needed to be seen as a problem. He could see that further opportunities were available after headship. He stated:

I don't think you have to be a Head for 20/25 years. I mean my view point of a Head in a school is quite often six, seven, eight years is probably about right and then you move on somewhere else, do two or three schools. You should have financial stability to do something different then.

This however does appear to be a problem as more and more teachers are obtaining responsibility points earlier on in their careers which then means younger DHTs which consequently means younger HTs with longer periods of time to serve before retirement.

### **Money remuneration**

When asked the reasons why DHT 7 wanted headship, he stated that on a personal level he was thinking into the future about pensions and

...the way the pension structure works now as we I mean, I don't want to be working until I am 65 theoretically, although I might if they keep changing the goalposts and I believe now the pension structure is an average over your career rather than the last 3 or 4 years. So therefore a part of me thinks the sooner I get to Head teacher or as soon as I earn as much money as I can, for as long as I can then my pension will be better, as best as possible, so that's another motivating factor. (DHD 7)

On the other hand DHD 8 couldn't see why school head teachers were financially remunerated differently to a Managing Director of a business. He felt that although head teachers of large schools earned a good salary it still wasn't equitable to a head of other organisations and that this was one of the reasons that DHTs as a whole did not want headship.

### **Theme 3 - Head Teachers' perceptions of support/guidance given to Deputy Head Teachers**

Deputy Head teachers 7,8,10 and 11 teach in two different schools (see table 3) Therefore information from HT1 and HT5 transcripts have been used to ascertain what support/guidance they give their deputies. Head teachers were asked:

- Whether they knew what their deputies future plans were.
- What CPD opportunities were offered to their deputies to help with their progression to headship?
- Why they thought their school was a good training ground for future leaders
- What has changed over time that helped or hindered their deputy's progression?

#### **Future plans**

Both Head teachers were very sure when asked how many of their DHTs were ready and eager to progress onto headship. This showed that there was on-going dialogue between HTs and their DHTs and that HTs were taking an active interest in their career progression.

Three of them will definitely go for headship, and of the three of them, two have just done NPQH so they are close to headship. (HT5)

Yes I know as far as they know! One deputy is a very experienced deputy. It's her second deputy post and I know she will become a head. The other guy is fairly new in post; I haven't really discussed it with him because he is still only in his second year. (HT 1)

Both HTs appeared to have very strong relationships with their DHTs and communication was a key factor to their career progression.

I have had some really good conversations with my DHTs because we had to start identifying strengths and weaknesses and so again that process has been great for forcing honest conversations. (HT5).

### **Continuing Professional Development (CPD) including NPQH**

Both head teachers were able to state which of their DHTs were on the NPQH and which had already achieved it. Both HTs had achieved their NPQHs in its early inception but were enthusiastic about what the new NPQH had to offer their DHTs.

The NPQH they're on, the new NPQH which I think is really good has invigorated my DHTs. The whole language of the NPQH has changed from the old NPQH which was a bit of an out of school jolly. One of the deputies really feels invigorated and it does feel like he's now being developed – he needs to produce his own action plan about areas he needs to work on. (HT5)

The National College is a big aid to the generality of professional development that gets people ready for headship – the NPQH has been narrowed down. (HT1)

Professional development at school and at other schools was also offered so that DHTs kept abreast of all aspects of school life.

My deputies have a CPD expectation of them at school once a term if only for a couple of hours, so things to keep them alert. (HT 5)

One HT also had the forethought of recognising that he might not be a suitable role model that his DHT needed and so sent him to work shadow a head teacher at another school.

I've sent one of my deputies to a different school so that she can see how other heads model themselves – a model like me might put her off as I work a lot in the evenings and holidays – but this is the way I work and not all heads do. (HT1).

**Why do you think that this school is a good training ground for future leaders?**

When asked this question HT1 felt that the training his DHTs were getting because of their NTI category was providing them with the skills they would require when they got their own headship. DHTs were looking more at the national picture rather than just focussing on their own school.

In the short term the fact that we are in an Ofsted category of Notice to Improve (NTI) has meant that we have had so many people crawling all over us that the professional dialogue has not been restricted to just this school – questions like 'Where are we nationally', 'Where are we within the Local Authority' and 'Where are we within the Collegiate' and so forth have all made us stronger. (HT1)

Alternatively HT5 didn't feel the need to worry her DHTs about Ofsted as she states she would do the worrying for them. She felt that one of the main barriers to headship was that they had to be more accountable and she did not want that to put her DHTs off.

I don't stress about Ofsted – it does worry me and it does wake me up at 5 in the morning, but I don't let it worry them ... because they are still excited about Headship they're not seeing that stuff about accountability. (HT 5)

The following quotes illustrate that both Head teachers felt that their schools were good training grounds because of the values that they held about

teaching and learning and that if their DHTs could teach and lead in these schools they could do so anywhere.

We have an unrelenting focus on the quality of teaching. You know schools that focus very much on systems and things – it's not necessarily the best preparation for headship. You know we are very values driven. At the moment the Ofsted category will be a great finisher for people as its brought ruthlessness that perhaps I don't always provide. (HT 1)

I am creating deputies who are strong and who are committed to working with children in different situations who recognise that those schools are harder to work in, much harder to teach in so actually that would be the school where ultimately they would have a bigger smile on their faces at the end of the day. (HT 5)

### **What has changed over time that helps you or has not helped you to help the deputies?**

When asked about what was helping or hindering HTs from helping their DHTs, both had differing opinions with one stating that the whole accountability issue was not helping him to guide his DHT to headship and the other stating that it would either make or break them. Through networking with HTs and other DHTs a lot of negative information regarding Ofsted and NTI had caused DHTs to view these as barriers to becoming a head teacher.

I think all this accountability stuff that is going on at the moment is pretty heavy ... and I think there are some HTs who are in very difficult situations and I think they've ( DHTs) twigged that they're about to put themselves in that position of authority. (HT 5)

HT1 stated that being in a NTI school had also helped his DHTs in the long term as:

... over the last twelve months we've had so many people crawling all over us that the professional dialogue has not been restricted to just this school and the few, but has been right in at: Where's it at

nationally? Where's it at in the local authority? Where's it at in the Collegiate? (HT 1)

This type of dialogue and the NTI situation enables DHTs to gain insightful professional development into what working under pressure is like and as HT 1 states:

.. the Ofsted category will be a great finisher for people who are nearly there because it's bought a ruthlessness that perhaps, you know, I don't always provide so it's about that, for people to see that, to see what it looks like and then put it into their own real melting pot.

#### **Theme 4 - Deputy Head Teacher's perceptions of support/guidance given by their Head teachers.**

Deputy Heads in group 1 were asked what support and guidance they received from their head teachers. Their responses are presented under the following headings:

- Support for NPQH application and other CPD
- Personal support and dialogue
- Taking the lead

#### **Support for NPQH application and other CPD**

When asked about the support/guidance DHTs received from their HTs all were very complimentary about the support given to them and they were keen to take advantage of all CPD. The new NPQH which states that candidates only need apply if their HTs feel they will be ready for headship within eighteen months has proved to be very motivational as HTs have to

state what their DHTs strengths and weaknesses are, thus forming an action plan.

I'm quite keen on doing my NPQH ... Yes no problems, let's go forward with that but here are some areas where I think you're probably in need of development. (DHT 8)

The new NPQH has to have head teacher backing where he/she thinks you are ready and the head teacher is not supposed to back your application to be on it unless you are within 18 months of gaining a headship. It's expected of me this year and I've just applied in the January window. (DHT 11)

Other external opportunities have also been supported by HTs which include head teacher shadowing and visiting other schools. All of the DHTs found these to be extremely beneficial.

He's supported me doing the head shadowing scheme and is supportive of me applying for the Leadership Succession Training through the National College where you get a mentor. They only accept 20 people who they believe would be ready for headship in the next 18 months. (DHT 10)

He has supported that I've gone to New Mexico to visit other schools there. (DHT 10)

The most useful thing I have found is when my head sent me away to shadow head teachers. I would literally spend time sitting as part of the process, you can have quality conversations with people who are doing the job in front of you – why do you do that? Why's it like this? It's very enriching. (DHT 11)

Head Teacher shadowing appeared to be most beneficial because it was seen a more practical activity and DHTs were able to network with other senior leaders.

### **Taking the lead**

Opportunities were also available within school that interviewees felt helped them to feel that they could progress onto headship. Having their Head

teacher's support in trying out whole school initiatives and giving them opportunities to try out new things gave DHTs a more positive self-concept which in turn gave them more confidence to progress onto headship.

He's allowed me and xxxxx the other deputy certain aspects of the school to run with certain autonomy and I appreciate that we're not going to get complete autonomy ... he does give us distinct roles so that we can go away and tinker with them. I mean staffing for example; it is good preparation for the next level. (DHT 7)

She's really good at supporting and giving opportunities to do things that we've not done before. I would normally go and say I think I need to do this, or I need to do that. I haven't got much experience of this. The head here has always been superb in saying we'll give you the opportunity, we'll make that happen for you, so that has been great. (DHT 11)

DHTs were able to focus on areas that they felt they needed to improve and thus this gave them more confidence. Having HTs that gave them these opportunities was a great advantage.

### **Personal support/dialogue**

Responses from all of the DHTs interviewed suggested that their head teachers were extremely supportive and had conversations with them at regular intervals regarding their progression. In the case of DHT 7 and 8 their conversations with HTs had been very explicit where they knew that headship was their next step. It appeared that both DHTs needed that confirmation from their HTs before they could progress further.

He knows that I want to be a head teacher, he said when we had our six monthly reviews, and he tries to review us every six months. He was kind enough to say I am a very good DHT now and within a couple of years, should I want to, I'd be a very good HT so he has been very encouraging in that sense ... it's kind of nice to hear ratification off him. (DHT 7)

We agreed I'd stay 3 years when I took the job and I haven't stuck to that. I've been here longer. He hasn't wanted me to apply because the school hasn't been ready. I would hope we come out of NTI within the next few months, so we've agreed if I was going to apply it would be better in the summer. (DHT 10)

However for DHT 11 and 8 although communication did take place, they did not appear to get a definite 'yes I think you should go for headship' from their Head teachers.

We have our little conversations about my future, then we both go 'I don't want to talk about it anymore', and we don't talk about it because I'm quite nervous about it, you know you really get close to someone. We didn't talk about headship for a while and it was absolutely the unspoken thing, it just wasn't going to happen – wasn't the right time for the school. (DHT 11)

She's good in terms of sowing seeds, in terms of giving you confidence and building you as a leader, without coming out and saying you're ready for headship. (DHT 8)

All respondents wanted/needed ratification of whether they were ready or not to progress onto headship from their HTs. Some appeared to be very explicit with their advice/guidance whereas others would not commit themselves.

**Table 12: Summary of themes to emerge from group 1 – those DHTs wanting to progress onto headship**

<b>DHTs</b>	<b>Drivers to headship</b>	<b>Barriers to headship</b>	<b>DHTs perceptions of the support/guidance received from their head teachers</b>	<b>Heads perceptions of the support/guidance given to their DHTs</b>
<b>DHT 7</b>	Head teacher as role model Ambition Power to make change Family	Family commitments and work life balance Age The right school	Support for NPQH application Six monthly reviews Given opportunities to broaden skills Very supportive head	Continuing Professional Development – including NPQH  Knowledge of DHTs career progression  School – a good training ground
<b>DHT 8</b>	Head teacher as role model Power to make change Ambition	The right school	Very supportive head Meetings once a week Support for NPQH application Constructive feedback on areas to improve Support provided through coaching	
<b>DHT 10</b>	Head teacher as role model Power to make change Head teacher giving more autonomy	Family commitments and work life balance The right school	CPD – head teacher shadowing One-to-one meetings where progression discussed Very supportive head	
<b>DHT 11</b>	Ambition Head teacher as role model Power to make change	Family commitments and work life balance The right school Age	Support for NPQH application CPD – head teacher shadowing Many opportunities within the school to broaden skills.	

## Summary

From Table 12 it is clear to see that all the DHTs in group 1 were quite certain that they wanted to progress onto headship, with reasons why being: the positive role models of their own head teachers, their own ambition to succeed and wanting to make a difference to bring about change. These were their drivers; however they also had barriers that they were conscious of. These centred on family and work life balance and how these factors would affect them if they were to progress onto headship. Other barriers included the type of school and location as DHTs wanted to go into schools that did not require a lot of work (were not in NTI category). Some DHTs worried about their age being a problem as they were relatively young DHTs who if they became HTs were looking at twenty five to thirty years of headship. However, they could still envisage themselves as HTs in the future with and the drivers outweighing the barriers.

Head teachers appeared to be very supportive and were able to give DHTs all of the opportunities available to progress onto headship e.g. NPQH, Head teacher shadowing and personal encouragement. Deputy Head teachers were able to confirm the support they received and appeared to take full advantage of every opportunity. However some DHTs did feel that they needed their HTs to be more explicit with their guidance and support. They wanted to be told that they were ready for headship in a more formal way. Being encouraged to apply for the NPQH was not enough validation of their head teacher's confidence in them.

## Group 2

Fourteen DHTs were interviewed with six (DHTs 1, 4, 9, 12, 13 and 14) stating that they would not be going onto headship. All had progressed from heads of department with two also having had experience as head of year or as an assistant head teacher. Table 7 illustrates that five out of the six DHTs had had their job from between ten to sixteen years. The jobs assigned them by their HTs ranged from curriculum to timetabling and budgets. No DHTs in this group had responsibility for a specific curriculum area (apart from DHT 4) which contrasts with DHTs in group 1 who all line managed different subject areas. The transcripts of these six DHTs gave rise to three main barriers to headship and no real drivers. The barriers include:

- accountability;
- work life balance;
- confidence.

These groups of DHTs were quite adamant that they did not want to go for headship. Two DHTs had already gone for headship in the past and had made a conscious decision not to try again (DHTs 1 and 4). The entire cohort in this group was aged between their late forties to late fifties with one exception (DHT 9) who was in her mid-thirties.

When asked the question 'Will you be going for headship in the near future', replies from respondents included, 'No not at all' (DHT 9), 'I would not choose to' (DHT 12), 'I hadn't totally convinced myself that I really wanted to do it' (DHT13) and:

I actually came for headship at Swanshurst, but pulled out, and then I went for another headship, was shortlisted and then pulled out ... I had to go through those two processes I think to crystallise in my mind that I didn't want headship and I made that decision four years ago and I haven't regretted it. (DHT 1)

Common to all were their quick, straight forward responses to my question as all were adamant that they did not want to take that next step, having already done so in the past.

### **Theme 1 - Drivers to headship**

In this section DHTs could not give any drivers to headship but were able to talk at great length about the barriers that were deterring them.

### **Theme 2 - Barriers to headship**

#### **Accountability – national challenge, litigation and Ofsted**

One of the biggest barriers appeared to be the accountability that HTs were under for everything that happened within a school. DHTs talked about the increasing pressure that HTs were under e.g. being in a NTI school, National Challenge, fear of litigation and Ofsted were all major hurdles that had to be faced.

...increasing strains on heads, increasing pressures, the whole accountability thing. I knew a number of heads who seemed to be more nervous each day and I thought well I don't actually have to put myself through that pressure if I don't want to. (DHT 13)

There are so many different pressures on schools now particularly with the requirement to get whatever results happen to be the results of the day ... there are so many things that come in from central government – different initiatives that change their names. I think the job is in many ways quite overwhelming

These pressures appeared to overwhelm this group. They could only see the constant pressure that their HT was under and not the more enjoyable aspects of the job.

DHT 1 talked about HTs being in a vulnerable position:

... things like National Challenge and what that will bring might put more people off. Heads will become more vulnerable; their positions will become more vulnerable, so I think the headship crisis could get deeper. I know that there are quite a few people of my generation of deputies around Birmingham, who have made the same decision as I have. We create in some ways a twofold problem for the authority because not only are we not going for headship, we are also blocking deputy headship. (DHT 1)

Ofsted isn't an explicit barrier, but in terms of accountability obviously it is important and I think that given that nowadays if a school goes down, you go down with it with the Local Authority taking you on – getting you a nice job somewhere. (DHT 13)

### **Work life balance/family**

DHTs in this group all cited families, especially children as a major deterrent to headship. They wanted a workable work life balance but were realistic about the commitment that was needed in becoming a head teacher.

... I'm not thinking of headship. I think the main reasons for that are partly family, still have two children. I had two female head teachers who both had children and I am very aware of the time commitment it takes, particularly in the first five years, it is very heavy especially if you want to turn the school around. (DHT 9)

That's a serious part of not going for headship – where do you get the job satisfaction from in that job? As you know I have a young second family and all those pressures deter me from thinking about headship. If I hadn't married again I might have been a head today – who knows? (DHT 4)

This DHT reflected on why she hadn't gone for headship before

My daughter was younger then, and you know, on reflection there have been times during her life when I've gone for promotion and when I look back, it has been unfair on her. I think family plays a huge role in why some DHTs might not go for headship. (DHT 1)

### **Confidence – having a positive self-concept**

Having self confidence in her own ability appeared to be DHT 9s main barrier. She still didn't feel she had enough knowledge of all aspects of a HTs role.

It would be about not being ready, not being wise enough in enough different areas although my knowledge is growing I still know there are large areas I don't have a handle on. (DHT 9)

Further on into the interview she states that a co-headship role could be the answer as decisions would have to be shared between two people. 'I think women are naturally inclined to share and not build power, it's not about the power or personality it's all about the best, then I would love it, I would absolutely love to do it like that'. Self-doubt as well as self-confidence also was the main reason deterring DHT 4.

I'm not so good at the administration and jumping through hoops and responding to problems, all those sorts of things that heads are called on to do, lots and lots of meetings, lots going on after school. (DHT 4)

### **Theme 3 - Head Teacher's perceptions of support/guidance given to Deputy Head Teachers**

Deputy Head Teachers 1, 4, 9, 12 and 13 teach in three different schools (see table 3). Therefore information from HT 3, 4 and 5 transcripts have to be used to ascertain what support/guidance they give their deputies.

Head teachers were asked:

- Whether they knew what their deputies future plans were.
- What CPD opportunities were offered to their deputies to help with their progression to headship?
- Why they thought their school was a good training ground for future leaders
- What has changed over time that has helped or hindered their deputy's progression?

#### **Future plans**

All three HTs were very sure when asked how many of their DHTs were ready or not to progress onto headship as the following quotes illustrate:

The third one, I don't know what you'll find, but it might be that he is, and the danger is, that worst would ever be if anybody ever saw it as inadequate not to be head. I think it is wrong. If you think nationally, large secondary schools are going to have three or four deputies and there is only ever going to be one head, so you are not expecting every deputy to convert into a head. (HT 3)

When I first started, I thought they both did, I don't know, maybe three or four years ago one of them decided that she wouldn't, and the other one is still thinking about it. (HT 4)

Three of them will definitely go for headship ... but the fourth deputy will not ... one of the original deputies. At one point he desired to be head – he applied for this headship but he didn't get it – he did about six months, nine months of trying to apply without success. (HT 5)

This group consisted of DHTs who did not want to progress into headship and all HTs were surprisingly knowledgeable about their DHTs career progression plans. Again communication is a key factor in senior leadership relationships. HTs can only help if they know what their DHTs want to do in the future.

### **Continuing Professional Development (CPD) including NPQH**

The new NPQH proved to be a positive experience for HTs and DHTs alike and HTs approved of the new format, so although DHTs in this group were not going for headship they were still keen on completing their NPQH.

The new NPQH they're on, the new NPQH which I think is looking really good. One of my deputies has come back really invigorated, he's been very motivated by it ... the whole language of it has changed from the old NPQH, which was a bit of an out of school jolly really. It does feel like he's now being pushed to develop his own action plan about the areas he needs to work on. (HT 5)

Two of the heads interviewed, viewed taking on whole school CPD as good training for headship:

We've got a huge CPD programme so that's what one of the deputies has brought and developed ... all the deputies have an expectation on them to lead some CPD activity, once a term if only for a couple of hours, so things to just keep them alert. (HT 5)

We do have a fairly comprehensive structure for training ... developing as a leader, you know, it shouldn't be so much as sitting back and receiving the training as leading it, so that's another opportunity for people, for deputies, to get involved. (HT4)

Having excellent relationships with consortium schools also enabled HT3 to help her DHT gain useful insight into the role of the Head teacher by acting

as an associate head. These types of placements are organised within the South Network.

I think it is certainly the case that nationally and at local authority level, because of the crisis of future headship, there are not necessarily financial resources, but there are opportunities there, for instance Andrew taking the associate head route, and there are opportunities for deputies who wish to find out more about the job, to go into other schools. (HT 3)

**Why do you think that this school is a good training ground for future leaders?**

One head teacher thought that teaching and leading in a large school (1800 students) enabled DHTs to improve their communication skills, which in turn would stand them in good stead in the future if they decided to become head teachers, as communication between leadership teams ensured success

... I personally think communication underpins any effective school, being able to deal with communications in a very large school is very good practice for someone who is a deputy and learning to move on to become a head. (HT 3)

The head teacher also claimed that roles were interchanged between deputies so this was valuable training where deputies got to work out of their 'comfort' zones.

**What has changed over time that helps you or has not helped you to help the deputies?**

HT 3 didn't find taking on the responsibility for succession planning for the country a comfortable situation to be in as. She states 'not everybody wants to be head' and that DHTs should 'look inside themselves as to whether they want to become head teachers'. She continues to expand:

... the fact that the country has a crisis, I forget the percentage, but a huge number, a huge percentage of heads retiring in the next five years, is it? Yes, that means we have to have successors, but there is an issue existing head teachers to suddenly turn into the people who provide that succession. I don't know I just find that slightly uncomfortable.

Therefore it was a decision that only the deputy could make for him/herself.

She would be willing to help guide and support but only when the deputy had decided on the career route to be followed. HT3 also stated that if a deputy wanted to stay in their post for their entire career then that was their prerogative and no-one should be made to feel uncomfortable with their decision.

HT3 was alone in taking this view as all the other head teachers were extremely keen to help with succession planning.

#### **Theme 4 - Deputy Head Teacher's perceptions of the support/guidance they receive from their Head Teachers**

Deputy Heads in group 2 were asked what support and guidance they received from their head teachers. Their responses are presented under the following headings:

- Opportunities
- Professional Development

##### **Opportunities**

Most DHTs were given ample opportunities within the school environment to try out areas that they were not confident in. This in turn stopped them

working in their 'comfort zone' and enabled them to try areas that they did not feel they could do.

She gives me lots of opportunities to do different things. I was very much a data and technology person which were my comfort zone and things I was very familiar with and so she quite quickly in under a year said right you are ready to do the next step, curriculum- so she's given me the opportunities. (DHT 9)

Since the day she became head, she guides me into areas I want to explore – she points out noticeable weaknesses in my portfolio and supports me in the fact that I want to stay a deputy head for the time being. (DHT 4)

The responses suggested that head teachers were more in tune with what their DHTs required in order to motivate and extend them.

### **Professional Development**

When asked about professional development opportunities, all but one DHT was able to enthuse about the opportunities that were available to them especially through Specialist School Trust as the following two responses indicate:

She continues to push me, there's a new development coming up now through the L.E.A actually and she's come to me and said do you like it, spending more time out of school, but it will give you the opportunity to sample something else – so she is always pushing and developing me. (DHT 9)

Oh yes there is enough training. I mean both of us have been for the last two years on the Birmingham Transforming Education Training programme which is for secondary DHTs. We have a lot of access to training through Specialist School's Trust. (DHT 1)

Whereas DHTs in this group were happy with the support/guidance given to them, there was one exception. DHT 13 was negative about his career

progression and felt that he was left alone and it is was up to him to attend courses if he wanted to. This could have been due to his age as he was close to retirement.

I was left very much on my own to make that decision. It was a question of if you wanted to, that's fine and if you didn't well that was fine as well. Thinking back over my career there was never any idea of support for career progression particularly. (DHT 13)

**Table13: Summary of themes to emerge from group 2 – those DHTs not wanting to progress onto headship**

<b>DHTs</b>	<b>Drivers to headship</b>	<b>Barriers to headship</b>	<b>DHTs perceptions of the support/guidance received from their head teachers</b>	<b>Heads perceptions of the support/guidance given to their DHTs</b>
<b>DHT 1</b>		Family commitments and work life balance Additional responsibility – <b>confidence</b> Accountability	<i>Support for NPQH application</i> <i>Six monthly reviews</i> <i>Given opportunities to broaden skills</i> <i>Very supportive head</i>	<i>Continuing Professional Development – including NPQH</i>  <i>Knowledge of DHTs career progression</i>  <i>School – a good training ground</i>
<b>DHT 4</b>		Family commitments and work life balance Additional/ultimate responsibility - <b>confidence</b>	<i>Very supportive head</i> <i>Meetings once a week</i> <i>Support for NPQH application</i> <i>Constructive feedback on areas to improve</i> <i>Support provided through coaching</i>	
<b>DHT 9</b>		Family commitments and work life balance Additional/ultimate responsibility - <b>confidence</b>	<i>CPD – head teacher shadowing</i> <i>One-to-one meetings where progression discussed</i> <i>Very supportive head</i>	
<b>DHT 12</b>		Family commitments and work life balance The right school Age	<i>Support for NPQH application</i> <i>CPD – head teacher shadowing</i> <i>Many opportunities within the school to broaden skills.</i>	
<b>DHT 13</b>		Family commitments and work life balance Accountability - <b>confidence</b>		

## **Summary**

From Table 13 it is clear to see that all the deputies in group 2 were quite adamant that they didn't want to progress onto headship. They had no real drivers but they had barriers that they were conscious of. These centred on family and work life balance and how these factors would affect them if they were to progress onto headship. Other barriers included the pressure of being held accountable and not having the actual confidence to take on headship. Head teachers appeared to be very supportive and were able to give deputies all of the opportunities available to progress onto headship e.g. NPQH, Head teacher shadowing and personal encouragement. Deputy Head teachers were able to confirm the support they received and appeared to take full advantage of every opportunity but still did not want that next step. As with group 1 these DHTs wanted to be told they were ready for headship by their HTs. Being encouraged to apply for the NPQH was not enough validation of their HTs confidence in them and their ability to lead a school.

## **Group 3**

Four deputies were interviewed with four (deputies 2, 3, 5 and 6) stating that they were unsure whether they wanted headship or not. All but one had progressed from head of department and assistant head. Job roles assigned to them by the head teachers included curriculum, pastoral and CPD. All of this group were responsible for line managing different subject areas. The transcripts of these four deputies gave rise to three barriers:

- self -confidence

- work life balance
- accountability

There was one main driver to seeking headship which was, having the oversight of whole school issues rather than being an expert in one area only. This group still had more barriers to discourage them from headship than drivers.

During the interview process all deputies were asked whether they wanted to become HTs. Groups 1 and 2 could state whether they did or did not want to become head teachers whereas group 3 were unsure as the following quotes illustrate:

There's a yes, and there's big but, so there is a yes but and I'm not at that point today, I'm not 100% certain what the but is. (DHT 2)

Yesterday I didn't, today I might, tomorrow I'm not sure ... so to be honest it changes daily, weekly, and monthly. (DHT 5)

It depends on what day of the week it is ... Yes I do lots of the time because, again, it's that wider influence, but then sometimes I can't imagine why some HTs put themselves through it. (DHT 6)

DHT 3 was placed in a strange situation as her head teacher had been 'head hunted' to lead a failing school so needed a strong leader. This left a temporary head teacher post which was offered to DHT 3. She would be able to 'step in' and as she states 'having the control of decisions in the school was too good to miss'.

However with the following quote she shows that she is unsure but because the decision has been made for her she will do the job of head teacher.

I haven't chosen this job in January-let's just make that clear ... at all, and I feel very scared about January but I will do it. (DHT 3)

Trust has been placed in her and because her head teacher has made the decision, then she has not had to decide for herself. Her self-confidence has been raised because of this trust.

## **Theme 1 - Drivers to headship**

### **Oversight of whole school issues**

When asked about why DHTs would want to progress to headship many spoke of having the ultimate responsibility and being able to make whole school decisions. This is what appealed to them most.

I think the drivers are that as a deputy you tend to see everything that happens in the school and part of me thinks 'hmm that's quite interesting I'd quite like to do that and having the choice to have the ultimate decision is very appealing. (DHT 5)

The fact that you can step up to a Head's job in January, being surrounded by people driven in the same way and having the control of decisions in the school is an opportunity too good to miss. (DHT 3)

... the job that I do now, because this is such a large school, is very focussed, so you have a lot to do in one area and obviously as a head you'd have more of an oversight over lots of areas and I'd like getting involved in other things that are going on ... It isn't a control or power thing, it's just that you have got ideas and you think things could be done and obviously as a head you could do that whereas you get quite 'pigeon-holed' as a deputy, particularly in a large school. (DHT 6)

DHTs wanted to be able to 'try out' new ideas and have the 'power' to do this.

As DHTs, especially in large schools, they did not feel they were able to do this.

## **Theme 2 - Barriers to headship**

### **Self confidence**

All respondents in this group I felt were ready to apply for headship in the future but something in their own characters stopped them. This group needed confirmation from their head teachers that they had what it took to become a head teacher.

For deputies in this group the barriers were all concerned with self-confidence and believing in themselves. They appeared to need somebody behind them, a mentor, guiding them to make that ultimate decision.

I've actually allowed myself to think I'm no good, I can't do this, so I've got to inflate that balloon again, I've got to get myself back – I'm partly there now. (DHT 2)

This deputy had been persuaded to take on an acting post of head teacher at her present school whilst her head teacher was asked to help another school within the consortium. She described her head teacher as being dynamic, charismatic and inspirational; all things she felt she was not. Her character was very different to her head teacher's and she felt colleagues within her school would compare styles and that she would not come out well.

Having to stay at the same school and not move on can influence a person's self-confidence, especially if he has been a very good leader – stepping into another person's shoes can be very daunting. (DHT 3)

DHT 5 felt that her head teacher was at fault because he hadn't rotated posts so she felt under prepared for headship.

I think that the main barrier for me is that I've always been able to work in my comfort zone and within my area of expertise which is

pastoral inclusion, students, parents, staff and that sort of thing. I'm definitely not a data person. The school's I have worked in have allowed me to work in my comfort zone – I need leadership that is more spread where people rotate posts. If I was made to work with data/curriculum I would feel more confident to move forward. (DHT 5)

DHT 6 also felt that deputies roles should be swapped at regular intervals so that different skills could be developed, 'otherwise you lose self-confidence thinking that you haven't really acquired all skills to become a head teacher.

She then goes on to expand:

I know there are some things I really wouldn't be good at and you would have to develop the skills to do it but I think as a head you've got to have all of these skills, you've got to have an oversight of all the different things that go on in a school. (DHT 6)

She could however see a disadvantage of rotating deputies' roles, 'if somebody else had to come and pick that up they've got to learn all the stuff that you know before they can move it on'.

### **Work life balance/family commitments**

Another deterrent to headship was balancing work commitments with family ones. DHT 2 had an extended family to look after and didn't feel that she could raise it at interview. She didn't feel she could give a hundred per cent to a headship job when she still had these constraints at home.

The other thing is that I've got this young child, and I have a partner and that these are constraints put on me in terms of two other children, and you don't discuss these at interview ... there's also an eighty one year old mother in law as well. You can't ever raise those issues, you know, and that makes your choices difficult. (DHT 2)

Having a young baby is an obvious deterrent to DHT 5 who states:

... Obviously having a little baby, the hours are a barrier. They weren't when I didn't have Izzy but now I am very conscious 'please let me be home for quarter past five so that I can feed her', whereas last year I was working until six or seven and then coming home and working (DHT 5)

Thinking of the future she states:

I'm thinking in four or five years' time that will have given me a chance if I am lucky to have another baby, and get them both to nursery full time, but again if you've got two children you've got even less time to think about being a head.

Two deputies comment on the breakdown of marriages that they have observed which have subsequently had an impact on their decision on becoming a head teacher. Deputy 6 comments on the pressure that she has seen placed on a roommate who is a head teacher, with the personal cost of the sacrifices she has made, being a broken marriage.

On the home front it has to be a negotiation, and I'm very lucky ... the fear for me about headship is that I meet too many heads who are not married anymore, too many heads that have had marriages that have broken down ... I don't want my kids to grow up saying 'Mum, I never saw you. You were always ...' (DHT 3)

I just think it is too much to ask (time commitment) ... but maybe you do need that level of commitment in order to then be able to say maybe those are the only sorts of people that make good heads. (DHT 6)

## **Accountability**

There was an overwhelming feeling that being held accountable for everything that happened within a school was too great a pressure and was one barrier that needed addressing before thinking about headship in the future.

After Christmas I fear this person I will become – I don't want the ultimate accountability of being head teacher of a school. That really, really scares me because I have such faith in Tim. (DHT 3)

It's a completely different world, and the politics of it – that's just massive, absolutely massive, it's all about pass rates, league tables ... the buck stops with the head. (DHT 2)

Ofsted as an accountability tool is too big a tool – it's a sledge hammer to crack a nut lots and lots of times and when you sit as a deputy and see what your HT goes through, even in a school which comes out as 'good with outstanding features', you do have to think whether you want to go through all that. (DHT 6)

DHT 6 continues to state that although Ofsted can 'get rid' of perceived failing HTs, head teachers themselves can't get 'rid of' failing teachers as easily.

You've got hundreds of teachers that you can't get rid of that are completely bloody incompetent and yet in one foul swoop you can destroy a HT of a school. (DHT 6)

This can be linked to self-confidence again as DHTs in group 1 (those wanting headship) were not so daunted about Ofsted and being held accountable for everything that went on in a school.

### **Theme 3 - Head Teachers' perceptions of support/guidance given to Deputy Head Teachers**

Deputy Head teachers 2, 3, 5 and 6 teach in two different schools (see table 8). Therefore information from HT2 and HT3 transcripts were used to ascertain what support/guidance they gave their deputies.

Head teachers were asked:

- Whether they knew what their deputies future plans were.

- What CPD opportunities were offered to their deputies to help with their progression to headship?
- Why they thought their school was a good training ground for future leaders
- What has changed over time that helps or hinders their deputy's progression?

### **Future plans**

Both head teachers were very sure when asked about their deputies' progression routes showing that the Leadership Team worked closely and the head teacher took time to find out what their deputies' career aspirations were for the future.

One is about to take up secondment at St Albans School up the road ... this is her second deputy headship and she would say she feels she is not ready for headship ... so she's going on a secondment to help shake things up a bit, to open fresh possibilities, to help her explore what she should do. (HT2)

The other deputy is definitely on her route to being a very good head teacher, so much so that she starts work on the first of January as a head teacher, because she is going to be an acting head teacher here. (HT2)

...certainly in terms of one of my deputies, I am doing that (supporting her), she would be in a position (to move to head teacher), and possibly another one. The third one, I don't know what you will find, but it might be that he is, and the danger is if anybody ever saw it as inadequate not to want to be a head. (DHT 3)

### **Continuing Professional Development (CPD) including NPQH**

Both head teachers had encouraged their deputies to take the NPQH which they had done so previously. Other training came from taking the Leadership Team on planning days outside of school so that there were no interruptions. Both head teachers had used outside professionals to work with their senior leadership teams. Again it was felt that there were definite opportunities for deputies to access training, 'there are not necessarily financial resources, but there are opportunities, for instance Andrew taking the associate head route and opportunities to go to other schools'. (HT 3)

### **Why do you think that this school is a good training ground for future leaders?**

HT 2 felt that his school was a good training ground because of the changes that he had made throughout the years. His own reputation of being a young, dynamic and creative person was also an advantage.

... we have fun. It's just a bit of fun here really. I think schools are too serious ... the government expects us to put everything right in terms of outputs and GCSEs ... people get so intense in politics ... and I think what is good about this school is that we are a young and small and dynamic and creative organisation, and where there's a spirit of fun and where risk-taking is allowed, that really helps. (HT 2)

### **What has changed over time that helps you or has not helped you to help the deputies?**

Both head teachers felt that with the remodelling of the work force more opportunities and a more creative role for deputies had been opened up.

I think something that's changed over time for the good is remodelling ... I have an outstanding Business manager, operations kind of person, and I have an outstanding HR woman but they're admin staff not teachers ... I think that is a useful shift. (HT 2)

The overall perception of the job of head teacher appeared to be what these head teachers thought was not helping their deputies think of progression to headship. The external pressures and the uncreative aspects of the job were also off putting.

I do think deputies see heads, and I mean in the broader sense, through the press and everything else, as being the scapegoats for so much of the external agenda which has ratcheted up ... the scariness of Ofsted and the pressure that heads are under individually to be accountable for that. (HT 3)

If DHTs think that being a head teacher is about having to attend governing body meetings, read minutes, deal with budget and sort your way through personnel complexities, then is it any wonder they wouldn't want to head teachers. (HT 2)

#### **Theme 4 - Deputy Head Teacher's perceptions of the support/guidance they receive from their Head Teachers**

Deputy heads in group 3 were asked what support and guidance they received from their head teachers. Their responses are presented under the heading of support and encouragement.

##### **Support and encouragement**

Having the support and encouragement of their head teachers appeared to be very important to deputies within this group. This support and encouragement had been seen as either personal dialogue of strengths and weaknesses or encouragement to go for professional development.

The head was very supportive; he gave me one term off on the associate headship programme. This helped as he was a lot more upfront about my strengths and weaknesses. (DHT3)

I have had to in effect team-head the school as Tim is going to be heading up another school for at least two terms. We've worked very closely and complimented each other – I have learnt a lot. (DHT 3)

Tim has encouraged me in the sense of challenging me. He wants both of us to move onto headship, but he wants to move his assistant heads on as well. He wants to build capacity ... he knows he can build leaders for the future. (DHT 2)

DHT 5 had only been at the school she was interviewed in a short time (just over a year) but was able to talk about her experiences with her previous head teacher.

My last Head was a very peopley person and was always very good at praising and saying things like, 'obviously in a few years you'll be a great head'. (DHT 5)

These responses indicate that head teachers for DHT 2 and 5 were able to get useful insight into what their head teachers thought of them as future heads without actually explicitly stating 'I think you are ready to go for headship'.

My Head was very supportive about the NPQH, but the most helpful part of it was the statement he had to write – with mine we were both very honest with each other and he said 'with some help on data training Rebecca has all the skills she needs to be a Head, but without that she doesn't'. I think that in a sense was brilliant at motivating me to think 'right now I should be doing the NPQH'. (DHT 5)

Well, he hasn't explicitly said I think you should go for headship. He's talked in the context of, 'If I had to write a reference for you, this would be a difficult area. (DHT 2)

**Table 14: Summary of themes to emerge from group 3 – those DHTs who are unsure of progressing onto headship**

<b>DHTs</b>	<b>Drivers to headship</b>	<b>Barriers to headship</b>	<b>DHTs perceptions of the support/guidance received from their head teachers</b>	<b>Heads perceptions of the support/guidance given to their DHTs</b>
<b>DHT 2</b>		Family commitments and work life balance <b>Self confidence</b>	<i>Support for NPQH application Encouragement of head</i>	<i>Continuing Professional Development – including NPQH  Knowledge of DHTs career progression  School – a good training ground</i>
<b>DHT 3</b>	Oversight of whole school issues	Family commitments and work life balance <b>Self confidence</b>	<i>Very supportive head, lots of encouragement. Support for NPQH application Been on the associate headship programme.</i>	
<b>DHT 5</b>	If co-headship was advertised might be interested. Oversight of whole school issues	Family commitments and work life balance	<i>Support for NPQH application Very supportive head, lots of encouragement.</i>	
<b>DHT 6</b>	Oversight of whole school issues	Work life balance	<i>Very supportive head, lots of encouragement. Support for NPQH application Been on the associate headship programme.</i>	

## **Summary**

From Table 14 it is clear to see that all the DHTs in this group; although they are unsure of progressing to headship they can still state drivers as well as barriers to headship. There is only one driver, which is having oversight of whole school issues and barriers include: self-confidence, work life balance/family commitments and accountability. Again having low self-confidence in their own abilities was deterring them from progressing to headship. Worrying about being accountable if things went wrong also indicates that these DHTs do not have much confidence in themselves. Head teachers appeared to be very supportive and were able to give deputies all of the opportunities available to progress onto headship e.g. NPQH, Head teacher shadowing and personal encouragement. Deputy Head teachers were able to confirm the support they received and appeared to take full advantage of every opportunity open to them. However deputies still needed that personal assurance from their head teacher that they were ready for headship and should 'go for it'.

This chapter has focussed on the findings and evidence from the study. I will, in the next chapter relate these summaries to the literature reviewed in chapter 2. It will also allow modification of Gronn's (1999), model (accession stage) to create a revised one more applicable to my research.

## CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Having reviewed the findings, the researcher is now able to analyse and discuss these findings. After carrying out nineteen semi-structured interviews with deputies and head teachers, three groups of deputies emerged – those wanting headship (group 1), those not wanting headship (group 2) and those who were unsure (group 3). Each group was asked what they perceived the drivers and/or barriers were to headship. Each group was also asked to explain what support/guidance they received from their head teachers. Head teachers were also asked whether they knew what their deputies' career progression plans were and what support/guidance they offered their deputies. Table 15 summarises the drivers and barriers experienced by all three groups. This information will help in discussing the first two research questions.

**Table 15: Summary of drivers and barriers to headship**

	<b>Group 1</b>	<b>Group 2</b>	<b>Group 3</b>
<b>Drivers</b>	Positive role model Ambition to succeed <u>Having the opportunity to make a difference</u>		<u>Oversight of whole school issues (autonomy and control)</u>
<b>Barriers</b>	<u>Work life balance</u> Type of school Age Money	<u>Work life balance</u> <u>Accountability</u> <u>Confidence</u>	<u>Work life balance</u> <u>Accountability</u> <u>Confidence</u>

## **Research question 1:**

### **Why are Deputy Head Teachers seeking headship? What are the drivers?**

After carrying out semi-structured interviews with deputies from a range of schools a group emerged (group 1) in chapter 4 that wanted to seek headship and appeared to look forward to this next progression in their career. The researcher wanted to know what the pros and cons were as perceived by potential applicants and a number of factors affected the attractiveness of headship. Draper and McMichael (1998) stated that there were incentives (drivers) and disincentives associated with the head's post. This group could appreciate all of the incentives and could see that the disincentives (barriers) were inevitable and acceptable dimensions of the post. When asked what the drivers were they stated that these were:

- Positive role models
- Ambition to succeed
- Having the opportunity to make a difference and having the power to make change.

Although this group wanted headship they were also very conscious of some of the barriers that they faced:

- Family/Work life balance
- Type of school and location
- Age
- Money remuneration

These deputies are described as 'rising stars' and 'ambitious deputy' by Hayes (2005). They are seen as deputies who have a definite career plan and want to progress to headship. This is also backed up by James and Whiting (1998) who describe this group as active aspirants, 'deputy head teachers who are currently actively seeking headship posts' (p. 356) and potential aspirants who are, 'deputy head teachers who have not yet applied for headship but envisage doing so in the future' (p. 356). The researcher's findings correlate with these statements as all but one deputy had a definite career plan and they were all conscious of how many years they had to complete as deputy before they could progress onto headship.

### **Positive role models**

All of the deputies in this group had excellent relationships with their head teachers and could only state positive things about them as leaders and as people. They were all seen as positive role models for them to emulate.

Ribbins (1997) in his study claims that a deputy's relationship with their head teacher is a key dimension to their evolving role. This is also backed up with what deputies in this group were stating;

... so the head's been fantastic – she's been really good, really, really good actually in terms of just her modelling what she does and letting us see what she does and speaking in a way that makes me think a little bit more of what I do rather than telling me... she has been a fantastic modeller of what good leadership is. (DHT 8)

Hayes (2005) makes a similar point;

Deputies will acquire their perception of headship mainly from their head teacher, and their decision whether to become a head is, to a

large extent, going to depend on the image of headship that is presented to them on a daily basis. (p. 7)

This is reiterated by Harris et al., (2003) who state 'it must be true that the relationship between the deputy and its head teacher is a crucial one for the development of an ambitious deputy' (p. 7)

Ribbins (1997) also states that it is the relationship with the head that is the key influence regarding the experiences of having been a deputy. Deputy Head teacher relationships, Ribbins (1997) continues to explain is the space where it can all go right or wrong.

I worked for somebody who viewed her role as head as being to train me for headship ... the head helped to push me in the right directions. She was great because she allowed me to make mistakes, helped me to discuss situation, but also sometimes left it entirely to me. (p. 301)

Gronn, 1999 also agrees that significant people play an important role in a person's career development. There is general consensus within the literature that significant people are strategically placed colleagues who help others with the advancement of their careers.

Parker (2002) calls these significant people mentors and discusses their importance in helping to shape the thinking of leaders. He states that mentors can be crucial for preparing heads for leadership roles. This is reiterated by Ribbins (2003) who also suggests that prospective head teachers are influenced and shaped by their mentors.

Therefore learning from their heads teachers either positively or negatively appears to be just as important as Clarke (1997) states: 'The head I worked

with there has retired now but my time with him helped clarify the sort of head I wasn't going to be' (p. 95). All the deputy heads in this group have positive comments to make about their heads and all appeared to have inspired them. These are the people that they want to emulate and aspire to be like them in their own schools.

### **Ambition to succeed**

Those deputy head teachers wanting progression to headship all had ambition and knew they wanted their own school to lead. This is aptly illustrated by Spear et al., (2000) who states that teachers seek promotion to headship based on their desire to broaden their experiences, obtain greater freedom and challenges and increase their influence to improve the education of children. They all appeared not to need their head teacher's validation and had 'positioned' themselves (Gronn and Lacey, 2004) to achieve their career goals. Positioning represents a sense in aspirant leaders that they know who they have to convince' that they know what it takes' to progress to senior leadership. These deputies (please see table 10) were all aged between 30 - 40 and had all progressed very quickly to deputy headship. They all appeared to have definite career plans and knew exactly where they wanted to be. Their self – confidence also appeared to be high as Ofsted did not appear to daunt them at all and being accountable was not included as one of their barriers to headship. They all appeared to have 'career plans' and knew exactly where they wanted to be.

## **Autonomy and control**

This group of deputies also felt ready to take on their own schools as they wanted opportunities to try out their own ideas. They wanted that ultimate power to make change and be accountable to themselves and not their head teacher. This is reiterated by Draper and McMichael (2003) who state that these are 'deputies who are people who want positive opportunities for autonomy, control and for introducing one's own ideas' (p. 188).

Similarly Hayes (2005) in his study asked existing heads what their perceptions of headship was, they claim that one of the main reasons that the move from deputy to head is a difficult one is that the deputy has no real responsibility of his or her own. Once they become head teacher, they have total responsibility for everything that happens within a school. It is this autonomy and control that the deputies in this group looked forward to when asked what was driving them to become a head teacher. Spear et al., (2000) also suggest teachers seek promotion to headship based on their desire to broaden their experiences but also to increase their influence.

## **Summary**

All sources and deputies in group 1 highlight the fact that head teachers are key influencers of deputies progressing onto headship. They also had definite career plans and know exactly how many years they needed as deputy head before they could progress to headship. They were all at specific stages of their career and appeared to be autonomous, confident and competent within the school. This motivation to progress to headship appears to be driven by

the interaction between perceptions of self and the nature of the role. This group of deputy head teachers appeared to have high self- confidence and barriers to headship were viewed as unavoidable problems that could be overcome.

### **Research question 2:**

#### **Why are Deputy Head Teachers not seeking headship? What are the barriers?**

After carrying out semi-structured interviews with deputies from a range of schools two groups emerged - group 2 and group 3. Group 2 did not want headship whilst group 3 were unsure. When asked what the barriers were to headship both groups stated the following:

- Accountability
- Work life balance
- Confidence.

This group were not able to identify any drivers to headship.

These deputies have been described as those waiting to retire and 'counting the days' and are described by Hayes (2005) and McBeath (2011) as 'career deputies' or 'settlers' (James and Whiting, 1998). This group according to Draper and McMichael (1998) place a lot more significance to disincentives (barriers) than incentives (drivers) as the results prove. Hayes (2005) has also described this group as 'sitting tenants' and states that these are the ones who do not want to become head teachers, who do not want the added pressure and bigger workload. He claims that this group have serious consequences for the profession as they block the route to headship for

others. This is reiterated by Draper, Fraser and Taylor (1998) who describe this groups career strategy as stopping others applying for promotion. Hayes continues to describe this group as an interesting phenomenon - a group who are often capable and effective deputies who have made the decision not to progress further. Alternatively Bobbit, Faufel and Burns (1991) class this group as stayers. Those who choose to stay in the classroom are not going to apply for headship.

### **Accountability**

Another explanation given by all of the deputies in groups 2 and 3 (as to why they would not go for headship) was the role that the head teacher played of being accountable for everything that went on in a school. Draper and McMichael (2003) also found this to be the case for the falling level of interest amongst experienced staff in applying for headship. James and Whiting (1998) found in their research that for deputy heads who did not aspire to headship, that one of the primary reasons was that they would find the public accountability too risky. The following quote illustrates this point effectively:

As a head, it's not a case of 'Jack of all trades', it's master of all trades ... you've got governors on your back, parents, the government, the LEA and if that isn't enough inspection. (James and Whiting, 1998, p. 360)

With the introduction of site-based performance management (now appraisal), the tasks that have to be completed by heads have changed beyond just the language of leadership and having a vision. There is not just

more work to do, but there has been a qualitative shift in the type of responsibilities. (Craig with Rayner, 1999; Marsh, 1997; Morgan and Raynor, 1999)

Head teachers have had to delegate more which can be a risky business at a time when head teachers can suffer a loss of livelihood through 'the consequences of failure or the politicking around what is regarded as failure' (Hayes, 2005; Wallace and Hall, 1994; Wallace and Huckman, 1996). The deputies in this group were very much aware that society had changed with more demands being put on schools and society also becoming litigious (Gray, 1997). Deputies in group 1 (those wanting to progress to headship) did not view being accountable in the same light. They were confident in their own capabilities and regarded dealing with difficult groups as a challenge. However deputies in group 2 (those deputies not wanting to progress to headship) and group 3 (those who were unsure about progressing to headship) doubted their capabilities and shied away from difficult tasks. These groups appeared to have no confidence in their own ability to manage a school.

### **Work life balance**

This was mentioned as a barrier in all three groups and correlates with James and Whiting's research, (1998) and Draper and McMichael (2003) who found that the reasons deputies did not seek headship was because of the personal dimension. They found no real difference between male and

female deputies interviewed which also correlates with findings from this research as both male and female deputies talked about family life as one of the barriers.

Even those who were keen to apply considered their applications carefully and would be highly selective as a consequence of domestic pressures and preferences. (Draper and McMichael, 1998 p. 192)

Reasons centred on concerns over not wanting to disrupt their children's education, or not wishing to re-locate to a different area.

Draper and McMichael (1998) also found that having children settled was a key motivator for going for headship. Those not wanting headship did not want their quality of life diminished. Many had already felt the relationship losses with children when becoming a deputy. These they felt would only increase if they became head teachers.

### **Confidence**

Deputies in group 1 did not state that confidence in their own ability was a barrier to applying for headship. They appeared to have a high self-efficacy where they appeared to believe that they could perform well in all situations. Even Ofsted did not deter them from headship, which was viewed as a challenge to be mastered and not to avoid (Bandura 1986, 1997).

They had 'positioned' themselves and had convinced those with the power that they were ready to progress (Gronn and Lacey, 2004). Positioning involves engaging in:

...a range of personal subjective work tasks and questioning to do with self-belief, in particular self-esteem (i.e. sense of personal worth) and efficacy (i.e. sense of capacity). That is, they are likely to be preoccupied with factors to do with ambition, career goals, motivation, what they want to do and why and whether or not they believe they 'have what it takes to do what they want to do'. (p. 410)

Deputies in groups 2 and 3 however did state that they did not possess confidence and self-belief in themselves and consequently doubted their own abilities. They focussed on what they could not do and not on what they could. These groups found it more difficult to recover their sense of self confidence if they had been unsuccessful. Two deputies in group 2 (those not wanting headship) had previously applied for headship roles but had been unsuccessful when they were younger. This accords with Bandura's (1989, 1997) 'mastery experience' where failure lowers efficacy beliefs and contributes to the belief that future performance will also be low (Bandura, 1993). Deputies in group 3 revealed that they were consciously waiting for their head teachers to identify their senior leadership potential and to receive confirmation that they were ready to progress internally or elsewhere. This Bandura (1989, 1997) states is 'social or verbal persuasion' where others provide 'feedback' on performance (Bandura, 1986). He states that if people are persuaded verbally that they possess capabilities to master given activities, they are more likely to want to succeed. Both deputies in groups 2 and 3 needed their confidence raised by their head, and sought feedback, recognition and advice. Without these being addressed by their head teachers the frustration set in which hindered their progress (Rhodes and Brundrett, 2008). These deputies lacked self-belief which was why

progressing to headship seemed such a great task. This concurs with the view of Pascal and Ribbins (1998):

It doesn't matter how many courses you've been on, and how much you know intellectually about the process of being a head if you don't develop an appreciation of yourself as a person ... you will never make a good head. (p. 22)

James and Whiting (1998) also cite 'dubiety' or uncertainty of their proficiency to fulfil the role of head teacher. They state that within their study typical comments such as 'I don't know my own worth' and 'I'm not sure I could do it' (p. 360) were made.

Deputies made ambiguous subjective assessments about their professional competence and retained fluctuating levels of confidence. These uncertainties should have been picked up by the performance management system in place in schools, but interestingly, performance management was not referred to by any of the respondents in groups 2 or 3.

### **Type of school, money remuneration and age**

These were identified by deputies in group 1 only and were considered as minor disincentives. The type of school appeared to be very important in several of the transcripts as deputies discriminated between schools and selected them for two main reasons:

...the process involved considerable research and time was limited and since the number of headships they would hold was small (usually one or two over their career) they were concerned to select the right opportunities'. (Draper and McMichael, 2003, p.192)

Deputies also commented on the fact that going from being a deputy in a large secondary school to head teachers in smaller schools was not financially viable as the difference in salary was not as large. Draper and McMichael, 2003 also found that this was the case and monetary rewards were seen as one of the reasons increased responsibility was sought. This also correlates with the findings of Rhodes, Brundrett and Nevill (2009) who illustrate this point with 'For financial reasons I had to wait for the right school, because I was well paid as a deputy in a big school' (p. 460). Hayes (2005) also made the point, when he stated that in his study that both the largest and the smallest schools in Bromley (where his study was conducted) received the most applications. The smallest schools attracted the new and younger head teachers and saw the school as a useful 'stepping stone' and the larger ones more for in the future.

'As head teachers' pay is linked to the size of the school, large schools will inevitably attract more applications, including existing head teachers of smaller schools'. (Hayes, 2005 p. 12)

### **Research Question 3:**

#### **What are Head Teacher's perceptions of the support that they provide for their Deputy Head Teachers?**

Head teachers were specifically asked questions about their deputies future plans, what leadership development opportunities were offered, why they felt their schools were good training grounds and what helped or hindered them to help their deputies. Surprisingly all head teachers were able to talk at great depth about their deputies' progression and what their future plans were.

They took a strong interest in leadership development which correlates with findings from Rhodes and Brundrett (2006, 2008). By working closely together all the head teachers who were interviewed were able to state quite succinctly which of their deputies wanted to progress and which ones did not. Some of the conversations that had taken place were informal but through formal conversations (Performance Management) head teachers were able to support their deputies' progression. The findings all pointed to the fact that head teachers were very supportive and were willing to help their deputies if they required the help. The main type of help they offered was through providing leadership development opportunities including the NPQH, mentoring and coaching.

#### **Leadership development opportunities including the NPQH**

Head teachers were conscious that they needed to provide leadership experiences for their deputies and therefore fully supported leadership talent identification and development within their schools (Rhodes and Brundrett 2008; NCSL 2007b; Rhodes et al., 2008). They showed strong interests in

leadership distribution, job rotation, networking, shadowing and peer support (Bush and Glover, 2004). All but two deputies had taken part in or were in the process of completing NPQH training. This correlates with the NPQH programme being seen as a 'rite of passage' for aspirant leaders (Brundrett, 2006 p. 484). The head teacher is an extremely important person to convince if a deputy wants to progress, which accords well with the notion of 'positioning' put forward by Gronn and Lacey (2004) , where aspirant leaders know that they have to convince their head teachers 'that they know what it takes' for progression. Deputies therefore have to convince head teachers that they are ready to take the new NPQH as this qualification needs the backing of their head which they only give if they feel that deputies will be able to become head teachers within 18 months of graduation. All head teachers could appreciate that the new NPQH provided valuable insight into the role of head teacher. The value of mentoring, coaching and shadowing as leadership learning were thought of as good aids to the transition to headship (Bush and Glover, 2004). Coaching has been included in the revised NPQH which should provide better role conceptualisation (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003) especially to those who have low self-confidence (deputies in groups 2 and 3). Self-confidence in one's own ability is extremely personal and many deputies in groups 2 and 3 i.e. those who did not want headship and those who were unsure all expressed that they had limited self -confidence and were unsure of whether they could take on the responsibility of headship. Maybe these deputies need specific training before they start NPQH training. Rhodes et al., (2009) state that:

The deployment of national aspirant headship programmes in advance of NPQH could perhaps be employed at the right time in aspirants' career development to raise confidence and help overturn the route to derailment resulting from earlier damaged professional growth. (p. 386)

For younger teachers this is now possible through Fast Tracking, Leading from the Middle (LfM) and Leadership Pathways.

This confirmed previous work carried out by Rhodes and Brundrett (2006) who stated that self-belief was needed at all stages of the journey to headship. This can be provided by the head teacher which it is through Performance Management. It is also re-iterated by head teachers when they give the 'go ahead' to apply for the NPQH, as head teachers are really telling their deputies that within eighteen months they should be ready to apply for headship and then ultimately lead their own school.

The way head teachers carry out their own roles can go some way to counteracting the growing disenchantment with leadership reported in other studies (Draper and McMichael 2003; Fink and Brayman 2006; Hargreaves and Fink 2006). Head teachers also have to try and counteract information that deputies have gathered from other colleagues and from the media about the difficulty of becoming head teacher. Head teachers within this research study have tried to do this by 'down playing' Ofsted and by stating that being in 'notice to improve' was good a good leadership development opportunity for deputies.

Training within school environments was also seen as important. Engaging in whole school initiatives and playing a significant role in leadership teams through engagement in improvement planning, evaluation and work with

governors were all useful pre-experiences. However the degree of personal accountability associated with actual headship meant that it was impossible to simulate the reality of it in any meaningful way prior to appointment.

#### **Research Question 4:**

##### **What are Deputy Head Teacher's perceptions of the support they receive from their Head teachers?**

All deputies interviewed were extremely complimentary about the support that was provided by their head teachers. Many stated that they thought their heads were inspirational and if they were to become head teachers then they would model themselves on them. This correlated with research findings from Rhodes and Brundrett (2008) who also stated that good leadership role-modelling was important to a deputy leadership learning programme.

#### **CPD including the NPQH**

Deputies all felt that leadership development opportunities were extremely important to their progression and development; both from an individual and professional point of view (Friedman and Phillips, 2001, Rhodes et al., 2004). Deputies in group 1 (those wanting headship) and group 3 (those who were uncertain of headship) were very active in their own learning. Deputies in group 2 (those who did not want headship) were also given the same opportunities but barriers always outweighed drivers for this group. Deputies were able to state quite confidently that if opportunities were available then they were encouraged to take part in these. These opportunities included

mentoring, coaching (particularly within the NPQH), networking and formal leadership programmes (Bush and Glover 2004).

In England deputies aspiring to headship must gain the NPQH before they can become head teachers. Deputies that had been on NPQH training prior to 2006 had according to their transcripts been persuaded to go and do this as it was at the time, the only real preparation for headship. However this old NPQH programme has been attacked for its over reliance on a system made up of competences (Revell 1997); its lack of 'staff college experience' (Bazalgette 1996, p 17); and its daunting nature (Downes 1996). Some even felt that it was too academic and should have been more focused on practical problems to do with headship (Poutney 1997). Gunter (1999) also criticised it as being intellectually and emotionally sterile.

All of the deputy head teachers interviewed could all appreciate the value of NPQH training especially the 'new ' NPQH introduced in 2000, which was competence based and focussed on schools (Tomlinson 2004). This is made clear by the following quote from HT5:

They're on the new NPQH which I think is looking really good ... he has come back really invigorated... the whole language of it has changed from the old NPQH which was a bit of an out of school jolly really. It does feel like he's now being helped as he had to produce an action plan about new areas he has to work on.

Deputy head teachers in this study had not experienced formal arrangements of shadowing, but had, however, been keen observers of their head teacher's style of leadership, so they had observed from a distance. In this study,

respondents stated that they would have benefitted from a more formal approach to observation of different senior leaders with time also afterwards to reflect on what had been observed. This concurs with Simkins (2009), Billet (2008) and Zenger et al; (2000) observations. Learning that is left to informal methods, therefore is not the preferred method of training for a headship role.

All deputies could see that having time to think about their next steps and what the gaps in their knowledge and training was, was all beneficial to their progression. The whole process of NPQH training was seen as an excellent leadership development opportunity, however why are deputies therefore still not progressing to headship? The influence of the NPQH is therefore not enough for those deputies who do not want headship and those who are unsure about headship progression. The NPQH experience was insufficient to overcome the personal and professional barriers. Rhodes and Brundrett 2009 put this quite succinctly:

The new NPQH experience ... appeared unable to mend broken journeys and overcome concerns about headship that were deeply planted. (p. 465)

These deputies in groups 2 and 3 all required support and confidence from their head teachers as they were seen as the main people to convince; they were seen as the main 'gatekeepers' of their progression or career route (Rhodes and Brundrett 2006). The head teacher was seen as an important patron against whom deputies needed to 'position' themselves (Gronn and

Lacey 2004). This is also supported by Rhodes et al., 2009, who state that within their research, that the most important school-related factor was head teacher support.

From 2009, the NPQH has become a mandatory qualification and head teachers are advised to support deputy applications only if they feel they will be ready for headship within eighteen months. It would be interesting to find out how many deputies within the last two years still do not want headship having had verification from their head teachers that they are ready. At a time of leadership shortages the reasons why deputies do not take up headships after NPQH training post 2009 needs to be further researched.

In the next chapter, conclusions and recommendations, the overall conclusions from the findings of the study are presented as well as the contribution to knowledge.

# CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Introduction

The overriding theme throughout this study has been what stops deputy head teachers from progressing to headship or what spurs them on up the progression ladder. This thesis argues that deputies have to be supported through the late 'accession' stage if more deputies are to be persuaded to take on the role of headship. Self-confidence and self-belief at all stages of the journey to headship needs to be fostered so that talented individuals are not 'lost' along the way.

In this final chapter, I return to an examination of the four research questions that I set out in Chapter One. I then consider the contribution of the research the areas touched upon in the thesis that would benefit from additional research.

My four research questions are:

1. Why are Deputy Head teachers seeking headship? What are the drivers?
2. Why are Deputy Head teachers not seeking headship? What are the barriers?
3. What are Head teacher's perceptions of the support that they provide for their Deputy Head teachers?
4. What are Deputy Head teacher's perceptions of the support they receive from their head teachers?

Question 1 is addressed under the sub-heading 'Drivers to headship'; question 2 under 'Barriers to headship'; question 3 under 'head teacher perceptions of support/guidance given to their deputies' and, finally question 4 is addressed under 'deputies perceptions of the support/guidance received from their head teachers'.

## **The research questions and findings**

### **Drivers to headship**

Despite their heavy workload most deputies in this study appeared to enjoy considerable job satisfaction derived from relationships with pupils but in particular relationships with their head teachers. All deputies in group 1 (those wanting headship) stated that they had excellent, positive relationships with their head teachers, described as complimentary, yin and yang, or the leadership partnership by Jayne (1996). Deputies viewed them as role-models that they wanted to aspire to. These findings accord well with Ribbins (1997); Hayes (2005); Harris et al., (2003); Gronn (1999); Parker (2002) who all state that one of the main reasons that deputies did progress to headship was because of positive role-models depicted by key people and that a deputy's relationship with their head teacher was a key dimension to their evolving role. The impression conveyed during the study was that on the one hand the range of demands of the job was exhausting but enjoyable, on the other hand the potential for understanding both practice and policy and gaining the respect of their head gave them a positive self-image and fuelled

their commitment to their work. This also potentially gave them confidence to go for headship.

Deputies in this study were extremely conscious of the image that their head teachers portrayed of not being phased by outside agencies or of what was happening within their own schools. This image of self-control and emotional coherence is also important for a head teacher to portray and was another reason why deputies in group 1 viewed their heads as role-models. This accords well with research carried out by Crawford (2007) who states that to be an effective head teacher you have to be in tune with your own emotions and that you have to believe in yourself and the decisions that are made.

Outward emotions have to be kept in check as the school community ultimately look to the head teacher in times of crisis. This 'emotional regulation' (Crawford, 2007) is what deputies admire about their head teachers especially in times of stress such as Ofsted inspections. For this group, head teachers make the job of headship look manageable and enjoyable rather than overly stressful.

Another driver to headship is a deputy's ambition to succeed. Deputies in group 1 were all highly motivated individuals who had progressed to deputy headship within 10- 15 years of starting teaching. They actively sought headship because they wanted to broaden their experiences and obtain greater freedom and challenges. These deputies appeared to be confident individuals who did not need their head teacher's validation. They are able to 'position' themselves so that the right people knew 'that they know what it takes' to progress to headship (Gronn and Lacey, 2004).

Another factor that figured highly as a driver was the opportunity to have their own school and the ultimate autonomy and control that this gave them to make a difference. Draper and McMichael (2003); Hayes (2005); Spear et al., (2001) all suggest that this is the case and that positive opportunities for autonomy, control and for introducing their own ideas to increase their influence were all another reason that they wanted headship.

### **Barriers to headship**

The perceived prize of headship does not tempt all deputies. These 'career deputies' (Hayes, 2005; MacBeath, 2011) or 'stayers' (Bobbit, Faufel and Burns, 1991) are often capable and effective deputies who have made the decision not to progress further. The demands of the 'top job' is regarded more of a 'poisoned chalice' than a 'positive challenge' (James and Whiting, 1998) and concerns for the wide variety of expectations placed on head teachers was also a barrier. The level of 'enchantment' and 'disenchantment' displayed by head teachers can also have an effect on deputies and their perceptions of headship. Deputies in groups 2 and 3 (those not wanting headship and those who were unsure) did not like the fact that head teachers were accountable for everything that went on in a school. This public accountability they viewed as far too risky. This finding accords with work carried out by Draper and McMichael (2003); James and Whiting (1998); Crawford (2003). Deputies were very much aware that society had changed with more demands being put on schools and society now becoming more litigious (Gray, 1997).

The personal dimension also played a part in the reasons why deputies did not seek headship. When referring to familial matters as a factor in not seeking headship, deputies concerns centred on family commitments, relationship losses, dependent relatives, family relationships and relocation. Other work life factors included illness and impending retirement. This concurs with work carried out by Draper and McMichael (1998, 2003); Browne-Ferrigno (2003); Hayes (2005) and James and Whiting (1998). Deputies own professional abilities were of concern to groups 2 and 3 of the sample. They felt they did not possess confidence and self-belief in themselves. This lack of personal and professional confidence hinders progression. (Fletcher-Campbell, 2003; Dorman and D'Arbon, 2003; Gronn and Lacey, 2004). They considered themselves 'unready' for headship even having gone through the NPQH, which should be a validation of the fact that their head teacher thinks they are ready for headship within the next 18 months. This fear of failure has been identified within this study and also by Draper and McMichael (1998); James and Whiting (1998) who confirm that headship can be extremely daunting and settling for the role of deputy who is supported is better than the isolated and highly accountable position of head. Deputies in group 3 (those who were unsure about progressing to headship) would I feel have had more confidence in themselves if their head teachers had given additional confirmation that they were ready for headship. Allowing deputies to start the NPQH was not enough confirmation of their ability, a verbal declaration was also needed. This correlates with what Bandura (1986, 1997) suggests that verbal persuasion constitutes a potential potent

source of self-efficacy. Verbal persuasion is associated with the verbal feedback on performance received from colleagues and other stakeholders. This could be highly relevant to aspirant leaders and to the management of their talent. This 'dubiety' or uncertainty of their proficiency to fulfil the role of head teacher is also cited by James and Whiting (1998) and Pascal and Ribbins (1998). Present findings confirm previous work (Rhodes and Brundrett 2006; Cowie and Crawford 2009) showing that deputies need to foster self-confidence and self-belief at all stages of the journey to headship. A pre-qualification in advance of the NPQH could be the answer, at the right time in a deputy's career development, which would hopefully raise confidence. More research needs to be carried out on how leaders acquire the skills and confidence to take up leadership roles and a deeper understanding of leadership development from the time of entry to the profession through to headship.

Finally, other factors that deputies take into account when deciding on headship is the type of school that they would want to manage. It has to be the right size in the right location and offering enough money remuneration to make the pressures and accountability of headship worthwhile.

### **Head teacher perceptions of support/guidance given to their deputies**

Deputies are assigned tasks and responsibilities at the start of their jobs, by their head teachers. They experience in their current positions very varied opportunities to gain insights into the role of head teacher. Schools vary in size and socio-economic catchment, and heads differ in the way they

manage their schools and the amount of responsibility they delegate their deputies depends solely on them and their discretion. If deputies are given very narrow focuses such as taking responsibility for pastoral care, Information Technology (IT) or buildings, then this is not going to give deputies confidence in their own ability to carry out the numerous responsibilities of a head teacher. Heads should give their deputies varying opportunities so that they can benefit from raised confidence and self-belief in the mastery that they achieve. They should not be 'trapped in strait jackets – the one as 'the administrator' and the other as the 'carer' (Robinson 1973 p. 218). These experiences should be commensurate with the role of head teacher. They could benefit from shadowing their own heads or others within the consortium and take part in on-the-job-learning (Simkins 2009; Woodall and Winstanley 1998; Eraut 2007).

A range of leadership experiences were provided within the schools with head teachers fully supporting talent identification and development. (Rhodes and Brundrett 2008; NCSL 2007; Rhodes, Brundrett and Nevill 2008).

Opportunities such as networking, shadowing, peer support both within the school and from other schools and taking the lead on whole school issues were all important aspects of head teacher programmes. Head teachers also supported their deputies by approving their applications for the NPQH, which is a programme that is seen as a 'rite of passage' for aspirant leaders.

(Brundrett 2006) This approval is only given if heads feel that their deputies are within 18 months of headship and should have been enough proof that 'they could do the job'. However even after completing the NPQH not all

deputies were convinced of their 'readiness' to take on the job of headship. Some deputies therefore found the NPQH only useful as preparation for the selection process and not for headship itself. This corroborates with findings from Rhodes et al., (2009).

Finally, incumbent leaders have to take responsibility to ensure that both formal and informal leadership development opportunities are available and can be accessed by them. The findings from this study suggest that it is the head teacher, who on a day-to-day basis allocates various leadership learning strategies, and therefore the head teacher is an important patron with whom aspirant leaders have to 'position' themselves to be noticed (Gronn and Lacey, 2004).

Head teachers therefore need to have a more active role in developing new and future leaders, not just by agreeing to allow their deputies on courses, such as the NPQH but by also offering opportunities within a school to work shadow a head teacher or act as a co-head teacher. These opportunities would give excellent experience of what being a head teacher was like and accords well with previous studies who write about on-the-job training (Woodall and Winstanley 1998; Mumford and Gold 2004; Rainbird et al., 2004; Raelin 2008).

Finally, the importance of confidence and self-belief in the journey to headship has emerged in a number of studies (Gronn, 1999; Rhodes and Brundrett, 2006; Rhodes et al., 2008; Rhodes et al., 2009; Cowie and Crawford, 2009). The management of self-belief as a component of talent management (to allow the development of a belief in personal competence)

is important and requires more emphasis by head teachers when communicating with their deputies about their career plans.

### **Deputy perceptions of the support /guidance received from their head teachers**

Overall, deputies within this study had a lot of support and guidance and were all extremely complimentary about their head teachers, who were viewed as inspirational and good role-models. Any leadership development activities that deputies wanted to attend or take part in were wholly supported by their head teachers. These opportunities included providing leadership development opportunities for whole school initiatives, mentoring, coaching, networking and taking part in formal leadership programmes. There were sufficient opportunities for in-depth updates and conversations about progression and what deputies had to do next to achieve headship. These opportunities for discussion were timetabled as meetings (Performance Management) or weekly line manager meetings. Vulliamy and Webb (1995) found the opposite of this as discussions often took place in 'snatched time' during the day which implied that they were not very important.

The NPQH course undertaken by deputies had on the whole proven to be a positive experience for them, especially the new improved NPQH (2000) which was more competence based and focussed on schools. (Tomlinson, 2004) The NPQH appears then to be a very good start to headship progression. Those who definitely wanted headship saw it as an important qualification to obtain, however most deputies in this study had achieved or were in the process of achieving their NPQH but were still not progressing to

headship or were undecided about progression. These deputies see the advantages of taking a NPQH but need further leadership development opportunities as there has not been a 'mind-set' shift to that of a leader. (Rhodes et al., 2009) During and by the end of the NPQH, role-identity transformation had not taken place (Browne-Ferrigno 2003) as it had appeared to have done so for those who did still want headship. These deputies still did not have self-belief that they could progress to headship. This motivation to progress to headship seems to be driven by the interaction between perceptions of self and the nature of the role. Personal and professional confidence is clearly an important issue (Gronn and Lacey 2004; Rhodes and Brundrett 2006). However, so are perceptions of what headship involves. James and Whiting (1998) noted that 'the notion of changing role of the head from leading practitioner to chief executive was a key inhibitor (p 359), while those of Draper and McMichael (2003) were also concerned that promotion to a leadership position would involve 'a de-skilling experience, the loss of collegial contact and changes in professional identity'. (p. 191) Training within school was also seen as important. Engaging in whole school initiatives and playing significant parts in leadership through engagement in improvement planning and evaluation were all useful pre-experiences. However the degree of personal accountability associated with actual headship meant that it was impossible to simulate the reality of it in any meaningful way prior to appointment. Therefore in order for deputies to widen their experience, develop new skills and knowledge, head teachers could consider job-sharing with their deputies, moving away from the more

traditional model of deputy supporting head teacher. In large secondary schools this would mean job sharing with possibly three or four deputies which would prove highly unmanageable. This method however could prove highly effective, especially with those deputies who do not want headship and those who are unsure as it could help motivate and improve their self-belief.

### **Research purpose and design**

The primary purpose of this present study was to explore the barriers and/or drivers that deputies faced during their journey to headship. The researcher also wanted to explore the way that head teachers helped their deputies through this transition to headship and finally to see whether deputies could corroborate this. The study consisted of nineteen semi-structured interviews – fourteen deputy head teachers and five head teachers from secondary schools in the South area of the Midlands. The interviews were tape recorded, transcribed and then analysed. By using semi-structured interviews the study was able to capture rich narrative accounts from participants about their experiences and perceptions about their journey to headship.

## **Implications of the findings to the overall study**

The research reported in this study is limited to a sample size of fourteen deputies and five head teachers and it would be inappropriate to generalise or extrapolate from its findings. However, it does provide a basis for which a fuller picture of why deputies do and don't progress to headship can be made. Semi-structured interviews that were carried out allow tentative answers to the research questions posed. It has been found that aspirant head teachers have to acknowledge that on their journey to headship there will be barriers as well as drivers. Barriers include: work-life balance, accountability, confidence and the type of school, area and money remuneration. Drivers to headship include: positive role models especially the head teacher, ambition to succeed, having the opportunity to make a difference and oversight of whole school issues (autonomy and control). Deputies are supported by their head teachers, who are the main 'gatekeepers' to their professional development, with training provided within the school or outside of it. Head teachers support their deputies by nurturing good working relationships with them and by knowing what their career aspirations are for the future. They are supported with applications for courses especially the NPQH and are given opportunities to develop and line manage different curriculum areas. Deputies in turn feel supported by head teachers providing opportunities for shadowing, applications for Leadership Succession Training through National College, visits abroad for personal professional development and giving responsibility for whole school issues.

### **Contribution to knowledge**

One of the main contributions of the study is that it provides a first attempt to apply established models of the journey to headship, such as Gronn's (1999) process of leader accession, to deputy head teachers for the first time. The first stage of formation would have been important in the overall journey of deputies, as early experiences may be influential in establishing self – confidence, however the intention was to ascertain the reasons behind why deputy head teachers either wanted or did not want headship. Having progressed through differing roles to achieve deputy headship, what then stopped or encouraged them on their journey to headship and change of identity?

Gronn (1999) describes the accession stage as a time for 'grooming' during which candidates for headship equip themselves with a variety of skills. This study confirms that if incumbents have a strong motivation to achieve, a strong sense of individual self-confidence and self-belief in their own abilities, then this may facilitate their journey and transition to headship. In figure 2, Gronn (1999) points to individual self-belief as an important pre-condition for self-realization. He describes two faces of self-belief, firstly a sense of self-efficacy (the acceptance of self-potency, competence and capacity to make a difference to organisational outcomes) and self-esteem (positive feelings of one's own worth and value). Group 1 of the sample (who I have named 'enchanted deputies') identified many drivers to headship as well as barriers. Drivers included ambition to succeed, making a difference and having the power to initiate change. This group showed that they had high self-

confidence in themselves indicating the potential for high self-efficacy and self-esteem. Barriers were viewed by this group as obstacles that could easily be mastered – their confidence was such that their journey could not be hindered and barriers were viewed as challenges which were able to be overcome, which then added further to their self-belief. Accounting and accountability pressures had not diminished their motivation to progress to headship. These incumbents therefore progress through the stage of ‘accession’ as Gronn (1999) describes, ready to take on the role of head teacher.

Groups 2 and 3, (who I have named ‘disenchanted deputies’ and ‘irresolute deputies’) have not gone through a transformation and assumed a new identity. They do not view themselves as aspirant head teachers as the barriers they perceive far outnumber the drivers. These groups have become to be known as ‘career deputies’ as deputies in group 2 did not want headship at all and group 3 were unsure about their progression. Table 10 indicates the length of time that each deputy has had that role. Group 2 have been deputy head teachers from 10 – 16 years and group 3 from between 1 – 7 years. This poses the question of how long does it take for self-belief to develop? Mastery is important and different people will achieve it at different rates depending on context, opportunity and level of engagement. This sample is a first study so further research is needed to provide answers to the above questions.

These groups identified barriers such as balancing their work and private life, being accountable and not having confidence in their own abilities. So when

faced with difficulties, these groups may dwell on their negative experiences, rather than concentrate on how to perform successfully. This could be because of low self-esteem, low self-confidence and their perceived inability to do the job of headship. This persistent low self-efficacy may result in the wasted potential of those aspirants who could lead well, but have never had the opportunity, mainly because of their own self-doubts and lack of support. It could lead to the avoidance or withdrawal from a leadership journey and in some cases, unreasonably derail those who could lead well but whose talent may be lost. Therefore increasing a deputies feeling of self-efficacy appears to be a potentially important element in talent management and the success of the leadership journey.

The management of leadership talent should not be just about informing individuals of the required skills and behaviours but also making them capable of believing that they can perform successfully up to the limits of their ability. Those involved in managing aspirants may choose to offer tasks which offer challenge and support to enable mastery and raise confidence and commitment in relation to decision-makers and other colleagues.

The place of self-belief as a factor in the management of talent and the journey to leadership warrants further attention as a means to advance present understandings of talent management in educational contexts. Those involved in managing the talent of deputies need to help individuals arrive at their own judgements about confidence and self-belief. Lacking self-belief in your own skills and behaviours may serve to undermine potential and the

achievement of potential through the avoidance of tasks, feelings of inadequacy to disclose an interest in pursuing a journey to leadership.

Finally, what needs further clarification is whether self-belief is an intrinsic component of leadership potential and performance. Does the opportunity to perform, enable self-belief to grow and the subsequent journey to leadership to succeed?

I therefore offer a new conceptualisation of transition from deputy to head teacher and propose the following extended model (diagram 2) as a modification of Gronn's (1999) accession stage as applied to deputies. For group 1, deputies progress through the stage of 'accession', ready to take on the role of head teacher. However, this journey to headship can become broken or interrupted for some deputy head teachers (groups 2 and 3) perhaps mainly due to low self-belief and inadequate talent management. This low self-belief potentially then stops them progressing to headship and they become 'sitting tenants' (Hayes, 2005) or 'career deputies' (MacBeath, 2011). Both groups could benefit from:

... a source of on-going support which is able to enter into their intellectual and emotional frame of reference and is able to help extend and redefine the borders within which their experience is conceived. Where these measures are in place the task of leading a school becomes less daunting to the incumbent and more appealing to the career deputy (MacBeath, 2011, p. 119).

Whilst there is the potential that individual self-belief may be promoted in some journeys by insightful trainers, coaches or mentors, the management of self-belief as part of the journey to headship remains unexplored. Given that

the major goals of talent management are to get the right individuals into the right jobs at the right time and encourage their continued development, commitment and performance, success in managing talented individuals in their journey to leadership and during their incumbency may well rely, in part, upon their feelings of self-belief and self-confidence. Further research is therefore needed on the inclusion of self-belief as an important component of talent management in schools.



## **The contribution of this research**

The contribution made by this research can be applied in the following four ways:

1. It can aid Head teachers involved in managing the talent of aspirant deputies to help individuals' arrive at their own judgements about confidence and self-belief by offering tasks that are manageable and pertinent to the job of head teacher. Tasks offered to aspirants should offer challenge and support to enable mastery and raise self-confidence and commitment. Head teachers need to, as part of talent management design and carry out interventions to counteract feelings of low self-efficacy and devise meaningful CPD from the time deputies are appointed to the time they gain their first school.
2. By suggesting to trainers that formal leadership preparation and development programmes which are frequently only concerned with the acquisition of technical craft skills related to management and administration rather than to facilitating identity construction should be included in training and preparation. Individual self-belief needs to be promoted in some journeys by insightful trainers, mentors or coaches who need to be trained themselves in managing self-belief as part of the journey to headship. Therefore policy- makers and government agents can benefit from the results of this study.
3. Researchers can explore new knowledge using this study as there remains a lack of empirical work and evidence on self-belief and leadership talent management of aspirant head teachers.

4. Policy makers need to take into account the many barriers that aspirant head teachers state they face, such as the extent and pace of change that head teachers have to contend with, and the accounting and accountability pressures which diminish motivation and work systemically against the very goals that government seek to achieve.

### **Limitations of the study**

The limitations of this study follow mainly from the size of the sample, which is small. It is not representative of all deputies and head teachers as only secondary school teachers had been interviewed. This may have had an impact on the findings. For example, reasons for why deputies do or do not progress to headship might be influenced by some additional factors in other sectors and in other contexts. In one respect there was no issue concerning gender as there are roughly equal numbers of both males and females, but no respondents from ethnic groups were identified. On these grounds, it would be unwise to generalise from the results of this sample to the wider population of deputies on the basis of this study alone. However the study had value. First, the field of research on deputies and their progression is under researched. Second, the method of data collection gave the sample of deputies and head teachers a voice. The semi-structure of the interviews also afforded extensive opportunities to make any comments in any terms, which the teachers saw fit to use.

Lastly, a new conceptualisation of transition from deputy to head teacher (figure 2) has been proposed with the journey to headship being broken for some deputies because of low self-belief and confidence.

### **Summary and recommendations**

This research has confirmed my belief that people will progress further in their career if they want to. They will ensure that opportunities come their way; they will 'jockey for preferment' and will attend training in and out of school so that their journey continues to headship. I also believe that deputies should be able to stop their journey if they want to and be proud of the fact that they are 'sitting tenants' (Hayes, 2005) and extremely competent at their jobs. Heads of pastoral and academic teams all stay in their positions for years and no one thinks any less of them. They do not have to think of making way for future incumbents for their posts. Help and guidance should be offered to those deputies who are unsure about headship. This group because of a lack of self-belief will need to be given 'acting' headships or co-headships where responsibility is shared. Those managing talent may choose to offer tasks which offer challenge and support to enable mastery and raise confidence and commitment in relation to decision-makers and other colleagues. Talent management should be concerned with raising self-belief and fulfilling actual potential rather than encouraging false identity claims and inappropriate self-importance. Talent management needs to operate at the level of the individual.

Head teachers of state schools in England no longer need QTS and there are a small number of bursars and school managers now who possess NPQH. The publication of the PricewaterhouseCoopers report on models of school leadership is probably best known for its suggestion that people other than teachers be permitted to take up headship (DfES/PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2007). The report also suggested that greater consideration be given to new models of headship such as co-leadership, executive and federated heads. However this will not prevent 'the stopping of the buck' as this will always remain with the head teacher as someone needs to be accountable.

On the basis of the findings, the study makes the following recommendations:

1. It is clear from the literature review that further research is needed into the reasons why some deputies do not view the role of head as attractive. What interventions can be put into place so that 'career deputies' or sitting tenants' actively seek headship as their next career goal. Research is limited to either descriptions of their role, or normative descriptions of what that role should/could be in a transformed school environment? More research is needed that moves beyond description to more explanatory studies of the reasons why deputies do or do not progress to headship.
2. Having high self-belief may be instrumental in whether aspirants want headship or not and therefore head teachers need to be aware of this so that as part of talent management, interventions can be designed

and carried out to counteract feelings of low self-belief. This study has made a starting point for further study in this area and these findings can be used for more studies in managing self-belief within the framework of talent management.

3. Giving deputies more opportunities for co-headship, acting headships and work shadowing would provide excellent CPD but also increase self-belief with deputies believing in themselves and seeing that balancing work and life was possible. With these measures in place, the task of leading a school may become less daunting to the incumbent and more appealing to the career deputy.
4. Professional development or targeted leadership programmes (with managing self-belief as a module) may be helpful for those deputies who are unsure about their journey to headship because of low self-belief.
5. Findings from this study may not be generalised to other schools, regions or nationally due to the small size. Hence, there is a need for an in-depth study with a bigger sample in order to help confirm findings in this first study.

The study ends on a note that given the barriers identified to headship, the main one being low self-confidence, it is time for practitioners, policy-makers and researchers to come together and explore this topic further for the benefit of aspirant head teachers of the future.

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## Appendix 1 Research Interview Consent Form

**Interviewer** .....

**Interviewee** .....

### **Purpose of interview**

This interview is part of my research for the EdD at the University of Birmingham. I will interview and tape record interviewees for 60 minutes. I have attached questions that I will be focusing on which focus on why deputies either want or do not want headship. I will also be asking head teachers what support and guidance they provide their deputies.

### **Confidentiality**

Research ethics will be observed at all times in the analysis and use to which the data may be put. The data from the interview will only be available to the staff tutoring on the EdD programme at the University of Birmingham and, possibly, to the External for my thesis. Excerpts from the interview may be included as part of the final thesis, but names will be excluded, and any identifying characteristics will be removed. The interview may also be used as part of written paper or books, but without names and excluding any identifying characteristics, and subject to research ethics. You have the right to withdraw at any stage of the interview or afterwards.

### **Acknowledgement**

Please sign this form to show that we have agreed its consent

**Signed (Interviewee)** .....

**Signed (Interviewer)** .....

**Date** .....

## **Appendix 2 Interview questions for Head Teachers**

### **Semi – structured interview for Head Teachers**

- Who were you influenced by to become a Head Teacher?
- Why did you decide to become one? What drove you to become one?
- What actions do you take or could you take to encourage deputies to further develop and seek headship?
- What has changed over time that helps you or does not help you to help the deputies?
- Why do you think this school is a good training ground for future heads?
- What 'in-house' and/or external training takes place?
- How soon can you spot leadership talent?
- What do you think are the barriers are today?
- What do you think should be done to encourage deputies to go for headship?

### **Research questions**

- 1) Why are Deputy Head Teachers seeking headship? What are the drivers and are there any barriers?
- 2) Why are Deputy Head Teachers not seeking headship? What are the barriers and are there any drivers?
- 3) What are Head Teacher's perceptions of the support that they provide for their Deputy Head Teachers?
- 4) What are Deputy Head Teacher's perceptions of the support they receive from their Head Teachers?

### **Appendix 3 Transcript from Head Teacher**

Ok, so I have never had a straightforward career plan or path. I've left teaching twice and certainly never set out to be a head teacher. I've been influenced by three very positive head teachers who have encouraged me and provided different bits of the example. And I suppose part of why I am a head teacher goes back to the fact that I was a Head of Faculty at Broadway School in Aston and I lived about 300 yards from the School and I was a drama teacher; and because I was never trapped with the chains of the National Curriculum as a drama teacher – actually I'm an English teacher. I became a drama teacher because of the National Curriculum, so in 1988 when National Curriculum came along, I thought, Hmm, I don't like this, I'd rather do whatever I want to and so I was a drama teacher. And I would say that having the freedom to go on thinking for myself about what my curriculum should be and why, and living 300 yards from the school and being completely immersed in that community seven days a week, probably are two key determinants of what made me head teacherish, because actually I think I saw a bigger picture, and it would be fair to say, that having left teaching to work in a drugs project and being already, always primarily involved with community development rather than education or my own career, I think it's probably that kind of values base in terms of my interest in growing community and the fact that that knows no limits, that has sucked me into the mad world of headship.

After, I don't know, eight years or so as a Head of Faculty, I'd enjoyed making lots of new things – it was quite a kind of a creative time and I'd built a theatre with National Lottery money that I'd applied for. So I moved on and that's where the slippery slope became steeper because then I was onto a leadership team, and soon after arriving on my first leadership team, the head was moved on to go and work in a failing school, so as a very young and uncertain senior teacher or assistant head now, I was almost instantly told that I was going to be an acting deputy on what was a small leadership team with a very strong head, a very good head. And once you have an acting role, that makes quite a difference. So when everybody came back to their positions and I was kind of demoted again, I thought well actually I quite like being deputy head. So I think that was the one time when I really actively thought, No, I want to take on a bit more. And it was because I think I got very positive feedback and I was told that I could, so that's been a consistent thing all the way through. People have said, "You should be a head teacher," or whatever.

And so I, what did I do? I then went to Holt, and after a term at Holt, we got an Ofsted notice and the school was a disaster, and at the end of a week of Ofsted inspection (in the old days we had full Section 10 inspection) the head teacher disappeared into coronary care and was never seen again, and lo and behold, six months into the job, jointly with the other deputy, we were both made acting head, joint acting head – interesting concept. And then again, it was just by being dumped in it. A substantive head teacher was appointed a term or so later, and for the next three years I was in an unusual

position as a deputy because we complemented each other very well, we were very different and I think in a lot of ways she allowed me to be a co-head. We had big battles, we fought an awful lot, it was a school in crisis that is now the top or the second top school in Birmingham in my book in terms of CVA and all that sort of stuff. And so those battles were big battles, and we fought them very much as partners in crime. And actually, strangely, she didn't like doing quite a lot of the external, political stuff that is very much the head teacher's job, and so I did a lot of that, and I did a lot of work with other head teachers in the network. So that was how I got seduced into behaving like a head. I was quite happy there, quite happy to be deputy, and had no ambition to be a head, other than the fact that this job came along, and various people said, "That job's got your name on it." And when my head gave me her encouragement or blessing to go for it – this was a school that we'd always decided that my children would come to, we lived locally and we were committed to this school –

Yes

So, ok, in terms of deputies and their progression, I have two deputy heads and they're both progressing, so that must be good!

That's good!

One is about to take up a two term secondment at xxxxxx up the road, and that's part, this is her second deputy job, and she would say that she feels she is not ready for headship. I think that's what she'd say, and she certainly wants to explore things further. She's worked in very different kinds of schools, and xxxxxx has been a big journey for her and I think at the end of it, she's liked xxxxxx more than she expected but she's not sure what kind of school she would be the head teacher of, if at all. So she's going on a secondment to help shake things up a bit, to open fresh possibilities, to help her explore what she should do.

The other deputy is definitely on her route to being a very good head teacher, so much so that she starts work on the first of January as a head teacher, because she's going to be an acting head teacher here.

Does she? Oh, I see, yes

So by me going on to xxxxxx for two terms, she gets to be acting head. And I think that the acting up job – I'm not sure, having looked at it – we are a, for a High Performing School status, we are a Leadership Partner School, which means that our job is to promote and encourage progression, and having talked with folk about the experiment of your deputy going to xxxxxx, I'm not sure how much of the gap that will fill. I think that people will benefit always by seeing another school, and by broadening their horizons and seeing – what happens with career or with experienced deputies, if they get a locked into one school. Now I never – you know, I told you about four schools that

I've worked in, and I've worked in two of those for just three years, never because I had some dramatic plan, but actually it served me very well to have seen different schools, and to have seen things worked out in different places gives me a confidence, a kind of perspective that's useful. So there we go.

For my deputy who's becoming acting head here, I think that that's a much more powerful experience. Seeing other schools is good, but a really powerful experience is just knowing that the buck stops with you, and I really don't know how you can be a co-head, or an associate head, I think is the term, because actually if you're just there for six weeks, the last thing that's going to happen is have the buck stop with you. You can do something significant and strategic, but that's not the test. The thing that puts people off, I think, is just the fact that all roads lead to you, and that at the end of the day, whatever the nasty thing is, whatever the big problem, whether it's a dispute, employment tribunal, a fatality, you know, a crisis over finance, a bit of serious politics with the local authority or a neighbouring school – it stops with you. And I think the fact that ultimately, accountability for how well a school does, stops with you, and that's an intense reality for some people.

Why do you think this school is a good training ground for a head? Or do you think it is a good training ground? I mean, obviously it is!

I think, well actually this is interesting because you're from xxxxxx. Because when I go and visit your fantastic head teacher, I think, Oh, good grief, I'm just playing at this – she's a proper head teacher in a proper school – but I think that's what's good about xxxxxx. You see, we have fun. It's a just a bit of fun here really. I think that schools are too serious. I think that schools have got a big weight on them. Society expects them to put everything right for children. The Government expects us to put everything right in terms of outputs and GCSEs and all the rest of it and people coming here – they get ever so intense in politics and who's relating to who. You know, they're the incestuous institutions, aren't they? And I think that what's good about xxxxxx is that we are a young and small and dynamic and creative organisation, and where there's a spirit of fun and where risk-taking is allowed, that really helps. I think schools with a huge weight of traditions, systems, pressures, everything being absolutely tied down – I mean, there's quite a lot of rigour in this school, there's quite a lot of pressure, but it's not a great big juggernaut.

It's probably your personality as well, because of your drama and so on, you know, you're pretty laid back, but you know, when you walk into a school you can tell what it's like, and when you walk into the school it's really lovely. I did my teaching practice here a long time ago

Oh right, ok

And it didn't have this feeling then.

Who was the head teacher then? How long ago was that?

I can't remember now, but it was a long time ago – it was about 15 -17 years ago.

Xxxxxx xxxxx?

Probably, yeah. I don't know, I can't remember. I just came in, did my job and went home. Just too petrified – get it over with. But it's good coming in because you do get that, it's lovely.

Yes, it is a lovely school. What helped me living in the community around my school in xxxxx, was that you saw the whole picture in a different way, and I think that lots of people don't see – you know there's a desire to specialise, and you know, if you're the science teacher you'll be an expert in science, and you don't do pastoral stuff now because we employ other people to do the pastoral stuff, and so the danger of everybody being very discretely specialised is a problem.

Yes. It's funny that is, because I was speaking to one of my team, and she wants to become a teacher. She's a nurse, and she wants to become a teacher now, but she says she doesn't think she likes it. She doesn't like the teachers, because they're just too into: You've got to wear uniform, you've got to do this, and she's very much into, you know, we should be looking after children but teaching them as well – she's saying exactly the same thing, so, I'll say, when you become a teacher, you'll have to come here!

At xxxxxx, yes!

What's changed over time that helps you, or doesn't help you to help the deputies?

I think something that's changed over time for the good is remodelling, because here, all the nasty jobs that scare fun-loving funky teachers off being heads or deputies, we can give to very serious people who aren't teachers.

Finance?

So, in all seriousness, finance and personnel. I have an outstanding // finance, business manager, operations kind of person. And I've got an outstanding HR woman, and actually, if you can remove some of the big burdens and technical areas of the job, then I think that that helps. I think that's a useful shift. I mean, well, you know in the old days the deputy head did the timetable. It's a long time since that's happened here. Yeah, a really clever, you know, good user of computer with very logical brain who works in admin does the timetable.

So what do your deputies, what are they responsible for?

Hardly anything! That's why it's such a good school to be in! No, the split is that one deputy is curriculum deputy and curriculum drives everything in this school, and the other deputy has been responsible for operational work, which has included pupil support, and he's responsible for monitoring evaluation, so, school development planning, the SEF. And there's a logic that says the curriculum deputy makes and drives most of the action of the school, but the other deputy, whilst being responsible for support services, actually has a role of monitoring and evaluating what the first deputy is doing, so there's an extent to which there's kind of a dialogue between them.

Good, ok.

Is there any in-house, or what sort of external training, I mean, external - I suppose NPQH – they would have done that, but is there any internal, in-house?

There is. I made my deputies and all of my leadership team come sailing with me for the weekend, because we are a fun sort of school! Does xxxxxx take her leadership team up a mountain? I want to know! So, no, we talk quite a lot here about: we have 5 Rs and the 5 Rs are relationship, responsibility, risk, rigour and relevance. I believe that if we are going to talk the language of risk and relationship with pupils, then we need to do that as adults, and I think that I quite like David Hargreaves' language of the deep learning, deep leadership, deep support and that stuff, so I think that deep leading comes from a deep capacity for relationship, and therefore there is a need to work with emergent leaders on how they are going to relate deeply with other people. My way of doing that is to take them sailing.

But in all seriousness, changing experiences, changing the frame where stuff happens. So I've used outside people. There have been two different bits of leadership work going on recently. I've used an outside consultancy type guy to come, who does work for NCSL and those sorts of people, and he's been involved in NPQH – well, I've asked him to do some particular focus work supporting or working with an individual, with a group of members of the leadership team on different things. And our middle leaders are currently doing some quite deep work around values and how that impacts on how you work with people in terms of – it's actually drawing on some sacred writings and proverbs and looking at the place of vision and values, but the values of forgiveness and reconciliation in terms of how we deal with relationships and conflict.

If that gives you a feeling, I think that ultimately if people are confident and can see that ultimately leadership is about those things ... If the best people in the teaching body think that being a head teacher is about having to attend governing body meetings, read minutes, deal with budget and sort your way through personnel complexities, then is it any wonder they wouldn't want to be head teachers? If they clock that the best teachers are good teachers

because they do relationship well, that if you have clarity about your values and how you want to move people, and that the mechanism through which you do that is skills around deep relating, then I think, if I can make that a reality for people in my school, then they'll grow.

Ok, that's great. How soon can you spot leadership talent?

Well, I have got a piece of paper here – there, look at that! I don't know if you noticed that! I take great pride in my filing system. It just worked, perfectly!

As long as you know where it is!

You see, xxxxxx desk doesn't look like that, does it!

No!

So I mean I think that there are very, very significant qualities of leadership and that they are a lot to do with passion and vision for making a difference, and they are equally about integrity. There's a lot about being willing to learn and being open. And I think // with the idea of fast tracking people. And it's interesting, because I was a head in my thirties, and I had heads who valued me and thought I'd done a decent job and encouraged me, but at the same time I also had one wise head who would say, "The trouble with you, Tim, is you've missed out a stage," or "You've jumped ahead too quickly," and I think that in some ways you can't shortcut the need for people to have a bit of experience. And I mean life experience: life experience of sorting out your own relationship issues, and life experience of getting through crises, and life experience of struggling with your own struggles a bit. So, you know, making sense of my peculiar marriage is probably the most important bit of life training I've had for being a head teacher. And being a parent I think helps quite a lot. So, yeah, I think you can spot qualities in people very quickly. I think the qualities – you know, I don't think there's a great mystery about that list of qualities, but adding a spade load of wisdom and grace to that, you know, is something. I'm sceptical about fast tracking.

That's so interesting. You are totally different to the heads that I have interviewed, so it's good to get that perspective as well.

So, tell me a little about that! What's the big difference?

What's the big difference? The other heads that I've interviewed - well you're younger than the other heads that I've interviewed –

I like knowing that! I am very young!

And the sorts of answers they have given to these, are the sorts of answers that I thought that I would get. And you're just giving it, you know, a totally different perspective. I can see in all the other schools that I've gone to, it's

all been doom and gloom, in that, you know, deputies, they don't want to become head teachers because, work-life balance, Ofsted - you haven't even mentioned Ofsted or anything like that yet – and of course, nobody wants to. You've got governors who are getting a bit too big for their boots, etc, all that sort of stuff, but you are coming at it from a totally different angle, so that's why –

Ok, that's interesting, ok.

What do you think are the barriers today? I suppose I've mentioned a few. I mean, Ofsted comes ////

Well no, I've just said. I think that the barriers are a sense that society wants everything from schools, and you know, Every Child Matters, and Baby P, you know, the extent to which agendas get loaded on schools, and league tables, and the fact that the head is the person who carries the can. I – but you see I'm disappointed that those are the responses that colleague head teachers have given you, because, I think it's deeper than that. Alright, I'll give it to you from the pit of my being, which is that – I grew up in a vicarage. My dad is a priest, and I think that leading a group of people is a spiritual activity, and I think that schools that are based on systems are dead places, and I think that schools that just try and satisfy Ofsted and Government targets are gonna be soulless places, and I think that schools that love children and are passionate about celebrating our humanity are very good places to be. I think, you know, we can blame Ofsted, but actually people who work here would know that that's what I think. That's what I think being a school is about. If you accept that's what school's about, and you have not got a fairly well developed set of resources or a map to operate from, then that's quite a scary process, isn't it? So, you know, I think you can have all the NVQH training in the world, and you can have all the systems; you can have all the tools of success in terms of lots of the fairly superficial ways schools have managed, but ultimately I think that the job my dad did, and the job that I do, are not so hugely different.

And just to say, I think that what's hard about that, is that society is complicated. Actually, I think my dad had a much easier job, because he was dealing with one religion for one group of people who had opted into it, you know, and I think that actually - I don't mean that leading school is an explicitly religious activity - but I think that my job is about, yes, challenging under performance, and yes, it's about driving for standards, but ultimately learning is a deep thing. Learning is about growing people and about how we grow, and I think that you – yeah, to make sense of that in a school that's 50% Muslim, in a school where, you know, people have such complex variety to their life experiences, you know, different kinds of families, different cultural backgrounds, you know, very, very different experiences according to their resources, or you know, economic background - I think that to create meaning and identity in a way that really feeds people and enables people to grow in that is quite a challenging task.

You still have to make sure that you've got whatever percentage A\*-C, you know -

Yeah, and I'm motivated about that. I think that's the simple stuff. You see, I think that most people can do that. There are lots of good heads of department who know how to get grades. The difficulty is getting it all to work together. And ultimately I don't think it's enough to unite people on keeping Ofsted from the door. I think the head teacher who says, "Well, this could be our Ofsted year; let's all work really hard." – I think they've kind of missed the point. And if that's the language that people – I suppose, interestingly, I go back to my very first answer. I opted out of the National Curriculum to be a drama teacher, and actually that's because I wanted to believe in what I was doing and be able to make sense of it because it made sense to me, not because I'd got it in a folder from London.

Yes, I see what you mean. What do you think should be done to encourage deputies to go for headship – this is like overall, not in your school?

No, I think they should all get sailing! It's a very good question. I think moving people around is good. I think that schools as institutions – they need stability and there's a lot in our society that undermines that, and actually I think the poorest communities that need that structure the most. You know, privileged youngsters with everything going for them, I think can afford to have a much more flexible, dynamic, transient experience of learning. I think the kids from more deprived backgrounds need more structure and stability from the institution as a school, so this is not about the schools becoming incredibly flaky and loose, but actually I think it really does help colleagues if they can - if they've got a breadth of experience, because we get incredibly trapped in our own schools, and it's intense, and the deputy can be a person who – you know, how long has xxxx been at xxxxx?

About 15 or 16 years.

And how much does he know? How much is he completely locked into so many systems at xxxxxx? You know, I think that that's, it would be better if schools were simpler places. And that some of our / there's an issue - one of the reasons why I can joke about xxxxxx just being a fun place and Swanshurst being a proper school, is because xxxxxx is just 600 kids, and Swanshurst megaly millions of children. So I think complex systems and intense external pressure are both bad news. Simple realities of community and trying to minimise the sense of the unreasonable, unexpected, intense external pressure, you know, help. Because things have gone well here, and our results have consistently got better in all departments really, we can afford to be a bit flippant about Ofsted, and we can afford to be a bit relaxed, because it's all going nicely. I might feel a bit different, you know, in another school, in a term's time!

Thank you very much.

You're welcome.

## **Appendix 4 Interview questions for Deputy Head teachers**

### **Semi – structured interview for Deputy Head teachers**

- What made you decide to become a deputy? How long have you been doing this job?
- Who were your main influences?
- Were there any specific steps you took to become a deputy?
- Do you want to become a head? Why – if yes what are the reasons and are there any barriers? If no what are the barriers and what would be needed to encourage you to go for headship?
- What actions of the head are encouraging you to go for headship?
- What other actions would be useful to you?
- Has the NPQH encouraged or discouraged you to become a head? Why?
- Is there any one person/people who are encouraging you on your progression?

### **Research questions**

1. Why are Deputy Head Teachers seeking headship? What are the drivers and are there any barriers?
2. Why are Deputy Head Teachers not seeking headship? What are the barriers and are there any drivers?
3. What are Head Teacher's perceptions of the support that they provide for their Deputy Head Teachers?
4. What are Deputy Head Teacher's perceptions of the support they receive from their Head Teachers?

## Appendix 5 Transcript of Deputy Head teacher

R Chagger

How did you come to this point in your career?

I started teaching in 2000, started teaching in a real tough challenging school in Dartford. I naively assumed it was place, I didn't realise Dartford was an extension of London. I started teaching there and as I say it was tough challenging school but I really enjoyed working in that school. I thought I'd quite like to be Head of Department so I got Head of Department in the final term of my NQT year for a school in Hampshire. I was Head of Department there and then took on a Head of Year role too and did two roles so I was a Head of Year and a Head of History. I got my Assistant Headship after three years at a school in ????? and did that for three years and then came here as Deputy. I've been quite lucky in as much as I've scaled the heights quite quickly in that sense. Because of the schools that I've chosen I think I've picked up some invaluable experiences that have helped me get to where I've got to. Sorry, what was the question again?

R Chagger

Really it's what made you decide to become a deputy?

To have, well, senior team rather than deputy, I'm not too sure you really need Deputy I think the roles are incredibly similar, to have a greater impact on more children is the main purpose because I can see what I thought were mistakes being made in the schools that I worked that and I thought I could do it better than that.

R Chagger

It's amazing that all the people I've interviewed that has been the main, 'I could do it better than that' or 'I could do that job'.

As soon as you get there you then realise why those mistakes have been made because it's so easy to make those mistakes or you did them so different.

R Chagger

What was your Assistant Headship for?

It changed, it was always Curriculum but in different formats. First it was 14-19 and then it became the

curriculum as a whole. This role I am doing now is the curriculum it's just some schools, like I said it doesn't matter what Assistant Head or Deputy does.

R Chagger

How many Assistant Heads have you got?

There are four Assistant Heads, two Deputies, one Head, one Bursar and the Head's PA, that's the senior team.

P Chagger

What did you do before you became a teacher?

I worked for Retail. I worked for Tesco and Sainsbury's I was department manager and also got to, I guess you call it, top teams in Sainsbury's and Tesco as well.

P Chagger

Why become a teacher?

I think, I never wanted a career in retail, I always wanted a career working for people. I wasn't too sure until I was in my mid 20's what I wanted to do so I spent my younger years in retail. The thing that used to pain me an awful lot about working in retail is I was always making money for someone who would always have far more money than me. I think Astin Grants was his name who owned Argyle who owned Sainsbury's in the late 80's early 90's, I think he was on £900,000 a year which I thought was quite obscene and I was never going to earn anything like that working for these organisations and it just seemed ??? as well, dividends and profits. I guess really that's the main reason.

P Chagger

So who were your major influences?

Within teaching? The first Head of Department I worked for in Kent in Dartford, xxxxxx, some fantastic pieces of advice he gave me that I still use today – the fact that he was just a genuinely solid good bloke but also teaches well, at that stage in my career he was a good influence. Then, the Head of my second school – again very similar characteristics but a very different man, incredibly honest to the children as well which I thought was incredibly important, also part of his downfall perhaps at times but incredibly important that he was always honest with people and to the staff as well. He was a good Head but then retired as I moved

to another school. Unfortunately I didn't find anybody that I looked up in my other school, the one in ?????? that was a funny experience. All senior teams, as I said to them here only yesterday, I'm learning from all the senior teams they've all got different attributes and characteristics that I can see that I need to pick up, Andrew's influence is very, very calming and then David's got very good judgement of the children and Ben is also very calm so there's a lot of skills I need to pick up from the team I'm working with now, two people in particular of those that I've mentioned, one of whom's Head.

P Chagger

Are there any specific steps you took to become a Deputy?

There are steps I took to become in Senior Team, when I was fortunate to have my Head of History and Head of Year, when I was Head of History in a reasonably small school, about 700 children, this Head of Year post came up and I seized the opportunity to have that role I was aware I would make quite an influential middle manager as I had pastoral and academic together so that was a purposeful career minded route to take on my behalf. Also I was doing that I was fortunate enough for the Head to write me a reference to get onto NPQH so I completed probably the second or third round of NPQH so I completed that whilst I was a middle manager which of course now you can't do at all so I completed my NPQH in the first six months of being Assistant Headteacher I was able to move from one school to the next so that was a purposeful thing in that sense and I think that probably helped me get into Senior Team. I did a lot of the ground work before I even became a Deputy, to get onto Senior Team in that sense. Personally again, to get to the level where I am now, to do the job I'm doing which is charge of the curriculum and roster timetables I volunteered at my other school before here to start roster timetables and that kind of helped ???? timetable, curriculum, I guess that's the path.

R Chagger

Right you said you'd like to become a Head, how long??

Yeah a year almost to the day since I started there

this time last year. That, I don't know, your life changes so much doesn't it, I mean we've got Milly who's four, like another one and I'm thinking probably five years ago I was dead set I was going to be a Head by this time and this, this and this, but now as I get older, the stresses, I've gone grey, I'm thinking, yeah I can see, I can honestly see why there are some Deputies who want to stay as Deputies. I can clearly see that's really good because you get a lot of benefits being a Deputy Headteacher, a lot of privileges, a lot of authority and a certain amount of autonomy, at the end of the day it's not your school and the buck stops with somebody else, I can see why a number of staff see it as a good role. I think for the time being for me to ??? my experiences and skills to become a Head I think that's a very important role that I am going to have to develop further, but that's not enough for me, I do want to be a Head. I think I need a few more years as Deputy in this school. I'm 37 at the end of this month and if I could be a Head by 40.

R Chagger

And then you would have been teaching for?

About 12, 13 years, in three years time, yes about 13 years so I guess it's still reasonably quick.

R Chagger

Is reasonably quick right as there are lots of people now, and I'm in charge of NQT's as well, and I can see in the last couple of years there have been NQT's who finish their NQT year, next year they have responsibility points and I can see, within five or six years, they might be Assistant Headteachers, that's just too quick, but you've had experience outside of education as well.

Yes but that's only been taken into account when it's fit, when it's suited them, it's not always been, I mean xxxxx took it into account and he was quite thankful that I had all this experience but I'm not sure that all people I've been interviewed with, or by rather, it's just the individual school or management team who have been prepared to take that on board.

R Chagger

What are the reasons that you want to become a Head? You want your own school, any other reasons?

Thousands of reasons! Primarily, the first reason I gave you is to write some tips to make more of an impact and an influence on more than one child's life so if you've got a school of 7, 8 900 children that's the main drive that you can give that ????? of children that cracking chance at what they've got coming up for the next 5, 6, 7 years, that's the main drive for me and I should imagine for most people who want to be Headteachers. When it comes to Curriculum, improvements and stuff as well in Curriculum Development. It would be so good to say right this is where I want to go, I know exactly want to go and this is where we're going. Let's go this way rather than have to get my decisions ratified by somebody else and???? the consultation process and so on and so forth. To have these ideas and not have to have them ratified by somebody who's above you could be quite good. Again, on perhaps quite a personal level, because of the way the pension structure works now as well I mean, I don't want to be working until I'm 65 theoretically, although I might if they keep changing the goalposts and I believe now the pension structure is an average over your career rather than the last three or four years I think that's what heading for me and I guess probably for you as well. So therefore a part of me thinks the sooner I get to Headteacher or the sooner I earn as much money as I can, for as long as I can then my pension will be better, as best as possible, so that's another motivating factor. That isn't the most important one. Also if I did get to Headship at 40, that gives me 17 years, 57 is when I'd like to call it a day, exactly 30 years for me in teaching and I think 30 years in one career ????? so that would give me 17 years, if I can get to Head by 40, I could probably get 3 schools in as well and I think that would be important to have for me and also for the schools I would be working in as well.

R Chagger

So if you get to be a Head by 40 you've got 17 years, so you wouldn't stay in one school as a Head for 17 years?

Personally I'm not sure that's a very sensible and good thing for this school or for me for obvious reasons, also I'm not sure, it would be interesting to see how contracts develop in the future for Headteachers because I have a feeling they might go

like premier league footballers where you're on a 3 year rolling contract. I'm imagining that might happen- I don't know it's just what I'm predicting so whether I want to stay in one school or not, I may not have that choice, because if Ofsted come along and you don't get a particularly good Ofsted then your contract might not be renewed for that school, you might have to go elsewhere, I don't know I'm just summing that. I wouldn't like to stay, I've never stayed, on a personal level I've never stayed in one place too long because I haven't because I get bored and I like to move on. I'd like to do at least two, possible three schools as a Head, if I get to Head by 40.

R Chagger

So those are the main reasons. Are there any barriers?

Yeah, there are stress barriers, the fact that it's making me go grey now, I mean I know it's part of my age but it also quite a stressful job at times isn't it and that's a barrier isn't it. The fact that, there's a expectation, you put the hours in as well don't you and that goes back to my roots I remember having to do 12, 13 hours a day and I haven't got a problem with that, at least when I went home, I went home rather than when you go home here you take your laptop and you're still carrying on, there's something in it, I don't know what it is, my wife's a teacher as well and she said to me if we both go into teaching there'd be loads of assets but you can't sort of turn off can you and that is a barrier because like most people who've got a family we've got our own lives and it's finding that happy balance – that's a very strong barrier.

R Chagger

As a Headteacher that's even worse isn't it.

Today's an example isn't it – the rest of the staff get the day off ?????????? Barriers, again on a personal level for me is my perceived lack of experience as well because I've only been teaching since 2000, so that's what, 8, 9 years isn't it. Sarah, my wife, her mum's a Governor and she works at Tesco bizarrely and she's gone through the interview process with a Headteacher at the school she's working at and I would have loved that school as a Head but it was far too early in my career and even I knew that – I take

risks but she just thinks that people like me are far too inexperienced – how can I go for a Headship and I think that's going to be a barrier for me too, unless I go for a particularly challenging school in very urban areas, because they're not necessarily going to recruit and I'm not sure that would be good for me or that school.

R Chagger

Also, wouldn't you have to like, with other schools you've been too, you haven't stayed in one area you've moved around, so when you go for Headship you're going to have to find one in this, in the Midlands.

We want to stay in the Midlands now. We live in Bidford so that's Warwickshire. That's something else as well, I'm not that keen on getting to know people intimately within the Local Authority, I'm not sure again that's particularly helpful if that makes sense. I don't like the sort of politics you often get within Local Authorities so that's another reason I've never had one school, two schools in one Local Authority I've always had different Local Authorities. I'm just acutely aware of sometimes how Local Authorities can have their favourites and so on.

R Chagger

The people that I've interviewed, they, Ofsted always seems to come up as one of the barriers – you know when you see the Headteacher going through what they go through.

I've been fortunate or unfortunate enough to go through notice to improve twice now because the school I came from was on notice to improve ????? I got this job here so I probably had about six months of not being notice to improve after having two years, within two years I've had six months ????? I feel quite comfortable with knowing what the stresses are. I kind of mentioned it before and I think that's why I think Headteachers will have this rolling contract is primarily because of Ofsted, I think that's what's going to happen – hopefully I'm wrong. It's not Ofsted, Ofsted is not a barrier for me because it's there and something you have to deal with and if it isn't Ofsted it will be some other Government ????? or Institute and I appreciate that any public organisation needs checks and balances, I mean that's acceptable and I realise that and I think things along those lines will change

and become more comfortable, I'm going off quite a tangent now, but if you watched Despatches on Monday there seems to be an acceptance now with the society that young people can be quite challenging and I'm not sure that probably 5 years ago that was being accepted outside of teaching and people working with people but if its on TV now I think people are starting to accept that teaching is different to what it used to be - it's almost like front line social work and ???? I think those are the challenges and barriers affecting me personally more than perhaps the organisations within Education.

R Chagger

Do you watch that programme Waterloo Road? Well I watched it and it started yesterday and it was so good it was exactly what you are talking about, because it was just showing all the problems that there are and everything teachers have to deal with, but there was a gun which had been brought into school and they way they dealt with it was really good. I thought it was very good.

I think, Ofsted is just one of those things you have to deal with – it's a pain in the backside but I do appreciate that those checks have to be there and there are hoops and things that you are expected to do and it is frustrating – you've got to achieve this because that's what the government says. To a certain extent, whatever industry you're in you have to meet those targets. Again going back to my retail experience Head Office set you targets and somehow you had to meet those targets. It's just the way it is. Education to a certain extent is an Industry isn't it, again, going back to my other point, that this society issue is the biggest barrier facing teaching at the moment and as soon as society will accept that children are not like they used to be even 10, 15 years ago, then I think once that barrier is addressed it will be much easier to work in schools, I don't mean physically easy but easier in mind sets because you've got to be accepted and people will understand that children bring different issues to school.

R Chagger

What actions are the Head encouraging you to go for Headship?

He's not encouraging me to go for Headships yet, I think for fairly obvious reasons I've only been here a

year.

R Chagger

Does he know that you would like to go for Headship?

Yes of course. He knows that I want to be a Headteacher, he said when we had our six monthly reviews, he tries to review us every six months, he was kind enough to say I am a very good Deputy now and within a couple of years, should I want to, I'd be a good Headteacher so he's been very encouraging in that sense and it's very nice to hear that but you know, I guess partly stubborn as well because I pompously know that I want to be Headteacher and want to be it by 40 – it's kind of nice for him to see, kind of nice to hear ratification off him that in my mind what I've got planned is going the right way – he's been very encouraging in that sense and he's a good communicator in as much as allowing me and Sharon the other Deputy certain aspects of the school to run with certain autonomy and I appreciate that, we're not going to get complete autonomy because I know that when I'm Head I'll be a bit of a control freak because at the end of the day it's your school and the buck stops with you or whoever the Head is and I appreciate that but he does give all of us within the senior team actually distinct roles so that we can go away and tinker with them. I mean staffing for instance, and just putting ads in the TES it's up to me, as long as I run it past him, how it's done is up to me and I think that's great and that's good preparation for the next level whether you're Assistant Head going to Deputy or Deputy to Head. I'm sure you can go for Assistant to Head.

R Chagger

No you can't because that's what, because all the interviews I've done, they haven't.

I've come across a couple that have done it.

R Chagger

I've asked some of the Heads, because what I've found doing this is that all the schools that I've come to, apart from one, I've got to do Wheeler's Lane next week, she has four Deputies and she deliberately hasn't gone down Assistant Headteacher route, she doesn't believe in it, but all the others schools have got fewer and fewer Deputies, including my school, I

mean we had four, have gone down to three but we've got four Assistant Heads so all the schools have got three or four Assistant Heads, fewer Deputies, but the progression is you go from Deputy to Headship and when I've asked the Headteachers can Assistant Heads go, you know there might be the odd case but that isn't the progression.

No it's not the route, I am aware of a couple, but it's not the rule and I'm glad you raised that fact because it was similar circumstances to this, similar setting and similar structure when I first got there, one Head, two Deputies, four Assistants and then one of the Deputies became the Head, within four years they had four Headteachers it was quite a challenging school so then one of the Deputies then changed the structure and then had one Head, one Deputy and six Assistant Heads and then a new Head has come along now and has kept that structure, one Head and six Assistant Heads which is great ?????? but it makes the progression from Assistant Head to Deputy much harder and you're right you have to be a Deputy, in broad speaking, you have to be a Deputy before you become a Head. In my previous school there were some Assistant Heads however that have reached their point and that is where they are going to stay and they've only got a couple of years left and they are going to retire, it's all good and bad isn't it, in a couple of years it's great for some people as it means they are going to get promotion but at the moment it's stifled because it's like that isn't it.

R Chagger

That's interesting in that when I started this I'd done ?????? I'd started it but now I know I'm going to have to add this extra bit about the NPQH because I hadn't realised it had changed and to go onto it you have to be able to become a Headteacher in the next 18 months.

It has always been, I was on there, you were supposed to be a Head within two years, I knew that I would never be a Head in two years and they must have known.

R Chagger

I think lots of people did the NPQH but they didn't do anything after it, they just thought they had to do it because it was part of CPD.

I just knew I wanted to be Headteacher and they said you've got to have this to be a Headteacher so I thought I'd best do it as soon as I can – get out the way as it was. Again, having a young child and wanting another child it's just time, it's worth a third of an MA, an NPQH as well apparently and Warwick which is where I do my ??? accept it as a third of an MA, so I would like to do an MEd perhaps or MA at some point so having a third of it already is really good so in that sense.

R Chagger

Warwick university?

How I got to Warwick is bizarre really but again that's done me wonders, this society, country is so wrapped up in snobbery, it's unbelievable and Warwick are okay yes. Before I went I had no information on the esteem.

R Chagger

I did my degree at Worcester and did my Masters at Warwick and it was really great then to get into Warwick.

It's a good place. I was supposed to get GCSE's but only got one – sounds really bad doesn't it. I then ended up in Retail, initially I wanted to join the Fire Brigade like my father and do that, but didn't want to get my hands dirty, but then knew I didn't want to end up in Retail so I went to the local colleges to say I wanted to do some A' levels because I really ballsed up my GCSE's so I went to a number of colleges and at Evesham course we did this really bizarre course because I wanted to do History, Politics and a Language and they said we do this course, we'll accept you on the History, Politics and German Language that's fine ?????? Did two years at Evesham College, two years at University and come out with a degree – two years at Evesham College in conjunction with the University is like an Access course, equivalent to A'Level and that was it – German Politics, German History, British Politics, British History and German Language – really lucky to find that, I can't believe how lucky I was to find that and then to also have it as Warwick as well which has been quite good to have on my CV at times.

R Chagger

If you do your masters, when you look at job descriptions they have 'desirable' if you've got a

masters, you don't need one to become a Headteacher do you?

No it's not compulsory; it's just a nice thing to have. I'm not sure I'm getting, by the time I'm a Head, that's the thing with families as well it's just the time, because a lot of the time at home is spent doing stuff you can't do at school because you're so busy in school because you're called away.

R Chagger

What other actions would be useful to you? Is there anything else that the Head or the Authority or anything else that would help you?

No, again on a very personal level it's just time. I've done one year of Deputy Head now. I've done three years as Assistant Head, one year as a Deputy Head, it goes back to what I see as one of the barriers, you need to be a teacher which is, some of the more traditional governors see people like me as a wildcard, a maverick. So, I just need to put the time in. xxxxx is really good in giving me lots of opportunities to broaden my skills if you like. On a very personal level, if the other Deputy was to leave and get her Headship, clearly, yes on a personal level that would make my career very good because it would make me a bit more established and a new Deputy would come along and sort of set me up. But even if that weren't to happen, I think within 2, 3 or 4 years I would have a good bank of experience here doing what I'm doing here anyway which would set me up quite well for Headship it's just that I need that 2, 3 years experience at this level because I just know that I won't be looked at seriously until I've got probably 2, 3 years experience. Yes that's the only action really I need. It's just more time of doing what I'm doing.

R Chagger

Is there any one person or any people encouraging you in your progression, obviously the Head, the Head's been encouraging you?

Yes. Perhaps a few years ago it was really burning ambitions but now I've got older, Milly our daughter's getting older, we need the stability. It's not so burning now, there's no immediate rush. Also, like you said at the beginning, 5, 10 years time that's been in the background for a long time now hasn't it. I can remember when I first starting them saying 'in the next

15 years'. It would be interesting to see whether that's actually helped my career, whether I've been in the right place at the right time as well as hopefully having the right skills that would be interesting to learn. That's kind of reassuring as well isn't it to know that people of my age who are in this position, if they want to, there's a good chance that they're going to have it if they play their cards right and do the right things at the right time so that's quite nice to have in the background, it fits in with where I want to go.

I can't do this job without Sarah, I really couldn't, because she runs, you know I might be reasonably important here and make some important decisions here, but at home she makes all the decisions she feels, she does everything – she's quite a good driver. She allows me to spend the time in school and she allows me ?????? and that's incredibly important. Has that been risen before with people you've spoken to?

R Chagger

It hasn't in that way. One of the Deputies at my school I interviewed he should have been Headteacher a long time ago – he was a Deputy by the time he was, late 30's, but then he got married again in his early 40's and he's got a young family and it just stopped him, his partner is at that school as well so it's all stopped because of this second family, so it's sort of like that. That is good because it's usually, what you said is good, you're the only one who's said that but you're the youngest one that I've interviewed really that was a Deputy that wants to go on to become a Headteacher.

Sometimes I have to pinch myself – to be a Deputy after 7 and a half, 8 years is going some – I do have to pinch myself sometimes. I was 35 when I became a Deputy – I'm impressed with that. That's good – still plenty more to do.

R Chagger

What sort of school would you like?

700, 800 pupil wise – preferably 11-16 as well – not sixth form – just primarily because that's the most informative and most moulding sort of age really isn't it and also that size, 700, 800 because I've worked in two schools like that now, I've worked in two schools over 700, 800 and worked in two schools that are over

1000 and I'm thoroughly keen on not knowing by name, I would much like that, my second school in particular as Head of History eventually after 2 years I knew pretty much every student in the school and that's incredibly important if you are going to be a member of the Senior Team and guiding these children in their career paths and in their life chances but that's important that you know individuals reasonably well and I think that's why I'd like a 700 – 800 school. Ideally, Studley or Alcester's gone (that's the one I was talking about early), yes that's about 800,900, it doesn't have a Sixth Form yet although I do say no Sixth Form, I think most schools will have some connection with a Sixth Form because that's clearly where, 14-19, that's where its going, so I'm not naïve to think, you know, I'm aware that's going to happen, and also the way that the Curriculum planning, it looks like schools will have to work incredibly, whether they like it or not, going to have to work very closely with each other, FE's and HE's and so on, alternative curriculum provision or whatever the case may be, but ideally that's what I'd like a 700-800 school, 11-16 predominately.

R Chagger

Our school, we've put in a bid for ?????????? xxxxx ?????? yes, she's the one who's been coming to our school ????? but you know this has been really interesting for what I'm doing now because I've taught at my school since, because I was an NQT at my school and haven't moved so it's really interesting to hear lots of people saying, I think I only want to go to Assistant Head, but the school next to me in the next Road which is xxxxx I hadn't even realised had a Black Headteacher. I went and interviewed him and fantastic he was and then done everybody, xxxxxx and then he'd gone because of the Governors, no Head of xxxxx, so the Head of xxxxxx now who I interviewed, he's fantastic, he's quite young, he's only in his 40's and is Headteacher – very very extrovert because he's Art/Drama so he's gone to xxxxxx now to fill in for two terms, I hadn't realised all this happening! Then speaking to Deputies and Assistant Heads, everybody's just normal people who can feel that they can do really good jobs.

Actually, it is a very privileged role to have because I only teach five lessons a week and I can remember having to teach getting on for 20 so in that sense it's

very privileged. Obviously there are other things that we need to do within our time, all the planning and that sort of stuff, or as some staff like to think just sitting in the office looking out of the window which again is part of the process, you're always going to get that. It is quite privileged to have only teaching 5 periods but that's also a drawback because that's what you come into teaching for isn't it to be with the children and that's why you go into Senior Management, to make those chances even better, ?????? so that's when you realise those 5 hours you get with the children that's really good, what you came in for.

R Chagger

As a Headteacher I don't think there are many Headteachers that teach now do they?

No but I think I would like to. xxxxx does and I think that's incredibly important and I think when I become a Head I'd like to teach as well because I think it's important for the staff to see you're teaching because how can you encourage staff to improve their game as teacher and you're not teaching yourself and I think it's incredibly important for you to do that, and also for you as a teacher ?????????? but yes it is very privileged in that sense. It's privilege just to have that responsibility, almost want to thank people at the end of a day 'thanks for letting me be your Deputy, because I've made some decisions that you won't like, you haven't liked but you still come back everyday, and you still talk to me as if I'm a colleague, probably not as friends but a colleague but that's great, that's a huge privilege and working with these people, teachers are a funny bunch, having worked in other industries as well, teachers are very very funny aren't they, very strange.

R Chagger

Our school is so huge that you can, I don't know three quarters of the staff. I'm based in the Sixth Form and I go to the Sixth Form and I stay there and that's it, unless you meet for meetings and so on. It would be lovely to go to a smaller school and know all the staff and all the students.

That's another privilege of my role isn't it. I do know all, all, because we have a written timetable I know all the staff because I have to because I have to put them in the right boxes so I know their initials and stuff and I

have to go and speak to them about their timetables so that's a privilege isn't it to actually speak to these people and deal with these people. It is painful and times and awkward but that's the nature of the job but it is, people are nice generally aren't they. I'm always surprised at how nice people are and I think teachers in particular because that's the nature of our job isn't it – is to be nice with young people and therefore with each other – predominantly teachers are quite nice, you get some strange ones, that's such a privilege to work with people like that.

R Chagger

There's a Deputy at my school, she's very unsure, she's done her NPQH, she's very unsure.

No.

R Chagger

No, okay. She has started this term – she's at xxxxxx and she's shadowing the Head. Would you not want to do that or do you think it's still that you need the extra 2, 3 years?

I am aware that xxxxx, the other Deputy here, is on a succession mentor and so on so I'm acutely aware of that. I think it would be rather rude of me to go to xxxxx and say I want to do a similar course whilst Sharon is already on that, for the benefit of this school – the school needs stability so I'm sure at some point in the future I would probably do that and probably nearer the end of my 10 years here I think, probably in the next 2 years but at the moment I feel, the first year I've hopefully made an impact within this school and I need to consolidate that and probably then in my final year take that further and get into some sort of succession route or shadowing or whatever that National College, it's largely driven by the National College, so whatever in the next 2-3 years they have. I think for the benefit of the school it just wouldn't be wise for 2 Deputies to be doing that. I rather hope that the Assistant Heads are aware that xxxxx is doing this because it's good possible career progression for them, if not here, somewhere else, but at least they can get sort of experiences. You kind of have, it's not being ????? but you have to have to look out for your own career don't you and I know Heads will nurture you, but at the end of the day it's your job, it's your career so you have to sort it out for yourself to a certain extent.

R Chagger

Thank you.