The Impact of School Leadership on Pupil Outcomes

Interim Report

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NCSL National College for School Leadership

department for children, schools and families

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Executive Summary

Introduction

This three-year study, commissioned by the *Department for Children, Schools and Families,* in conjunction with the *National College of School Leadership,* focuses upon the critical relationship between school leadership, in particular headteacher leadership, and improved pupil learning outcomes. Taking a review and evaluation of the growing international evidence base as a point of departure, the study investigates not only how successful school leaders impact on students' learning outcomes but also how, in order to do so, they adapt their practices to suit the many different contexts in which they carry out their work. For our purposes, such contexts include: sectors of schooling (primary, secondary); amounts of experience leaders bring to their work; socio-economic levels of their school's student intakes; and leadership in schools in three different 'improvement' groupings.

This interim report presents findings at the half-way point of the study. The report summarises the project design, provides a discussion of key findings and identifies emerging messages.

Research Design and Methods

Begun in January 2006, the study, which uses a mixed method approach linking qualitative (case study) and quantitative (survey) approaches, is being conducted in three phases. During the first, now-completed phase, a comprehensive review of literature was conducted (Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris and Hopkins, 2006a), national data sets related to pupil attainment were analysed, and survey data were collected from both head teachers and key staff in a nationally representative achieved sample of high performing and improving primary (394) and secondary (368) schools during 2006/2007. Based on three years (2002-2005) of national pupil achievement data, schools in the sample were allocated to one of three groups for comparison purposes; schools that had significantly improved from a low to moderate level, schools that had improved from a moderate to high level, and schools that had demonstrated stable high achievement and effectiveness[1] These schools were selected to represent different levels of social disadvantage of their pupil intake identified by the % of pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM band 1 to 4[2]).

School case studies are being conducted over a two year period in phase two (September 2006 – August 2008). This report includes analyses of two rounds of the six round of data collection, in 10 primary and 10 secondary schools. In each school, these data include in-depth interviews with head teachers (N = 20), key

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[1] Effectiveness as measured by combined absolute improvement in pupil attainment levels across three years (2003-2005) in key indicators of attainment (%pupils 5A*-C at GCSE for secondary schools; % level 4+ in English and maths at KS2 for primary schools) and significant improvement in value added results for pupil progress using contextualised Value Added (VA) models and simple VA models identified by Fischer Family Trust (FFT) analyses for three years (2003-2005) OR stable high effective schools in VA terms.

[2]Although it is recognised that the FSM indicator has limitations, it is the only nationally available measure collected for all schools and shows a strong association with attainment. It is commonly used in research studies as an indicator of social disadvantage and in interpreting school performance. In the analysis of schools' attainment data more detailed pupil level data were included to contextualise the value added measures of effectiveness.

staff (including deputy and assistant headteachers, heads of department, and keystage co-ordinators (N = 70), colleagues, including teaching staff, support staff and governors (N = 80), along with a researcher-administered pupil survey. A second wave of surveys to all sample schools also will be administered to follow up the emerging findings identified in phase one. The final phase of the project (September 2008 – January 2009) will entail the integration of all data collected and will seek to develop new insights about the contributions of successful school leadership to pupil outcomes.

Framework Guiding the Research

Building on the literature review completed during the first phase of the research, the framework guiding data collection for the study conceptualised successful leadership practices within four broad categories – building vision and setting directions, understanding and developing people, redesigning the organisation, and managing curriculum and pedagogy – each including a number of more specific actions or behaviours. These practices are influenced by the internal states (attributes) of leaders themselves (e.g., confidence, optimism, knowledge), as well as their perceptions of the broader environment in which their school is situated (e.g., national policies, community context). Successful leadership practices, in turn, influence pupil outcomes indirectly through their proximal effects on such key school conditions as, for example, school culture, academic focus (commonly called academic press in the international literature) - widespread agreement in the school about the priority to be accorded the academic work of students (e.g., Goddard, Sweetland and Hoy, 2000) in the school; the school's behavioural climate (e.g., Willms and Ma, 2004); and teachers' pedagogical practices.

Developing on this way of thinking about the nature, causes and consequences of successful leadership, our review of literature identified a series of seven knowledge claims justified by the available evidence. Six of these claims have been further tested using our project data, in varying degrees from phase one, and serve to organise our report of results in this summary. The seventh claim that "school leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence upon pupil learning" will be addressed in the final report since it is dependent upon the sum of evidence provided through the other six claims. Whilst these interim results give additional support for all six claims, they also extend some of these claims in new directions, and provide a more nuanced understanding of how the claims manifest themselves in the unique contexts in which primary and secondary schools in England are situated. This summary includes a brief account of some early findings and messages of relevance to policy and practice. Claims three, four and five, in particular, will form a key part of our research in the final phase which will focus upon how patterns of leadership support and distribution influence a range of student outcomes.

Results

Claim 1. Almost All Successful Leaders Draw On The Same Repertoire Of "Basic" Leadership Practices.

Interim evidence from the study indicates that the four broad categories of "basic" leadership practices included in our initial framework capture a very high proportion of what successful leaders do. In addition, however, this evidence extends previous efforts to identify key specific practices or strategies within each of the categories. Our full interim report richly illustrates what these practices entail.

Building vision and setting directions*.* Previous research associated three more specific practices with this category - developing a shared sense of purpose, identifying specific goals to guide the school improvement effort, and demonstrating high performance expectations for staff and students.

The majority of primary and secondary heads in the present study claimed to have increased their efforts over the past three years to develop among staff an overall sense of purpose for their work in the school. Most key staff (Senior and Middle leaders) believed their heads to be providing such an overall sense of purpose. About 75% of key staff respondents to the survey reported that their head teachers provided assistance to school staffs in setting short-term goals to help achieve the school's longer term vision or goals for teaching and learning. One in three heads claimed "a lot of change" on their part in demonstrating high expectations for staff and one in five claimed such change in demonstrating high expectations for students. The vast majority of key staff (92%) reported their headteachers to be demonstrating high expectations for pupil behaviour.

Understanding and developing people*.* Previous research associated three specific leadership practices with this category – providing staff with intellectual stimulation (including CPD), offering individualised support to staff (an atmosphere of caring and trust) and modelling desirable values and practices.

Headteachers in successful schools demonstrated a range of strategies for providing staff with intellectual stimulation; they placed great emphasis on the continuing professional development of teachers through a range of formal and informal approaches which focused upon individual and school related needs. This development was focused, in particular, on curriculum, pedagogy and assessment – especially the assessment of students' academic performance. More than half of heads who responded to the survey reported a substantial amount of change in such efforts on their part, although key staff were slightly more circumspect about the extent of such change. For example, 53% of primary heads and 58% of secondary heads who responded to the survey reported "a lot of" or "very significant" change in practice in relation to providing assistance to staff in setting short-term goals for teaching and learning.

Another focus for teacher professional development, was found to be nurtured by a large majority of primary heads (80%) and secondary heads (70%). This involved encouragement for staff to think about fostering their pupils' learning beyond the academic curriculum; about half of key staff survey respondents agreed that their heads strongly encouraged this focus (N = 933, 53%).

A fair degree of change was reported, also, by both primary and secondary heads in the frequency with which they discussed educational issues with staff. Over the past three years about two thirds (primary: 62%; secondary: 62%) reported either a "lot" or "partial" increase in this; and 70% of key staff reported their heads to be having such discussions with them.

A large minority of both primary (39%) and secondary (42%) heads reported substantial increases in their efforts over the past three years to provide individual staff with support intended to help them improve their teaching practices. About one in four heads also claimed to have significantly increased their efforts over the past three years to provide an atmosphere of caring and trust (an equal number reported little change on their part with respect to this practice, it should be noted). More than 75% of key staff respondents moderately to strongly agreed that their heads were working to develop such an atmosphere.
A quarter of primary heads and about a third of secondary heads reported significantly increased efforts over the past three years to model a high level of

professional practice and more than 80% of key staff reported their heads to be enacting this practice in their schools.

Designing the organisation*.* Specific leadership behaviours encompassed within this category include developing a productive professional culture, creating structures to support the culture, building productive school-community relationships, and connecting the school to the wider environment.

With respect to the professional culture in schools, case study evidence suggested that a key part of the focus for most heads was raising the quality of teaching and learning in their schools. The drive to evaluate the contributions of current practice had led to a *more rigorous culture of responsibility with greater individual and collective accountability*. Pupil failure was no longer considered to be an acceptable outcome of teaching. A distinct movement toward a "can-do" or "success" culture was in evidence.

As part of this culture, staff in many of the case study schools felt increasingly empowered to cope with change themselves. Pupils, as well, had increased their own expectations of themselves - especially their academic progress - and what they could expect from teachers. Survey evidence found that about two thirds of primary heads and staff believed that their colleagues shared similar values, beliefs and attitudes related to teaching and learning. Consensus on this matter was significantly weaker in secondary schools, however.

Also, a feature of the culture in at least four of the case study schools, one that appeared to account for part of their success, was a high level of trust, mutual support and openness among staff. The value of school cultures which foster trust among staff, parents and students receives considerable support from many other sources as well[3] .

Case study evidence also suggested the addition to this category of leadership behaviours aimed at *creating a positive behavioural climate* in the school. Six secondary and six primary schools in the study had introduced such a whole school approach to pupil behaviour management which interviewees believed had made significant improvements to pupil outcomes. The contribution of such a behavioural climate to the academic learning of pupils finds support in a growing body of impressive evidence (see, for example, Willms and Ma, 2004).

Managing and supporting the teaching and learning programme*.* This category of core leadership practices typically includes such specific behaviours, for example, as staffing, aligning resources with the teaching mission, monitoring student progress, supervising instruction, and buffering staff from distractions to their core work. Evidence from the study deepens our understanding of how these specific behaviours are enacted by successful leaders and recommends additional behaviours be added to this category.

Much of this evidence provided by the case studies carried out in 20 schools substantiates the importance that successful leaders attach to the *recruitment, development and retention of a stable staff team*, which is deeply committed to meeting a wide range of pupils' academic, social and emotional needs. Heads with this priority, for example, provided placements for teacher trainees in order to assess their strengths as future staff members; they also spent time observing applicants teaching and interacting with students as part of the recruitment

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[3]For example, see Tschannen-Moran, M. and Hoy, W. K. (1998). Trust in schools: A conceptual and empirical analysis. *Journal of Educational Administration, 36*(4), 334-352.

process. There is an especially intense focus on serving the wide range of pupils' needs in schools serving a high proportion of disadvantaged pupils.

Successful heads worked to ensure the alignment of both human and material resources in their schools. For example, the majority of heads reported utilising support staff skills for the benefit of pupil learning and increasing their efforts to do so over the past three years. Similar proportions of heads also claimed to have significantly increased their efforts to locate and strategically allocate teaching resources in their schools.

To manage successfully the teaching and learning programme, considerable effort is required of leaders to keep attention in their schools focused on the core work of teaching. The majority of heads in this study reported regularly observing classroom activities, working with teachers directly to improve their teaching after observation, sometimes through coaching and mentoring; most Key staff agreed that their heads did these things.

Focusing on the core work of teaching was also encouraged by extensive use of data for decisions about pupil progress and the improvement of teaching for individual students as well as groups of students. *Significant increases in the use of pupil achievement data* were reported by more than 25% of heads in both primary and secondary schools; most key staff perceived their head teachers to be encouraging this use of data. As well, most heads (63% primary and 56% secondary) also claimed to use research evidence in their decision making and about 75% of key staff respondents concurred. Finally, about a third of heads claimed to have been increasing their efforts to buffer teachers from distractions to their core work.

Overall, our interim analysis of data show that a *key strategy* on the part of successful heads to improve the cultures of teaching, learning and achievement in their schools is the *alignment of* structures and cultures with 'vision' and 'direction'. In effect, they *repositioned their schools internally* through changing expectations, aspirations, structures and cultures so that they were able to build and sustain improved performance. They increased effectiveness through a *sustained focus upon raising the quality of teaching and learning whilst at the same time raising the levels of individual and collective efficacy and involvement of staff*.

Claim 2. The Same "Basic" Leadership Values And Practices Are Enacted In Contextually Sensitive Ways.

Interim results point to three features of leaders' contexts that shape the specific ways in which they enact the same core set of leadership values and practices - the extent of their leadership experience; the socio-economic status of their pupils and communities; and the stage of development, or improvement grouping, of their school.

Leaders' experience. Heads who had been in post for a shorter period of time reported more change over the past three years in nearly all aspects of policy and practice about which the study inquired. Less experienced leaders (in terms of time in their current school), for example:

- Made greater efforts to engage parents in the school's improvement efforts;
- Initiated more change in their school's internal review procedures; and
- Reported more efforts to restructure their schools to facilitate the work of staff.

Since recently appointed heads typically find themselves in schools that are new for them, it does not seem surprising that they promote more changes than heads who have been in their schools for some time.

School socioeconomic status. *Disadvantaged school and community contexts both required and received more intense leadership effort by heads and others* providing leadership in schools. Heads in more disadvantaged (FSM band 4) as compared with more advantaged (FSM band 1) contexts were reported to make, and themselves reported making, greater efforts, for example:

• To engage parents in the school's improvement efforts;
• To restructure their schools to facilitate the work of staff;
• To help clarify the reasons for the school's improvement efforts; and
• To ensure wide participation in decisions about school improvement.

School improvement group. As we explained in describing our methods, all schools in the study were identified as being in one of three categories based on their three year pattern of student achievement change (schools that had significantly improved from a low to moderate level, schools that had improved from a moderate to high level, and schools that demonstrated stable high achievement).

Our analysis uncovered differences in the enactment of leadership practices by school improvement group, especially in the case of secondary schools. These differences were in the extent of reported change in almost all the aspects of *school structures*, *culture* and *curriculum, pedagogy and assessment*. Compared to other areas of change analysed in our surveys (e.g. academic focus, extracurricular programmes and leadership distribution) where fewer differences were found, these three areas appeared to have been a particularly strong focus of change and improvement for heads in the Low and Moderate/High improvement group in the secondary sample. To achieve rapid and sustained improvement from a low base, it appears that a focus on these areas is particularly important, especially in the larger and more complex organisational context of secondary schools.

Claim 3. School Leaders Improve Teaching And Learning Indirectly And Most Powerfully Through Their Influence On Staff Ability, Motivation And The Conditions of Teachers' Work.

The importance of cultural change in schools in promoting improved pupil attainment outcomes was strongly supported by the case study evidence. The qualitative evidence highlighted a number of dimensions which, taken together, seem to help embed changes in attitudes and practices that affected school culture in a positive way and lead to a greater focus on teaching and learning and raising standards, and also to enhance staff collegiality and commitment. Staff were supported in this by In-Service Education and Training (INSET), other in-house professional development and performance management processes. In this way they were prepared to be responsible and accountable for engaging all pupils more in learning which was set within consistent task and lesson organisation.

In the 20 case studies there were many examples of heads: aligning CPD to the school development plan; nurturing staff self-efficacy and motivation by, for example, building inclusive teams of staff in order to break down barriers to the commitment to whole school vision; improving the physical working conditions for staff and students; and engaging in succession planning through, for example,

clarifying roles and distributing responsibilities to selected staff. The timing and application of these strategies were responsive to context but all were used. A key part of the focus for all heads was on raising the quality of teaching and learning. This meant there was a drive to evaluate all current practices and new initiatives. This in turn seems to have led to a more rigorous culture of responsibility with greater individual and collective accountability. One key feature of this culture was that staff felt increasingly empowered to cope with change and innovation.

Claim 4. School Leadership Has A Greater Influence On Schools And Students When It Is Widely Distributed.

This claim was widely believed by those in most roles who provided evidence for our study. Interim results indicate substantial, and quite explicit, distribution of leadership within schools. Such distribution aimed to increase – and sometimes to redesign - the leadership functions of middle managers, as well as to increase the effectiveness of the senior leadership team (SLT). Improving the relationships between heads and SLTs was also a goal for leadership distribution in some schools. In addition, leadership distribution included the creation of new leadership roles, for example, bursar or business managers, and pastoral teams composed largely of non-teaching staff.

Substantial leadership distribution was viewed by most survey and case study respondents as very important to their school's success in improving pupil learning. According to respondents, distributed leadership cultivated a sense of ownership and agency on the part of staff, helped develop a vision for the school shared by most staff, increased staff understanding and sense of responsibility for whole-school matters, buffered teachers from non-teaching responsibilities, and developed the leadership potential of other staff.

Evidence from ten of the case study schools (5 primary and 5 secondary) also demonstrated the potential for distributing leadership to students. In these schools, student councils gave pupils a voice in decision making about changes within the school, for example, how funds should best be used to upgrade playground equipment. Several schools included members of the school council in staff recruitment processes. School council members in most schools were able to communicate directly with head teachers and, in several cases, the governing body. Students' views in six schools (5 secondary and 1 primary) were systematically collected on such matters as the quality of teaching and learning in the school. Questionnaires, interviews and feedback following teacher observations were examples of methods used to collect such views.

Claim 5. Some Patterns Of Distribution Are More Effective Than Others.

As yet our interim results do not include a strong test of this claim. We will address this aspect more directly in the final phase of the project. However, they do offer both provisional support and an important refinement. Leadership distribution, most frequently the product of delegation by the headteacher, commonly took one of two broad forms or patterns. One pattern, "consultative distribution", featured considerable participation of key staff in providing information and advice on school-wide decisions but final decisions were retained by Heads and Deputy Heads. The second pattern, "decisional distribution", awarded full responsibility and a high degree of autonomy to teacher leaders for all decisions in a designated area of responsibility. Both patterns fit within a still-

hierarchical management structure, one that was being stretched horizontally but without much loss of vertical control; *the leadership structures in these schools were becoming "fatter" not "flatter".*

While most key staff believed that leadership was widely distributed in their schools, they also viewed the Head's role as pivotal to the school's improvement efforts. Heads largely determined the nature and pattern of leadership distribution in their schools. Which patterns they chose to foster arose from interactions among (a) heads' personal characteristics (e.g., need for control); (b) their own stage of development as leaders (e.g., more experienced leaders had less need to make all decisions themselves); and (c) their estimates of the readiness of their staff to take on greater leadership responsibilities.

These variables offer a more refined understanding of the claim that some patterns are more effective than others. For example, variation in staff readiness could provide justification for quite different patterns, a consultative pattern for staff with less leadership capacity and a pattern providing for more decisional authority for staff with relatively well-developed leadership capacities. This fifth claim, then, should likely be revised to state that "*some leadership patterns will be more effective in some circumstances than in others*". Evidence eventually provided by our full study should spell out the details needed to make such a conditional claim practically meaningful.

Claim 6. A Small Handful Of Personal Traits Explain A High Proportion Of The Variation In Leadership Effectiveness.

Among the small number of personal traits previous evidence has suggested have an influence on the behaviours of effective leaders, this interim report examines, in particular, the extent to which leaders felt self-efficacious about their work. A considerable amount of evidence indicates that feelings of self-efficacy (or self-confidence) related to one's work generates persistence in the face of sometimes daunting challenges and initial failure[4]. Persistence creates opportunities to acquire the abilities needed to address those daunting challenges.

Both primary and secondary heads' responses to items measuring their self-efficacy were positively skewed, indicating high levels of self-confidence on their part. The majority of key staff also viewed their head teachers as highly self-efficacious about their jobs. In both sectors, heads from more disadvantaged schools appeared to have the most positive views about their self-efficacy – arguably a very good thing given the scope of the challenges they face in their improvement efforts.

Primary heads, however, were relatively less confident than their secondary colleagues about some aspects of their jobs: their ability to manage multiple accountabilities from diverse audiences and their ability to sustain their job satisfaction and motivation in their leadership role, as well as their commitment to the teaching profession, although levels of confidence were still generally high. *Primary heads also were relatively less confident about their ability to raise achievement in national tests and examinations and to manage change in their schools.* Key staff in both primary and secondary schools generally believed that their heads had high levels of confidence; paradoxically, this view was held by more primary than secondary key staff respondents.

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[4] See Leithwood, K., Jantzi, D. (in press). Linking leadership to student learning: The contribution of leader efficacy, *Educational Administration Quarterly.*

There are two final findings reported which add to existing knowledge in the field: i) diagnosis and differentiation; and ii) values led leadership.

i) Diagnosis and Differentiation

The headteachers in the case study schools do not, it seems, pursue only one strategy in their quest for success. Rather, they combine a number but prioritize within these. In other words, they are able to *diagnose* (needs), *differentiate* (in levels of importance and timing of strategies to meet these) and actively *co-ordinate* these strategies. They apply their judgements about the timing and nature of change, and prioritize their change strategies in their schools in different ways according to their diagnosis of need in relation to purpose and context.

Although, as suggested in our 'seven claims' review of the literature, headteachers draw upon the same range of qualities, strategies and skills, the combinations will vary as will the way they are applied, since this relates closely to their personal qualities and traits. This helps to account, for example, for the different ways in which they distribute leadership among staff. We use the term 'layered' or 'nested leadership' to indicate the presence of core aspirations, expectations, qualities and strategies which are available for use. Images of the headteacher as 'juggling' among priorities do not provide a sufficiently accurate description of the skilfully differentiated, careful, focussed (if sometimes intuitive) and caring ways in which these headteachers appear to exercise their responsibilities and accountabilities for raising standards in response to multiple initiatives; as with other aspects of their work, there were differences in the relative strength of these by sector and by school context (measured by FSM band).

ii) Values and Virtues

All the data so far confirm the importance of leadership values of care, equity and achievement for all. These sit alongside such values as honesty, integrity, trust, fairness and persistence to the exercise and impact of successful leadership. These go beyond the personal traits identified in the literature and underpin the professional identities and actions of the leaders in this research. They are not simply leaders, but rather they are particular kinds of leaders with particular kinds of intra and interpersonal qualities.

Our interim data point to the impact of leadership values and virtues on the school's culture as an important influence on the improvement of student learning. It is these values and virtues of these headteachers which seem to define them, in the eyes of their colleagues and broader community, as confident, problem solving, coupled with proactive optimism, a high level of reflexivity, high ideals and expectations and moral commitment to enhancing pupil learning opportunities and outcomes to which cultures of praise, warmth and care are integral.

Summary of Key Messages

1. The Primacy of the Headteacher

Headteachers are still perceived as the main source of leadership by school key staff. Their leadership practice shapes the internal processes and pedagogic practices that directly result in school improvement especially for schools in challenging circumstances.

1.1 The leadership of the head has an important direct effect on the way teachers think about the leadership and management of their teaching and learning practices which, indirectly, influences pupil outcomes (chapters 7 and 9).

1.2 Leadership for improvement requires the alignment of structures, values and vision. This is orchestrated and reinforced by the headteacher in successful and improving schools (chapter 7 and 9).

1.3 Leaders in improving schools select, sequence and harmonize improvement strategies so they reinforce and support each other. This 'layered' or 'nested' leadership allows staff to maximize the improvement efforts without being distracted by competing strategies or priorities (chapter 7 and 9).

2. Leadership Qualities and Values

Headteachers are adaptive in their leadership and management strategies, within a core values framework governed by principles of care, equity and performance.

2.1 Flexibility, persistence, resilience and optimism within a system of values – led practices are key qualities of successful headteachers, particularly those facing daunting conditions (chapter 4).

2.2 The head leads in ways which demonstrate responsiveness to local culture and national policies, within clear ethical frameworks which emphasise care, equity and performance (chapter 7 and 10).

3. Expectations and Outcomes

Headteachers' expectations and aspirations emanated from a view of pupil achievement which incorporated improved behaviour, academic, personal and social and affective dimensions.

3.1 The setting of high expectations for staff and students was a central strategy in developing the teaching and learning programmes (chapter 5).

3.2 School success in raising student outcomes rests on the establishment of high achievement-focussed school cultures in which care and trust are predominant features (chapter 5).

3.3 Introducing a whole-school approach to pupil behaviour management is positively associated with improved student outcomes (chapter 5).

4. Leadership and Teaching and Learning

Agreement by key staff differed in relation to their perceptions of their headteachers' involvement in pedagogy and assessment. A substantial

number of key staff noted that the headteacher uses data to plan for individual pupil needs and to make decisions about school improvement. However, not as many agree that headteachers are involved in the detail of curriculum development and the pedagogy of improvement. Moderate levels of agreement were identified with regards to the headteachers' perceived involvement in the promotion of CPD activities and the encouragement of teachers to think innovatively about their practice.

4.1   Head and other leaders had expanded the curriculum beyond the confines of the traditional academic subjects, in order to boost student engagement in school and, thereby, their achievement (chapter 6).

4.2   A key leadership strategy in the effective schools was that of placing a high priority and consistent emphasis upon improving classroom teaching across the school (chapter 6).

4.3   Allocating and distributing personnel and resources appropriately so as to foster student achievement was a focus for a significant number of headteachers and other leaders in the schools (chapter 6).

4.4   Head and staff in the schools were using increasingly detailed analyses of student progress and achievement data to inform their teaching (chapter 6).

4.5   Introducing a whole-school approach to pupil behaviour management is positively associated with improved student outcomes (chapter 5).

5. Leadership Distribution

All headteachers distributed leadership, but the forms, purposes and extent of distribution varied.

5.1   Effective leadership relies upon an increasingly close and collaborative relationship between headteachers and the SLT (chapter 4).

5.2   The creation of new 'distributed' leadership roles and patterns was a consistent feature of the effective schools (chapter 4).

5.3   Broadening participation in and communication about change needed to promote improvement is a key leadership strategy (chapter 4).

5.4   Development of student leadership in some schools was considered to be a means of enhancing pupil outcomes (chapter 5).

6. Leadership and Strategic Change

Headteachers used a range of strategies in building the effectiveness capacity of the school. Their leadership and management of schools' vision, direction, change agenda, and the direct and indirect influence which they exercise in relation to expectation raising, capacity building, staffing, leadership and management structures, cultures and pedagogy are key to the improvement of schools.

6.1   The majority of primary and secondary school key staff reported moderate or strong agreement on the important role of headteacher leadership practices in relation to school structures, culture, curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. However, whilst most key staff perceived that their head had a very important role in setting the direction, not as many agreed that he/she developed people or discussed educational issues with staff (chapter 7).

6.2   One-quarter of the key staff attributed the school's success in improving student outcomes to the head's strategic vision in positioning the school so that it could respond to change in a robust way (chapter 7).

6.3   Prominent strategies that the head used to promote a positive response to

change within the school included:
- Developing the leadership potential of staff within the school by giving them additional responsibilities.
- Giving developing leaders opportunities to attend external leadership courses.
- Aligning CPD with the school development plan, and increasingly relying more upon internal models of CPD, rather than external courses.
- The head responding positively to external policy changes, and in this way providing a positive role model for how staff responded to change.
- Building a strong, caring and inclusive staff team was commented upon as important by the majority of participants across the case study schools, in ensuring all staff were committed to helping students achieve their best, as well as being aware of their role in achieving that vision (Chapter 7).

7. Leadership Differences by Improvement Groupings

Schools which have improved from a low point (i.e. from low to moderate/high) have made the most changes.

7.1   The categorisation of schools into three distinctive groups reveals that there are statistically and educationally significant differences in certain leadership features and practices (chapter 8).
7.2   There are important relationships between school context and the school improvement group, and between school context and heads' time in post (chapter 8).
7.3   There are distinct features that differentiate schools in the three improvement groups. There is strong evidence that schools in the Low to Moderate/High group had made greater improvements in changing school culture, climate and addressing teaching and learning and use of performance data during the last three years (chapter 8).
7.4   Participants were significantly more likely to report substantial improvement in pupil behaviour, attendance, attitude and motivation. These aspects are likely to be important precursors and facilitators for improvement in students' academic achievements, especially in high disadvantage contexts (chapter 8).
7.5   Heads in the Low to Moderate/ High Group were more likely to prioritise strategies to improve teaching and learning and the use of data than those in the Stable High effective group (chapter 8).

8. Leadership Differences by Experience

Effective headteachers employ different improvement strategies depending on their experience and time in post and their perceptions of the need for change in their school. During their early years in a school (0-3 years), headteachers are more active in initiating changes to effect improvement.

8.1   Level of leadership experience of the head has an association with the level of change implementation to structures in the school (chapter 4).

9. Leadership Differences by Sector

There were differences between the leadership practices and influence of primary and secondary headteachers.

9.1   More primary than secondary heads reported a substantial amount of change in providing assistance to staff in setting short-term goals for teaching and learning and encouraging staff to thinking of learning beyond the academic curriculum (chapter 7).

9.2   Compared to primary heads, secondary heads tended to report more change in relation to the use of and prioritising regular classroom observation, coaching and mentoring and redesigning resources for teaching (chapter 7).

9.3   Secondary heads are more likely to use indirect approaches (operating via the SLT and Head of Departments) to support the development of teaching and teachers (chapter 7).

10. Leadership Differences by Socio-economic Context

There are relationships between the extent of the disadvantaged context of schools (FSM band) and the amount of change in leadership practice reported by primary and secondary heads.

10.1   Most successful heads seem to draw on the same repertoire of basic leadership practices, including building vision and setting directions, understanding and developing people, redesigning the organizing and managing the teaching and learning programme. However, this seems to be mediated by context, with a greater number of practices being required to effect change in more disadvantaged schools (chapter 4).

10.2   Effective heads in challenging circumstances have to be more responsive to school cultural and policy contexts in order to improve pupil outcomes and make greater efforts to effect improvement in a range of ways. Improvements in only one or two areas are unlikely to be sufficient (chapter 8).

10.3   Effective heads in challenging circumstances (disadvantaged contexts) employ a broader range of strategies in order to implement and manage change and especially seek to stimulate specific improvements in teaching and assessment and the use of performance data (chapter 8).

10.4   Changes in efforts to engage parents in school improvement were more likely to be reported by heads with less experience at their current school, and by headteachers in more disadvantaged contexts (FSM 3 and 4 schools) (chapter 4).

10.5   The use of performance data was reported more conclusively by schools improving in disadvantaged contexts (chapter 6).

Discussion

The research so far has provided evidence of a number of leadership qualities, virtues and strategies which were reported by heads, key staff and colleagues as being central to improving their schools to promote change. The qualitative data, in particular, point to the **primacy of the headteacher, as 'primus interpares', in leading others in leading change; and of the creation of cultures which combine high expectations of staff and students with high levels of care. In these successful schools, there is clear evidence that 'Every Child Matters'**.

The various changes in curriculum, pedagogy and assessment and leadership structures and cultures were widely perceived to have promoted increased pupil and staff engagement and self-confidence and thus led to raised levels of

engagement and attainment as cultures of aspiration, care and achievement grew. So far the evidence we have produced **provides stronger support for the indirect effects than for the direct effects model of the way heads influence pupil outcomes**. The emerging findings point also to the **heads' leadership activity varying over time (being stronger in the early years of headship in a particular school), by school context,** tending to be greater in disadvantaged (and usually) in secondary school contexts, and by school sector.

Our data so far suggest that the sample of highly effective and improved schools are not unusual (except in their strong positive impact of pupil outcomes), in that their leadership practices do not seem to be radically different from those in other schools. What may be more unusual is the mindset, culture and extent of strategic direction and clear focus that involves a commitment to a consistent and sustained focus on improving teaching and learning over several years achieved via changes in structures, culture, and curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.

Conclusion

We believe that the interim results summarised here, and the many other findings described in our full interim report, provide important insights about how successful heads improve student learning and how they adapt their practices to the unique features of the contexts in which they find themselves whilst maintaining a strong values-led ethos. Our interim results support, refine, extend, and add to claims justified by the earlier reviews of evidence about successful school leadership. Nonetheless, we still have more case study data to collect, a second wave of surveys to administer; and the quantitative data will be subject to structural equation modelling (see chapter 3). Data collected during the remainder of the project will considerably deepen and add to the findings and key messages of this interim report.

Part 1: Background To The Study

Chapter 1: The Research Policy Settings

1.0   Introduction

This three year study was commissioned by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES)[5] in conjunction with the National College of School Leadership (NCSL) in England and began in January 2006. It involves collaboration between teams drawn from different Universities.   The research uses a mixed methods approach to explore causal and associative relationships between school leadership, in particular that of the headteacher, and pupil learning outcomes.

Of the few empirical research projects internationally in this area the most notable have been the work of Silins and Mulford (2002) in Tasmania which explored connections between leadership and organisational learning; the meta-analysis by Hallinger and Heck (1996), the review of the literature in New Zealand by Robinson (2007), and the current research by Leithwood and his colleagues (2004) in North America. However, none of these focused upon investigating leadership in primary and secondary schools that were judged to have achieved and sustained success in terms of pupils' value-added attainment tests at national level over time.

This research project should be seen, also, in the context of the English government's sustained and persistent initiatives to raise school standards through a range of interventionist measures. Not least among these has been a focus upon improving understandings of school leadership in all its forms and, based upon these, the development of a range of strategies for leadership recruitment, selection, training and development. All of these strategies have implicitly assumed a link between school leadership and student learning and achievement since this has consistently been reinforced, within the literature, as significant.   The research base about the impact of leadership in schools is particularly robust, as highlighted in **Seven Strong Claims about Successful School Leadership** (Leithwood et al, 2006b).   Here we claim that, 'School leadership is second only to classroom instruction as an influence on student learning', (p3).   It is from this perspective that we briefly review the current policy context of school leadership in England.

A useful starting point in understanding how school leadership and its relationship to student learning is conceptualized from a policy perspective (in England) is provided by the following extract from the OfSTED Framework (NCSL, 2001, p1), which emphasises the vital connection between what leaders do and what happens in the classroom:

> *'Effective headteachers provide a clear vision and sense of direction for the school. They prioritise. They focus the attention of staff on what is important and do not let them get diverted and sidetracked with initiatives that will have little impact on the work of the pupils.*

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[5] The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) is now renamed the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF).

They know what is going on in their classrooms. They have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of their staff. They know how to build on the strengths and reduce the weaknesses. They can focus their programme of staff development on the real needs of their staff and school. They gain this view through a systematic programme of monitoring and evaluation. Their clarity of thought, sense of purpose and knowledge of what is going on mean that effective headteachers can get the best out of their staff, which is the key to influencing work in the classroom and to raising the standards achieved by pupils'.

Building on this definition of the role of school leader in this introductory chapter we will:

- Describe the regulatory framework and distribution of responsibilities of school leaders in England;
- Outline the accountability framework within which they work;
- Enumerate the challenges facing school leaders;
- Detail their involvement in collaborative networks.

1.1 Regulatory Framework And Responsibilities

The regulatory framework and distribution of responsibilities of school leaders in England are described in several key documents.

First, the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (DfES, 2006) sets out a range of responsibilities for school leaders including: formulating the school's aims; the appointment and management of staff; liaison with staff unions and associations; the determination, organisation and management of the curriculum; appraising, training and inducting staff; responsibility for standards in teaching and learning; developing effective relationships with the governing body, Local Authority (LA) and other organisations.

Second, with regards specifically to the role of the head, the National Standards for Headteachers (DfES, 2004) identify core professional leadership and management practices in six key areas. These apply to all phases and types of schools and are in turn subdivided into the knowledge, professional qualities (skills, dispositions and personal capabilities) and actions needed to achieve them (DfES, 2004, p4). These include:

- *Shaping the Future*: creating a shared vision and strategic plan for the school (in collaboration with governing body) that motivates staff and others in the community;
- *Leading Learning and Teaching*: raising the quality of teaching and learning and for pupils' achievement. This implies setting high expectations and monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of learning outcomes. A successful learning culture will enable pupils to become effective, enthusiastic, independent learners, committed to life-long learning;
- *Developing Self and Working with Others*: building effective relationships and building a professional learning community through performance management and effective professional development for staff;
- *Managing the Organisation*: improving organizational structures through self evaluation, organization and management of people and resources in order to build capacity across the workforce and deploy cost effective resources;
- *Securing Accountability*: heads are accountable to pupils, parents, carers, governors, the LA and the whole community to provide a high quality of

education for promoting collective responsibility within the whole school community and for contributing to the education service more widely;

- *Strengthening Community*: creating links and collaborating with other schools, parents, carers and other agencies to share expertise and ensure children's' well being.

Third, whilst not regulatory, the most recent guidance for primary headteachers and senior leaders from the Primary National Strategy (DfES, 2007) reinforces the use now being made at national level of syntheses of a range of evidence about effective leadership, stating unequivocally that:

> 'We know from a wealth of research that headteachers play a key role in effective schools. In the DfES publication, 'Making great progress', the following leadership characteristics have been identified following visits to primary schools where all children have consistently made higher than expected progress' (p. 6).

The ten characteristics identified are: i) heads see themselves as the headteacher; ii) Senior leaders are close to the learning; iii) heads retain their energy and enthusiasm; iv) an absolute and sustained focus on improving standards; v) established systems allow time to think and act strategically and innovatively; vi) a confident and assured style of leadership; vii) passion for order and thoroughness; viii) organising a team around functions rather than status; ix) the forging of strong, professional relationships; x) doing jobs that need to be done (p. 7).

Fourth, it is clear that England has a relatively decentralised education system with many leadership and management decisions taken at a school level. This is a direct consequence of the introduction of Local Management of Schools (LMS) in the Education Reform Act (1988) that allowed all schools to be taken out of the direct financial control of Local Authorities by devolving autonomy on resource allocation and priorities from Local Authorities to governors. It is significant that the majority of statutory responsibilities reside with the governing body. Indeed it is a distinctive feature of the English system that governing bodies, as opposed to local government (school district) and headteachers are invested through legislation with wide ranging powers and responsibilities. The DfES's Education Regulations (School Government, 2000) set out the regulatory framework of roles and responsibilities for headteachers and governing bodies. These include specific duties in relation to Budget, Staffing, Curriculum, Performance management, Target setting, Exclusions, Admissions, Religious Education, Collective Worship, Premises, School Organisation, Information for Parents and Governing Body procedures.

Finally, it is worth noting that a recent research study (PwC, 2007, p10) outlined six mains areas of responsibility for headteachers identified by themselves: accountability (time spend fulfilling the legal and other responsibilities of heads); strategy (setting the strategic ethos of the school and improvement planning); managing teaching and learning; staffing issues (including recruitment and staff's professional development); networking (with other schools and other appropriate organisations); and operations (the day to day management of the school).

1.2 Accountability Framework

However, whilst funding, leadership and management control were flowing to schools, this new autonomy coincided with a significant centralisation of decision

making over curriculum, assessment and accountability. Through the Education Reform Act (1988), the Government introduced:

- The National Curriculum, which made it compulsory for schools to teach certain subjects and syllabuses. Previously the choice of subjects had been up to the school;
- National curriculum assessments at the end of Key Stages 1 to 4 (ages 7, 11, 14 and 16 respectively) At Key Stage 4 (age 16), the assessments were made from the GCSE exam. A direct consequence has been the publication in newspapers of League tables showing performance statistics for each school;
- And then later, in 1992, the creation of Ofsted and a comprehensive programme for the inspection of all schools in England.

Schools leaders, and especially headers, are, therefore, held accountable for school performance through a highly developed national accountability framework. This framework includes individual target setting for each school, the publication of exam results and a national inspection regime where reports on the performance of individual schools are publicly available and parents are encouraged to examine these reports when choosing a school for their child. The considerable autonomy and control that school leaders have in some areas is thus linked to high levels of accountability and areas of national prescription.

More recently, the Government has committed to a New Relationship with Schools (NRWS) to reduce bureaucracy and data collection demands, and pave the way for; on the one hand, new flexibilities and "inspection holidays" for schools deemed to be outstanding whilst, on the other hand, for sharper intervention in schools judged to be unsatisfactory. However, whilst welcoming aspects of the NRWS, Head Associations have called for more intelligent accountability, more flexibility on staff pay and conditions and, in particular, 'more support and less pressure' for school leaders from national agencies, Ofsted and central Government (SHA, 2004).

1.3 The Challenges Facing School Leaders

In view of the breadth and depth of roles and responsibilities, there are a set of key contemporary challenges at the heart of school leadership. These include: ensuring consistently good teaching and learning; integrating a sound grasp of basic knowledge and skills within a broad and balanced curriculum; managing behaviour and attendance; strategically managing resources and the environment; building the school as a professional learning community; and developing partnerships beyond the school to encourage parental support for learning and new learning opportunities.

Within this context, there is also a set of specific contemporary challenges that stem, in particular, from the scale and complexity of agendas and more specifically from 'the changes associated with the juxtaposition between the ECM agenda, of the learning and standards agendas on the one hand, and the social and inclusion agendas on the other' (PwC, 2007, p161).   These include:

- *The synergy between standards and welfare*: the ECM agenda. School leaders are now asked to retain a rigorous focus on raising pupil attainment whilst at the same time leading improvements in provision that enables children to be safe, healthy, enjoy and achieve and make a positive contribution to society. The latter 'welfare agenda' includes the development of extended provision (including before and after school clubs) as well as the

co-organization of multi-agency children's services. This stems not only from concerns for child safety and protection, but also is an important strand in national approaches to tackle the pervasive impact of social, class on educational achievement. The creation of a new Department for Children, Schools and Families gives an increased emphasis on and voice to the every child matters agenda. Indeed, the new Secretary of State for DCSF has referred to his Department several times as "the Department for Every Child Matters". Enhancing learning and teaching is a key priority for school leadership. Trends towards personalizing education to individual student needs and interests, coupled with a greater responsibility for student welfare as part of the ECM agenda, represent real challenges for school leaders as they attempt to continue to raise school standards and offer a broad and balanced education. To meet these challenges, heads will increasingly be expected to:

- o Build professional learning communities within and beyond schools that develop and widen learning and teaching strategies to respond to a range of student learning needs;
- o Use the full innovative potential of workforce reform to deploy teachers, higher learning teaching assistants and other support staff to extend curricular and learning pathways (especially in 14-19 phase) and extend services before and after the school day;
- o Consider new models of leadership and governance to appropriately distribute an increasing range of responsibilities to a wider and differentiated pool of leadership expertise.

- *The drive to increasingly personalize the learning experience of students*. This demands, amongst other things, that leaders embed assessment for learning and the use of data on pupil achievement as whole school professional practices in the design of learning experiences that really stretch individual pupils;

- *The implementation of workforce reform*. From September 2005, under the national workforce agreement, schools were legally bound to introduce, for the first time, guaranteed professional (preparation) time for teachers at 10% of their teaching time. This is part of a broader reform to devolve administrative tasks from teachers to support staff, limit requirements on teachers to cover absent colleagues and achieve an overall reduction in workload and a reasonable work-life balance. The challenge for school leaders is to ensure that this supports broader school improvement or, at the very least, does not undermine stability;

- *The impetus for school diversity and parental choice*. Particularly in the secondary phase, the current Government has encouraged schools to diversify away from a common comprehensive school model towards a wide range of school types in terms of both curriculum (Specialist status) and governance (Trusts and Federations). This has been coupled with an explicit move to provide parents with greater choice in the school(s) they send their children to in terms of both admissions procedures and the construction of new schools (Academies). Both the diversity and choice agendas are seen by Government as drivers of improvement. The challenge for school leaders is to make sense of these initiatives at their local level, engaging with the broader system in a meaningful way whilst protecting their students, staff and school ethos from uncoordinated or even unnecessary change;

- *The progression of particular groups of students*. These include specific minority ethnic and social economic groups (including black boys and white students on free school meals); students with English as an additional Language (EAL) particularly in urban areas; students with the potential for high attainment so as to ensure there are really stretched and engaged; children with Special Educational Needs, particularly where they are moved

from special schools into mainstream schools (as part of the Government's Inclusion agenda). Progression pilots have just been launched in selected LAs;

- *The leadership of professional learning*. The leadership of professional learning will also include the development, management and strategic alignment to school priorities of networking and collaboration with other schools. There will also be a wider range of professionalisms in schools as pat of both the ongoing workforce reform, ECM and 14-19 agendas. For instance, extended schooling, multi-agency co-sited approaches to welfare and inclusion, financial management across federations, and widening 14-19 pathways will all bring new leadership challenges.

In addition to these specific challenges, school leaders are also faced with a range of other issues including: planning their own succession in the face of a potential shortage in the supply of leaders; staying abreast of and implementing curriculum and assessment changes across the Key Stages and 14-19; managing potential falls in student numbers in particular local areas; and also leading schools in challenging circumstances.

1.4 Collaborative Networks

Whatever the general and specific challenges facing the contemporary school head, the ability to work and lead beyond an individual school is of increasing importance. It is estimated that nearly all schools in England are involved in some form of collaborative activity or networking and many are involved in 4 or 5 partnerships (Hill, 2006). Indeed, a vast range of central initiatives have and continue to promote collaborative networks under the guiding theme of school improvement.

These have included:

- The Excellence in Cities programme which developed school partnerships and shared responsibility for, amongst other things, opportunities for gifted and talented students, City Learning Centres and Learning Mentors;
- The Leadership Incentive Grant, introduced in 2003, to strengthen school leadership in schools facing challenges through collaborative professional development and mentoring;
- Specialist school networks that share best practice in curriculum areas;
- The Leading Edge Programme that connects 200 high performing schools with 800 partners to share innovation in teaching and learning;
- The Networked Learning Communities (introduced in 2002) that brought groups of schools, LAs, Higher Education Institutions and the wider community together with the aim of raising standards and improving learning opportunities for pupils.

And more recently:

- The ECM agenda that is about closing the attainment gap, raising standards for all and keeping young people safe from harm, is one of the main drivers for school collaborating between schools and other organisations and agencies in order to ensure pupils' welfare. The role of the extended school is critical here;
- The 14-19 agenda that has also required schools to liaise mainly but not solely with FE colleges so as to expand schools' curricula offerings:

- The Primary Strategy Learning Networks (introduced in 2005) that encourage schools to work together in a particular area of learning aiming to improve standards in literacy and mathematics, the curriculum and performance;
- Education Improvement Partnerships (introduced in 2005) to formalize the devolution of defined delivery responsibilities and resources from a Local Authority to groups of schools working together for improvement (DfES, 2005);
- Federations that were introduced in the (Education Act, 2002). They allow for the creation of a single governing body or a joint governing body committee across two or more schools to provide the basis for schools to work together.

1.5 Conclusions

Finally, it will be clear from this brief synthesis of the English schools' policy context that the work of heads – and, therefore, their staff – is subject to a range of policy imperatives which, depending upon perspective, act as 'drivers', encouraging schools to improve through the challenges they offer or, for some, as 'hindrances', holding schools back from improvement because of the distractions from schools' internally identified improvement agendas which they are perceived to represent. These contexts need to be taken into account in any research into headteacher and school effectiveness, since they will inevitably colour the lenses through which they draw and undertake their work.

This interim report presents findings at the half way stage of the project which provides indicators for the direction of the final phase. These findings are based upon the combined analyses of i) a survey of heads and key staff from a nationally representative sample of primary and secondary schools that had increased their effectiveness, in terms of student progress and achievement, as measured by value added national test scores over at least a three year period between 2002 and 2005 under the leadership of the same headteacher; and ii) the first two rounds of interviews conducted in twenty case study schools.

The results of these two data sets will be framed within the critical policy context outlined in this chapter. They will also be related to the key findings of a comprehensive review of the international literature focused on the relationship between leadership and pupil learning outcomes. This review was conducted during the first year of the project and published in two forms by the DCSF and NCSL (Leithwood et al, 2006a; Leithwood et al, 2006b).

Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework

2.0 Aims

The aims of the study are to (i) establish how much variation in pupil outcomes (as measured by, for example, achievement, engagement, involvement, motivation) is accounted for by variation in the types qualities, strategies, skills and contexts of school leadership, in particular those of headteachers as 'leaders of leaders'; and (ii) to determine the relative strengths of the direct and indirect influences of school leadership, especially that of the headteacher, upon teachers and upon pupil outcomes. The study thus seeks to:

i) Collect and analyse attainment, attendance and behavioural data at a national level in order to explore the relationship between leadership and pupil outcomes;
ii) Collect evidence to identify and describe variations in effective leadership practice (types, qualities, strategies and skills) with a view to relating these changes to variations in conditions for pupil, teacher and organisational learning and outcomes;
iii) Explore to what extent variations in pupil outcomes is accounted for by variations in types, qualities, strategies, skills and contexts of leadership;
iv) Identify which influences significantly moderate the effects of leadership practice (e.g. trust, leadership, continuity) on both short and long term pupil outcomes;
v) Identify which influences (e.g. professional community, school improvement planning) significantly mediate the effects of leadership practice on a range of both short and long term pupil outcomes;
vi) Identify empirically-grounded direct and indirect causal and associative relationships between effective leadership and pupil outcomes;
vii) Provide robust, reliable data on i) to ii) which will inform the work of the Department for Education and Skills (DCSF), the National College for School Leadership (NCSL), local authorities (LAs), and schools.

2.1 Objectives

By the end of the research period, the research team will have:

1. Collected and analysed attainment, attendance and behaviour data in improving schools at a national level over time in order to explore the relationship between leadership and pupil outcomes;
2. Identified and described key characteristics (types, qualities, strategies and skills) of leadership practice and related these to existing literature and theories of leadership;
3. Explored the key indicators of leadership practice that are most closely associated with improving pupil outcomes;
4. Investigated whether different forms of leadership practice vary in the nature and/or magnitude of their impact;
5. Identified the influence school context has on the nature, characteristics and practices of effective leadership;
6. Identified which influences significantly moderate the effects of leadership on pupil outcomes;

7. Investigated whether, and to what extent, the impact of different forms and levels of leadership are moderated by different influences;
8. Identified which influences significantly mediate the effects of leadership on pupil outcomes;
9. Investigated whether, and to what extent, the impact of different forms of leadership are mediated by different influences;
10. Identified and mapped empirically-grounded direct and indirect causal and associative relationships between effective leadership and pupil outcomes.

2.2   Research Knowledge Of Successful Headship

An initial review of the literature was used to inform the design of the project. The first phase of the research involved a further detailed literature review of the international literature on leadership and pupil outcomes by the team (Leithwood et al, 2006a).   This review was used also to inform the development of questionnaire surveys of headteachers and key staff and interview schedules in twenty case studies. The research seeks to test and refine existing models of school leadership as far as they can demonstrate an impact on pupil outcomes. Such models are common across contexts in their general form but likely to be highly adaptable and contingent in their specific enactment. As Ray, Clegg and Gordon (2004) explain, leadership is a "reflexively automatic" activity and such activity is never unaffected by context.

2.2.1 Seven strong claims
The literature review revealed that it is possible to make seven strong claims about successful school leadership on the basis of the empirical evidence base:

1. School leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on pupil learning;
2. Almost all successful leaders draw on the same repertoire of basic leadership practices;
3. The ways in which leaders apply these basic leadership practices – not the practices themselves – demonstrate responsiveness to, rather than dictation by, the contexts in which they work;
4. School leaders improve teaching and learning indirectly and most powerfully through their influence on staff motivation, commitment and working conditions;
5. School leadership has a greater influence on schools and students when it is widely distributed;
6. Some patterns of distribution are more effective than others.
7. A small handful of personal traits explains a high proportion of the variation in leadership effectiveness.

(Leithwood et al, 2006b)

Comparative research has shown that successful heads respond to but are not dictated or constrained by context in their work. They may be said to be highly skilled diagnosticians, culturally responsive, able to combine clusters of skills and strategies; and they are highly adept in working with a range of key stakeholders from outside their school for its benefit (Day and Leithwood, 2007).

Research and inspection evidence consistently shows that successful headteachers "build vision and set directions". They create a compelling sense of purpose in their organizations, by developing a shared vision of the future, helping build consensus about relevant short-term goals and demonstrating high expectations for colleagues' work (Day et al, 2000). Effective headteachers engage in "understanding and developing people" by combining differentiated

support for individual colleagues' ideas and initiatives, with intellectual stimulation (e.g., reflect on existing practices, question taken-for-granted assumptions and consider new practices) and modelling important values and practices ("walk the talk"). In terms of "redesigning and reculturing the organisation", leadership practices include building a collaborative school culture, creating structures and cultures which encourage participation in decision-making, and building productive relationships with parents and the wider community.

These leadership practices, along with others, are claimed to be most effective when they are widely distributed across the organisation (Bell et al, 2003). Where leadership is stretched across those in many formal and informal leadership positions there is greater potential for organisational growth and change (Spillane et al, 2001: 8; Harris, 2007). Finally, successful heads work directly to improve teaching and learning by, for example, monitoring pupil progress, hiring (with governors) skilled staff, buffering staff from external distractions, aligning resources with teaching and learning priorities, and, in many instances, modelling good practice through their own contribution to leading in the school or classroom. Other research suggests that empathy and emotional understanding of self and others also play a powerful role in sustaining leadership success (Goleman et al, 2002; Sugrue et al, 2004; Day and Leithwood, 2007). These are solid, empirically tested and credible factors.

2.3 Relationships Between Factors Giving Rise To Successful School Headship

Figure 2.1, adapted from Leithwood and Levin (2005), is the framework which provided an initial tool for thinking about the different variables or influences on and by headteachers. It suggests that successful leadership practices, the independent variables in the framework, develop and emerge through the influence of antecedent variables. Those leadership behaviours or practices, in turn, have direct effects potentially on a wide range of other variables. Some of those variables moderate (enhance or mute) leadership effects, whilst others 'link" or mediate leadership practices to pupils and their learning, the dependent variables in the study.

Figure 2.1: A framework to guide research on leadership effects
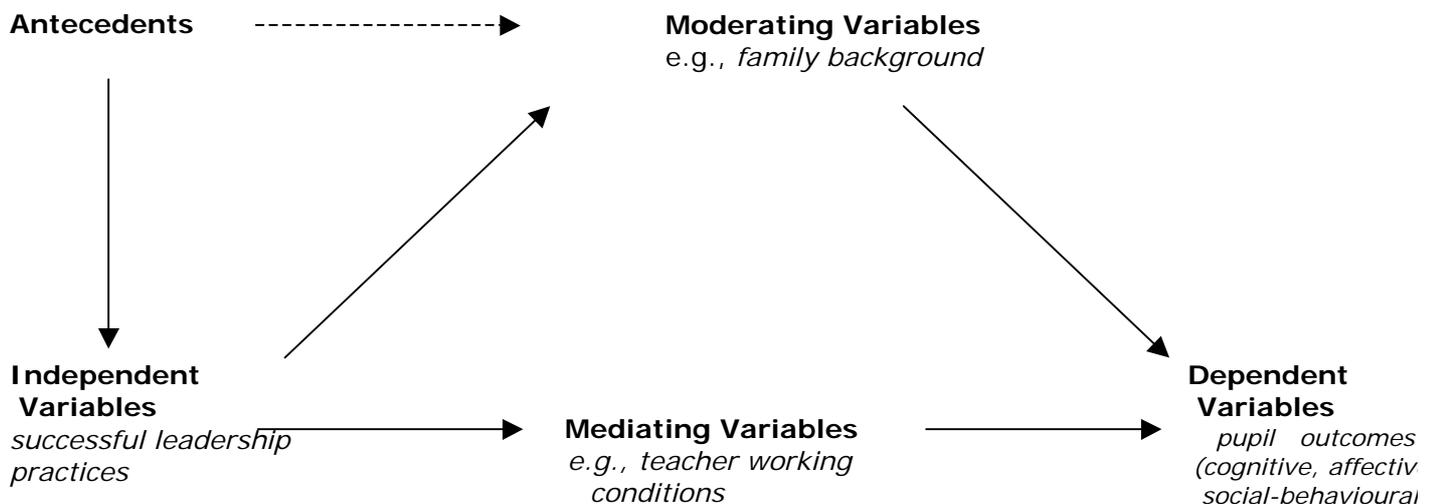
The roots or antecedents of successful school leadership could include, for example, on-the-job learning, professional development experiences, socialization processes and individual traits. These are variables which are both internal to leaders, and are features of their external environments.

2.3.1 Internal antecedents

Teacher working conditions, their effects on teachers' internal states which are fundamental to sustaining good teaching (e.g., efficacy, commitment, identity, resilience, agency, trust, pedagogical content knowledge) and the consequences of such states for teachers' classroom performance, are among the most promising mediators for inclusion in leadership effects research because they are so powerfully and closely related to pupil learning (e.g. Day et al, 2004; Leithwood, 2005; Bryk and Schneider, 2003; Day et al, 2007).

School leadership research has yet to devote much energy to the study of leaders' internal lives, with the exception of their values (e.g., Begley and Johansson, 2003; Sugrue et al, 2004), and cognitive processes (e.g. Leithwood and Steinbach, 1995). Evidence gathered in non-school contexts suggests the need to remedy this oversight and points to the importance of leaders' motivations, self-efficacy beliefs, capacities and such personality characteristics as optimism and openness (Popper and Mayseless, 2002); this evidence also points to the value of greater attention to leaders' emotional sensitivity (Beatty, 2004; Day, 2004; Wong and Law, 2002; Day and Leithwood, 2007). The recent development of a typology of attributes of successful headteachers for urban leadership, derived from the study, includes the affective domain (NCSL, 2004).

2.3.2 External antecedents

Among the most influential external antecedents of successful heads are the policy and professional contexts in which they work. For many years, school leaders in England and Wales have worked in a 'results-driven' policy context which holds schools more publicly accountable for their performance. Some evidence internationally suggests that successful leaders in such policy contexts are now less consumed with worries over the sometimes negative steering effects of these and other accountability initiatives - reduced autonomy and public naming through publication of league tables, for example - and are more intent on harnessing government accountability initiatives to their own school's priorities and broader educational values (Day and Leithwood, 2007). A large proportion of the successful heads in two recent small scale studies, for example, used external demands for greater accountability as a tool for overcoming longstanding resistance to change on the part of small numbers of their teachers (Giles et al, 2007; Belchetz and Leithwood, 2007).

School phase (e.g., primary, secondary), school size, location (e.g., urban, rural), status of school (e.g., specialist school), type (government vs. catholic) are all plausible influences on the emergence of successful school leadership but have not been the subject of significant inquiry. Evidence about other antecedents of school leadership is modest, at best. A very restricted range of variables has been explored and there is little accumulation of evidence about any of those variables that have been studied. This neglect of attention to external antecedents is surprising since a great deal of the educational leadership literature claims that the context in which leaders work is of enormous importance in determining what they do. But such claims typically have prompted research about leadership in one context at a time - for example, whole school reform (e.g., Brooks, Scribner, and Eferakorho, 2004), technology (Anderson and Dexter, 2005), minority pupil populations (e.g., Riehl, 2002), and social justice (Shields, 2004).

These "one-context-at-a-time" studies tell us little about how variations in context

are related to variations in leadership practices, the kind of evidence that is needed if we are to become clearer about the antecedents of school leadership and the importance of their broader influence across different kinds of schools.

2.3.3 Variables mediating successful leadership effects
The indirect nature of a high proportion of school leadership effects on pupils has prompted research about those variables or conditions in classrooms and schools that (a) are open to significant influence by those in leadership roles and (b) produce demonstrable improvements in pupil learning. Evidence has identified both school and classroom variables that fit this description. Some of these classroom variables include: time on task (Smyth, 1987); quality of instruction/instructional climate (Biddle and Dunkin, 1987); a curriculum rich in ideas and engaging for pupils (Brophy, n.d.); safe and orderly climate (Teddlie and Stringfield, 1993); staff participation in school-wide decision making (e.g., Conley, 1991); school culture (Deal, 2005); teacher commitment: (Dannetta, 2002; Day et al, 2007); collective teacher efficacy (Goddard, Hoy, and Hoy, 2000); sense of professional community (Louis and Kruse, 1995); organizational learning processes (Silins and Mulford, 2004); school goals (Hallinger and Heck, 1996); teacher capacity and experience (Glass, 2002) and; procedures for monitoring pupil progress (Walberg, 1984). The DfES funded four year longitudinal VITAE research also identified the positive effects of school leadership, colleagues and culture on teachers' long-term commitment and effectiveness (Day et al, 2006b).

2.3.4 Moderators of successful leadership
Moderating variables are features of the organizational or wider social context in which leaders' work; they interact with the dependent and/or mediating variables, potentially changing the strength or nature of relationships (depress, neutralize, or enhance) between, for example, the independent and mediating variables or the mediating and dependent variables (Baron and Kenny, 1986). The same leadership behaviours may have quite different effects on teachers, for example, depending upon an individual teacher's gender, age, amount of experience or levels of stress; so these become promising moderators.

Examples of research identifying moderators of school leadership effects include Hallinger, Bickman and Davis (2000) on pupil background factors; Louis and Miles (1990) on school location; Howley (2002) on school size; Tyler and Degoey (1996) on levels of trust; and Bryk et al (1984) on public vs. private schools. In their review, Leithwood and Jantzi (2005) found a consistent pattern of results suggesting that leadership effects can be enhanced or augmented by higher levels of prior pupil achievement, family educational culture, organizational culture, shared school goals, and coherent plans and policies.

The majority of school leadership studies, however, do not provide a theoretical rationale for their choice of moderators. Nor do they examine the extent to which variation in a selected moderator enhances or mutes leadership effects. Rather, evidence about these variables is treated more as background, as a means of ensuring similarity of schools on a key variable or as a means of ensuring that the schools included in the research represent the full range of states on each variable. Recent exceptions to this are research in England which evaluated the effects of a government project in England designed to assist the improvement of eight secondary schools who were previously unsuccessful (MacBeath et al, 2007; Harris et al, 2006) and a longitudinal eight country project on successful school principalship (Day and Leithwood, 2007). Understandings of school leadership effects would be much improved by further research inquiring about the consequences of variation in the status of theoretically defensible sets of moderators.

2.3.5 Independent variables: pupil outcomes

A significant proportion of research about leadership effects on students is limited to measures of student numeracy and literacy outcomes. A small number of additional studies (e.g., Silins and Mulford, 2002; Leithwood and Jantzi, 1999) also have examined the effects of school leadership on student participation and identification with school. Other useful indicators of student outcomes include attendance rates, retention rates, successful entry into tertiary education and productive employment. Because so much of the leadership effects literature has focused narrowly on a small but critical set of academic outcomes, it is important for future research to include but extend its measures of pupil outcomes to other indicators of this sort. This research attempts to do this and the next chapter outlines the project's design and organisation.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Organisation

3.0 The Organisation Of The Research

The research is divided into three related but overlapping phases. These three phases illustrate the mixed methods approach to the research design where both the qualitative and quantitative components are given equal weight. In addition, the findings from different phases contribute to the development of the research instruments through an iterative process of analysis, hypothesis generation, testing and, ultimately, the synthesis of findings (see Table 3.1):

Table 3.1: An overview of phases of activity

	Activity	Time
Phase One	- Review of the relevant literature - Contact researchers on related projects - Production of Literature Survey Report - Analysis of national datasets, using Fischer Family Trust (FFT) indicators to identify highly improved and highly effective schools - Identification of a sample of these for a questionnaire to headteachers and key staff of a nationally representative sample of improved schools - Design of research instruments - Recruitment of 20 headteachers and key staff for case study schools - Administration of questionnaire (wave 1) - Analysis of questionnaire data (wave 1) Production of initial report of survey analysis - Integration of emerging qualitative (round 1 and 2) with phase 1 analysis - Interim Report production	January 2006 – August 2007 August 2007
Phase Two	- Year 2 data collection in case study schools (rounds 4-6 of case study visits) - Final analysis of Year 1 data (rounds 1-3) - Further analysis of Wave 1 questionnaire data (SEM) - Design and administration of questionnaire (Wave 2) - Analysis of questionnaire data (Wave 2) and SEM - Analysis of Case Study Year 2 data (rounds 4-6)	September 2007 November 2007 - January 2008 March – August 2008
Phase Three	- Integration of Year 1 and 2 quantitative and qualitative data - Final report	September 2008 – January 2009 January 2009

Phase One (January 2006 – August 2007):

Building on previous and current research – An international review of literature relevant to the aims and objectives of the research was conducted involving clear parameters for the selection of material along with criteria that sought to ensure that only the most robust findings were included. Two versions of this were published by DCSF and NCSL. The review is ongoing and will be updated as the project progresses to take account of new work in the field. The review findings informed the design of a 'first wave' survey of a nationally representative sample of improving schools and the development of the theoretical and conceptual framework for the research.

Data collection, analysis and reporting – this involved the design, administration and analysis of a questionnaire survey and the analysis of data from case study visits in each of twenty primary and secondary schools. In-depth interviews were conducted with headteachers, key staff, colleagues and Governors. The results of Phase One are presented in this Report. (Interviews with staff take place at times suitable to the school in order to minimise any additional burdens on them).

Phase Two (September 2007 – August 2008):

During this period, further visits to schools will be conducted with the interview and data collection designed to probe further the results of Phase One. Additionally, a second wave questionnaire and a researcher-administered pupil attitudinal survey will be implemented.

Phase Three (September 2008 – January 2009):

This phase will comprise of the integration of different forms of data, structural equation modelling (SEM), and the development of new theoretical models of relationships between leadership, particularly the leadership of the head, and pupil outcomes.

3.1 Sampling

3.1.1 Questionnaires to headteachers and key staff

Questionnaires were sent initially to the heads of 752[6] primary and 839[7] secondary schools, and distributed to a maximum of five key staff in each of the secondary schools (N=7000+). The key staff were Key Stage 1 and 2 managers in primary schools and the heads of five departments (maths, English, science, arts and humanities) in secondary schools. (For achieved sample size, see Tables 3.3 – 3.5 on page 18.

An analysis of national datasets from the Fischer Family Trust (FFT) DfES and Ofsted was conducted during Phase One of the study. This data informed the selection of schools to be surveyed. Three groups of schools were chosen on the basis of: (i) measured value-added sustained improvement in pupil outcomes over at least a three year period prior to the start of the project (i.e. ranging from low to medium, medium to high and sustained high improvement; and, (ii) presence of the same head over the same period. Key staff were chosen on the basis of (i) their role in the management of measured improvement in pupil outcomes; and, (ii) presence in the school for at least a three year period. This enabled the tracking of improvement, as well as allowing a comparison to be made with the preceding state of the school. In addition, heads, key staff and

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[6] Original sample size was 752, but 6 schools were amalgamated.
[7] Original sample size was 839, but 1 school was amalgamated.

schools represented a range of:

- Professional life phases, age groups and gender;
- Socio-economic contexts of schools (from high through to low quartiles based on free school meal indicators);
- School phase (primary and secondary);
- Types of school (rural, urban, etc);
- School size (small, average or large for sector).

3.1.2 Selection of Case Study Schools

The case study sites were selected to represent different contexts, including different levels of advantage and disadvantage, and ethnic diversity. More improved schools from disadvantaged contexts were included in the case study phase to reflect the policy interest in raising standards in schools facing challenging circumstances.

Figure 3.1: Summary of sampling

Analysis of national value added models and linkage with Ofsted inspection data to explore links between leadership and pupil outcomes

Selection of representative sample of 1584 improving or high performing schools in terms of value added and inspection data, pupil attainment, leadership equity, rural/urban/mixed, low/typical/high socio-economic status

Questionnaire to headteachers and keystaff Selection of 20 case study schools

PRIMARY SAMPLE
Headteachers = 10
Key staff = 20
Colleagues = 60
Pupils = 600

SECONDARY SAMPLE
Headteachers = 10
Key staff = 50
Colleagues = 60
Pupils = 600

Headteacher interviews, Key staff interviews, Colleague interviews, collection of attainment, attendance and behaviour data, headteacher observations

Pupil attitudinal questionnaire

The range of data types, their accumulation over a two year period and the sample sizes included in the project afford the possibility of a powerful variety of data analyses that can be applied progressively over the stages of the project to inform its goals of both description and explanation. The availability of various forms of data reinforces reliability and validity within the study. The inclusion of the case study headteachers and key staff within the survey sample allows cross- or between-method triangulation techniques to ascertain (for example) the extent to which the case study heads were representative or typical of the larger group of survey respondents according to a range of potential indicators.

3.2 Methods Of Data Collection

The complexity of the area of study warranted a mixed method approach involving a range of research techniques, including approaches traditionally associated with both 'quantitative' and 'qualitative' paradigms. Mixed methods designs (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003; Cresswell, 2003) offer significant advantages through the conceptual and methodological synergy of case studies and qualitative data gathering and analysis with quantitative (affective, social behavioural and cognitive) measures (e.g. Sammons et al, 2005; Day et al, 2006a). A key feature of the research strategy is a series of extended research team meetings to facilitate the analyses of different data sets and the integration of data and development of emerging hypotheses.

3.2.1 Collection and analysis of attainment, attendance and behaviour data at national level

The availability of national datasets from SSAT, FFT, DfES and Ofsted provide a vital resource to the study of leadership effects and enhances the cost effectiveness of the research. The SSAT, FFT and Ofsted have provided data to support this aspect of the research. The team has accessed national databases (particularly FFT and DCSF value added and attainment indicators, PLASC data about pupil intakes and Ofsted inspection data on leadership of heads and other staff) to explore the patterns between measures of effectiveness and leadership and management. These data have been used to ensure that the sample of 1500+ survey schools covered a range of effectiveness features and leadership.

3.2.2 Selection criteria

These included:
- Combined absolute improvement in pupil attainment levels across three years (2003-2005) in key indicators of attainment (%pupils 5A*-C at GCSE for secondary schools; % level4+ in English and maths at KS2 for primary schools);
- Significant improvement in value added results for pupil progress using contextualised VA models and simple VA models identified by FFT analyses for three years (2003-2005) or Stable high effective schools in VA terms;
- No recorded change of headteacher 2003-2005;
- The level of social disadvantage of the pupil intake (by FSM band).

Three groups of primary and secondary schools were identified: Significantly improved from low to moderate, from moderate to high, and stable high effective. Table 3.2 below shows primary and secondary samples by FSM band.

Table 3.2: Primary and Secondary Samples by FSM Band

FSM Band	Primary Sample (N)	Percent (%)	Secondary Sample (N)	Percent (%)
FSM 1 (0-8%)	225	30	316	38
FSM 2 (9-20%)	180	24	280	33
FSM 3 (21-35%)	163	22	124	15
FSM 4 (36%+)	184	24	119	14
Total	752	100	839	100

3.2.3 Administration of survey and response rates

The initial questionnaire survey was conducted in summer 2006. The response rate to the survey initially achieved was approximately 19% for both the primary and secondary head teacher sample. A re-survey of non-respondents of the original sample and other schools that met the criteria but were not included in the original sample was carried out in January 2007. Strategies included: personal telephone calls; emails; and postal contact with the offer of a visit if preferred. Though time consuming, these proved very successful

The headteacher response rate to the questionnaire survey increased from approximately 19% for both the primary and secondary headteacher sample to 24% primary and 32% secondary of a larger group. The total sample size surveyed is shown in Tables 3.3 – 3.5 below. Additional questionnaires received have been incorporated into subsequent analyses. Tables 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 summarise the response rates for headteacher and key Staff questionnaire surveys.

Table 3.3: Survey Response Rate (Headteachers)

	Sample Size Surveyed N	Returned Headteacher Questionnaires N	Response Rate %
Primary	1,550	378	24
Secondary	1,140	362	32

Table 3.4: Survey Response Rate (Key Staff at School Level)

	Sample Size Surveyed N	Schools with Returned Key Staff Questionnaires N	Response Rate %
Primary	1,550	409	26
Secondary	1,140	393	34

Table 3.5: Survey Response Rate (Key Staff at Questionnaire Level)

	Sample Size Surveyed* N	Returned Key Staff Questionnaires N	Response Rate %
Primary	3,100	608	20
Secondary	5,700	1167	20

*Schools were sent 2 forms for key staff in primary schools and 5 for Head of Department in secondary schools.

An important consideration is whether the later time of the follow-up survey and additional means of contact might affect the results of the survey. We compared the findings from the initial response groups with those achieved in the final response sample. Interestingly, the pattern of responses for the two groups

(initial and final) are very similar and thus we have a fair degree of confidence that the two samples are comparable. We, therefore, report results in the final responses achieved. The larger numbers also give increased confidence about the ability to distinguish sub groups for schools.

3.2.4 Questionnaire survey of a representative sample of high performing and improved schools

A self-completed questionnaire survey was sent to 839 secondary and 752 primary headteachers in England (April 2006) in a selection of LAs in England.
The questionnaire was informed by an initial review of relevant literature to gain information regarding (for example) headteachers':

- Attitudes towards leadership;
- Reasons / motivation for becoming a school leader;
- Levels of commitment, motivation, job satisfaction;
- Views on formal and informal preparation for their posts;
- Headteachers' assessment of their own leadership behaviour;
- Headteacher leadership strategies.

The instrument was piloted with a number of headteachers and the wording of some items revised prior to the main survey. Responses to this questionnaire were used:

1. To identify groups of headteachers within a range of schools who were prepared to take part in the main body of the research that would eventually involve a representative sample of 20 headteachers;
2. To establish, in conjunction with a review of relevant literature, key conditions and factors which headteachers currently perceive to affect their ability to impact upon pupil learning and achievement;
3. With the case study data to contribute to the development of an empirically based analytical framework for interpreting the effects of leadership on pupil outcomes.

3.2.5 Questionnaire survey of key staff

During Phase One of the study, a self-completed questionnaire survey was sent also to key staff working in the same schools as the sample headteachers. Key staff were defined as either (i) Key Stage managers/leaders in primary schools; and, (ii) Heads of Department (maths, English, science, arts and humanities) in secondary schools.

As with the headteacher questionnaire, this instrument was informed by an initial review of relevant literature and focused on a number of key areas:

- Reasons for becoming a leader;
- Leadership values, beliefs, qualities;
- Leadership strategies;
- Impact of leadership;
- Forms of leadership practice;
- Motivation, commitment, job satisfaction.

The instrument was piloted with a number of Key Stage leaders and Heads of Department and the wording of some items revised prior to the main survey.

Responses to this questionnaire were used for three main reasons:

1. To identify key staff who were prepared to take part in the case study element of the research;

2. To establish, in conjunction with a review of relevant literature, key conditions and factors which key staff perceive to currently affect their ability to impact upon pupil learning and achievement;
3. With case study data, to contribute to the development of an empirically based analytical framework for interpreting the effects of leadership on pupil outcomes.

The surveys are being used to explore underlying dimensions of leadership and the survey data interacts with in-depth, case study research involving multiple methods of data collection (described below). A further 'wave 2' survey will be used in Phase Two as a means of testing hypotheses generated by the combined analyses of the quantitative and qualitative data in Phase One of the research.

3.3 Case Studies

A sample of 20 headteachers and key staff was recruited to the study with a range of experience and from a range of schools in different FSM groupings. Their views and illustrations of their situations and practices are being collected, via visits to schools, across a two year-period.

3.3.1 In-depth interviews with case study headteachers and key staff
These face-to-face interviews allow 'case study' participants to speak at greater length about those issues which are most significant to them in relation to the research aims and objectives. There are specific questions and prompts relating to issues of values, strategies and skills of leadership, moderating factors (e.g. pupil background, school location, school size, organisational culture, etc), and mediating factors (e.g. teaching and learning classroom climate, pupil engagement, staff participation in decision-making, teacher commitment.)

3.3.2 Interviews with colleagues
Interviews with other colleagues in the school provide insights, outside the formal school leadership, into perceptions of the nature and impact of the practice and effectiveness of participating headteachers and key staff, and the role of school (and departmental) leadership, including the involvement of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and middle managers (e.g. Key Stage Leaders). In order to achieve this, a minimum of four to six colleagues are interviewed in addition to the participant key staff, once in each of the two years of data collection:

• A member of non-teaching staff;
• A member of teaching staff;
• A developing leader;
• A member of the SLT;
• A member of middle-management; and, the Chair of Governors or a parent governor.

3.3.3 Attitudinal survey of a sample of pupils
In addition to the collection and analysis of pupils' cognitive outcomes (from Key Stage tests) approximately 30 pupils in each of the schools participating in the case studies are selected in order to provide perspectives on the behaviour, relationships, and achievement culture of the school and/or department, and their perceptions of the headteacher/key staff role(s) in this.

The questionnaire was informed by the initial review of literature and reviews of previous pupil survey instruments e.g. PISA (OECD, 2005), RAPA (Levacic, 2002; Malmberg, 2002) projects. The instrument provides:

- Examples of social and affective outcomes of pupil learning;
- Evidence of the relationships between leadership and pupils' perceptions of school and classroom climate;
- Evidence of the relationships between leadership and pupils' perceptions of school and classroom conditions;
- Evidence of student engagement and identification with school.

3.4 The Relationships Between Research Aims, Methods and Outcomes

Table 3.6 provides a summary of the relationship between the research aims, methods of data collection and outcomes.

Table 3.6: Summary of relationships between research aims, methods and outcomes

Research aim	Method of data collection	Outcome
(i) collect and analyse attainment, behaviour and attendance data at national level in order to explore the relationship between leadership and pupil outcomes *Research Question 1: what does the analysis of attainment, behaviour and attendance data at a national level tell us about effectiveness features and leadership of schools?*	Collection of pupil attainment attendance and behaviour data School Ofsted data	Identification of key quantitative indicators of effective schools and associations with leadership judgements
(ii) collect evidence to identify and describe variations in effective leadership practice (types, qualities, strategies and skills) with a view to relating these changes to variations in pupil, teacher and organisational outcomes *Research Question 2: what are the variations in effective leadership practices in schools in different phases, in different socio-economic contexts and with differential effectiveness?*	Interviews with headteachers Interviews with colleagues Observation in school (and classes) School Ofsted data Pupil attitudinal survey E-journals	Summary and synthesis of effective leadership practices in a variety of schools
(iii) explore to what extent variation in pupil outcomes is accounted for by variations in types, qualities, strategies and skills of leadership *Research Question 3: how much variation in pupil outcomes is accounted for by variations in types, qualities, strategies and skills of leadership?*	Interviews with headteachers Interviews with colleagues Collection of pupil attainment attendance and behaviour data School Ofsted data Pupil attitudinal survey	Mapping of relationships between variations in qualities, strategies and skills of leadership and their impact on pupil outcomes
(iv) identify which variables significantly moderate the effects of leadership practice on both short and long term pupil outcomes *Research Question 4: which variables significantly moderate the effects of leadership on both short and long term pupil outcomes?*	Headteacher questionnaire Interviews with headteachers Interviews with colleagues Collection of pupil attainment attendance and behaviour data	Mapping the variables that significantly moderate the effects of leadership in different contexts on both short and long term pupil outcomes

	School Ofsted data Pupil attitudinal survey Collection of data on neighbourhood contexts	
(v) identify which variables significantly mediate the effects of leadership practices on both short and long term pupil outcomes *Research Question 5: which variables significantly mediate the effects of leadership on both short and long term pupil outcomes?*	Headteacher questionnaire Interviews with headteachers Interview with colleagues Collection of pupil attainment attendance and behaviour data	Mapping the variables that significantly mediate the effects of leadership in different contexts on both short and long term pupil outcomes
(vi) identify empirically-grounded direct and indirect causal relationships between effective leadership and pupil outcomes *Research Question 6: what kinds of causal relationships exist between effective leadership and pupil outcomes?*	Outcomes from (i) – (v)	Development of a single, coherent model of direct and indirect causal relationships between effective school leadership and pupil outcomes
(vii) provide guidance on this relationship that will inform the work of the DfES, the National College for School Leadership (NCSL), local education authorities (LAs), and schools *Research Question 7: how can findings inform work of NCSL, LEAs and schools, and suggest foci for subsequent fieldwork?*	Headteacher questionnaire Interviews with headteachers Interview with colleagues Pupil attitudinal survey	Production of a final report for DfES

3.5 Conclusions

This chapter has provided an overview of the research conceptual framework, design and organisation for this large scale mixed method study which focuses upon the impact of school leadership on pupil outcomes. It has outlined the way quantitative and qualitative data collection methods and analyses are being used to identify associations between leadership, especially headteacher leadership, and pupil outcomes in effective and improving schools. This mixed methods approach was designed to enable a sufficient and appropriate range of data about leadership and leadership practices to be collected and analysed so that a coherent, empirically derived and theoretically robust model of direct and indirect causal and associative relationships between effective school leadership and pupil outcomes can be developed.

Part 2 of this Report provides emerging findings from the research so far and key messages related to their implications for policy and practice.

Part 2: Emergent Findings: Linking Qualitative and Quantitative Analyses

Chapters 4 to 8 present the emerging findings from the research based on two sources of data. The first is a questionnaire survey (wave 1) carried out between July 2006 and January 2007 with headteachers and key staff in a purposive sample of primary and secondary schools across England[8]. The second source of data has been gathered via face-to-face interviews with headteachers (N=20), key staff (N=70) and colleagues (N=80) in 20 case study schools (10 primary and 10 secondary) located in different geographical and socio-economic contexts. In both the questionnaire survey and case studies all of the schools were identified as highly improved and effective, or stable highly effective, based on analyses of national assessment and GCSE results over three years (2003-2005) and data obtained from the Fischer-Family Trust. Each Chapter includes a brief summary of messages derived from the analyses. In addition, Chapter 9 provides an overview of the emerging findings and key messages.

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[8] The achieved survey sample was representing, primary N = 378 heads, 608 key staff, and secondary N = 362 heads, 1167 key staff.

Chapter 4: Leadership In Improving And Effective Schools: Broadening Participation and Distributing Leadership

4.0 Introduction

Both the case studies and the surveys have provided a wealth of complementary data relating to a number of key issues about the role, characteristics and strategies of leadership in improving and effective schools, and they have begun to point to associations between these and improvements in pupils' achievements. In this chapter we combine quantitative and qualitative data to illustrate findings concerning the indirect influence of headteachers' leadership on improved pupil outcomes through broadening participation and distributing leadership. The survey questions were derived from the review of the literature on successful headship; and the findings from the survey largely reinforce the broader literature. However, there are interesting differences in respondents' perceptions to the survey demonstrated between school sectors (primary and secondary); between headteachers' experience levels (years in current post and total years of headship); and between school SES contexts based upon level of social disadvantage. For the case studies only sector differences have been investigated at this stage (future qualitative analyses will address other aspects in the final report).

The survey questions asked headteachers and key staff to report on the extent of changes in different aspects of school activity and practice over the last three years. This period was chosen to coincide with the years for which the earlier analysis of improvement in pupil attainment outcomes had taken place which identified the survey sample of schools. While surveys inevitably capture respondents' perceptions of change (in line with the qualitative interviews that also access participants' perceptions) we also have a baseline of the initial level of attainment for a school to relate to perceptions of change in the quantitative analyses. This enables us to examine perceptions of change in relation to school improvement group and these results are described in detail in Chapter 8.

4.1 School Improvement: Widening Participation In Decision Making

Over half of primary heads (N=192, 51%) reported "a lot" of change in response to the question that asked them about their emphasis on "helping clarify the reasons for their school's improvement initiatives" over the past three years, whereas less than half of secondary heads (N=151, 42%) reported change to such a degree. In a smaller minority of cases the extent of change was identified as 'very significant' in this area (here the proportions for primary and secondary heads were similar at 14% and 16% respectively). More than 90% of key staff agreed moderately/strongly with the item that asked about the extent to which their headteacher helps clarify the reasons for their school's improvement initiatives; and primary key staff (N=457, 75%) were more likely to agree strongly than secondary key staff (N=698, 60%). This sector difference was statistically significant (p<0.001).

Somewhat more primary than secondary heads felt that "a lot" or " very significant" change had occurred over the past three years in their leadership practice in relation to widening participation in decisions about school improvement (Primary: N=143, 38%; Secondary: N=128, 36% reported "a lot", while N=51, 14% primary and N=30, 9% reported "very significant" change in widening participation). When key staff were asked whether their headteacher ensured wide participation in decisions about school improvement, primary key staff were more likely (N=333, 55%) to agree moderately/strongly than their secondary counterparts (N=433, 37%). This variation was statistically significant (p<0.001) (Figure 4.1).

Overall, key staff from highly disadvantaged schools (FSM Band 4) were more likely to agree that their headteacher ensured wide participation in decisions about school improvement than staff from low disadvantage contexts (FSM Band 1) (p<0.01). This difference was largely due to differences in responses amongst key staff in secondary schools. Heads of department from highly disadvantaged secondary schools were more likely to agree strongly that their head helped clarify the reasons for their school improvement initiatives and that their head ensured wide participation in decisions about school improvement than those from less disadvantaged schools. (p<0.01).

In total, 48% (N=181) of primary heads and 44% (N=154) of secondary heads reported "a lot" or "very significant" change in increasing dialogue between adults and pupils about school improvement over the last three years, in contrast to only 4% (N=16) of primary heads and 7% (N=23) of secondary heads who reported "not at all" or "very little" change. Key staff were also asked whether the headteacher had increased the dialogue about school improvement between pupils and adults. In total, 78% primary key stage managers agreed moderately/strongly compared with 69% of secondary key staff and this sector difference was statistically significant(p<0.001).

Figure 4.1: Differences between primary and secondary staff perceptions of the headteacher's leadership practice in relation to ensuring wide participation in decisions about school improvement

	Disagree strongly/moderately/slightl	Agree slightly	Agree moderately	Agree strongly
■ Primary	3%	7%	35%	55%
□ Secondary	12%	17%	33%	37%
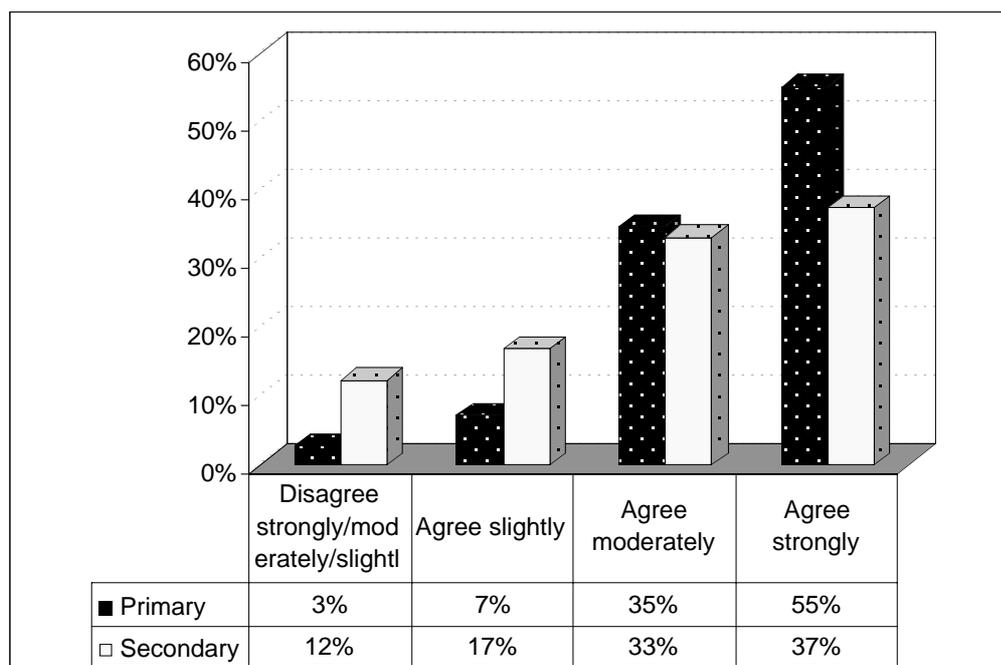
4.2 Widening Participation: Differences related to Heads' years of experience in school

4.2.1 Clarifying reasons
There were several significant differences identified in heads' responses to the survey that related to their length of experience as a head in the current school for the secondary sample. These included responses to the item on changes in the emphasis they gave to 'helping clarify the reasons for their schools' improvement initiatives' ($p<0.05$) and 'ensuring wide participation in decisions about school improvement' ($p<0.05$). We found that more experienced heads tended to report less change in their emphasis on these two areas over the last three years (Figures 4.2 and 4.3). Such heads may have effected more change earlier in their time in the school, and, having achieved improvements, may have been more likely to seek to embed changes made and perhaps focus on other areas of activity.

From our survey data it appears that an emphasis on clarifying the reasons for school improvement initiatives and ensuring wide participation in decision making are particularly important activities for heads in the early phases of a new headship that may be linked with setting new directions to effect rapid and positive change in pupil outcomes .

Figure 4.2: Secondary heads' experience in school and the extent of reported change in helping clarify the reasons for their schools' improvement initiatives
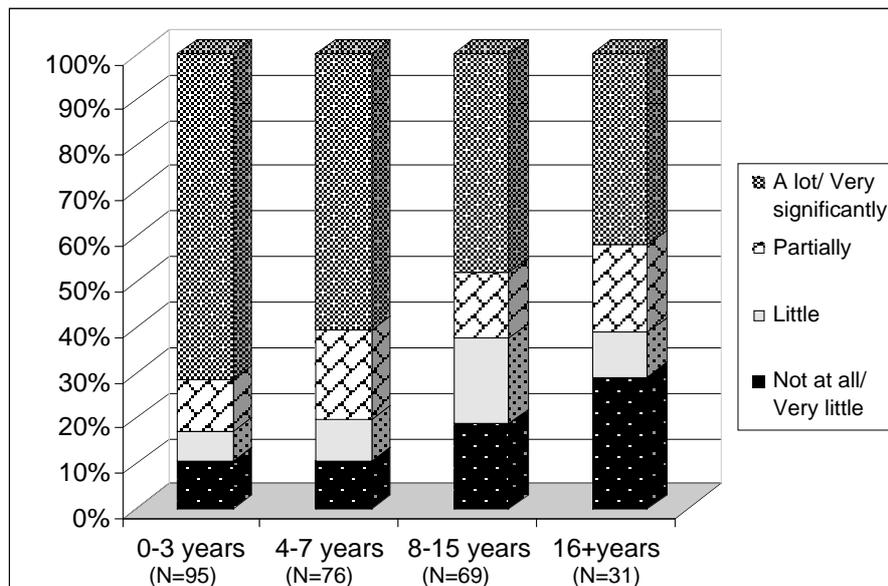
Figure 4.3: Secondary heads' experience in school and the extent of reported change in ensuring wide participation in decisions about school improvement
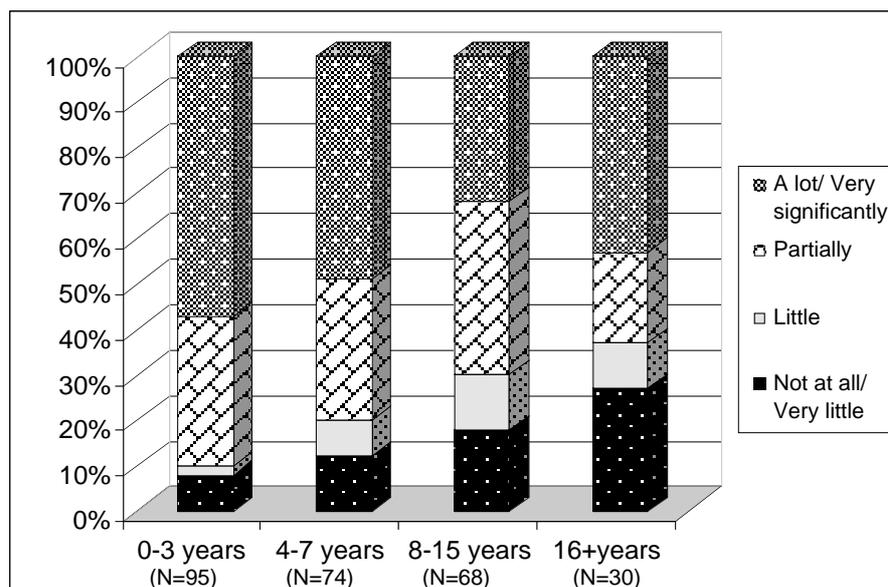
4.2.2 Engaging Parents

In total 44% (N=166) of primary heads and 42% (N=149) of secondary heads felt that their actions taken to engage parents in their schools' improvement efforts had changed "partially" over the past three years, while a substantial minority reported "a lot" or "very significant" change in this area (35% of Primary, 28% of secondary heads).

There was a marked difference in primary heads' responses concerning the extent of change in 'engaging parents in the school's improvement efforts' in relation to their time in post in their current school but this did not apply to secondary heads(p<0.05). Figure 4.4 shows responses for the primary sample to illustrate this pattern. Half of the primary heads (N=36, 51%) with no more than three years' experience in post in their current school reported a substantial amount of change in practice in this area, in contrast to only 22% (N=11) of those who had served their school for more than sixteen years.

For the primary sample only, a weak but statistically significant negative association was found between level of school disadvantage and the extent of reported change in engaging parents in their improvement efforts. This indicates that heads in low disadvantage schools in our sample were more likely to report positive change in the extent parental engagement over the last three years than heads in schools serving more disadvantaged intakes. (p<0.05).

Figure 4.4: Primary heads' experience in school and the extent of reported change in engaging parents in the school's improvement efforts
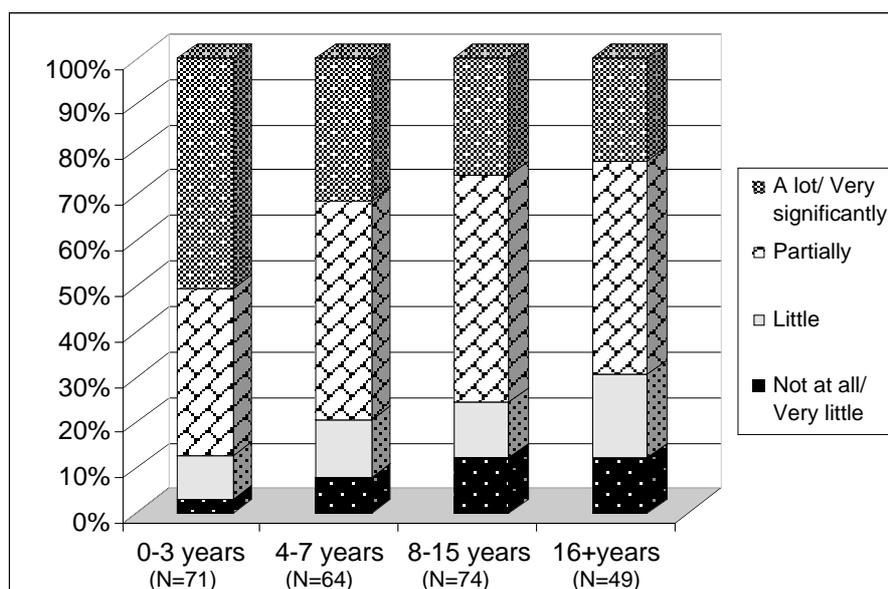
When key staff were asked about the extent that their headteacher engages parents in the school's improvement efforts, most key stage managers from primary schools (N=487, 81%) were likely to agree moderately/strongly; with almost 41% agreeing strongly. By contrast, proportionately fewer secondary heads of department agreed moderately/strongly (N=783, 68%); with only 28% agreeing strongly. This difference was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). Taken together with the heads' responses, this points to a greater emphasis on engaging parents in primary schools to support improvement efforts. This is likely to reflect the younger age group, smaller organizational scale and the perceived benefits of engaging parents in supporting school improvement during the primary years.

4.3 Strategies To Increase Parental And Community Engagement

Heads of all case study schools drew upon a range of strategies for parental and community involvement. However, heads of more disadvantaged schools (FSM 3 and 4 schools) appear to have focused more intensely upon the use of such strategies and created other, innovative ways to meet the challenge of promoting parental engagement:

> *Something we are starting this academic year is that when we have our class assemblies the parents can stay afterwards for tea and coffee which the children will do and then they can come and observe lessons so that they know what is going on in school how the lessons are delivered and the content. That's something we are hoping that the parents this year will take us up on and gets them more involved. (10AHT-R1 - FSM 3 primary school).*

> *When we have the interviews we now give them an appointment, we have a whole day now. We get about 88% attendance. And if they don't attend they get followed up. As to why they didn't attend. So there is no escape! (1HT-R1).*

> *I have been keeping a record of who doesn't come to parents evening and we have introduced something called Carers Call which is an automated teleph call that's sent out to all parents reminding them of the parents evenings or whatever. We send out letters with reply slips so that we try and make sure that parents receive the letters. We do try and inform them in plenty of time about them and we do have parents' questionnaires and surveys and things like that – in fact there is one being done at the moment to try and get their views on things. (14AHT-R1).*

The case study data provided evidence that the community context of the school was perceived to influence the approach to leadership within the schools. Schools in the FSM 3 and 4 bands faced particular challenges to raising student outcomes, such as disengagement of parents and low pupil expectations. Results from this first year of the project suggest that leaders respond to these challenges, not by drawing on a significantly different set of practices, but intensifying their use of a range of strategies to reduce barriers to pupil learning.

4.4 Meeting The Challenge Of Community In Disadvantaged Schools

Leaders in the 14 FSM 3 and 4 schools in the case study sample talked of facing special leadership challenges associated with the disadvantaged communities in which their school was situated. Central amongst these perceived challenges was a lack of parental engagement in their child's education and low parental and student expectations:

> *One area that we are trying to work on is getting parents to be more involved with their children's schooling. It's a real biggie. It's still the case unfortunately that parents don't support their children's learning. (5DHT-R2).*

> *Location that does have an impact on the children's expectations for school, their aspirations and ambitions. Some children come to school because they have to do they do not see it as a means to anything except maybe to have a play around with their mates. (4DHT-R2).*

Leaders in these 14 schools took the stance that the school had to compensate for social deprivation, rather than using it as a reason for low achievement of students:

> *[Name of area] is a challenging area to work at the best of times. Our students have lots of problems outside school we can't deal with but we need to provide them with a secure environment where they can feel safe and unthreatened. I think we've made a huge amount of progress but I still think that if we want our kids to succeed we're going to need to start challenging parents' views, stakeholders' views about what education's for, what they need to get out of it, and what the students need to get out of it.(12HOD4-R2).*
> *Because we have a lot of children here that have a lot of family problems but that should not be an excuse for them not making progress in school. Because you got to get around those family problems. (10HT-R1).*

If I wanted to claim on my tombstone the effect I had it would be to get everyone support, get everyone committed to really trying to teach the kids despite whatever barriers and obstacles they have been. And for the locus for them is outside the school, but that doesn't matter. Because we still have to try and get on with it. (15HOD1-R1).

4.5 Working With Other Schools

4.5.1 Differences by sector and socio-economic context

Compared to primary heads (N=105, 28%), a greater proportion of secondary heads (N=125, 35%) reported "a lot" of change in the extent to which they were now 'working in collaboration with other schools' over the last three years. However, only a few heads reported "very significant" change in the extent to which they were now working with other schools and this was more often reported by secondary heads (N=65, 18%) than their primary peers (N=50, 13%).

In contrast to headteachers' reports, key staff perceived levels of collaboration with other schools to be more prevalent. A greater proportion of primary key stage managers agreed strongly that their headteacher works in collaboration with other schools (N=339, 56%) than their secondary peers (N=525, 46%). Within these groups, proportionately slightly more key staff from highly disadvantaged primary schools (N=503, 86%) agreed moderately/strongly than those from less disadvantage schools (N=944, 81%) about the emphasis on collaboration with other schools. This difference was statistically significant (p<0.01). A similar pattern was also evident within the secondary sample. Key staff from highly disadvantaged schools (N=294, 85%) were more likely to agree moderately/strongly than their counterparts in less disadvantaged contexts (N=624, 79%) that their head worked collaboratively with other schools (p<0.05). *These findings support the view that cross school collaboration may have been a particularly important strategy for the improvement of schools in disadvantaged contexts, especially in the secondary sector.*

4.6 Building Community Support

4.6.1 Differences by sector, socio-economic context and years of experience in school

Headteachers' views on the extent of change in emphasis given to 'building community support for the school's improvement' efforts were explored. For both primary and secondary heads, around one in four reported "a lot" of change with only a few reporting "very significant" change (Primary: N=23, 6%; Secondary: N=25, 7%). It appears, therefore, that only a minority of schools (under a third in both sectors) had given a particular emphasis to building community support during the last three years, a much lower figure than that emphasising working collaboratively with other schools (reported above).

In relation to school context, primary heads in highly disadvantaged schools were more likely to report change in emphasis in relation to building community support. This was not the case for secondary schools. Both primary and secondary heads with more experience tended to report less change in their schools in relation to building community support over the last three years.

Evidence of sector differences was also found when key staff were asked about the extent to which their head emphasized building community support for the school's improvement efforts. A slightly larger proportion of primary staff (N=487, 81%) than those of secondary (N=851, 74%) indicated moderate/ strong agreement that their head sought to build community support, a much higher figure than that given by headteachers themselves. Again, the school disadvantage factor was found to be important. A larger proportion of staff from school FSM bands 3 and 4 (N=465, 81%) agreed moderately/strongly than those from school FSM bands 1 and 2 (N=864, 74%). The difference was statistically significant at $p<0.01$ across all key staff and was also noted within both primary and secondary samples ($p<0.05$).

4.7 Working With The Local Authority

4.7.1 Difference by sector and socio-economic context
One in five primary heads (N=76, 20%) reported "not at all" or "very little" change in working collaboratively with the Local Authority (LA), with slightly over a third indicating "a lot" or "very significant" change in this area (N=129, 35%). Variations were also found in secondary heads' responses. At least one in four (N=97, 27%) felt that there was "not at all" or "very little" change in their collaboration with the LA whereas almost a third (N=115, 32%) reported "a lot" or "very significant" change over the last three years.

When key staff were asked to indicate their agreement about whether the headteacher in their school works collaboratively with the Local Authority, a far greater level of overall agreement was reported than was reported by heads. Just over 90% agreed moderately or strongly (N=1,577); out of which 63% agreed strongly (N=1,093). Higher proportions of primary key staff agreed moderately/strongly than their secondary peers. In addition, primary key staff (N= 434, 72%) were more likely to agree strongly than their peers in secondary schools (N=659, 59%). School disadvantage was, again, a factor. Higher proportions of staff from highly disadvantaged schools agreed moderately / strongly than those from low disadvantage schools ($p<0.05$). This supports the headteacher findings that LA involvement seems to be perceived as more common and may be more influential in the primary sector and in disadvantaged contexts.

From the evidence of responses of heads and key staff concerning changes in the extent of working collaboratively with the LA over the last three years, we can conclude that working collaboratively with the LA seems to have been a relatively more important factor associated with the improvement of disadvantaged primaries in our sample. However, this does not seem to be the case for secondary schools where there was little difference in the extent of LA involvement reported by school context. In interpreting this we note that many secondaries had become specialist schools during this period and this may link with the differences found.

4.8 Integrating School Policies With National Policy Agendas

4.8.1 Differences by sector and socio-economic context
Variations were also found in survey responses to the item concerning the extent of changes in schools related to the item on 'integrating school priorities with the government's policy agenda', with proportionally more primary heads (N=141, 39%) describing the amount of change over the past three years as "a lot" or

"very significant" and a much lower proportion (N=50, 13%) who reported "not at all" or "very little" change. In common with the primary heads, over a third of secondary heads (N=131, 36%) also felt that their leadership practice in relation to integrating school priorities with the National Government's policy agenda had changed "a lot" or "very significantly" over the past three years, whereas a much lower proportion (16%, N=56) reported "not at all" or "very little" change. Interestingly, at the secondary level, more change was reported by heads of highly disadvantaged schools but this was not found for primaries.

There were some significant differences between the two sectors and between schools in different socio-economic settings in key staff perceptions on this item. Primary key stage managers (N=399, 66%) were more likely to agree moderately/strongly than secondary heads of departments (N=667, 58%) that their head integrated school policies with the government's policy agenda. Moreover, those from more advantaged contexts (school FSM band 1 N=298, 53%) were the least likely and key staff from more disadvantaged contexts (school FSM band 4 N=183, 66%) were the most likely to agree moderately/strongly to the above statement.

The results indicate that integration of schools' priorities with the government policy agenda is perceived to have been a major area of emphasis for this sample of improving and effective schools by key staff, especially at the primary level, whereas this is somewhat less evident from headteachers' responses. For primary key staff it may be that the national primary strategy has been an important influence.

4.9 Working With The Governing Body

4.9.1 Differences by sector
In both sectors there were variations in heads' reports on the extent of change in the extent to which they worked collaboratively with the Governing Body. More primary (N=209, 56%) than secondary heads (N=174, 48%) reported 'some or a lot of change' in practice over the last three years. In secondary schools one in five (N=77, 21%) reported "not at all" or "very little" change whereas proportionately fewer primary heads reported this (N=61, 16%).

A substantial amount of agreement was also noted when (N=1,665, 95%) key staff were asked about the extent to which their head works collaboratively with the Governing body. Nearly 75% agreed strongly that this was the case, with another 21% agreeing moderately. A slight sector difference was evident here, with somewhat higher proportions of primary key staff agreeing strongly to this item on the extent of headteacher collaboration with the Governing body (N=498, 82%) compared with a smaller proportion of those from secondary schools (N=805, 71%) (p<0.001).

4.10 Working With The Senior Leadership/Management Team

For both primary and secondary heads a large amount of change in their actions was reported for the item related to working collaboratively with their Senior Management Team (SMT) or Senior Leadership Team (SLT) over the last three years. Almost one in three (N=113, 31%) of the secondary heads felt that change in this area was "very significant", compared with a slightly lower figure of nearly one in four of the primary heads (N=88, 23%). In addition "a lot" of change was reported by 39% (N=145) of primary heads and 21% (N=77) of

secondary heads.

A similar proportion of primary (N=96, 25%) and secondary heads (N=80, 23%) reported that their actions had changed "partially" in relation to collaboration with their SLT. However, almost half of secondary heads (N=157, 44%), compared to over a third of primary heads (N=140, 37%), reported "a lot" of change in leadership practice in working with the SLT over the last three years. In the primary sample less change was reported in highly disadvantaged schools (p<0.05), whereas this was not the case for secondary schools. Twenty-three per cent of primary heads (N=32) leading FSM3 and 4 schools, compared to 16% of their peers in FSM1 and 2 schools (N=38), reported "not at all" or "little" change in leadership practice in relation to working collaboratively with their SLT.

4.10.1 Differences related to headteacher experience in school

There was a marked difference in the extent of reported change in their actions over the last three years between less experienced and more experienced heads for many survey items, particularly in the primary sector. In both sectors, heads' length of service in their current schools was related to the extent of reported change in terms of working collaboratively with the Governing Body, the Local Authority and the SMT/SLT, and encouraging collaborative work amongst staff. In all cases, more experienced heads reported less change in their leadership practice in their current school over the last three years. *Moderate*, statistically significant negative associations were found between heads' experience in their current school and the degree of reported change in relation to working collaboratively with the Governing Body for both the primary (<0.001) and the secondary sample (p<0.001). Once again, this points to the implied importance in the first years in a new headship of taking actions that promote wider participation and collaboration in leadership practice in our sample of improving and effective schools.

4.11 Changes In Leadership Structures: The Complexities Of Distributed Leadership

Changes in leadership structures within the school were specifically cited by 41 participants across 17 case study schools (nine primary and eight secondary) as influential in helping to improve pupil outcomes. The changes in structures were found to be aligned with and were supportive of whole school approaches to teaching and learning.   They focussed upon i) distributing the leadership; ii) delineating responsibilities clearly; and iii) redefining the senior leadership team. Essentially, the changes strengthened and broadened existing structures and clarified and strengthened the role of the senior leadership team as well as delineating middle management responsibilities and activities more clearly.

In the survey, when key staff were asked whether the headteacher works collaboratively with the SMT/SLT, a high degree of agreement was reported by primary (N=582, 95%) and secondary respondents (N=1,055, 92%), (p<0.001).

When asked about the extent to which their headteacher encourages collaborative work among staff, variations were found in the way key staff responded to the item. Over half agreed strongly (N=983, 56%), 30% agreed moderately (N=523) and 11% agreed slightly (N=200). There was a marked and significant difference across sectors in the extent to which key staff felt that their head encouraged this. Significantly more primary staff (N=427, 71%) compared with a smaller proportion of secondary staff (N=556, 48%) agreed strongly (p<0.001) that their head encouraged staff to work collaboratively in their school. This may reflect the

size and nature of secondary schools, where departments may be more directly influential in relation to promoting collaboration. The key staff respondents in secondary schools were heads of department and this may have had an influence (other research has indicated that the subject department is an important feature in secondary school effectiveness).

School disadvantage was also positively related to the way staff responded to this aspect (on the extent that the head encouraged staff to work collaboratively) of headteacher leadership. A greater degree of strong agreement was identified for key staff from high disadvantage contexts (school FSM band 4 N=163, 60%) than among their counterparts from more advantaged contexts (school FSM band 1 N=290, 51%), (p<0.05).

A similar pattern of difference was found between sectors, when key staff were asked the extent to which they agreed that their headteacher promoted leadership development among teachers. Higher proportions of primary key staff (N=445, 73%) than their secondary peers (N=674, 60%) agreed strongly that their head emphasised this. However, there were no significant differences in responses to this item related to school context measured by level of disadvantage (school FSM band).

4.11.1 Strengthening middle management
From the survey we found that participants in all the schools perceived that leadership was distributed fairly widely. For example, 63% of key staff in secondary schools though groups of teachers provided leadership moderately or 'a great deal' with 28% using the 'great deal' response. For primary key staff, 65% agreed moderately or a great deal that groups of teachers provided leadership in their school and 29% agreed strongly. Primary Key Stage Managers in particular were seen to provide a great deal of leadership or leadership all the time (66%) and for secondary heads of department, the figure was also high at 69%. Case study results also supported this conclusion and revealed that leadership distribution was also perceived to be very important to the schools' success in sustaining improved student outcomes. When asked about patterns of distribution of leadership within their school, seven headteachers offered a rationale for distributing leadership. For these heads, distributing leadership was important because it worked to cultivate the sense of ownership and agency of staff, and in so doing, developed a shared vision across the whole staff:

> *Everybody is a leader of something. If you give people the ownership then they will do a good job. If I had to, I would say that my role is monitoring and evaluating what is going on in whatever way it is done, and if something isn't working then that would be the time to find out why that it wasn't. (5HT-R1).*

Strengthening middle management was noted by participants across 5 schools (3 secondary and 2 primary), as specifically crucial to increasing the effectiveness of departments or curriculum areas, and enabling pupil outcomes to be improved. The 'Teaching and Learning Responsibility Points' system was noted as a helpful catalyst for this change in these schools. For example, 1 primary school headteacher had created key phase managers:

> *I went down the road of having key phase managers and they very much get on with their roles and responsibilities for that key phase. We don't really have many meetings. We have meetings when we need them when there are issues. Otherwise, the staff are allowed to run their areas as they see fit. (5HT-R2).*

In one secondary school, the head had made significant changes to middle management by removing whole school responsibilities (e.g. assessment for learning, SEN, emotional literacy or ICT) from the remit of heads of department. In this new structure:

> *Individual members of a department have a whole school responsibility and not a subject, or departmental responsibility. It's their job to ensure this whole school priority is reflected in a way in which the department works. Then you get a much greater movement in the department if these people push it internally over these things and they're asking for items to be put on the agenda [within the department]. So, in this sense the structure will allow you to reflect a school priority. (15HT-R2).*

In another secondary school, the change to middle management was more subtle, moving away from a heads of department curriculum leadership structure:

> *We changed the heads of department, and made them curriculum leaders. We had to say to people, you're not managing a department, you're not running a department, you're leading a team of people, and this team of people are going to get us good results and develop the youngsters. So I think that was a major … It was just a different way of thinking about leadership. That permeated the way people look at themselves within their roles, that they're not simply doing jobs, but they're actually carrying out leadership roles. I think that's really made a change. (16HT-R2).*

Although these five schools had restructured middle management in different ways, the common feature was giving middle managers more autonomy and responsibility to run their department, key stage or curriculum area.

4.11.2 Delineating responsibilities: freeing teachers to focus upon their core business

In one of four secondary schools which had re-structured the pastoral team, this had taken the form of a new appointment made by the headteacher, who had introduced several whole-school initiatives which sought to raise staff awareness of pupil voice, and to develop a greater cohesion and consistency of pastoral care throughout the school. In the other three schools, a new pastoral team had been created, composed largely of non-teaching staff, which had responsibility for the pastoral care of pupils. The benefits of this change were perceived to be two-fold: i) it gave teachers more time to focus on teaching and leaning; and ii) it enabled a focus upon building home-school relationships in that this new team could be contacted at any time in the school day by parents who had concerns about the pastoral care of their child:

> *We have year managers now who are not teachers and they do nothing all morning but walking around out here in picking up naughty children in dealing with them. (20HT-R2).*

> *And we have a new way of organising our year tutors. We have heads of community and assistant heads of community who don't teach. So when a parent rings up it doesn't go in the in-tray till… you know, you ring your head and you might have time in about an hour to deal with it, or tomorrow. (17HOD1-R1).*

In seven schools (three primary and four secondary), the creation of the new role of bursar or business manager had freed the head to focus more upon issues that

were going to have a direct effect upon pupil outcomes, and less upon administrative budget or building issues. Bursars and business managers employed in the schools all came from non-teaching backgrounds. They performed a variety of roles, including overseeing cover for classes, leadership of the non-teaching staff, and management facilities within the school, such as community sports centres:

> *My role really, if people say to me, what do I do, I say I am a business manager and the easiest way to describe it is that any thing that is not particularly teaching and learning I seem to have a handle on that. (20BUSM-R1).*

> *My role in the school is business manager and I'm part of the senior management team so I do lead various teams throughout the school, I am responsible for the majority of non-curriculum functions, resource management, risk facilities administration support, all of the administration services, the HR contact, finance, basically all the things that are non-curricular. (8BUSM-R1).*

4.11.3 The pivotal role of SLT: redefining the senior leadership team

Overall, 54% of secondary heads responding to the survey thought that their leadership practice had changed very significantly or a lot during the last three years and the figure for primary heads was higher at 63%. Over 60% of secondary but only 31% of primary heads reported that the leadership in their school was exercised 'all the time' by their SLT. This may reflect the heavier teaching commitments of SLT members in primary schools. Turning to key staff perceptions, the data showed that 72% of secondary and 80% of primary key staff strongly agreed that their headteacher worked collaboratively with the SMT/SLT in their school.

Although participants in the case studies generally considered the leadership of the school to be distributed, 9 heads and 35 key staff and colleagues (across 18 schools) commented that the role of the head, with the support of the senior leadership team, was a pivotal one in ensuring that the school continued to improve. Heads, supported by members of the senior leadership team, set the tone for how leadership distribution was understood and practised throughout the school:

> *Because we have a good leadership I know exactly what my role entails and I get on with it. (4Admin-R1).*

> *He [the headteacher] works as a team, and he's the leader of the team, but he gives clear guidelines to the people that are working in the rest of the team. His two deputy heads are well-informed, they know how to take responsibilities. (2SG-R1).*

> *Yeah, I would think that the roles and responsibilities of staff are very clearly defined. I would go along with the Ofsted report that we had last year that, you know, her leadership's inspirational. (17HOD4-R1).*

In four primary schools, explicit changes had been made to the structure of the senior leadership team (SLT), in order to strengthen leadership of teaching and learning. In two schools the SLT had been expanded, so that it included the key stage coordinators. This was considered to be a positive step in that communication was improved within the school since each key stage co-ordinator now had a 'voice' in leadership decisions. In another primary school, the senior

leadership team has been reduced in size, because the previous structure was considered unwieldy and ineffective:

> *Some people were …. taken off the senior team. And others have then moved on in their careers to other schools. We have restructured so that they did not necessarily need replacing because we felt that with having so many people on the senior team there were too many Indians are not enough chiefs. It needed to be more streamlined. (10AHT-R1).*

In the fourth primary school, the head had created two teams—a senior management team and a senior leadership team, each with different responsibilities. The benefit of this approach was considered to be on the way that the SMT could focus on leading on matters that were more to do with the general running of the school, freeing the SLT to focus their attention upon those matters which were more directly associated with improving teaching and learning:

> *The Leadership team will look more specifically at teaching and learning, so say the new strategies that are coming in, it's deciding on what the thrust of the staff meetings are going to be, looking at the new initiatives, like tonight we've got a leadership meeting and we're going to be looking at the staff meetings, what are the priorities from the SEF, so it's very much focusing on that teaching and learning and development. (7DHT-R1).*

4.11.4 Distribution or delegation?
Overall 38% of primary staff in the survey felt that leadership tasks were delegated by the headteacher or SLT in their school, indicating "very significant" agreement with the statement; and another 40% said this happened "frequently". For secondaries the picture was very similar for key staff, with 33% saying delegation was "very significant" and another 45% indicating that it happened "a lot".

The 25 key staff (across 16 of the case study schools) who provided a rationale for the distribution of leadership, most often talked about it in terms of delegation, and to a lesser degree, as a means of creating a shared ownership of change, and of developing leadership potential in other staff:

> *While I now have a second in the department who was in charge of Key stage three. So there is a process of delegation there. As regards other people in the department, I tend to feel that if people say "well we are not getting paid in the increments" then I can't really force them. (13HOD1-R1).*

> *I delegate like mad, I didn't used to, I was the man I knew everything! Then life got hold of me! I am 57, and I won't be here forever. It occurred to me a few years ago that it will be a good idea to delegate much more widely. (15HOD1-R1).*

> *I delegate as much as I possibly can. It depends on what comes through as to whether I think I have to deal with that or I can give it to somebody else to deal with. (10DHT-R1).*

Thus systems of distributed leadership played out in different ways between the 20 case study schools. Some heads distributed leadership so that other leaders were responsible for making decisions about what happened within the school, or

at least had a significant voice. Other heads retained a much closer hold upon decision-making, with the effect that responsibility and authority was not as widely distributed within the school. The different ways that two long-serving heads distributed leadership, the first at school 1 (a large urban primary school, FSM 4) and the second at school 15 (a large urban secondary school, FSM 4) provide a useful illustration. The head at School 1 distributed leadership to various staff members, and particularly to the deputy, but continued to keep a close hold upon overseeing what was happening within the school:

> *I believe that the deputy and I should take responsibility for nearly everything but we do have a senior management team and their input is used on quite a few levels but the buck stops here. Between the two of us [the headteacher and the deputy headteacher]. (1HT-R2).*

> *At the end of the day the headteacher wants the best for the children. But sometimes you do feel he lacks on the communication side of things a bit. Things are told to you very last minute. (1T2-R2).*

In contrast, the headteacher of School 15 was very clear about the need, not only to delegate tasks and leadership roles to people, but also to pass on the authority and responsibility for these tasks and roles:

> *I delegate authority alongside responsibility. But I allow people to make decisions, the area that they are responsible for. If they make mistakes, they make mistakes. I'm prepared to accept that as part of the risk element of leadership. I think people respond to that well, once they have started to understand that they can make decisions in their own area of responsibility they become more confident, they, I think, believe in distributed leadership themselves. That impacts further down school. (15HT-R1).*

> *He has got a very strong leadership group and he sees that as the way forward, instead of giving a few people a lot of responsibility. It is spread right across so the whole of the leadership is a very strong leadership. And that filters through, and I think that in itself gives them confidence. And that is a very good structure for the school. (15PA-R1).*

Further data are needed to probe the reasons for these differences. Results from the first year of the project, however, suggest that these differences in distribution are related to an interaction between the personal characteristics of different heads, their stage of leadership development, and their judgement about the readiness of the school staff to take responsibilities.

According to 31 case study participants, across 14 schools (9 primary and 5 secondary), a key benefit to distributing leadership was that a wider number of people could take on leadership roles, and in this way develop their understanding of and sense of responsibility for whole-school matters, as well as those which concerned their own classroom or department:

> *I'll say that one of the differences between teachers and leaders is that you have to have a wider view of what is going on in the school and not just what is going on in your room when you shut the door really. (10AHT-R1).*

[as a classroom teacher] You're so focused on getting through your lessons and things that's your priority, but then, as you take on responsibility, then obviously you know, you need to see the bigger picture. (15HOD4-R2).

now that I'm not Head of Department any more, and I don't have direct responsibility for any individual, but more responsibility for the way the school's run, you do see the bigger picture, and you do realise that, perhaps, before you were tunnel-visioned. (16AHT-R2).

Spillane's (2001, 2004) research on distributed leadership suggests that school leadership should be considered as an organisational phenomenon widely distributed across people and situations in a school, rather than as something vested within the headteacher, or a small number of appointed leaders. The literature review for this study (Leithwood et al, 2006a) concludes that the framework of distributed leadership offered by Spillane et al (2001) is a powerful lens for understanding the connection between school leadership, organisational change and student outcomes. The early results of this study suggest that distributing leadership across more people is perceived by stakeholders to be connected to improved student outcomes. However, the formula is not a simple one, in that it seems that different effective patterns of distributed leadership are associated with the organisational context of the school including its history, community context, and the stage of development of the headteacher's leadership. From our survey and case studies, delegation in leadership is still perceived by key staff to be the more common pattern of leadership distribution.

4.11.5 Clarifying roles and responsibilities

Twenty-one participants (across 11 schools) commented that a characteristic of the distributed leadership structure in the school was the increased clarity of roles, responsibilities and accountabilities. Lines of communication were clear, leaders knew what their responsibilities were, and staff members knew who to approach for support and guidance:

Obviously we have a good leadership structure, we have got the head, and the deputies in all the different roles. We know what everybody's role is. (15HOD2-R1).

As Deputy Head I am responsible for everyone, but we have broken down into smaller group and each person knows who they can go to the raise issues or concerns or talk about a child. (4DHT-R1).

The roles and responsibilities are reviewed every year. The strands of leadership are very clear. Any changes are announced at staff meetings but are negotiated at an individual level. (18KS4-R1).

4.11.6 Broadening participation in decisions about change within hierarchical structures

Despite the increased participation and clarity of roles and responsibilities, sense of ownership and 'whole schoolness', the way that 'distributed' leadership was structured within the case study schools was hierarchical. At the top of the hierarchical leadership structure there was the headteacher, senior leadership or management team, underpinned by a tier of middle managers including heads of department, curriculum leaders and key stage managers, and clusters of teachers and support staff. Questions put to participants about the way change was initiated, implemented and evaluated within the school yielded insights about how

these structures functioned within the day-to-day school programme. Two clear themes emerged from comments about how change occurred within the school and within departments or key stages. The first theme was that consultation about change was generally considered a norm. The second theme was that senior leaders and other staff played different roles in initiating and implementing change within the school—senior leaders leading the strategic direction of the school and other staff leading specific change implementation strategies within that. *Thus, what appeared to be a more distributed horizontal system retained the characteristics of a more traditional hierarchical system.*

4.11.7 Top down, bottom up and mixed: no one formula works

Sixty participants across all 20 of the case study schools spoke about the way changes was initiated and implemented in the school. Fourteen of these comments related to 'top-down' change, such as whole-school changes led by the head and senior-leadership team, or departmental change led by the head of department or key stage coordinator. Another nine comments referred to 'bottom-up' changes, initiated and implemented by teachers:

> *From time to time the head will direct us towards things he wants doing. For example he has recently directed us to focus on handwriting at key stage two. (6PPM-R2).*

> *I would say that it depends. Sometimes it will come from the headteacher, sometimes the SLT, they might discuss something they want to change within the School. Other times it comes from the teachers who say this isn't working, literacy coordinator or the science coordinator. (9KS2-R2).*

> *Another guy has said he wants to push GCSE PE again because our priority is BTEC but he wants to push the GCSE and we are now going to have an extracurricular club for well motivated students to attend, the ones who want to do it. So that change, something that he wanted to do. (20HOD4-R2).*

> *Change has at the moment been initiated by me. I've made a lot of changes, I might have made some of those too quickly but a situation was so desperate up there that I had to. In my opinion you have to just go in with how you're going to operate and hopefully people will get on board eventually which is happening. (14HOD1-R2).*

The remaining thirty-seven comments about change indicated that much change within the case study schools cannot be characterised as either a 'top-down' or 'bottom-up'. Instead, participants referred to the role different people play in initiating and implementing changes. For whole-school change this involved the head and senior leaders providing the strategic direction for change, and other leaders and staff initiating and implementing specific changes in line with this strategic plan or direction. At a departmental level, this involved the head of department or key stage coordinator providing the strategic direction and other staff members initiating and implementing specific changes in line with that direction:

> *Obviously strategic changes are very much senior leader initiatives, but curriculum development, once it's been given the green light by the senior management team, then the actual process of change is very much led by the middle leaders. (17HOD3-R2).*

He [the headteacher] is handing over quite a number of decisions to staff. For example, we were going to employ teaching assistants and the issue was do you want another teacher or do you want teaching assistants, and the idea was slightly bigger class but you would have support, but the staff made the decision that they were having an extra teacher because then they would have single year groups which would make planning easier. So a lot of decisions are handed over to staff. (8DHT-R2).

Most changes would be initiated by senior leaders. There are forums for anyone to bring their ideas because obviously faculty teams meet, middle-leaders meet, there are policy groups so anybody can suggest policy change but it's usually initiated from top down, but it's done through full consultation, there's nothing which isn't shared before a decision is made. (17DHT-R2).

There is change imposed upon us from external things. There is a kind of change that you might want to make when you have a set of exam results that you are not very happy with, or results that show a gender imbalance, that kind of thing. And then there is more creative change, the way you are teaching a particular aspect of the curriculum and liberating by doing it in a new way. So what we tend to do is that we have an action plan every year and a good one is owned by everyone, it's about everyone having a stake in it. (20HOD1-R2).

A central forum for distributing leadership through consultation was the formation and revision of the school development plan, and the increasing use of self-evaluation within departments and key-stages in schools:

The majority of change comes through the school development plan which is set on an annual basis at this time of year. Then it goes down to middle management, then the middle management have meetings with the individual members of staff. (17HOD5-R2).

All teaching staff have got a subject that they led through the school and they are involved in writing the school development plan as well. If their subject is a key subject to developing that would be part of the school development plan. (9KS1-R2).

I would like to think it [change] comes from all directions. It, undoubtedly, does come from the headteacher and SLT. Whole school issues do impact upon what we do in the department, but I think a lot of it comes from us. We self-evaluate, we fill in this SEF form. (16HOD2-R2).

4.11.8 Regularity of consultation between 'tiers'
Overall, 37% of secondary key staff responding to the survey felt that their head ensured wide participation in decisions about school improvement and another third (33%) felt this happened 'frequently'. For primary key staff the responses are notably more positive, with 55% thinking that wide participation was very significant and another 35% that this happened 'a lot'. This may reflect differences in school size and organizational complexity between the two sectors and perhaps of culture (see chapter 5) rather than differences in the mind sets of heads.

Thirty-one participant comments (across 15 case study schools) about the way change occurred in their school demonstrate that they perceived consultation between the head and senior leadership team to be important. Through being consulted about changes, staff felt that they played a more active role in contributing to school development. Only four participants, within 2 schools, commented that the processes of consultation within their school could be extended further, to ensure that more staff had a voice in the strategic planning for the school:

> *So I don't think it is all imposed from above, even though something is there not everyone is going to like it want to do it, teacher is very open to listening to teachers and we pride ourselves on being a listening school, listening to the views from parents, children, and staff. (6KS1-R2).*

> *I would have said that a lot of discussions about the vision and the direction for the curriculum was done between me [the assistant head] and [the headteacher] and we go away for a day, or whatever, and sit down and say "Well, what do we want to do for the next five years?" And then we would investigate where we can take the school, in terms of its curriculum, what should be caught, what shouldn't be taught, and I think certainly in the last three or four years that's changed, and it's much more of a collegiate decision. (18AHT1-R2).*

> *I think the SLT, the reason they don't always discuss things as much as members of the teaching staff would like, is because of those pressures that are being put on them. They haven't got time to discuss them, and yet, as I say, I actually think that time to discuss and think about ideas is important, time to consolidate on changes that have happened is important. (16HOD3-R2).*

These comments show that examining how change occurs in schools, provides a useful insight into how structures of distributed leadership function in real-time, as well as indicating important differences in the ways structures of distributed leadership are operationalised.

4.12 Key Messages:

1. Effective leadership relies upon an increasingly close and collaborative relationship between headteachers and the SLT.
• Of the heads surveyed, 23% of primary headteachers and 31% of secondary heads reported an increase in collaborative work between heads and the SLT, over the last three years.
• In all 31% of participants across 15 of the case study schools commented that increasing dialogue between the head and the SLT was a crucial factor in the effective leadership of the school during the last three years.

2. The creation of new 'distributed' leadership roles and patterns was a consistent feature of the effective schools.
• In 5 of the case study schools (3 secondary and 2 primary), strengthening middle management was an important factor in changing structures to improve student outcomes. Strengthening of middle management occurred primarily through giving middle managers additional responsibility and support to run their department, or curriculum area.
• Four secondary schools had created a separate pastoral team, staffed mainly by non-teachers, so as to free teachers to focus more upon their teaching

duties.

- Seven case study schools (3 primary and 4 secondary) had created or enhanced the role of school bursar or business manager to lead on administrative, budgetary and building issues, thereby freeing the head to focus more closely upon issues directly associated with the effectiveness of teaching and learning in the school.
- Twenty-one participants across 11 of the case study schools commented that the clarity of leadership roles and responsibilities was central to the effectiveness of the school in raising pupil outcomes.

3. Level of leadership experience of the headteacher has an association with the level of change implementation to structures in the school.
- In all 80% of secondary heads with 0-3 years of experience reported some change in internal review procedures, compared with 60% of secondary heads with more that sixteen years of experience.
- Over two thirds (68%) of secondary heads with 0-3 years of experience reported changes in structuring the organisation to facilitate work, compared with 43% for secondary heads with more than sixteen years of experience.

4. Broadening participation in and communication about change needed to promote improvement is a key leadership strategy
- Clear communication and consultation between the tiers of leadership was considered to be an important factor in the school's success in raising student outcomes by 31 case study participants, across 15 schools.
- Around one-half of all heads surveyed reported some or a lot of change in practice in relation to working collaboratively with their governing body, over the last three years.

5. Changes in efforts to engage parents in school improvement were more likely to be reported by headteachers with less experience at their current school, and by headteachers in more disadvantaged contexts (FSM 3 and 4 schools).
- Nineteen participants across all 14 of the FSM 3 and 4 schools in the case study sample made comments about the need to intensify strategies to engage parents in the school.
- Around a quarter of all primary and secondary heads surveyed reported a lot, or very significant changes, in building community support for school improvement. The group most likely to report these changes was primary heads in FSM 3 and 4 schools.

This chapter has highlighted the importance of heads of improving and effective schools in the research attached to changing organisational and decision-making structures in order to create the space for different ways of working and different leadership approaches. In changing structures, however, it was clear that these headteachers had the deeper purpose of changing cultures.

Chapter 5: Changing School Cultures

The analyses of the results for respondents in the surveys and case studies highlight a number of key features which emphasize how leadership actions in relation to school culture are seen to facilitate favourable conditions for school improvement and enable this to be sustained in different contexts.

5.0 Providing A Sense Of Purpose: Raising Expectations

5.0.1 Providing a sense of purpose
The majority of primary and secondary heads reported some or 'a lot' of change in practice over the last three years in relation to giving staff a sense of overall purpose. For example, 52% of primary heads (N=194) and 46% of secondary heads (N=166) thought their leadership practice and actions had changed "very significantly" or "a lot" in relation to giving staff an overall sense of purpose during the last three years. In particular, 10% (N=36) of primary heads and 15% (N=54) of secondary heads indicated "very significant" change in their leadership practice in this aspect. In contrast, 27% of heads of secondaries (N=98) and 25% of primaries (N=97) felt they had made little change in terms of giving staff an overall sense of purpose.

Key staff views showed some sector differences. Overall, 92% of key staff agreed moderately/strongly that the headteacher in their school demonstrated high expectations for staff's work with pupils. In all, 72% of primary key staff (N=439) strongly agreed (and another 23% agreed moderately (N=137)) that their head gave staff an overall sense of purpose. For secondaries, the figures were 61% of key staff (N=713) agreeing strongly and 29% agreeing (N=335) moderately. *It is clear that staff generally had a very clear view of the extent to which their head gave them an overall sense of purpose.*

5.0.2 High expectations for staff
For both primary and secondary heads, different degrees of change over the last three years in their leadership practice were reported which related to demonstrating high expectations for staff's work with pupils. In all 50% of secondary heads and 46% of primary heads thought this had changed "a lot" or "very significantly" In both sectors, approximately a third (Primary: N=124, 33%; Secondary: N=116, 32%) reported "a lot" of change in this area. However, nearly another third reported "not at all" or a fairly small amount of change ("very little" or "little") in practice (Primary: N=106, 29%; Secondary: N=115, 31%).

In primary schools, relatively less change was reported in high disadvantage schools (p<0.05), but this was not the case in the secondary group. Thirty-five per cent of heads in FSM3 and 4 schools (N=49), compared to 27% of those leading FSM1 and 2 schools (N=64), reported little change ("not at all/very little" or "little) in leadership practice in relation to demonstrating high expectations for staff's work with pupils.

The proportion of key staff agreeing strongly that their head demonstrates high

expectations for staff's work with pupils was slightly higher within the primary (N=456, 75%) than the secondary sector (N=813, 70%) and the difference was statistically significant (p<0.05). These results suggest that creating a climate of high expectations was perceived to be a strong feature of heads' activity in this sample of improving and effective schools.

5.1 High Expectations for Pupils

5.1.3 High expectations for pupil behaviour

A similar pattern was found in the extent of reported change between primary and secondary heads in relation to demonstrating high expectations for pupil behaviour. In both sectors, almost one in five (Primary: N=63, 17%; Secondary: N=69, 19%) reported "very significant" change in this area in their schools over the last three years. In addition, 28% of primary heads and 25% of secondary heads reported "a lot" of change in demonstrating high expectations for pupil behaviour. However, at least one in five (Primary: N=85, 23%; Secondary: N=76, 21%) heads reported otherwise ("not at all" or "very little").

Heads were more likely to indicate "a lot" or "very significant" change relating to demonstrating high expectations for pupil achievement (over half of both primary and secondary heads reported this). "Very significant" change in this area was more commonly reported by secondary (N=91, 25%) than primary heads (N=65, 17%).

Figure 5.1 shows that the vast majority of staff agreed strongly when asked whether the headteacher in their school demonstrated high expectations for pupil behaviour (N=1,498, 85%). However, a sector difference was evident here. Close to 74% of primary key staff (N=446) compared with only 52% of secondary key staff (N=609) agreed strongly to this item and this difference was statistically significant (p<0.001). This may reflect greater difficulties in pupil behaviour management between the two sectors.

When asked if pupils felt safe in their school, 82% of headteachers and 84% of key staff in primary schools strongly agreed. In contrast, a lower proportion 57% of secondary heads and 44% of secondary key staff strongly agreed that this was the case in their schools. *Thus, pupil behaviour management is perceived to be more problematic by key staff in secondary than those in primary schools.*

Figure 5.1: Differences between primary and secondary school key staff perceptions of their headteacher's leadership style in relation to demonstrating high expectations for pupil behaviour

	Disagree strongly/moderately/slightly	Agree slightly	Agree moderately	Agree strongly
■ Primary	2%	5%	20%	74%
□ Secondary	9%	11%	28%	52%
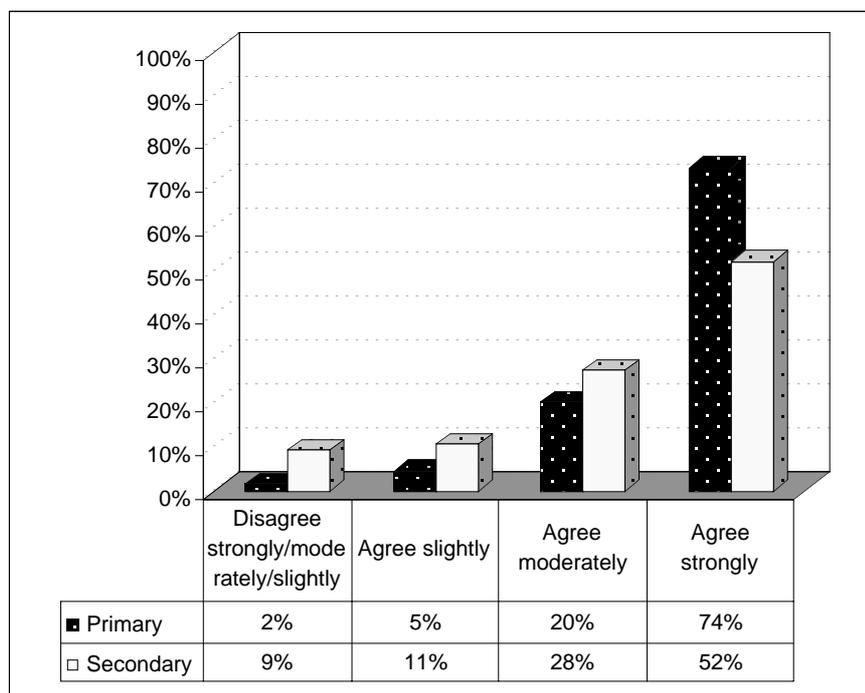
5.2 Shared Professional Beliefs And Values

The item, 'most teachers in our school share a similar set of values, beliefs and attitudes related to teaching and learning', can be seen as an indicator of school culture. The survey results suggest that most heads and key staff in both sectors had positive views about the extent to which this statement characterised their school.

5.2.1 Differences by sector
There were some differences by sector. In all, 68% of primary heads (N=259) and 67% of primary key staff (N=402) strongly agreed with this item as a description of their school, and another 27% of primary heads (N=100) and 27% of primary key staff (N=164) agreed moderately. In contrast, for secondary schools, 47% of heads (N=170) and 45% of key staff (N=522) showed strong agreement, with 43% of heads (N=157) and 36% of key staff (N=421) indicating moderate agreement. *This may reflect the stronger role of departmental and subject differences in secondary schools.* These sector differences were statistically significant.

5.2.2 Differences by socio-economic context
Higher proportions of staff from primary school high disadvantage contexts (FSM bands 3 and 4, N=404, 70%) agreed strongly that their headteacher raised expectations and set directions than their counterparts from less disadvantaged schools (N=737, 63%). This difference was statistically significant (p<0.05). A similar pattern was also noted within the secondary school sample. Slightly higher proportions of heads of department from high disadvantage secondary schools (N=233, 67%) agreed strongly to the above statement than their counterpart from less disadvantaged schools (N=472, 59%, p<0.05).

5.2.3 Differences by years of experience in school

For primary heads only, a moderate, statistically significant negative association was found between length of experience as a head in their current school and the extent of reported change in leadership practice in giving staff a sense of overall purpose ($p < 0.001$). As Figure 5.2 shows, there was a marked difference in the extent of change reported by less experienced heads and that reported by their more experienced peers: 73% of heads (N=51) with up to three years' experience in their current schools reported a substantial amount of change in their schools over the last three years, a proportion that was three times the figure for more experienced (16+ years) heads (N=13, 27%). *It thus seems, perhaps not surprisingly, that in the early stages of headship in a new school heads in our sample of highly effective/highly improved schools gave particular attention to raising expectations and setting directions.*

Figure 5.2: Primary heads' experience in school and the extent of reported change in giving staff a sense of overall purpose
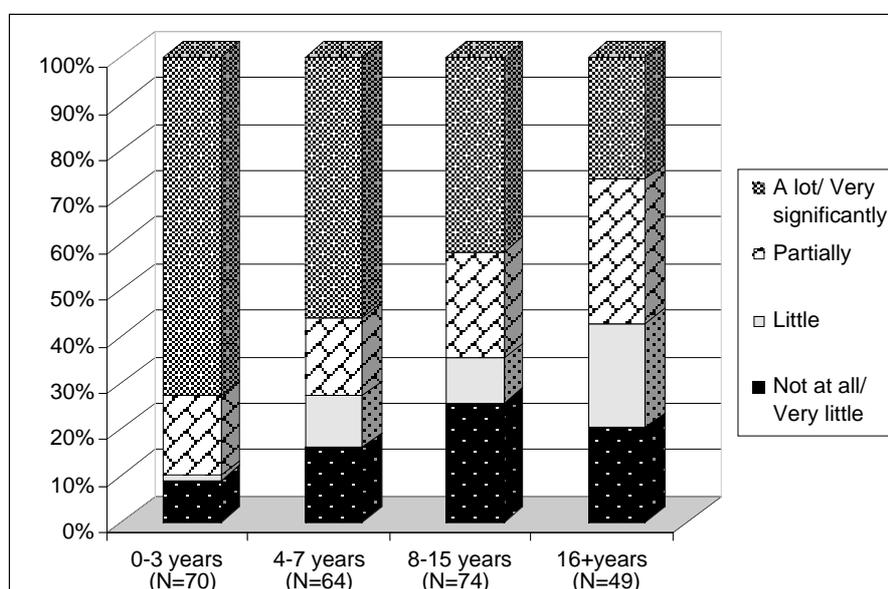
5.3 Developing People

5.3.1 CPD (Continuing Professional Development)

Most primary (N=226, 60%) and secondary (N=217, 60%) heads reported a moderate or a substantial amount of change over the three year period in relation to promoting a range of CPD experience among all staff. "Very significant" change of practice in this area was reported by a minority of 16% of primary heads (N=58) and a similar proportion of secondary heads (N=54, 15%). Less experienced primary heads were more likely to report change in terms of promoting a range of CPD experiences ($p < 0.01$) (Figure 5.3), but this was not the case for the secondary heads.

Figure 5.3: Primary heads' experience in school and the extent of reported change in promoting a range of CPD among all staff
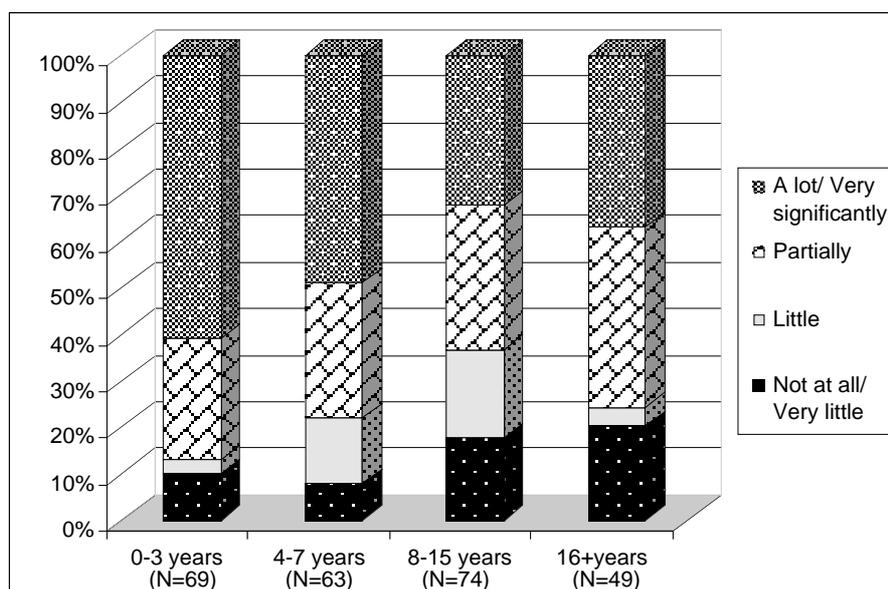
5.3.2 Difference by sector and socio-economic context

Once again, the sector difference was evident in key staff responses concerning the extent that the head was perceived to promote a range of CPD experiences for staff in their school. More primary key staff (N=388, 64%) agreed that this was the case ("very significantly") than was the case for their secondary school peers (N=533, 46%) (p<0.001). In addition, a greater degree of strong agreement was reported by those from high disadvantage schools (N=339, 58%) than by their counterparts from less disadvantaged schools (N=573, 49%) (p<0.01).

Within primary schools, those key staff from low disadvantaged school contexts (N=226, 61%) were less likely to agree strongly that their headteacher promoted a range of CPD experiences in comparison with their peers from high disadvantage schools (N=159, 69%) (p<0.05). This suggests that CPD may have been used more extensively as part of an improvement strategy in high disadvantage contexts.

5.3.3 Developing care and trust

In both sectors there were variations in the extent of reported change in leadership practice in the survey in terms of emphasis and change in developing an atmosphere of caring and trust. Although one in four (Primary: N=96, 26%; Secondary: N=91, 25%) heads reported "not at all" or "very little" change in this area in their schools over the last three years, another quarter of heads (Primary: N=96, 26%; Secondary: N=101, 28%) felt that their leadership practice in this area had changed "a lot" over the last three years. "Very significant" change in practice was reported by a further 15% of primary (N=58) and 14% of secondary heads (N=51).

5.3.4 Differences by sector

When key staff were asked whether the headteacher in their school develops an atmosphere of caring and trust, 57% agreed strongly (N=1,013); with 24%

indicating moderately strong agreement. A noticeable difference was found between the responses of staff from both sectors (Figure 5.4). Primary key staff (N=426, 71%) were significantly more likely to agree moderately/strongly than their peers in secondary schools (N=587, 51%, p<0.001). *It is possible that the smaller organizational size of primary schools may be more conducive to the development of such trust.*

Figure 5.4: Differences between primary and secondary school senior leaders' perception of their headteacher leadership style in relation to developing an atmosphere of caring and trust

	Disagree strongly/moderately/slightly	Agree slightly	Agree moderately	Agree strongly
■ Primary	3%	7%	20%	71%
□ Secondary	9%	14%	26%	51%
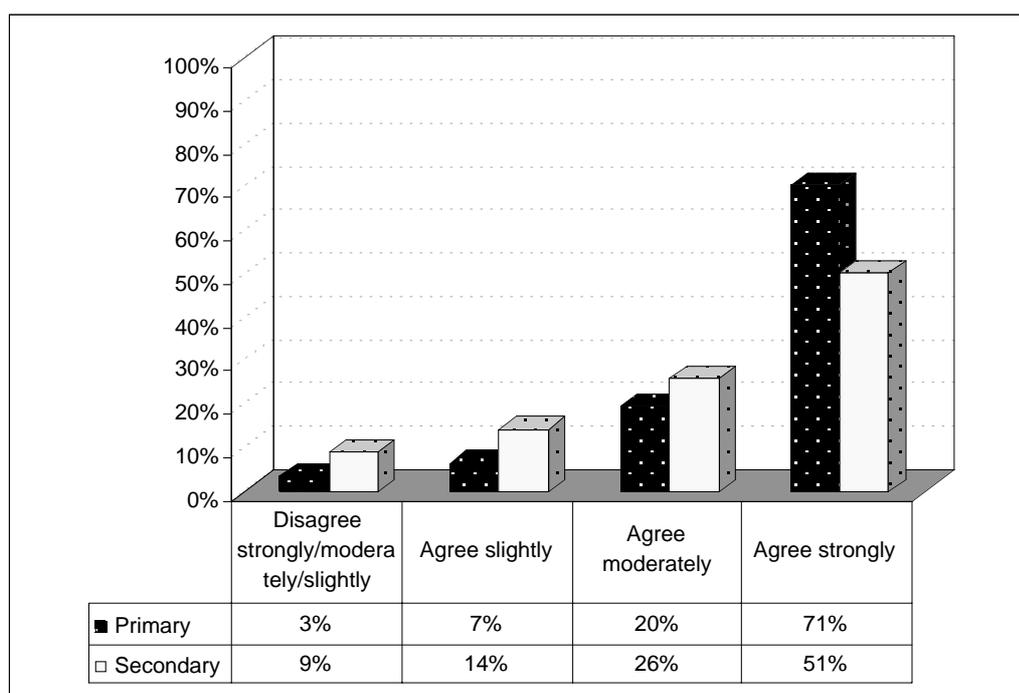
5.3.5 Modelling professional practice
Nearly two thirds of key staff reported strong agreement when they were asked whether their head modelled a high level of professional practice (N=1,108, 63%). A substantial number of them agreed moderately/strongly to it (N=1,522, 86%). Weak but statistically significant variations existed between primary and secondary staff agreements; with higher numbers of primary key staff than those of secondary schools agreeing (p<0.05). *Taken together with findings on the atmosphere of caring and trust noted above, these results suggest that the professional climate of secondary and primary schools is likely to differ also.*

5.3.6 Differences by sector and socio-economic context
Also in both sectors, one in five reported very little, if any, change ("not at all" or "very little") in relation to modelling a high level of professional practice in their schools (Primary: N=78, 21%; Secondary: N=79, 22%). A quarter of primary heads (N=97, 26%) and almost a third of secondary heads (N=112, 31%), by contrast, reported "a lot" of change in this area over the last three years. However, for the secondary sample, heads in high disadvantage schools were more likely to report a substantial amount of change in leadership practice relating to modelling a high level of professional practice (p<0.01).

5.3.7 Differences by years of experience and school socio-economic context
For both the primary and the secondary sample, weak but statistically significant

associations were found between the heads' experience in their current post in the school, and the extent of reported change on these two items relating to developing people. Again, less experienced heads were more likely to report change in these areas in their schools over the last three years indicating that this seems to be an important area of focus when heads first take up post in a school.

5.4 Discussion Of Educational Issues: Differences By Sector, Socio-Economic Context And Years Of Experience In School

A degree of change in practice was reported by both primary and secondary heads in relation to frequently discussing educational issues with staff. In both sectors, one in three (Primary: N=124, 33%; Secondary: N=118, 33%) reported "a lot" of change and almost a third "partial" change (Primary: N=110, 29%; Secondary: N=102; 29%). A very similar pattern was found in relation to the extent of reported change in practice in terms of buffering teachers from distractions to their teaching. In both sectors "partial" and "a lot" of change in practice in this area was reported by a third of heads.

For the secondary sample, heads of high disadvantage school contexts were more likely to report a substantial amount of change in these two areas relating to managing the teaching programme (i.e. discussing educational issues: ($p<0.05$); and buffering teachers from distractions: ($p<0.05$)). This was not the case for primary schools.

Seven out of ten key staff agreed moderately/strongly that their head frequently discussed educational issues with them (N=1,375, 78%); with half of them reporting a strong agreement (N=881, 50%). Higher proportions of primary key stage managers (N= 532, 82%) than their counterparts in secondary schools (N=843, 73%) agreed that this statement on the discussion of educational issues characterised their school. This association was statistically significant ($p<0.001$).

A weak but significant relationship was found between school disadvantage and the degree of agreement from key staff (Figure 5.5). Key staff in high disadvantage schools (N=481, 84%) were more likely to agree than their peers in low disadvantage schools (N=882, 75%, $p<0.01$). This variation was also evident within the secondary sample.

Figure 5.5: Differences between school senior leaders' perception based on the school disadvantage factor when asked whether the headteacher discusses educational issues with staff frequently

	Disagree strongly/moderately	Disagree slightly	Agree slightly	Agree moderately/strongly
■ FSM 1&2 (0-20%)	4%	6%	15%	75%
□ FSM 3&4 (21%+)	2%	4%	11%	84%
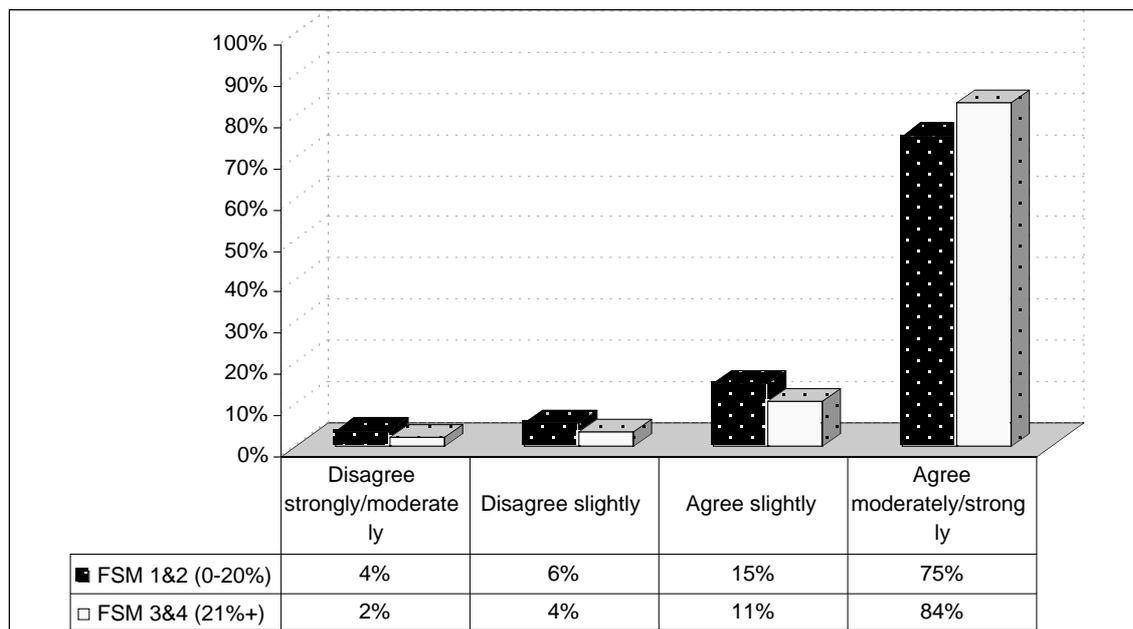
In both sectors, heads' experience in their current schools was related to the extent of reported change in discussing educational issues with staff. Once more, again not surprisingly, more experienced heads reported less change in their leadership practice in their schools over the last three years.

5.5 Managing The Teaching And Learning Programme

5.5.1 Strengthening internal review: differences by sector and socio-economic context

More than half of primary heads (N=204, 54%) reported "a lot" or "very significant" change in practice relating to improving internal review procedures. Heads from high disadvantage schools were more likely to report a lot of change in leadership practice relating to this area (p<0.05). By contrast, more substantial change in this area was reported by secondary heads (N=251, 71%) with almost a third who felt that the amount of change in practice in their schools was "very significant" (N=105, 30%) over the past three years. It seems that strengthening internal review procedures has been an important feature of activity over the last 3 years for the majority of heads, but especially those in the secondary sector.

Almost eight out of ten key staff agreed moderately/strongly that the headteacher had improved the internal review procedures of their school over the last three years. A greater degree of agreement was reported by primary (N=506, 84%) than secondary key staff (N=881, 76%) and this difference was statistically significant (p<0.001).

5.5.2 Redesigning the organisation: differences by sector and years of experience in school

A greater degree of change in practice was reported by secondary (N=202, 58%) than primary heads (N=175, 47%) in terms of the emphasis they had given to restructuring the organisation to facilitate work over the last three years. For

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secondary heads only, weak but statistically significant negative associations were found between their years of experience in their current post and school and the extent of reported change in relation to redesigning the organisation. Those with more experience tended to report less change in practice in their schools over the last three years. In particular:

- Eighty percent of secondary heads with less than three years' experience reported a substantial amount of change in practice relating to improving internal review procedures in their schools (N=75), whereas 60% (N=18) of those with more than sixteen years' experience did so (p<0.05);
- Sixty eight percent of less experienced secondary heads (0-3 years) reported "a lot" of change in practice in relation to structuring the organisation to facilitate work; by contrast, less than half (N=13, 43%) of their more experienced peers (16+ years) reported such extent of change (p<0.05).

5.6 Changing School Cultures

The importance of cultural change in schools in promoting improved pupil attainment outcomes was strongly supported by the case study evidence. This qualitative evidence highlighted a number of dimensions which, taken together, seem to help embed changes in attitudes and practice that affected school culture in a positive way and led to a greater focus on teaching and learning and raising standards, and also to enhanced staff collegiality and commitment.

Changes in school culture and ethos were seen by 48% of participants across all 20 case study schools as having a significant influence upon the success of the schools in raising pupil outcomes. Participants' comments were evenly balanced between five central areas; 1) changes in expectations and aspirations: towards a "can do" culture; 2) connecting positive pupil behaviour with learning outcomes; 3) targeted recruitment; 4) trust with collegiality; and 5) improving relationships with pupils.

5.6.1 Changes in aspirations and expectations: responsibility with accountability
A key part of the focus for all the heads was on raising the quality and teaching and learning. This meant there was a drive to rigorously evaluate all current practices and new initiatives. This in turn seems to have led to a more rigorous culture of responsibility with greater individual and collective accountability:

> They realise now that the evidence base is very sophisticated and you actually show you know the progress the individual departments have made. … And that's created I think a very significant change in what people feel about the school and achievement, and they recognise that with the introduction of contextual value added that actually it's less easy to hide and suggest that actually the department is doing exceptionally well. (15HT-R2).

> I think that now we're far more focussed on what we want and what we don't want, and we don't just go for everything, we go with what fits with us. (16HT-R2).

> I would say that pupil outcomes are really down to this gradual changing culture of expectation that failure is not acceptable. (18AHT1-R2).

Definitely the striving for excellence and the high academic thrust is there, the kind of, "We're not going to accept anything lower," mentality. (7DHT-R2).

Well I think the major thing is teamwork. It would be number one really. How people interact as a team. The biggest change is the attitude of the staff, independently and as a team they want to do their best for the children and will put 100% effort into it. (10KS1-R1).

These changes in aspirations, expectations and practices may be described as a movement towards a 'can-do' or 'success' culture. One key feature of this shift was that staff felt increasingly empowered to cope with change and innovation:

Culture is one of 'we can do'. That's changed since I've been here. The last head was lovely but he put a lot of emphasis on special needs, a lot of resources. Now it's a culture of 'we can do' and 'the children can do' and there's no such word as 'can't'. Everyone's involved in evaluation and perceptions. (2DHT-R1).

If you spoke to the Head he wants 'Outstanding' with the next Ofsted, and he thinks we could, potentially get that. He wouldn't have said that ten years ago, and we probably wouldn't have expected it. I think we've upped our game a little bit. I think we're more of a success culture if you like. (16AHT-R2).

A second change feature was that pupils increased their own expectations of themselves and of what they could expect from teachers, and of their learning progress and achievement. In addition, secondary school participants noted that this success culture led to pupils increasingly valuing academic success—both their own, and that of their peers:

I think the fact that a lot of staff have taken on board what I said about the intake, that the intake is better, it is a high intake. We have more able and talented pupils. (13AHT-R1).

It's becoming more acceptable to be successful. We're not there yet but academic success is no longer sneered at. (17DHT1-R2).

We've got a culture now where the kids behave by and large and they respect what we're trying to do and they join in. They expect to learn and the teachers expect to teach them. Before that it wasn't the case. The teachers expected to have quite a hard time in the lesson because the kids were challenging, but they expect now to go in and perform and do well, and the kids expect to learn. (12HT-R2).

5.6.2 Connecting behaviour with learning outcomes

Introducing a whole school approach to pupil behaviour management was highlighted by participants at 6 secondary schools and 6 primary schools as having made an important contribution to improved pupil outcomes. In secondary schools especially, thought not exclusively, whole school behaviour management was seen as the key to a successful, effective school:

The whole school follows a strict behaviour policy so every child knows where they go what happens and the consequences.

Because of that you can actually teach in that makes a big difference. (10DHT-R1).

We have a rigorous system. At lunchtime dinner ladies are asked to report any issues that arise on the playground. So the children have a very low expectation of getting away with anything. (8DHT-R1).

We use assertive discipline which is very helpful. It's firm and gives the pupils' boundaries. All staff have a consistent approach to behaviour. (18HOD1-R1).

There is a much more structured behaviour policy now and pupils are very much aware and value that and I think that can impact on them working. (14AHT-R1).

Nonetheless, some reservations were expressed by key staff at one secondary school about the change in relationship which had accompanied this emphasis:

I think the behaviour strategies that we have brought in to the school in the last year have worked, in terms of pupil behaviour, I think it has worked. But I think it is, it has made that relationship a bit more formal. There is less of a bringing of the kids on board, and more of a dictatorial and authoritative atmosphere.

However, for most (17 participants, across 11 schools) the implementation of these policies was seen to have resulted in a more positive school ethos:

There is an ethos, anyone who walks into this place always says it has a lovely ethos. The kids are lovely and friendly. We have strict guidelines, they are not allowed to misbehave. (1HT-R1).

Alongside this behaviour for learning strategy, the success culture of the school is growing as well. It is a place to achieve things and do well and I think the kids are buying into that. We want them to do well and it is in their interests to do well. So they are buying into that and I think that is helping as well as well as the behaviour for learning. (16HOD2-R1).

5.6.3 Trust with collegiality
In terms of the staff team, participants across four schools (three primary and one secondary) spoke of an increasing level of trust, mutual support and openness among the staff, which had the effect of creating an inclusive, strong and happy staff team:

I think there is a level of staff now, very good practitioners, and they are quite willing to share that. We have a lot of pupils coming through the school, we have a lot of teachers who have gone and observed other teachers so we are all quite familiar with each other's practice. (6PPM-R2).

I think there has also been a change and staff mentality in that we are a team and we talk about things in the staffroom that haven't worked, and people will say maybe try it this way. There is a lot of that, people are quite open. There is a lot of support. (5KS2-R2).

5.7 Improving Relationships With Students: Distributing Leadership

Participants in four schools (one primary and three secondary) saw improvements in the relationship between pupils and school staff (particularly teachers and leaders) as a direct consequence of the positive changes in school culture. The improving relationship between pupils and school staff was characterised as one where staff were increasingly caring of pupils, and where pupils did not fear teachers:

> So I think the general atmosphere of everybody working together and it's not just us as teachers them as pupils it's the school as a whole of working towards success. (14HOD4-R1).

> There's always a them and us because we're the teachers and they're the pupils, but there's a greater mutual respect amongst pupils and staff for each other, which means that classrooms are calmer, because it's their school. (11DHT-R2).

Significantly, key staff comments attributed the overall change to the school teaching and learning culture and directly to the leadership of the head, as illustrated in the following comment:

> The most significant one since [name of headteacher] was appointed is raising the learning agenda, putting learning at the heart of everything. I do think that before the [name of headteacher] was appointed there were so many external initiatives that perhaps we did lose our way a bit and actually refocusing on learning as being the key focus. (17HOD3-R2).

5.7.1   Student councils

In addition to comments about distributing leadership within the staff team, twenty-three participants also commented on the importance of distributing leadership to students in the school. Ten schools (5 secondary and 5 primary) used student councils as a primary means of distributing leadership to students. Participants spoke about how school councils had been empowered, by giving them a voice in decision-making about changes within the school. For example, several schools included members of the student council in staff recruitment processes, and other schools gave the student council the power to make decisions about where some schools funds set aside from upgrading playground equipment or school facilities would be best directed. In addition, the school council was able to communicate directly with the leadership of the school, including the head and, in several cases, the governing body:

> The children's involvement in the running of the school is a good thing. We don't just pay lip service to the school council. They actually helped interview for the deputy headship, they interview for teaching jobs, and they help run the school. (5HT-R1).

> One of the things we did quite early on, as we instigated a change to how school council worked i.e. we made it work because it hadn't worked at all before, it was a nonsense. And we gave them a budget, which last year was £8,000. So they get to spend that budget, and again that gets a huge amount of commitment from youngsters. (11HT-R1).

I've implemented the school council which is a true pupil voice. We have a meeting every 2nd Friday in the morning. The children are democratically elected – a boy and a girl from each class – I start by having an assembly to explain what's expected from those on the council and I go round the classes and we have a vote. They've made improvements to the play area, they support a charity. There's a possibility of additional money for resources for them to promote an activity outside the curriculum. (2DHT-R1).

5.7.2 Quality assessment role

Another key strategy used in fostering the leadership of students (mentioned by participants across six schools: five secondary and 1 primary), was that of gathering students' views about the quality of teaching and learning in the school. Giving students this role was also considered to be a way of building students' capacity to take on greater leadership roles with regard to their own learning. Student feedback about the quality of teaching and learning was most often gathered by questionnaire, but two other methods were mentioned. A department at one secondary school gathered feedback using student interviews. Another secondary had piloted a system whereby students observed teachers and provided feedback about the quality of the learning experience, from the perspective of pupils:

Relationships with pupils are good. There's a questionnaire that pupils complete and gives them a voice. They're very honest and we use their responses and analyse them. (18KS4C-R1).

Another we just piloted the sixth formers observing lessons…That was really interesting getting them thinking about process of teaching and learning. This involved students to observe lessons. This was only if teachers agree because some are uncomfortable. Last year, we had number of these lessons like this. It was quite an eye opener for me because they don't see things that we see and what they consider important is quite different from us. (19AH-R1).

We certainly listen to what they say, we do regular pupil perception interviews, we have looked at ways that they like learning, and we try to address, that goes into the department improvement plan. They love practical work, and a good listen to them as one when they have been doing something themselves, that they have learnt from doing. (20HOD3-R1).

5.8 Key Messages

1. The setting of high expectations for staff and students was a central strategy in developing the teaching and learning programmes
- A key focus mentioned by heads at all case study schools was that of developing a success culture in relation to teaching and learning. This success culture was developed through two key means: 1) empowering staff to cope with change; and 2) increasing pupil and staff expectations of themselves.
- One-third (33%) of all primary and secondary heads surveyed reported a fair degree of change in practice in relation to discussing educational issues with staff. Of the key staff surveyed, 82% of the primary sample and 73% of the secondary sample agreed moderately or strongly that their head frequently discussed educational issues with them.
- Around one-third of the heads surveyed (33% primary and 32% secondary)

reported a lot of change in relation to demonstrating high expectations for staff. In responding to a similar question, 92% of all key staff surveyed (75% primary and 70% secondary) reported that their head demonstrated high expectations for staff work with pupils.

2. School success in raising student outcomes rests on the establishment of high achievement focussed school cultures in which care and trust are predominant features.

- Around 40% of all heads surveyed reported a lot or very significant changes in relation to developing a culture of trust and caring during the last three years.
- Of the key staff surveyed, overall 57% agreed strongly that their heads developed a culture of care and trust in the school. However, there were sector differences with strong agreement from 71% of primary key staff, and 51% secondary key staff, suggesting that primary heads may be more successful than their secondary counterparts in establishing this culture of care and trust perhaps due to smaller organisational size.
- Participants across 4 case study schools (3 primary and 1 secondary) made specific mention of the way that a school culture in which trust, care and openness were predominant features was important in establishing a stable, strong and happy staff team.

3. Introducing a whole-school approach to pupil behaviour management is positively associated with improved student outcomes

- In all 24 participants across twelve case study schools (6 primary and 6 secondary) attributed increases in pupil outcomes to the introduction of a whole-school approach to pupil behaviour management. Comments by secondary school participants suggest that whole school approaches to behaviour management are especially important to the school's success in fostering improved student outcomes.

4. The headteacher plays a vital role model in developing the professional practice of staff in effective schools.

- Twenty six percent of primary heads and 31% of secondary heads reported a substantial amount of change in their practice in relation to modelling a high level of professional practice for staff. Secondary heads in FSM 3 and 4 schools were most likely to report a substantial amount of change in relation to this area of practice. Key staff results corroborate head reports. Eighty-six percent of all key staff surveyed moderately-strongly agreed that their head modelled a high level of professional practice.

5. Development of student leadership in some schools was considered to be a means of enhancing pupil outcomes.

- Distributing leadership to students was commented upon by participants across 4 case study schools (1 primary and 3 secondary) as an important means for developing a caring school culture. Leadership was distributed to students by two main methods: 1) empowering the student council to amplify student voice in decision-making within the school and 2) gathering student feedback about the quality of teaching and learning in the school.

Chapter 6: Changing Curriculum, Pedagogy And Assessment

In this chapter we examine the extent of reported changes over the last three years related to curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.

6.0 Curriculum And Pedagogy

The survey results provide strong evidence that headteachers and key staff of effective schools placed a great emphasis on improving curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, with a particular focus on the use of pupil performance data.

6.1 Setting Goals

6.1.1 Differences by sector

A similar proportion of primary (N=158, 42%) and secondary (N=149, 41%) heads who responded to the survey reported "a lot" of change in practice in relation to providing assistance to staff in setting short-term goals for teaching and learning, although the category "very significant" change was more likely to be reported by primary heads (N=50, 13%) than their secondary peers (N=25, 7%). This was confirmed by data from key staff respondents.

When asked whether the head provided assistance to staff in setting short-term goals for teaching and learning, three quarters of key staff agreed moderately/strongly (N=1,315, 75%). However, there was a considerable sector difference: with 50% of primary key stage managers agreeing strongly to it (N=301) but only 31% of their secondary peers (N=659). There was a moderate and significant difference ($p < 0.001$) which indicated that primary heads of effective and improving schools are particularly likely to support goal setting as a strategy to improve teaching and learning. *This may reflect the smaller size of primaries and differences in the level of day to day contact with headteachers as well as the important role of departmental leadership in relation to subject teaching and social setting in secondary schools.*

6.1.2 Differences by school sector and socio-economic context

In the secondary sample, heads from high disadvantage schools were more likely to report change in practice in relation to assisting staff to set short-term teaching goals, giving them individual support to improve their teaching and encouraging them to think of learning beyond the academic curriculum ($p < 0.01$). Higher numbers of key staff from highly disadvantaged primary schools (N=238, 41%) showed strong agreement to the item on goal setting than their counterparts in low disadvantage schools (N=414, 35%, $p < 0.05$). This was also true for the secondary school sample. Key staff from schools in FSM band 4 (N=54, 38%) were also the most likely to agree strongly and those from school FSM band 1 (N=108, 27%) were the least likely to agree strongly to this ($p < 0.05$). This was, however, not the case for the primary heads and key staff. *These results reveal that headteachers and key staff in highly effective/improved high disadvantage secondary schools are more likely to give particular emphasis to providing specific, focussed support to improve the quality of teaching than their counterparts in low disadvantage secondary schools.*

6.1.3 Differences by years of experience in school

Heads' experience is significantly associated with the degree of reported change in relation to setting short-term goals for both the primary (p<0.01) and the secondary samples (p<0.01). Sixty-two per cent of less experienced secondary heads (0-3 years, (N=59) reported a lot of change in this area in contrast to only 32% of most experienced heads (16+ years, (N=10) who did so. For the primary sample, 66% (N=46) of less experienced heads and 45% (N=22) of most experienced heads reported such change over the last three years. Less experienced primary heads were more likely to report change in terms of giving staff individual support (p<0.05) and encouraging them to consider new ideas for teaching, but this pattern was not the case for secondary schools. *This confirms other findings in this report that more recently appointed heads are more likely to focus upon improvements in setting short term goals for improvements in teaching and learning than more experienced heads, and that primary heads exercise more direct influence than their secondary colleagues.*

6.2 Encouraging New Ideas

6.2.1 Differences by sector

Many primary and secondary heads reported a substantial amount of change ("a lot" or "very significantly") in relation to encouraging teachers to consider new ideas for their teaching (Primary: N=213, 57%; Secondary: N=196, 55%). In both sectors a large minority also reported substantial change in practice in giving staff individual support to help them improve their teaching practices (Primary: N=148, 39%; Secondary: N=152, 42%). A moderate amount of change in the extent of individual support for teachers to improve their teaching was also reported by roughly a third of primary and secondary heads (Primary: N=129, 34%; Secondary: N=110, 31%). A moderate degree of agreement was noted when key staff were asked whether their headteacher encouraged them to consider new ideas for their teaching. Under half agreed strongly to it and roughly one-third agreed moderately; with about 15% agreeing only slightly to it. Figure 6.1 shows a clear sector difference. In all, 60% of primary key staff (N=361) agreed strongly, compared with 43% of their secondary peers (N=496, p<0.001).

Figure 6.1: Differences between primary and secondary staff perceptions of headteacher encouragement to consider new ideas for their teaching

	Disagree strongly/moderately/slightly	Agree slightly	Agree moderately	Agree strongly
■ Primary	2%	8%	30%	60%
□ Secondary	7%	18%	32%	43%
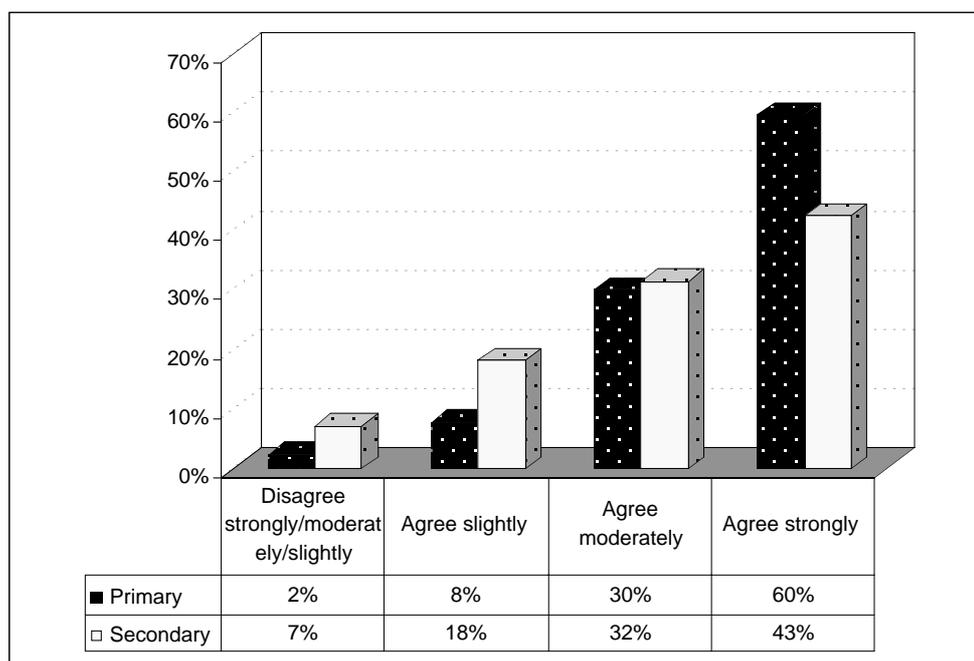
6.3 Beyond The Academic Curriculum

6.3.1 Differences by sector

A substantial amount of change was reported by many primary heads (N=210, 56%) in relation to encouraging staff to thinking of learning beyond the academic curriculum, whereas the figure was somewhat lower at 38% of secondary heads (N=138). Almost a third of secondary heads (N=116, 32%) reported a moderate amount of change in practice in their schools for this item.

Over half of key staff agreed strongly that their heads encouraged them to think of learning beyond the academic curriculum (N=933, 53%). Significant associations were found between sector and leaders' responses. Primary key stage managers (N=423, 70%) were more likely than secondary heads of departments (N=510, 44%) to agree strongly to it (p<0.001) (See Figure 6.2).

Taken together, these findings suggest that a focus upon raising the quality of classroom teaching and learning was perceived by heads to be a key part of their strategic role. However, there were differences between heads according to school SES and their years of experience in the school.

Figure 6.2: Differences between primary and secondary staff perceptions of headteacher encouragement to think of learning beyond the academic curriculum

	Disagree strongly/moderately/slightly	Agree slightly	Agree moderately	Agree strongly
■ Primary	1%	6%	23%	70%
□ Secondary	7%	16%	33%	44%
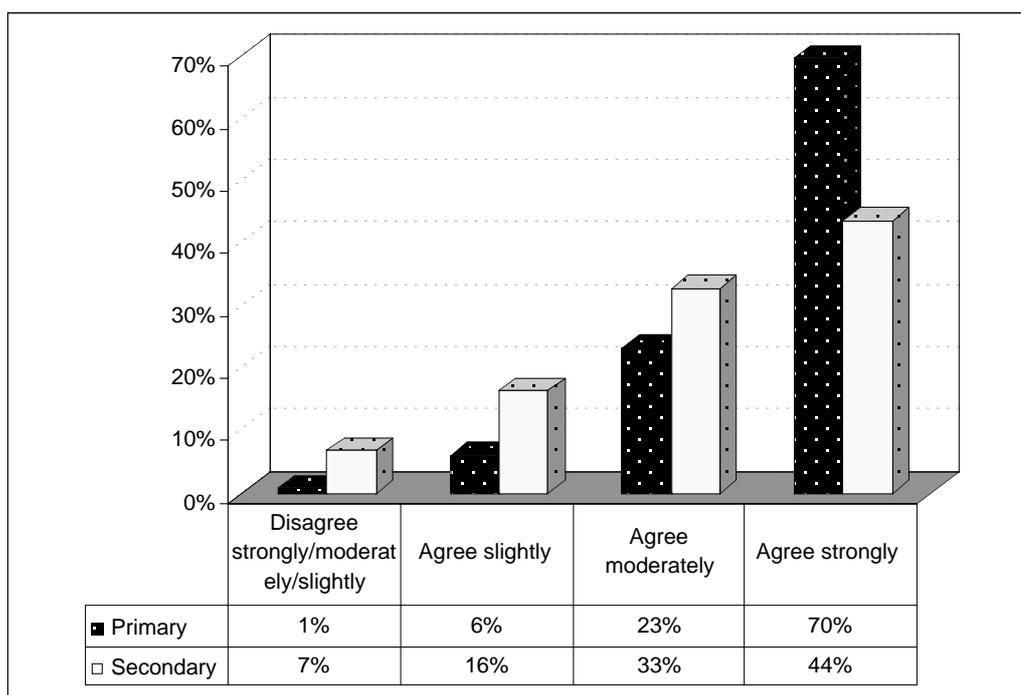
6.4 Redesigning Resources For Teaching

In both sectors over a quarter of heads reported "very significant" change in terms of utilising support staff skills for the benefit of pupil learning (Primary: N=102, 27%; Secondary: N=90, 26%). In addition, the majority of primary (N=225, 60%) and secondary heads (N=225, 64%) reported a moderate or a substantial amount of change in this area over the last three years. Similarly, most primary (N=237, 63%) and secondary heads (N=220, 63%) reported some or a lot of change in practice relating to their strategic allocation of resources based on pupil needs. Around one in ten of both primary (N=39, 10%) and secondary heads (N=36, 10%) reported "very significant" change in this area. Likewise, a fair degree of change was reported in relation to providing or locating resources to help staff improve their teaching by 64% of primary heads (N=240) and 66% of secondary heads (N=233). Less than half of key staff agreed strongly that their headteacher allocated resources strategically based on pupils needs (N=839, 48%); one-third agreed moderately to it (N=585, 33%) and 14% agreed only slightly (N=240). Primary key stage managers (N=381, 63%) were more likely to agree strongly than their counterparts from secondary schools (N=458, 40%) (p<0.001). Those from low disadvantage schools were somewhat less likely to agree with this statement (p<0.01).

6.4.1 Differences by school sector, socio-economic context and years of experience in school
Secondary heads in high disadvantage schools were more likely to report change related to redesigning resources for teaching. However, no statistically significant associations were found for the primary sample. Again, this finding indicates that specific targeted actions in relation to teaching had been implemented in high disadvantage schools in the secondary sector. In both sectors less experienced heads were more likely report change in relation to allocating resources strategically based on pupil needs over the last three years. Figures 6.3 and 6.4

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show that differences were slightly stronger for secondary level.

Figure 6.3: Primary heads' years of experience in school and the extent of reported change in allocating resources strategically based on pupil needs
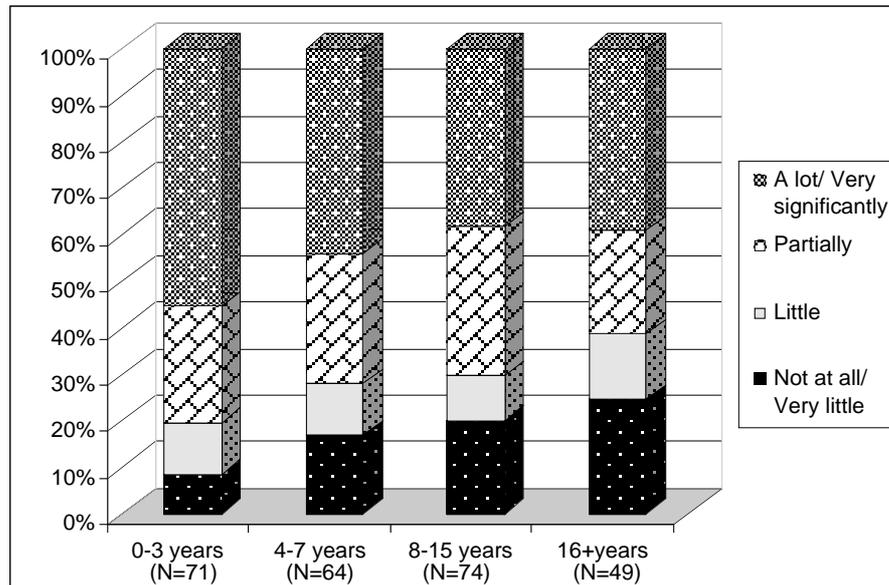
Figure 6.4: Secondary heads' years of experience in school and the extent of reported change in allocating resources strategically based on pupil needs
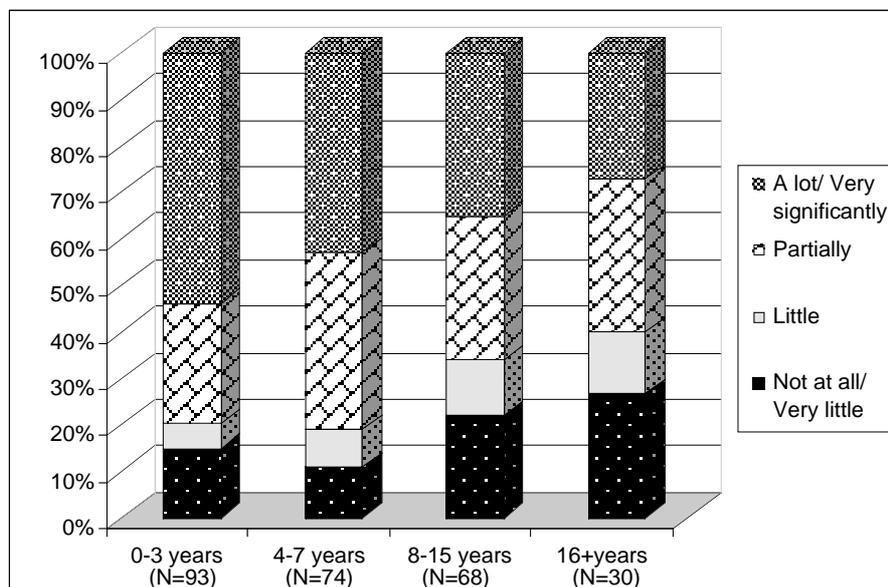
6.5 Coaching, Mentoring And Classroom Observation

In both sectors, some or a lot of change during the three year period was noted by the majority of heads for the three items related to increasing the time spent in: regularly observing classroom activities; working with teachers to improve their teaching after classroom observation; and using coaching and mentoring to improve the quality of teaching.

6.5.1 Differences by sector

For secondary heads, relatively more change was reported in relation to regularly observing classroom activities and using coaching and mentoring to support teachers in developing their practice. Sixteen per cent (N=58) and 10% (N=36) of secondary heads reported "very significant" change respectively in relation to these two items respectively, compared to 10% (N=39) and 6% (N=23) of primary heads. In addition, 40% of secondary heads (N=142), in contrast to 28% of primary heads (N=106), reported that "a lot" of change in practice had occurred in regular classroom observation. In total there were over half (58%) of secondary and more than a third (38%) of primary heads who reported substantial change in relation to the use of lesson observation. When key staff were asked whether the headteacher in their school regularly observed classroom activities, worked with teachers to improve teaching after the observation and used coaching and mentoring to improve quality of teaching, most staff from both sectors agreed "a lot" or "very significantly" to each of these items. As evident in previous items, the sector difference was significant here also. Primary key stage managers were more likely to agree to this than their secondary peers, in all, 73% of primary but 60% of secondary key staff agreed.

6.5.2 Differences by school socio-economic context and years of experience in school

In the primary sample, heads from high disadvantage schools were more likely to report a lot of change in relation to coaching and mentoring (p<0.05). Also, less experienced primary heads were more likely to report an increase in the extent to which there was regular observation of classroom activities (p<0.01) and working with teachers after class observation (p<0.05). However, there were no significant differences for the secondary sample related to experience or school context for these items. Key staff from high disadvantage schools (N=207, 36%), in particular, referred to the use of mentoring and coaching as an important factor to improve the quality of teaching than those from low disadvantage schools (N=348, 30%, p<0.05). *Once more results indicate a greater emphasis in high disadvantaged schools and among less experienced heads in the use of specific support strategies to improve teaching.*

6.6 Assessment: Increasing The Use Of Pupil Attainment Data

For both sectors, heads' responses to the three items that related to encouraging staff to use data in their work to identify pupil needs and to assist in decisions about improvement showed the greatest reported change during the last three years. The majority of heads (over 64%) reported "a lot" or "very significant" change in these areas. Roughly a quarter of primary (N=93, 25%) and secondary heads (N=84, 24%) reported "very significant" change in the use of pupil achievement data to make decisions about school improvement. Close to 90% of key staff agreed that the head encouraged them to use data in their work to plan for individual pupil needs and to make most decisions about school improvement. About 78% agreed that their head incorporated research evidence into his/her decision making to inform practice. Almost equal proportions of key staff agreed strongly when they were asked whether data/research is used to make decisions concerning school improvement for improving practice.

6.6.1 Differences by sector

For secondary heads relatively more substantial change was reported for the two items relating to encouraging staff to use data in their work and to identify pupil needs. Approximately one in three reported "very significant" change in practice

in these two areas in contrast to only one in five of the primary heads who did so. *This suggests that using performance data is seen, most recently, as a particular lever for improvement in the secondary sector, but does not imply that this is not the case, also, for the primary sector.*

Most primary (N=237, 63%) and secondary heads (N=198, 56%) reported some or a lot of change in relation to incorporating research evidence into their decision making to inform practice. However, 15% of primary heads (N=55) and 17% of secondary heads (N=60) reported "not at all" or "very little" change in this area in the last three years.

6.6.2 Differences by school socio-economic context

SES context was not associated with any differences in responses in the primary sample. However, in secondary schools heads in high disadvantage contexts were more likely to report a substantial amount of change in practice in relation to the four items on using data and research evidence to improve teaching and learning than secondary heads in low disadvantage schools:

* Encouraging staff to use data in their work ($p<0.05$);
* Encouraging staff to use data in planning for individual pupil needs ($p<0.01$);
* Incorporating research evidence into my decision making to inform practice ($p<0.05$);
* Using pupil achievement data to make most decisions about school improvement ($p<0.001$).

For example, 84% (N=84) of heads in FSM 3 and 4 secondary schools, compared with 73% of those in FSM 1 and 2 schools, reported 'a lot' and 'very significant' change in encouraging staff to use data in their work. Over 80% (N=84, 83%) of heads in high disadvantage schools indicated a substantial amount change in leadership practice in terms of encouraging all staff to use data in planning for individual pupil needs. In contrast, 67% of those leading low disadvantage schools reported that they did so. In addition, more than three in four (N=79, 78%) of those in high disadvantage schools, in contrast to slightly over half (N=144, 58%) in low disadvantage schools, indicated a substantial amount of change in using pupil achievement data to make most decisions about school improvement.

Again, the results suggest that in secondary schools a stronger focus over the recent period was made on the use of assessment data by staff and this was particularly evident for those in more disadvantaged schools, suggesting that the use of data had a particular role to play in their improvement efforts (a point supported by case study data reported elsewhere and in the written comments on the survey forms).

Length of experience and school disadvantage factors were also associated with the way key staff perceived the level of encouragement from the head to use data for identifying and planning to meet individual pupil needs. More experienced key staff and those from more disadvantaged contexts (FSM bands 3 and 4) reported higher levels of encouragement from the head to do so. For example, 52% of key staff in high disadvantage secondary schools indicated that they strongly agreed that class teachers regularly used pupil data to set individual pupil achievement targets with 31% agreeing moderately. For key staff in low disadvantage schools, 38% showed strong and 36% moderate agreement. Similarly, 47% of key staff in high disadvantage schools strongly agreed that the performance of subject areas was regularly monitored and targets set for improvement. The figures were slightly lower at 40% for low disadvantage schools.

In addition, staff from high disadvantage schools were more likely to report that their headteacher incorporated research evidence into decision making. No differences in degree of agreement was found between primary school key staff. But, within the secondary sample, staff with more experience and those from disadvantage schools were more likely to report encouragement from the headteacher to use data in planning for individual pupil needs. The staff with longer service were also likely to perceive more encouragement to use data in their work. *It may be that headteachers see the use of data as particularly important to encourage longer serving staff to review their teaching approaches and that those in disadvantaged contexts also find it especially useful to challenge existing practices.*

When key staff were asked whether the head utilised support staff skills for the benefit of pupil learning, over half agreed strongly (N=915, 52%) and roughly one-third agreed moderately (N=553, 31%). As seen in previous questions, primary staff (N=417, 69%) were more likely to agree strongly than their secondary peers (N=498, 43%, p<0.001).

6.7 Changing Curriculum, Pedagogy And Assessment

The case studies provide more detailed evidence of the kinds of changes in the teaching and learning programmes that were perceived to be linked with improvements in pupil outcomes. These included: an increased school-wide focus upon consistency in teaching approaches and learning practices within the school; adapting the curriculum; extending extra curricula provision; and the use of data informed progress and assessment.

6.7.1 School-wide focus on consistency in teaching approaches and learning practices

When asked about key changes over the last three years that had contributed to the school's success in raising pupil outcomes, 35 participants (across 15 case study schools) pointed to the way that the school had prioritised improving the quality of teaching and learning within the school. Participants' comments show that this occurred through focusing teachers' professional development on two central strategies: differentiated planning so as to cater for different abilities and learning preferences of pupils; and greater consistency in the lesson structures used across the school, moving away from a reliance on didactic teaching methods towards a model in which teachers employed a greater variety of activity structures that catered both for pupils' different abilities in the class, and for their different learning styles. Participants considered that because of changes in these features of classroom practice, the overall quality of teaching and learning had improved. In some instances it was also seen to have resulted in increased independence in pupils' learning. Increased pupil engagement with lessons and raised expectations for their own learning and achievement were also considered to be vital factors in raising pupil attainment:

> *And by differentiating lessons that way, our kids were becoming more engaged in the actual learning. So they did not care to misbehave anymore. They were more like "I want to be part of it, this is fun and interesting". That was a massive thing (12AST-R1).*

> *We are trying to have a lot more brain friendly learning if you like, cater for the different learning styles, present information and more memorable ways…To try and help them concentrate more. And I think that has worked. (5DHT-R1).*

The strategies used in the classroom have changed and developed over the last three years. Most staff have tried to get out of their comfort zone and have tried to embrace other learning styles because they have a particular style they prefer and you end up teaching that way. Over the last three years there's been a real development in that. (2KS1-R1).

Consistency in using an overarching three-part lesson structure (introduction, main activity and plenary) was seen to be a key planning strategy in the focus upon teaching and learning in most of the case study schools. A teacher in school 13 had developed a specific version of a three-part lesson. A copy of the structure (entitled "The Name-of-School Good Lesson") was displayed in every classroom and teachers were expected to follow this three-part lesson structure. This consistency of approach meant that not only were teachers clear about what lesson structure they should follow, pupils also expected every teacher to follow it:

We have worked really hard at getting quality, not just for the staff that we appoint but making sure that quality is in the classroom as well. So, for example, I could, hand on my heart now, say that I could walk into any classroom… and objectives are on the board. (17HT-R1).

We do what is called accelerated learning.… it is basically a lesson plan format, a way of working, starting by sharing objectives, and it is a cycle, where you make sure you revisit learning at the end and at the beginning of every lesson and you revisit what you did yesterday. And including some small brain breaks. And I think that has been a big contributor [to raising pupil outcomes]. Looking around teachers use these brain breaks a lot to try and maximise the time spent in class. So I think we have all taken that on board. So teaching in a structured way to make the most of the learning time. (6KS1-R1).

The school has instigated the [name of school] good lesson which is based on the strategy, I think. That is supposedly what everybody should be doing and I think if you went into a lesson I think people would be using objectives. I covered a science lesson recently and the kids were asking me what was the objective. So they were obviously used to hearing objectives. That is a model. (13HOD1-R2).

Staff were supported in this by INSET, other in-house professional development and performance management processes. In this way, they were prepared to be responsible and accountable for engaging all pupils more in learning which was set within consistent patterns of task and lesson organisation:

I think teaching and learning initiatives have had the biggest impact.… There is far less didactic teaching going on now. I think the emphasis on creating a good lesson, the observation cycle checking that certain things are going on a lesson. I think that has had the biggest impact. (16HOD-R1).

There is a lot of INSET within the school which promotes the teachers and understanding the teaching of the learning process. How we can move away from just delivering the curriculum to

actually turning curriculum in something organic that pupils can participate in rather than just fill it up (12HOD1-R1).

6.7.2 Adapting the curriculum

Ten headteachers and 18 staff suggested that, crucial to their success in raising pupil outcomes, was the adaptation of the curriculum so that it was more closely tailored to pupil learning needs:

> *I think curriculum leaders and senior management team are constantly looking at courses that are suited to the pupils, that get the best out of the pupils. I think the leadership team are willing to change. There's no standstill in the school. There's a lot of moving on, pushing forward, always looking at what is best for the pupils, really. And about how we get the best out of that. I think that is really good. (15HOD4-R1).*

In three schools, teachers of particular subjects mentioned how changing the way certain subjects were presented had made those subjects more popular with pupils:

> *I was a modern languages teacher and totally changed the curriculum to make it more popular. You can't just teach, but need to look at learning styles and motivations. (18HT-R1).*

> *Excellence and enjoyment is definitely one [reason for our success], where we have started teaching more cross curricular lessons. That goes back to the previous question about pupil engagement, because you're not just teaching literacy, you are teaching literacy in something else …. history might be something that really catches of certain child and it improves their literacy learning. (9KS1-R1).*

Some of the changes that were being made to the way curricula were offered differed between primary and secondary schools. For example, in 8 primary schools, headteachers and other leaders talked about:

- Integrating the curriculum and ('where it made sense to') teaching subjects through topics;
- Emphasizing a broader school curriculum to try and reach disaffected pupils who did not excel within the '3R's'.

> *We have a lot of kids here who will excel at gymnastics. We have one going international this year. While you were talking with the deputy principal down here they were 36 of them up there vaulting. And that has an impact on their work. (1HT-R1).*

> *We have talked about altering the curriculum… so that those pupils who come in who are very weak, will perhaps just do a year where we concentrate on building them up, before we offer the key stage curriculum in year nine. We modify the year nine curriculum to suit those who would only get a level 5. So we… do a lot of project based work. We have brought on separate sciences for the more able, in GCSE and so on. So I think it is trying to suit the individual needs, trying to offer something that will suit them. (15HOD3-R1).*

In the 10 case study secondary schools, the focus seemed to be on offering more options for a wider range of pupil interests and abilities. These options included

an accelerated curriculum and vocational subjects which were especially important in the schools with higher levels of disadvantage:

> *… a broader curriculum, not so traditional. Lots of people in this area move into the caring professions. We wanted to raise the aspirations of the pupils, so we developed the health and social care, as well as childcare, counselling, etc. We try to appeal to the career aspirations of individuals. (18HOD4-R1).*

6.7.3 Extending extra-curricular provision to meet more needs

Twenty-five percent of participants across 10 case study schools (6 primary and 4 secondary) commented on the way they had developed programmes of clubs and groups which operated outside the usual school day, in order to cater for a broader range of pupils' learning needs, and as a means of stimulating and extending pupil interest in and engagement with their schoolwork. Examples were given of three categories of 'out-of-normal-school-time' provisions. The first, mentioned by participants at 5 primary and 1 secondary school was the traditional extra-curricular clubs, e.g. gym, science and crafts. The second, provided by participants at 3 primary schools was those services set up by schools to cater for pupils' personal and social needs. These included breakfast clubs and a programme of play therapy. Finally, participants at 3 secondary schools talked about programmes to support pupils' academic learning, including homework clubs, and special classes to help pupils complete their coursework. Most of these activities occurred before or after schools, but 4 schools also had activities in the weekend and holiday periods:

> *Some of our children will not necessarily achieve academically. But they do have skills, and they are good at other areas. And the range of clubs in activities that we have got, craft club, the library club, loads of sports clubs, young engineering club, we have a range of clubs and a range of activities and some of our children excel in sport or an art or music. The strength of that is that it helps them to build confidence in other subjects. (3HT-R1).*

> *The school offers a lot more than just the normal basic school day. We're doing after-school lessons, lunch-time lessons, Saturday morning lessons, and I think the kids who've been targeted are coming in on those times, and that's making a difference. It's quite geared up in terms of getting the success of these children. (14HOD3-R2).*

> *When they do not do their course work we arrange with their parents that they cannot go home. Literally they cannot go home. The record is 20 to 10 at night and in order to make this happen. We have pizzas delivered and we have taxis to take them home. And they do not go home until their course work is finished. So we won't allow them to fail. (13HT-R1).*

> *They have the summer camp, during the six-week holiday. For the children to come in, the school is open for activities like cycling proficiency and things like that. The staff come in and give up their time. (4LM-R1).*

6.8 Data Informed Progress And Assessment

Staff and headteachers in all the schools stated that they relied increasingly on

pupil achievement data to i) monitor pupil progress; ii) involve pupils more in their own learning; in order to iii) inform changes in their teaching and learning and its organisation. In all cases, this change had been initiated by the senior leadership team in the school. These findings from the case studies are strongly in accord with those from the surveys (see section 6.6).

6.8.1 Monitoring pupil progress

The close monitoring of pupil progress was a key strategy in sustaining improved pupil outcomes. Twenty-five percent of participants, across all case study schools made specific mention that by monitoring pupil progress, schools were able to identify groups of pupils who were not progressing as well as they should. These data were then used to design interventions, such as provision of additional classroom support or booster classes for groups of underachieving children, as well as targeted professional development for teachers. Heads, and other senior leaders across 6 schools, noted that the development of teachers' ability to analyse data and utilise data were key professional learning goals in their school:

> *We are increasingly getting staff who appreciate that what they have to get involved in is a very close examination of the data that are linked to their department. So they have to understand issues around higher attaining boys, middle attaining boys, lower attaining boys and girls. Ethnic minority achievement, all of these things are pretty important. I think we are beginning to move staff in the direction of becoming more sophisticated in data analysis. We have had some big in-service training on that side. I think that is a very significant development. (15HT-R1).*

> *Using assessment data strategically to inform initiatives in school. To keep informed on a day to day classroom level, it's informing which children may need support, and that's giving us a much clearer overview of where we are, and with certain things if certain groups of children aren't achieving. That's made a difference. (7DHT-R1).*

> *All of the other things we do around the learning, the levelling of children's work, the tracking, it is very helpful. (1DHT-R1).*

6.8.2 Assessment for learning

In addition to using data to inform the practice of teachers, 15% of participants, across 12 case study schools, stated that data were also being used to raise pupils' own awareness of what they could be achieving:

> *… target setting is a huge difference in the school. We have really sat down and done a lot of work on it as a whole staff, we have talked about how to target set and it has had a massive impact on how the children have developed in class and the progress that they have made. They are more aware of their own learning. (10KS1-R1).*

> *Every child [and their family] when they arrive here within their first 8 weeks is met by one of the senior staff, and we set out their targets in terms of SATs and GCSEs, and we have about a quarter of an hour talking about how we're going to work together to get these targets. (11HT-R1).*

> *We also encourage children to think about how they have achieved in a particular lesson and what they think they need to do now so*

that they're active participants in their own learning. They are not just being taught, they are thinking about how they are learning. And I think that is a very important part in the outcomes. That is something we concentrate on very much in years five and six, children owning their learning. They can start driving themselves. They can say I've achieved that, I have achieved that, now I can do this. And that will motivate them. Taking them forward much more quickly. (9DHT-R1).

6.8.3 Pupil grouping

A third area where data were used to improve pupil learning, and as a result, outcomes, was grouping and setting. Teachers were using achievement data to identify groups that were succeeding to set pupils (in secondary schools) or to provide other flexible grouping techniques (in primary schools). For instance, school 10 used a booster programme whereby pupils who had not reached certain learning targets were grouped, and given focused attention by classroom assistants throughout the school day. In a year one class, there were at least five such groups operating, and pupils moved out of them, as they reached targets:

> *When my pupils came from reception they were obviously assessed, and there was a big percentage of them that were identified as needing extra help in different areas, especially to do with maths and literacy. So these could be simple targets such as identifying numbers, so whereas most children were at that level already these children needed pushing to get there. So they are identified, they have an IEP (Individual Education Plan), and then those children are taken out during registration period and it doesn't interfere with classwork. So those targets are met outside the classroom and those targets are also integrated within our own classroom…And I think this has a big impact on pupils' development. (10T2-R2).*

> *What we need to do is to monitor the target setting that's gone on and the point scoring that goes with it, so that you can see after half term or after a term where the children have made progress and, if they have not made progress, then we can go to the class teacher and ask is there a reason why Johnny is still a 2C? … If there is, then okay. If not, then we need to put them on a booster programme, check that the work they had been given was suitable and check their IEP. (10AHT-R1).*

> *And then there is the target group which we are a bit worried about. Without the extra support they might not get their level four so we monitor them very carefully. We are very analytical with them at the beginning. We look at who will stand a chance of getting it and what will they need to do that. (1KS1-R1).*

6.9   Key Messages:

1. Headteachers and other leaders had expanded the curriculum beyond the confines of the traditional academic subjects, in order to boost student engagement in school and, thereby, their achievement.
- 31% of case study participants (across 15 schools) attributed their success of improving student achievement to the provision of a broader range of curriculum programmes and activities (such as vocational courses, accelerated

curriculum and integrated curriculum).

- 25% of case study participants (across 10 schools) attributed their success of improving student achievement to the provision of a broader range of extra-curricular programmes and activities.
- 56% of primary heads and 38% of secondary heads surveyed reported substantial change in their practice in relation to encouraging to think of student learning beyond the traditional curriculum. The heads most likely to report this change were secondary heads in high disadvantage schools (FSM 3 and 4).
- More than half of heads surveyed (57% primary and 55% secondary) reported substantial change in relation to getting teachers to consider new ideas for their teaching. Of the key staff who responded to the survey, nearly all agreed (slightly-strongly) that their head encouraged them to consider new ideas for their teaching (98% primary key staff and 93% secondary key staff).

2. A key leadership strategy in the effective schools was that of placing a high priority and consistent emphasis upon improving classroom teaching across the school.

- Thirty-five participants across 15 of the case study schools commented that the head and other leaders had prioritised the development of teaching and learning within the school. This focus upon developing the teaching and learning programme had included:
  o Encouraging teachers to use different teaching approaches and innovative strategies to foster student engagement
  o Development of a greater consistency in teaching approaches across the school.
- Strategies aimed at getting staff to change and improve their teaching practice were also noted as a focus for heads in the effective schools that were surveyed. Areas of leadership practice that had changed significantly in survey schools included a marked focus on the provision of relevant professional development and the use of classroom observations to identify personal targets for staff development.
  o 39% of primary heads and 42% of secondary heads reported substantial change in giving staff individual support so that they could improve their teaching practice.
  o 60% of primary and secondary heads surveyed reported moderate-substantial change in relation to the promotion of CPD for staff. This was corroborated by key staff responses, with 52% agreeing that their head promoted CPD for staff.
  o 38% of primary heads and 56% of secondary heads reported substantial change in practice in their use of classroom observation. Most key staff agreed that their head regularly observed classroom practice.

3. Allocating and distributing personnel and resources appropriately so as to foster student achievement was a focus for a significant number of headteachers and other leaders in the schools

- 87% of primary heads and 90% of secondary heads who were surveyed reported a very significant change in the way that they utilised support staff skills to benefit pupil learning, over the past three years.
- 73% of heads surveyed report a moderate-significant change in how resources were allocated strategically, based on pupil needs.
- 64% of primary heads and 62% of secondary heads reported change in their practice of allocating resources to help staff to improve their teaching.

4. Headteachers and staff in the schools were using increasingly detailed analyses of student progress and achievement data to inform their teaching.

- Participants across all 20 case study schools commented that they relied upon a close analysis of pupil achievement data to inform changes in teaching and leadership practice in the school.
- One-quarter of the heads who were surveyed (25% primary heads and 24% secondary heads) reported very significant change in their practice of using pupil achievement data to make change. Nearly all key staff surveyed (90%) agreed that their headteacher encouraged the use of pupil achievement data to inform practice.

5. The use of performance data was reported more conclusively by schools improving in disadvantaged contexts.

A key finding from the analyses of the qualitative and quantitative data was that there had been an increasing awareness by heads and key staff of the need to increase pupil engagement with their own learning. This had prompted the Senior Leadership Team, and other staff in key leadership roles, to develop the curriculum (changing examination Boards, increasing the vocational element etc), adapt pedagogical approaches, and use data to inform and evaluate the changes. These changes were reported to have resulted in greater pupil motivation, engagement and achievement. In addition there was strong evidence about the role of performance data at all levels (total school, department and individual pupil) as a tool to promote improvement and inform teaching and learning.

Chapter 7: The Primacy Of The Headteacher:
Building Effectiveness Capacity

The case study evidence illuminated the crucial role played by headteachers in promoting positive change across a range of aspects of school life, and being the driving force behind the changes in culture, structure and curriculum, pedagogy and assessment noted, in the preceding chapters of Part 2. In this chapter, we focus on what the case study data reveal about the strategies these headteachers use in order to motivate staff and sustain and build the effectiveness capacity of the staff.

7.0 Managing The Vision

A particular aspect highlighted through the qualitative interviews related to the concept of school vision. Although leadership was generally seen to be widely distributed within all of the 20 case study schools, this distribution did not diminish the importance of the central leadership role played by the headteacher. When asked about the impact of different leaders upon pupil outcomes, 55% of the 130 participants (including 10 headteachers and 61 key staff and colleagues), across all 20 case study schools commented that the headteacher played a pivotal role in the introduction, implementation process and evaluation of change so that the school could sustain or improve pupil outcomes. Participants very much seemed to view the headteacher as the person who stood 'at the helm' of the school:

> The HT is on the ball and knows what he's doing. He's continued to make changes and advance the school. (18Sec-R1).

> Obviously you need the right leader. The right headteacher is a key one really. I mean his role is absolutely crucial and he is a marvellous headteacher. I would just say that he is the best person I have ever worked for without any doubt at all. (14DHT-R1).

> I think underestimating a good head would be wrong. It doesn't matter how the work is delegated, and all of the assessment and things have been delegated to the deputy head, but he is still sailing the ship so to speak. (9BusM-R1).

> [name of headteacher] is there, he is the one who sets the agenda. He does keep us focused on our aims and he does keep bringing us back. (8TA-R1).

> Obviously, the headteacher had some super ideas that she has passed on. I mean, every year something changes which adds to the progress that we are making. Particularly target setting, looking at assessment for learning and all that sort of thing. These are all things that have been introduced so you have things to work on all the time. (10KS1-R1).

7.1 Leading The Change Agenda

The headteacher's leadership was perceived to be central to the change agenda and its success within these schools.

When asked to describe changes in the school that had had an impact upon improved pupil outcomes, headteachers, key staff and colleagues described changes that had occurred over the past three years as being part of longer-term initiatives that had been implemented by the current headteacher. The nature of participants' comments seemed to be an indication of two important points about how change occurs within these effective schools. Change in these effective schools occurred as a process of steady progression in line with a long-term, broad-ranging strategic change agenda, rather than as ad hoc, spontaneous or isolated innovations:

> I can't honestly say that she came in and said, 'Right we are going to do this and this and this and we are going to change everything' because that is not how it had happened. It has been a very gradual process. (3KS1-R2).

The primacy of the headteacher's role in leading a change agenda which is successful within the school was strongly associated with four areas of leadership: i) (re)positioning the school; ii) recruitment and succession planning; iii) continuing professional development; and iv) building capacity for change.

7.2 (Re)Positioning The School

Thirty-five key staff (27%), across 12 schools made specific mention of the importance of the headteacher's vision for constructive change within the school. It acted as a catalyst for change and was related to two dimensions: 1) the clarity of communication to staff, pupils and parents and 2) its relevance and responsiveness to the internal and external school contexts. The headteachers' vision was not one of simply *reacting* to what was happening in this external and internal context. Rather, the headteacher seemed to be able to position the school to respond to future challenges or opportunities:

> We were on a high, but we needed to do something to make sure we stayed on a high and I think that is good leadership. In the sense that we are almost pre-empting what might happen. And being quite strategic in your planning and I think he's very good at that as the head. (16HOD1-R1).

> I think one of the biggest strengths she has is that she is prepared, she is very forward thinking and a lot of the things that we have done here have often been, we have been the first people to do it. I mean cover supervisors here are exemplars in the county because we went with it first. So she is quite proactive. (20BusM-R1).

> She realises that the kids are changing and it is different to what school was ten years ago. So we need to keep up with the times, and not get stuck in our ways really. (4LM-R1).

> He is always interested in moving the school forward. As well he is … looking for new initiatives that he can bring out, like the ICT award that we got and now we are looking at moving into healthy

> *schools. There is always something new that he is keen on, and asks staff to lead. (9KS1-R1).*

It seemed that because the headteacher's vision was both clearly communicated, and responsive to the school and external contexts (past, present and future) staff were more likely to put trust in the headteacher, and work with rather than against the direction of change within the school:

> *He remains very committed, he has a very clear vision that he dedicated to the school, and his leadership style is, in some ways, 'This is where we're going, and you're all coming with me'. (16AHT-R2).*

> *[Name of headteacher] is an incredible leader, as you obviously have gathered, and I don't know what her secret is except that she's got good interpersonal skills, she's got good organisational skills, she's forward thinking, she has a way of, I don't know, encouraging self-belief in staff. I don't know what she has for breakfast but it works. (7KS2-R1).*

In short, key staff and colleagues saw headteachers as having the capacity to lead effectively in terms of their moral commitment to their school's success, as well as their ability to translate this into appropriate actions. The headteacher could not only articulate and communicate a strategic vision which was responsive to past, present and future needs, but could ensure that this was realised on a close-up day-to-day basis and that staff could see tangible evidence of success that boosted their commitment to future change:

> *When I first applied for the job, the school motto was, 'Success through Effort and Determination'. The new headteacher came in and I was wondering how he was going to change the school. He came in and he said this is the motto and we have kept it like that through all these years. But we have actually made it REAL and the kids are feeling it now. (12AST-R1).*

7.3 Defining Capacity: Purposes, Processes And Results

A significant focus of the headteachers in all twenty case study schools was on building the capacities of the staff team. The qualitative data gathered during this phase of the project confirm the research literature findings internationally that leadership strategies aimed at developing the leadership, teaching and change management capacities of staff have an indirect, but powerful effect upon pupil outcomes.

The purpose of capacity building of the staff team focused on developing the knowledge, skills and qualities of staff, so that the school would be able to sustain improved student outcomes. In other words, it was through building the capacities of the staff team that the schools were moved towards achieving strategic vision for the school, established by the headteacher and other senior leaders.

7.3.1 Targeted recruitment
There is evidence, also, that recruiting, building and retaining a stable staff team who were deeply committed to meeting a wide range of students' social,

emotional and academic needs, was a particularly intense focus within the FSM 3 and 4 schools:

> *I work in a school like this because I want to do my best for these kids. I think there are a lot of people who share that bond. And it does bond you together will you like it or not! (20HOD2-R1).*

> *The kids that we have, they are not angels by any means, they do come in with a lot of baggage. I think because we all address that, and are all working for the same thing at the end of the day, that is what we come in to work to do to provide a nice, safe, happy environment for the kids. (4LM-R1).*

> *I think having the same group of adults permanently around every day at all times of the day, it is a very stable environment for the kids to come into. I think they respond because they see the same faces every day, there is not a lot of change, staff did not come and go we have all been here for years. (4LM-R1).*

Key staff in the FSM 3 and 4 schools were aware that recruiting high quality staff who were committed to working with students with a wide range of needs, was of fundamental importance to building a strong staff team. As a result, key staff in these schools talked about drawing upon a variety of strategies. Key among these were: 1) providing placements for teacher trainees, so that they could appoint new teachers who had proven their effectiveness within the school (mentioned by leaders in 4 schools); and 2) placing emphasis upon observing applicants teaching and interacting with students as part of the interview process (mentioned by leaders in 3 schools):

> *If I have any strength that all I would say it is in choosing the right people for this place. So I have one [teacher] who was going through college this year and I have a number in my diary and if we have a vacancy I will be phoning her up and saying "would you like to come in and have a chat about the job here." A lot of our teachers come here that way, they come and do a practice and they seemed to fit. (1HT-R1).*

> *When I appoint staff I don't care about the academic qualifications, we always watch them teach. When I am going around, I don't listen to the questions they ask to try and ingratiate themselves into my good books, I look at what they are doing with the children, how they react to children, because if they haven't got good rapport with the children you are not to be able to deliver an effective lesson. And the children are not going to engage with you. (5HT-R1).*

> *So as a training school what we try and do is use the links that we've got with [name of university], to try and weed out potential people that we wish to employ in the future. (17HOD5-R1).*

7.3.2 In-house

Succession planning for emerging school leaders took two main forms. The most important occurred *within the school,* with the headteacher giving staff additional responsibilities, and providing developing leaders with ongoing support and guidance to help them succeed in their leadership role (65 comments: 18 headteacher and 47 key staff, across all 20 schools).

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The rationale was that by giving people additional responsibilities, they could gain leadership experience, as well as giving the headteacher or other leaders an opportunity to assess how well they coped with this leadership role:

> *I try to give them [developing leaders] responsibilities, I want them initially to be good subject leaders. So they are responsible for their subject and that does not just mean being a coordinator and making sure resources are there. That means making sure they are responsible for raising standards. (10HT-R2).*

> *I give them additional responsibilities, and as time goes on changing those responsibilities. One of the things that I'm keen to do every year is to reflect on everybody's responsibility and change them so no one will have the same responsibility for ever. Because I think that is deskilling, it means that you haven't tested your management skills in a different area. (4HT-R2).*

> *Being steered towards the AST had most impact. He saw something in me that I didn't know was there because he'd seen it from the outside. The relationships that I have with staff are very strong and he said I'd be great in a coaching role rather than in a monitoring role. I do both but he said that my skills are in coaching other people and getting the best out of them. So he recognised that in me. It was the right decision and I've really enjoyed it. (2KS2-R1).*

Giving staff additional responsibilities was accompanied (27 participants, including 9 headteachers) by offering forms of support, guidance and nurturing:

> *I give them a lot of responsibility, give them specific projects that they hold the budget for, manage, complete and evaluate. Being there for them if they need any help, assurance or assistance, celebrating their successes, making sure they get all the credit for what they've done and not me (12HT-R2).*

> *I think I have good sound advice, I meet with the head every two weeks and he just lets me to get on with it. He has kept asking me "how is this going?", not checking up on me, I don't feel that he is doing that but I do feel that he is giving me the opportunity to lead. But he is also not letting the flounder I feel advised well. (16AHT-R1).*

Four headteachers also stated that it was very important not to blame or criticise staff, when they made a mistake in a new leadership role. They recognised that it was more important for developing leaders to learn from mistakes, rather then viewing mistakes as a failure of achievement:

> *You've got to have a go, if you get it wrong, let's not worry about it. I rarely, if ever, take somebody off at the knees. I am quite forgiving because I make a lot of mistakes myself. Usually it's just have a go, if you get stuck come and see me (20HT-R2).*

7.3.3 External courses

A significant number of participants (27 participants, across 13 schools) stated that sending staff to external courses was an important means of developing leadership capacity within the school. The courses most often mentioned were those run by the National College of School Leadership (NSCL), and to a lesser

degree, those run by the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) and local authorities. Comments about these external courses by key staff were generally positive:

> The other thing is actually that I'm keen on empowering or a least ensuring that more of the curriculum leaders have the skills to lead the department. Which means getting people to take the leading from the middle course through the NCSL because I think we are not strong on that. And I think we need to improve that capacity. They come to with a lot of enthusiasm and a lot of ability, but they do not always have the skills to manage the department and the way they need to be managed. That's an area that we really need to do something about. (15HT-R1).

> What I found valuable about those courses [leadership courses] was it just gave you time to reflect, how you are doing things and what we were doing, how things were going and what you could do better. In the hustle and bustle you don't often have an opportunity to reflect on what you are doing. (20HOD4-R1).

> I recently did a two-day training course about cooperative learning that changed the whole way I look at my teaching. And I've now got that responsibility to bring it in this school. (17HOD3-R1).

7.4 Continuing Professional Development

Providing staff with opportunities to engage in professional learning activities was a strong feature of the school cultures:

> The headteacher is supportive, and if there is training associated with it, he will let us go on it. (8ST-R1).

> The school is very good about booking professional development. It is very good at allowing, if it fits in with your performance management, with what you set out, and within the school development plan, they are very good at allowing you to do that. (15HOD3-R1).

7.4.1 Alignment with the School Plan
Comments by Headteachers and key staff in 17 of the case study schools (7 primary and 10 secondary) stated that building the teaching capacity of staff was achieved through adopting a strategic approach to professional development. Professional learning activities were aligned with school-wide priorities for developing teaching and learning within the school. For example, at one secondary school, INSET was aligned with the school-wide focus of developing teaching so that students took a more active role in their learning:

> There is a lot of INSET within the school which promotes the teachers and understanding of the learning process - How we can move away from just delivering the curriculum to actually turning curriculum into something organic that students can participate in rather than just fill it up. (12HOD1-R1).

Professional development was closely linked to the school development plan and pupil assessment data was used to identify areas of weakness within teaching and learning in the school:

> *Our team leaders meet with their individual staff and we discuss how the children are progressing. We decide what needs doing next, where the staff themselves need more help with it through professional development, or whether the programme is not right for the child. Through the CPD programme we are making sure that there is a match up between staff and children. (4HT-R1).*

The government-initiated policy of annual performance management reviews was also used to focus upon improving classroom performance:

> *I think we've got quite a tight package of staff development... a lot of in-service has been on curricular targets. So that's why I was giving a lesson demonstration on it to make sure some new members of staff were clear about what we were talking about. And when we do our observations, I will look to see whether particular targets are being used. (7DHT-R1).*

> *The classroom observations are used for whole school training. All staff sit in faculty areas and watch 3 lessons. They make judgements and then discuss lesson progress versus outcomes. Pupils are then informed of what they are supposed to have learned. (18AHT-R1).*

7.4.2 Building in house leadership

These schools had also moved away from a reliance on sending individual staff members to externally run professional development courses. Participants in six secondary schools spoke about how they had developed a strong internal model of professional development whereby a team of teachers (ASTs or teachers known to be highly effective practitioners) would run workshops and provide one-to-one classroom based coaching for teachers on whole-school teaching and learning initiatives:

> *Some teachers apply for externally run courses but the school is often not happy that we get value for money from them. We've tried to develop a school-based focus for training. (18AHT-R1).*

> *I think the model that we've adopted here, the co-coaching model is whereby you work with somebody on a coaching basis, set up something, you see it in action and you come back very quickly. You discuss that and refine it, you see it in action again and I think that's the way people move forward. (17DHT-R1).*

In primary schools, there was a greater focus upon encouraging teachers to work in a mentoring relationship with one another, and in developing more effective ways of cascading learning gleaned from external courses to the rest of the staff:

> *We have got this coaching thing going on with staff who can work in pairs to look at each other's practice in a really non threatening way and although we have only just begun we found that really positive. (6KS1-R1).*

Two primary schools had also adopted the strategy of using teachers within the school to run INSET in their areas of expertise, as opposed to bringing in external experts:

> *When we do an inset day now, we tend to take staff who are confident in their areas, and bring them on board and let them help*

to deliver to staff that have asked for areas of improvement. (2KS2-R1).

7.4.3 Evaluation

Headteachers in 2 primary schools reported that professional development activities were now more carefully evaluated, in terms of their effect upon student outcomes:

We reflect on what we're doing, not just by ourselves, we involve staff in evaluations. We'll evaluate any new resources we buy, any intervention strategies are evaluated and if they're not effective, we discontinue them. If they're effective, we increase them. (2DHT-R1).

7.5 Building Capacity For Change

7.5.1 Nurturing the culture

Fifty participants (11 headteachers and 39 key staff and colleagues) across 18 schools commented that fostering a school culture in which staff welcomed change and innovation was essential if the school was to be able to respond constructively to constantly changing external policy and community environments, maintain high expectations for students' learning and build and sustain successful levels of student achievement. The headteacher was crucial in fostering a culture of change. She or he 'set the tone' for how staff in the school responded to change. The way that the headteachers themselves responded to external demands for change, helped to foster a climate where staff viewed change more positively:

She [the headteacher]is constantly embracing, what is available, without losing sight of, if you have heard of the expression throwing the baby out with the bathwater, we aren't constantly reinventing the school and the wheel, we are trying to keep what we value and what works well, and then extending it. (4DHT-R1).

That's what we are willing to do here, it is forward planning definitely. It is planning, thinking ahead, thinking where we are going to be in two or three year's time. (15HOD5-R1).

7.5.2 Internal innovation

Forty-one participants across 16 schools (6 primary and 10 secondary) commented that a key strategy that headteachers used in developing cultures of change was that of encouraging and supporting staff to introduce innovations in the school, as well as giving staff a voice in how other changes might be best implemented:

It's a culture whereby people are free to make suggestions, people are encouraged to think of ways to take the school forward, and from my point of view I can't think of experiences where staff are actually turned down with anything. So, in terms of trying to boost staff confidence, the culture is one of... it's an open culture. (2KS1-R1).

He [the headteacher] allows us, if we have an idea or we want to promote something, if there is a way of getting it or doing it, he backs us up and trusts us to do it. I know some of my other

colleagues who go to heads and they just will have nothing of it. (5FSM-R1).

Encouraging staff to play an active role in fostering innovation and giving them a voice in how change was going to be implemented was perceived to be a primary means of empowering staff to view themselves as change agents:

> *I've got a teacher in her second year who's been doing some work on… She's a humanities teacher, doing work on developing children's political understanding, getting them involved in citizenship activities and that sort of thing, and [name of teacher] has gone off and done all sorts of things which we're just allowing her to do, because she wants to do them, because she sees them as important. (11HT-R1).*

> *You know everything we were involved in, everything was brought in for discussion, everything we were involved in and I think that's the key, the absolute key. So that we all feel as though we matter, that we all count and our opinions count. And we're all part of it so we're kind of carried along with it not pulled by it. (7KS2-R1).*

> *One teacher has taken up an initiative called computer clubs for girls. And she has run with it and they have won an amazing award. And that was someone who has only been teaching for a year. And she felt powerful enough to do that. (13AHT-R1).*

7.5.3 Developing cultures of care and commitment

Building a climate in which all staff felt cared for was mentioned by 32 participants mentioned as central to the schools' effectiveness. Within such caring climates, staff felt more resilient and committed to being innovative and enacting change. An important means by which leaders enacted this care, commented on by 48 participants in 19 schools (9 primary and 10 secondary), was by being responsive to staff achievements and needs by valuing the former and offering personal and professional support for the latter:

> *I also think that there are a series of cultural norms which inhabit a lot of the school's thinking. It's about being collaborative about wanting to raise achievement, it's about being successful, being committed to being successful, supporting one another. Those are the cultural norms I think underpinning a lot of what happens inside the school. (15HT-R1).*

> *The working environment in the school is good – everyone knows where they're going. All staff want to achieve everything they can, they feel valued and get positive feedback. (18HOD3-R1).*

> *Everyone, even down to the cleaner, they feel as though they are valued and that they have got an opinion and if they want to express that, they can. (16LM-R1).*

> *I think in key stage one we're all quite relaxed in our roles, and we are all supporting each other in keen to talk and discuss ideas. Everyone gets on really well and we are a very friendly team. I think that makes people feel more that they are valued. (9KS1-R1).*

7.5.4 Building an inclusive team

Building a staff team that was inclusive of both teaching and support staff was mentioned by thirty participants across 13 schools (8 primary and 5 secondary) as an important part of developing shared vision, and building staff morale:

> *My experience of talking to people in other schools is that staff don't always pull together as well as they do here. I think that has a big impact on the learning outcomes of the students, if you have a committed staff (16HOD3-R1).*

> *At one time there were two workforces, there was a teaching team and an administration team. People would decide things as a teaching team and then it might have filtered down a long time down the way. But now we are told if things are going to happen in the future, and so if people need extra training they can get it. (15PA-R1).*

> *If you are developing individuals in the school, you are developing all the staff, teachers, teaching assistants, lunchtime staff. (3HT-R1).*

> *When I say the staff, I mean the whole staff in the School, not just the teaching staff also the support staff. That is everyone. I have got the caretaker who voluntarily runs the breakfast club. You cannot buy motivation like that. It comes from a person. So when I say the staff, it's the whole staff that I have got not just the teachers. You need all those people. That is something I feel very strongly about, that everybody is equal in the school. It doesn't matter who it is, everyone has the same value. (5HT-R1).*

7.5.5 Breaking the barriers to whole school vision

The existence of departmental structures was considered to be a significant obstacle to the development of a cohesive vision and team within 8 secondary schools. Headteachers in these schools considered that the tendency was for departments to be more concerned about the progress of students within their department, and that this concern sometimes worked against the development of a stronger focus on whole-school concerns, or areas for improvement. In addition, 16 key staff across 5 secondary schools talked about the way that departmentalisation limited the interactions between staff, which was seen as limiting opportunities for informal professional learning. Strategies aimed at overcoming barriers between departments had been and were, therefore, a priority within these schools. These involved establishing interdepartmental 'change' groups, and opportunities for staff to plan cross-curricular units of work. Pressures of time and curriculum timetables, however, constrained what headteachers and other leaders could do to break down the tendency towards departmentalisation within the school team:

> *We do some cross collaborative work in terms of suspending the curriculum and departments coming together. So in the summer term we have what we call intensive challenge week and that is where youngsters might do three subjects in one week, and staff work together to teach that. (16HT-R1).*

> *I think as staff, we may come across as a fairly bitty, disjointed staff and that there are very strong departments around the school. (20HOD2-R1).*

The headteacher of one secondary school had used the Teaching and Learning Responsibilities (TLR) structure as a means of re-shaping the role of heads of department within the school. This change had involved taking many responsibilities from heads of department—such as for special educational needs, and ICT—and distributing them to individual members of departments who met as an inter-departmental group. The headteacher considered that this new structure would ensure that whole-school goals would be prioritised in all departments, thereby ensuring that change occurred more consistently across the whole school:

> *If you looked at most schools, the most dysfunctional group of people are always heads of departments. And they are dysfunctional because their main interest, that's what they were appointed to do, was to look after their department. They have instinctively little interest in whole school approaches. (15HT-R1).*

> *By creating a structure, in which individual members of that department have whole school's responsibility and not a subject, or departmental responsibility, it's their job to ensure this whole school priority is reflected in a way in which the department works. Then you get a much greater movement in the department if these people push it internally over these things and they're asking for items to be put on the agenda. So, in the sense the structure will allow you to reflect a school priority. (15HT-R2).*

7.6 Key Messages

1. One-quarter the key staff attributed the school's success in improving student outcomes to the headteacher's strategic vision in positioning the school so that it could respond to change in a robust way.
2. Prominent strategies that the headteacher used to promote a positive response to change within the school included:
- Developing the leadership potential of staff within the school by giving them additional responsibilities (65 participants, across all 20 of the case study schools).
- Giving developing leaders opportunities to attend external leadership courses (27 participants across 13 schools).
- Aligning CPD with the school development plan, and increasingly relying more upon internal models of CPD, rather than external courses (35 participants, across 16 schools).
- The headteacher responding positively to external policy changes, and in this way providing a positive role model for how staff responded to change (50 participants across 18 case study schools).
- Building a strong, caring and inclusive staff team was commented upon as important by the majority participants across the case study schools, in ensuring all staff were committed to helping students achieve their best, as well as being aware of their role in achieving that vision.

This chapter has provided evidence of a number of strategies reported by heads, key staff and colleagues which were used by headteachers and were perceived to be central to improving their schools. The case study data have begun to illuminate some of these and provide vivid illustrations of strategies used in individual schools to promote change. Innovation, in these schools, was a process of planned progression which was responsive to context and purpose. Both survey and qualitative data, then, point to the primacy of the headteacher, as 'primus inter pares', in leading others in leading change.

Chapter 8: Leadership Characteristics And Practices In Schools With Different Effectiveness And Improvement Profiles

8.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the relationships between leadership characteristics and practices in schools identified as having different effectiveness and improvement profiles over a three year period (2003-2005). It compares the characteristics of leadership practices of these improving and effective schools in terms of responses to the survey of head teachers and key staff and discusses in detail similarities and differences between the three improvement groups in leadership strategies in establishing foundations, and building and sustaining improvement. It also extends earlier discussion (chapter 4-6) of differences by sector and SES context, where appropriate, to set the findings on differences between school improvement groups in a broader context.

The three sub-groups of schools were identified based on analyses of national assessment and examination data and value added indicators identifying trends across three years as described in Chapter 2. The groups were: 1) improving from low to moderate or low to high in attainment and highly effective in value added, 2) improving from moderate to higher moderate or high in attainment and highly effective in value added and 3) stable high attainment and highly effective in value added. Proportionately more schools responding to the survey were in the low to moderate/high group i.e. those that had made rapid recent improvement (Table 8.1: Summary of Responses by Improvement Groups). For the purpose of this chapter, we label the Low to Moderate or Low to High Group as *the Low Start Group*, the Moderate to Higher Moderate or High Group as *the Moderate Start Group* and the Stable High and High to Higher Group as *the High Start Group*. Further details are reported in an accompanying more detailed Technical Paper.

Table 8.1: Responses to the Headteacher Survey by School Improvement Groups

School Improvement Group	Primary Schools		Secondary Schools	
2003-2005	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Low Start	160	42	167	47
Moderate Start	94	25	76	21
High Start	123	33	115	32
Total	377	100	358	100

*One school changed DCSF number but did not supply their DCSF number, so could not be allocated to an improvement group.

8.1 Contexts Of Leadership And Improvement Group

We found significant associations between the three improvement groupings and a range of influences relating to headteachers' years of experience in total and in their current schools, the number of headteachers in post in the school over the last ten years, school education sector and school socio-economic contexts.

8.1.1 School SES contexts and improvement groups

We found statistically significant negative associations between the level of socio-economic disadvantage of the pupil intake (measured by the FSM band of the school) and the three improvement groups for both the primary and secondary samples. *In both education sectors the High Start Improvement Group were relatively more likely to serve low disadvantage communities (FSM 1 and 2) whereas the Low Start Improvement Group were more likely to serve high disadvantage communities (FSM 3 and 4).*

Nearly two thirds (N= 105, 65.6%) of primary schools in the Low Start Group, compared with under one in 10 (N= 10, 8%) of the High Start Group were in high disadvantage contexts (FSM Bands 3 and 4). Similarly over half (N=84, 50.3%) of secondary schools in the Low Start Group compared with around one in 20 (N=6, 5.2%) in the High Start Group were in high disadvantage contexts. Although 71% of schools responding to the survey were in low disadvantage contexts (FSM 1 and 2) only around a half (49.7%) were in the Low Start improvement group. *These results point to the importance of school context in interpreting differences in school performance results and improvement trajectories.*

8.1.2 School SES contexts and heads' experience
- *Heads' years of experience in total*

For the secondary sample, heads with less total experience of headship tended to be more likely to serve high disadvantage schools, but this pattern was not identified for primary heads. Only 20% of secondary heads leading low disadvantage schools (FSM 1 and 2) had been a headteacher for three years or less whereas proportionately almost twice as many headteachers (37%) with similar amount of experience were leading high disadvantage schools (FSM 3 and 4) (Table 8.2). In contrast, nearly half (48.2%) of FSM 1 and 2 heads had more than eight years of experience whereas the proportion was somewhat lower at 38% of FSM 3 and 4 heads with a similar longer length of experience as a headteacher.

Table 8.2: School disadvantage context (FSM Band) and headteachers' total years of experience (secondary)

School Context (FSM Band)	How long have you been a headteacher in total?				
	0-3 years	4-7 years	8-15 years	16+ years	Total
FSM 1 and 2	46	73	87	24	230
	(20%)	(31.7%)	(37.8%)	(10.4%)	(100%)
FSM 3 and 4	34	23	28	7	92
	(37%)	(25%)	(30.4%)	(7.6%)	(100%)
Total	80	96	115	31	322
	(25%)	(30%)	(36%)	(10%)	(100%)

- *Heads' years of experience in current school*

Also only for the secondary sample, heads in high disadvantage schools were proportionately more likely to have worked in their current schools for a shorter period of time (0-3 years: FMS 1 and 2=31% versus FSM 3 and 4=45%). Those in low disadvantage schools were relatively more likely to have been in their current schools for a longer period of time (16+ years: FSM 1 and 2=14% versus FSM 3 and 4=7%).

8.1.3 Experience of headteachers and the school's improvement group

There were significant differences between the three school improvement groups in terms of the total years of experience of the headteacher. For both the primary and secondary samples, less experienced heads were proportionately more likely to be in post in schools from the Low Start Group whereas schools in the High Start Group were

relatively more likely to have an experienced headteacher in post. This tendency is particularly striking for secondary schools.

In total 47% of heads of the Low Start Group of primary schools had seven or fewer years of experience as a headteacher in contrast to 25% of those in the High Start Group of schools. At the secondary level, 62% of heads of the Low Start Group had the same amount of experience (7 or below) as a headteacher compared with 49% of those in the High Start Group.

secondary heads with less than seven years of experience in their current schools were more likely to be in post in the Low Start Group of improving schools (72.2% versus 56.5% of the High Start Group).

8.1.4 Age of headteachers and improvement groups
A similar pattern was identified when the relationship between the school improvement group and headteachers' age group was investigated and this held for both the primary and the secondary samples. *Younger primary and secondary heads were proportionately more likely to be in post in schools that had made rapid improvement from low to moderate or moderate to high.* Overall 51% of primary and 53% of secondary heads aged 45 or under were in the Low Start Group whereas only around a third (31% primary, 36% secondary) aged 56 or over were in the same improvement group.

For younger and less experienced heads, the challenges of improving a school with a low attainment profile may be particularly motivating. It may also be somewhat easier to obtain a headship of an initially low attaining school at a relatively young age. It is possible that younger heads may be better placed to effect radical change in schools with a history of low attainment, because the school's problems are widely recognised. It is also possible that the longer years of experience and a longer time in post of heads in the Stable High effective category may help to account for their sustained good results over a number of years.

8.1.5 Stability of school leadership and improvement groups
In both sectors statistically significant associations were found between the three school improvement groups in terms of number of headteachers in post over the last decade. Schools in the High Start Group were less likely to have experienced headteacher change and the association was stronger for the secondary sample (see Figure 8.1).

Figure 8.1: Number of heads in post over last decade school and improvement group (secondary)
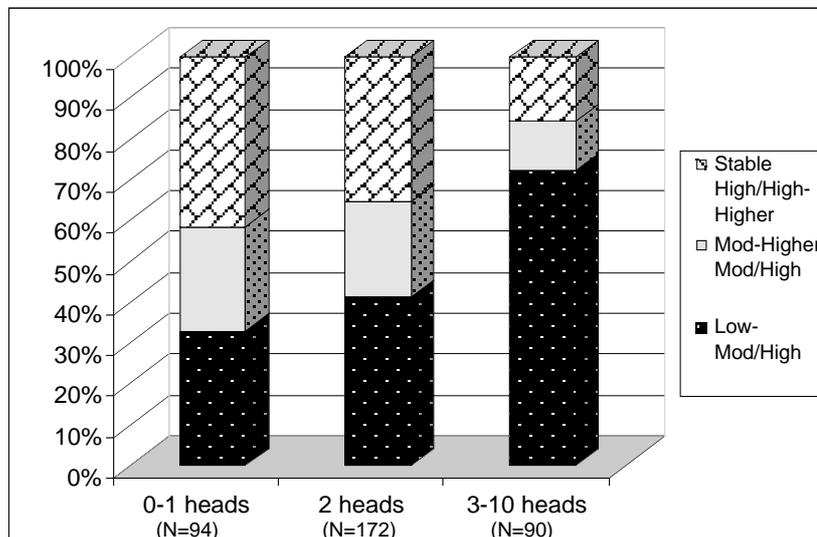
A change of headteacher can be a catalyst for school improvement. This has been noted in a number of studies of improving schools and is also evident in inspection evidence (see Matthews and Sammons, 2005). The survey results suggest that changing the headteacher may have contributed to the rapid improvement of schools with an initial low attainment profile. However, many changes in headship over a decade can be a symptom of a school experiencing many difficulties and this is likely to have inhibited the creation of a school culture focussed on improvement.

The number of headteachers in post in the past ten years is also significantly related to school context for the secondary sample. High disadvantage schools were relatively more likely to have experienced several changes of heads compared with less disadvantaged schools (Table 8.3). Again, this may be seen as a symptom as much as a possible cause of difficulties in the past.

For example, only a fifth (19.8%) of secondary schools in low disadvantage contexts (FSM 1 and 2) had experienced 3 or more changes of head in the last ten years but this was the case for nearly double this proportion for high disadvantage schools (FSM 3 and 4) (38.8%). *It seems that secondary schools in challenging (high disadvantaged) contexts have greater difficulties in recruiting/retaining headteachers who have the qualities necessary to effect significant improvement. The need for further attention to be given to ways of attracting high calibre applicants for headships in such schools is suggested by this finding.*

Table 8.3: School SES contexts (FSM Band) and changes of headteacher * (secondary)

School Context (FSM Band)	Including yourself, how many headteachers has your current school had in the past 10 years?			
	0-1 heads	**2 heads**	**3-10 heads**	**Total**
FSM 1 and 2	70	133	50	253
	(27.7%)	(52.6%)	(19.8%)	(100%)
FSM 3 and 4	24	39	40	103
	(23.3%)	(37.9%)	(38.8%)	(100%)
Total	94	172	90	356
	(26%)	(48%)	(25%)	(100%)

8.2 Leadership Distribution: Patterns Of External And Internal Participation

Overall there were more similarities than differences between the three improvement groups in relation to perceptions of:

i)   The way that leadership tasks were distributed or shared within schools;
ii) The kinds of leadership practice provided by SMT/SLT in school;
iii) The extent to which leadership practice in school was provided by other people or groups (e.g. Deputy Head(s) and SMT/SLT).

This was the case for both the primary and secondary headteachers samples. This suggests similar patterns of leadership distribution between the three improvement groups in terms of the way that leadership tasks were reported to be organised within schools and the provision of leadership practice by SMT/SLT in school.

For both the primary and the secondary samples, most heads indicated that leadership tasks were delegated or distributed by the Head or the SMT/SLT, and that collective

planning was a strong feature of their school organisation. In contrast, very few thought leadership distribution was spontaneous or that very few others took on leadership tasks in their schools.

Overall most headteachers agreed to some ("partially") or a fairly large ("a lot") extent that most leadership tasks were carried out by themselves and SMT/SLT, although rather more primary (N=43, 12%) than secondary (N=6, 2%) heads indicated that to a "very significant" extent, this was the case within their schools. This suggests that in a minority of primary schools (just over 1 in 10) headteachers and their SLT did not distribute or delegate leadership widely.

There was a considerable sector difference found for some items relating to the way that leadership tasks were perceived to be distributed within schools according to the key staff survey*.* For example, a greater proportion of primary than secondary staff reported that:

- They collectively plan which individual or group(s) will carry out which leadership tasks (Primary: N=325, 55%; Secondary: N=393, 35%);
- Most leadership tasks in their school are carried out by the Head and SMT/SLT (Primary: N=408, 68%; Secondary: N=530, 46%).

This suggests that more collective approaches may characterise the work of highly improved or high effective primary schools and this may reflect organisational size.

8.2.2 The kinds of leadership practice provided by SMT/SLT in school
For both the primary and the secondary sample, the large majority of heads strongly agreed that the members of the SMT/SLT in their schools *share a similar set of values, beliefs and attitudes related to teaching and learning*, *participate in ongoing collaborative work, have a role in a range of activities and the development of policies relating to teaching and learning*, and *have a positive impact on standards of teaching and raising levels of pupil attainment*.

In particular, a greater proportion of secondary than primary heads strongly agreed that their SMT/SLT have a role or involvement in:

i) *School-wide decision making* (Secondary: N=311, 86%; Primary: N=266, 71%);
ii) *The development of pupil behaviour policies* (Secondary: N=293, 81%; Primary: N=280, 75%);
iii) *The school evaluation and review process* (Secondary: N=325, 90%; Primary: N=274, 73%);
iv) *Determining the direction of the school* (Secondary: N=279, 77%; Primary: N=237, 63%).

Some sector difference was found for the key staff sample in terms of the kinds of leadership practice provided by SMT/SLT in their schools, particularly in relation to items on teaching and learning. This is in contrast to headteachers' responses where no marked differences were found relating to the same items. Higher proportions of primary Key Stage Managers compared to secondary Heads of Department tended to respond positively (agree moderately/strongly) to all the above items on the leadership of SMT/SLT in relation to teaching and learning.

Difference in the key staff responses was also found between the improvement groups, but for the secondary sample only. Key staff from schools in the Low Start Improvement Group were the most likely to agree that members of the SMT/SLT in their school participate in *ongoing, collaborative work* and that *they had a role in the development of policies on lesson planning*. This is, again, in contrast to the headteachers' responses where no significant difference was found between improvement groups. *It appears that key staff in schools that had made rapid sustained improvement in academic outcomes*

from a low start reported greater SLT involvement in these aspects, suggesting a more proactive 'hands on' approach.

8.2.3 The extent to which leadership practice in school was provided by other people or groups (Internal and External)

Primary heads in the High Start Improvement Group were somewhat more likely to report that *pupils* in their schools provided a moderate (N=51, 42%) or a substantial amount (N=41, 33%) of leadership practice, compared to those in the Low Start Group of schools, (p<0.05) (Figure 8.2). This was, however, not the case for the secondary sample.

In the secondary sample, heads of schools in the Low Start Group were more likely to report that leadership practice in their schools was provided "a great deal" or "all the time" by i) *groups of teachers*, ii) *individual teachers with formally assigned tasks* (e.g. KS3 co-ordinators) and iii) *the LA*.

In particular, only one in three secondary heads of the Low Start Group (N=55, 33%) indicated that their *LA* rarely or infrequently contributed to the provision of leadership in their schools in contrast to two in three of the High Start Group (N=64, 67%) who indicated so. This is likely to reflect specific LA targeting and priorities to assist the improvement of low attaining schools, while those in High Start Group may not need or wish for LA involvement, and indeed may be acting in a supportive capacity for other schools as a School Improvement Partner (SIP), for example.

Figure 8.2: Leadership distribution by pupils and the three improvement groups (primary)
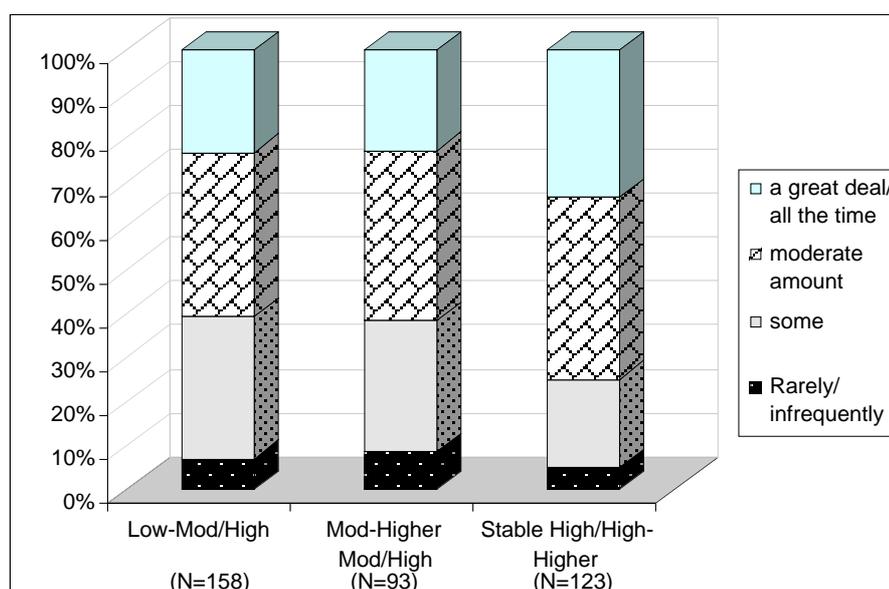
The evidence from the key staff survey indicated a fairly strong degree of correspondence in general views on leadership between headteachers and other key staff. Significant differences were noted only with regards to leadership practice by the School Improvement Partners (SIPs) and the LA. Secondary key staff from the High Start Group were the most likely to report "infrequently" and least likely to report "a great deal" of leadership practice by SIPs.

When asked about the leadership practice by the *LA*, both primary and secondary staff in the High Start Group schools were the most likely to report "Infrequently". For the headteacher sample however, a similar pattern of association relating to the *LA* was found only in secondary schools.

These results indicate that external agents (SIPs and LA) are perceived to play a lesser role in High Start Group secondary schools with a longer history of success (with stable high effective performance over several years).

8.3 Leadership Influence: Persuasion Tactics

Headteacher Perceptions
As noted in Chapter 4, there was considerable variation in heads' responses to these items for both the primary and the secondary samples. Some tactics were much more widely reported than others. *Rational persuasion* and *consultation* were the strategies most commonly reported by both primary and secondary heads to influence and persuade others, followed by *inspirational appeals* (appeals to persons' values, ideals or emotions), *apprising* (explaining how something would be beneficial to the person) and *personal support*.

In the primary sample *pressure* was found to be somewhat more commonly reported by heads in the Low Start Group (N=51, 32%) than those in the Moderate Start (N=21, 23%) and High Start (N=23, 19%) Groups. However, this was not found to be case for the secondary sample.

For the secondary sample statistically significant differences were found between the three school improvement groups in relation to heads' reported use of *inspirational appeals* and *personal support* as tactics to influence and persuade others. These two tactics were somewhat less commonly reported by heads serving schools in the High Start Group (Inspirational Appeals: N=53, 47%; Personal Support: N=40, 35%). By contrast, there was no marked difference between the Low Start and the Moderate Start groups in terms of the reported use of *inspirational appeals*. In both groups the majority of heads (the Low Start Group: N=100, 60%; the Moderate Start Group: N=47, 62%) reported using *inspirational appeals* as tactics to influence others in their school. Heads in the Moderate Start Group were also somewhat more likely to report using *personal support* (N=44, 58%) to influence others in their schools.

These findings suggest that the headteachers in schools that are making more rapid improvement from a lower starting point made greater use of a range of strategies, particularly those that have an emotional component (offers of personal support, inspirational appeals) that are likely to affect the mind set and emotional climate of the school. In contrast schools that are already highly effective appear to make less use of these approaches.

Key staff responses concerning the head teachers' use of persuasion tactics did not differ based on the three improvement groups within the primary key staff sample. However, Heads of Department from schools in the High Start Group were slightly less likely than their counterparts in other improvement groups to report that the headteacher used *inspirational appeals* and *ingratiation*. This is broadly in line with the findings from the headteacher survey.

8.4 School Conditions: Academic Press

Heads' responses were fairly positive for all the items relating to academic standards and expectations in their schools and this might be expected given the focus of the sample on highly improved/ highly effective schools. Primary heads were relatively more likely to report improvement in most items related to academic aspects over the last three years than their secondary peers. Nonetheless, a relatively greater proportion of secondary (N=225, 62%) than primary heads (N=176, 47%) tended to "agree strongly" that the

performance of department/subject areas was regularly monitored and *targets for improvement were regularly set in their schools.*

A large majority of key staff agreed moderately/strongly to the items relating to academic standards and expectations set in their schools. For example, when they were asked whether *their school sets high standards for academic performance*, more than 90% agreed moderately/strongly to it. This is broadly in line with findings from the headteacher sample.

Nonetheless, there were a few items to which a substantial proportion of key staff showed relatively lower levels of agreement. For example:

• Only 57% agreed moderately/strongly that the lesson plans are regularly discussed and monitored;
• 67% agreed moderately/strongly that pupils respect others who get good marks/grades.

Overall, there was a considerable sector difference, with higher proportions of positive responses from primary than from secondary key staff. Again, results are broadly in line with findings from the headteacher survey.

8.4.1 School SES contexts
School socio-economic contexts were related to both primary and secondary heads' responses in this section. For both the primary and secondary sample those in high disadvantage schools (FSM 3 and 4) were more likely to agree that *lesson plans were regularly discussed and monitored.*

In addition, for primaries, those in high disadvantage schools (FSM 3 and 4: N=118, 84%; FSM 1 and 2: N=175, 75%) were somewhat more likely to agree moderately or strongly that *the performance of subject areas was regularly monitored* and *targets for improvement were regularly set.* Those in low disadvantage schools (FSM 1 and 2: N=196, 84% versus FSM 3 and 4: 73%), were proportionately more likely to agree that *pupils were regularly involved in assessment for learning in their schools* .

For secondaries, heads in low disadvantage schools (FSM 1 and 2: N=200, 79%; versus FSM 3 and 4: N=91, 88%) were slightly less likely to agree strongly that *teachers regularly use pupil assessment data to set individual pupil achievement targets* (p<0.05). However pupil assessment data were clearly highly used in all schools.

Similar patterns of associations were found within the key staff sample. Key staff from high disadvantage schools were more likely to agree with specific items related to *the use of performance data* and *monitoring*:

• Primary key staff in high disadvantage schools were relatively more likely than their peers in low disadvantage schools to agree that *the performance of subject areas was regularly monitored and targets for improvement were regularly set.* This is in line with primary headteachers' responses.
• Also in line with secondary headteachers' responses, secondary key staff in high disadvantage schools were more likely to agree that *lesson plans were regularly discussed and monitored* in their schools and that *class teachers regularly use pupil assessment data to set individual pupil achievement targets.*

Taken together, these results suggest that the use of performance data and monitoring are particularly important strategies in the drive to raise standards in schools that make sustained improvement in raising pupil attainment levels in disadvantaged contexts.

8.4.2 School Improvement Groups

Primary heads serving schools in the Moderate Start Group (N=79, 84%) were more likely to agree moderately or strongly that *lesson plans were regularly discussed and monitored in their schools* than those in the other two improvement groups (the Low Start Group: N=126, 79%; the High Start Group: N=87, 71%). Also at the primary level, heads in the High Start Group (87%) were somewhat more likely than their peers in the other two improvement groups to agree that *pupils were regularly involved in assessment for learning within their schools*, though a large majority in all groups agreed moderately or strongly with this item (the Moderate Start Group: N=74, 79%; the Low Start Group: N=120, 75%).

At the secondary level, heads in the Low Start Group schools were proportionately less likely to agree moderately or strongly that teachers set high standards for academic performance (N=140, 84%) and that pupils respected others who had good marks/grades (N=99, 59%) as can be seen in Table 8.4. In contrast, heads serving schools in the Moderate Start Group were somewhat more likely to agree that teachers set high standards for academic performance (N=72, 96%) whereas those working in the High Start Group schools were proportionately more likely to agree strongly that pupils respected others who had achieved good marks/grades (N=88, 77%).

Table 8.4: Improvement groups and secondary heads' responses to "pupils respect others who get good marks/grades"

Improvement Groups	Pupils respect others who get good marks/grades				
	Disagree strongly/ moderately	Disagree slightly	Agree slightly	Agree moderately/ strongly	Total
Low to Moderate/High	5	19	44	99	167
	(3%)	(11.4%)	(26.3%)	(59.3%)	(100%)
Moderate to Higher Moderate/ High	2	4	21	48	75
	(2.7%)	(5.3%)	(28%)	(64%)	(100%)
Stable High/ High to Higher	1	6	19	88	114
	(0.9%)	(5.3%)	(16.7%)	(77.2%)	(100%)
Total	8	29	84	235	356
	(2%)	(8%)	(24%)	(66%)	(100%)

In primary schools, responses from key staff did not differ significantly based on improvement groups except for one item on academic standards and expectations. Proportionately more key staff from the High Start Group of schools were likely to agree strongly that *most pupils do achieve the goals that have been set for them* when compared with the leaders from schools in other two improvement groups. Overall, 60% primary key stage managers from schools in the High Start Group compared with only 47% of staff from the Moderate Start Group schools and only 41% of those from the Low Start Group agreed strongly with this statement.

However, for secondary schools, significant differences were found on most items in relation to the three groups of improving schools. Key staff from the High Start Group reported stronger agreement than their peers in the other two improvement groups when asked whether i) *Pupils in this school can achieve the goals that have been set for them* ii) *Teachers set high standards for academic performance*; iii) *The school sets high standards for academic performance*; iv) and *pupils respect others who get good marks/grades*. For example, 40% of key staff from the High Start Group schools compared with only 26% from the Moderate Start Group and 21% from the Low Start Group agreed strongly that *pupils in their schools can achieve the goals that have been set for them.*

8.5 Leader Self-Efficacy

Both primary and secondary heads' responses to items related to their self-efficacy were generally very positive, indicating high levels of self-confidence about their abilities; however, although still positive, primary heads' responses were somewhat less favourable than their secondary colleagues on most items.

Primary heads were relatively less positive about their ability to *manage multiple accountabilities from diverse audiences* and their ability to *sustain their job satisfaction* and *motivation in their leadership role* as well as *their commitment to the teaching profession* (Table 8.5 shows differences in the use of the most positive rating point only to illustrate this trend). Also, primary heads were relatively less confident about their ability to *raise achievement in national tests and examinations* and to *manage change in their schools*.

Secondary heads of improved and highly effective schools showed the most positive ratings for their ability to sustain their commitment to the teaching profession and to manage change.

Table 8.5 Comparisons of heads' responses ("very significantly") to items on self-efficacy*

To what extent do you feel able to:	Primary Headteachers Very significantly		Secondary Headteachers Very significantly	
	N	%	N	%
Manage multiple accountabilities from diverse audiences	68	*18*	97	*27*
Sustain your job satisfaction in your leadership role	91	*24*	139	*39*
Sustain your motivation as a school leader	91	*24*	147	*41*
Sustain your commitment to the teaching profession	133	*35*	180	*50*
Raise achievement on national tests and exams	77	*21*	114	*32*
Manage change in your school	149	*39*	170	*48*

* See Tables A and B in Appendix VIII for complete summaries of primary and secondary heads' responses to items on leader self-efficacy.

The majority of the key staff also responded positively on almost all items related to headteacher's efficacy. In particular, when they were asked whether the headteacher in their views of their school *managed multiple accountabilities from diverse audiences* (e.g. Governing Body, LA, Ofsted), 92% (N=1,595) reported "a lot" or "very significantly". This corresponds to patterns of headteachers' own perceptions of their self-efficacy. Primary key staff were more likely to hold positive views on all items related to the headteacher efficacy. These results confirm the high esteem accorded to head teachers as leaders in the sample of effective and improved schools in this study by their key staff.

8.5.1 School SES contexts

In both sectors heads from more disadvantaged schools responded most positively to items asking their views about their self-efficacy. Primary heads those from high disadvantage schools were more positive about items related to their role and their ability to *manage change in their school*[9] (FSM 3 and 4: N=134, 94% versus FSM 1 and 2: N=207, 89%) and *manage multiple accountabilities*[10] (FSM 3 and 4: N=96, 68%; versus

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[9] Gamma=0.37, p<0.05
[10] __=10.35, df=3, p<0.05; Gamma=0.31, p<0.01

FSM 1 and 2: N=121, 52%).

For secondaries, heads in high disadvantage schools tended to be more positive about their ability to i) *motivate teachers*, ii) *create a positive learning environment*, iii) *facilitate pupil learning* and iv) *raise achievement* – areas that are closely related to raising standards and the quality of teaching and learning. They were also, in common with their primary colleagues in schools with similar SES contexts, more positive about their ability to *manage multiple accountabilities.*

In contrast to findings of the headteacher survey, school disadvantage was not related to the key staff responses on these items within the primary sample. However, at the secondary level, key staff responses varied based on the school disadvantage factor. Key staff from high disadvantage schools tended to be more positive about their headteachers' ability to *motivate teachers* and *raise achievement on national tests and examinations*. This is in line with secondary headteachers' own perceptions. In addition, secondary key staff in high disadvantage schools were also more positive about their headteachers' ability to *generate enthusiasm for a shared vision of the school* and *sustain staff commitment to the teaching profession.*

These findings indicate that the leadership of the headteacher is viewed as especially important to success in disadvantaged secondary schools.

8.5.2 School Improvement Groups
For both primary and secondary heads, those in the Low Start improvement group were somewhat more confident about their ability to *manage multiple accountabilities*. In all 66% (N=105) of these primary heads, in contrast to 43% (N=53) of those in the High Start Group of schools, indicated a high level of perceived self-efficacy in this aspect. For the secondary sample, 75% (N=124) of heads serving schools in the Low Start Group, in contrast to 64% (N=72) of those in the High Start Group, reported high self-efficacy in relation to managing multiple accountabilities.

In secondary schools, heads in the Low Start Group were also more positive about their ability to *motivate teachers*. Over 90% of these heads (N=149), compared with 79% (N=59) of those in the Moderate Start Group and 83% (N=95) in the High Start Group, indicated a high level of perceived efficacy in this aspect.

Primary key staff responses did not differ based on the three improvement groups. In contrast, responses varied for secondary heads of department for three items on headteacher efficacy.

When secondary key staff were asked whether the headteacher *created a positive learning environment* in their school, those from the High Start Group (N=177, 46%) were the most likely to report "very significantly", followed by key staff from the Low Start Group (N=203, 39%) and then the Moderate Start Group (N=85, 36%).

In contrast, rather more positive views were given by secondary key staff from the Low Start Group, when asked whether *the headteacher sustained their motivation as a school leader* and *sustained their commitment to the teaching profession*. These results are in line with head teachers' own perceptions in the Low Start Group.

8.6 Classroom Conditions: Workload Volume And Complexity

Both primary and secondary heads' views were fairly positive, particularly concerning *teachers having access to the teaching resources they need to do a good job* and *the atmosphere throughout their school encouraging pupils to learn*. Most heads felt that *teachers' workloads were quite fair compared with those in other schools* ("agree

strongly": Primary: N=150, 40%; Secondary: N=174, 49%). Over half of primary heads (N=208, 55%) compared with more than two thirds of secondary heads (N=251, 70%) felt that *the amount of administrative work required of teachers was **not** excessive*.

Primary heads were relatively less likely than secondary heads to report that *the school had too many pupils who were uncooperative* (13% compared with 26%), or *who achieved poorly despite teachers' best efforts* (28% compared with 33%). However, primary heads were somewhat more likely to think *the size of classes makes **unreasonable** demands on the time required for preparation and marking* although this was still a minority (26% primary versus 17% secondary).

In general, therefore, heads of improving and effective schools are fairly positive about the relationship between workload demands and resources available to meet them in their schools. This is broadly in line with findings of the headteacher survey. Sector difference was also noted. Primary Key Stage mangers were more likely than secondary heads of department to have more positive views about their workload volume.

Primary staff were more likely to agree strongly than secondary staff that:

• They have access to the teaching resources that they need to do a good job (Primary: N=383, 48% and Secondary: N=484, 42%);
• The atmosphere throughout the school encourages pupils to learn (Primary: N=430, 72% and secondary: N=393, 34%).

Primary staff (N=357, 60%) were also more likely to disagree compared with secondary staff (N=462, 40%) when asked *whether they have too many pupils who are uncooperative*. This corresponds with headteachers' responses.

However, when staff were asked if *they teach subjects or areas of the curriculum for which they have little formal preparation*, substantially higher number of secondary staff (N=832, 73%) disagreed strongly to it compared with their primary peers (N=266, 45%).

8.6.1 School SES contexts
Both primary and secondary heads from high disadvantage schools gave more positive responses to the two items concerned with class size: i) *the size of classes makes reasonable demands on the time required for preparation and marking*; and ii) *the size of classes allows teachers to adequately differentiate their teaching between pupils*.

However, both primary and secondary heads from high disadvantage schools gave relatively less positive responses to the item on *numbers of pupils achieving poorly despite teachers' best efforts*. Also in both sectors fewer heads from low disadvantage schools thought *there were too many pupils who were uncooperative*.

Secondary key staff from high disadvantage schools were more likely than their counterparts from low disadvantage schools to agree strongly that *the size of their class(es) allows them to adequately differentiate their teaching between pupils*. In the headteacher survey however, a similar pattern of responses was found for both the primary and the secondary sample.

Interestingly, when key staff were asked whether *the amount of administrative work required of them is not excessive*, slightly higher proportions of key staff from high disadvantage schools (N=41, 18%) than their counterparts from low disadvantage schools (N=50, 14%) reported strong agreement. This may reflect differences in staffing levels.
For both primary and secondary schools, key staff from low disadvantage schools reported stronger disagreement when asked whether *they have too many pupils who achieve poorly in spite of their best efforts* in line with headteachers' responses. Secondary key staff from low disadvantage schools reported stronger disagreement when asked whether

they have too many pupils who are uncooperative. Again, in contrast, a similar pattern of disagreement was found for both the primary and the secondary headteacher sample.

With regards to *access to the teaching resources*, those from high disadvantage schools were more likely to agree strongly to it. This was found for both primary and secondary schools and may reflect more favourable resource allocations to such schools.

Again these findings indicate differences in the challenges facing those working in high versus lower disadvantage contexts in terms of pupil characteristics rather than in terms of resources available to meet needs.

8.6.2 School improvement groups
The school's improvement group was associated with heads' views on different items in relation to workload volume for the primary and the secondary sample.

At the primary level heads in schools from the High Start Group were less likely to report that their schools had too many pupils who were uncooperative. Three quarters of heads from the Low Start Group (N=120, 75%), compared with 85% (N=80) of those in the Moderate Start and 90% (N=111) in the High Start Group, disagreed moderately or strongly that *there were too many uncooperative pupils in their schools*.

At the secondary level heads in the Low Start Group had more favourable responses to the items concerned with class size. For example, 78% (N=131) of heads in Low Start Group schools, compared with 64% Moderate (N=48) and 57% of the High Start (N=65) reported a high level of disagreement with the item indicating that *the size of classes made unreasonable demands on the time required for preparation and marking in their schools. Similarly, t*he majority of heads in Low Start Group (N=104, 62%) felt that *the size of classes allowed teachers to adequately differentiate their teaching between pupils* whereas less than half of heads in the other two groups reported so (the Moderate Group: 47%; the High Start Group: 49%).

This may reflect differences in the resources available and strategies for size of classes in such schools. For primary schools, heads in the High Start Group (N=99, 81%) were more likely to indicate that *teachers had a significant amount of autonomy over decisions about what happened in their classes* compared with those in the other two improvement groups (the Moderate Start Group: N=63, 67%; the Low Start Group: N=109, 68%).

This may suggest that teacher autonomy may be viewed as less important in comparison with collaboration and consistency of approach in schools that are successful in raising attainment in difficult circumstances and from a low base.

Compared with headteacher perceptions key staff views were somewhat less favourable than those of headteachers in terms of whether they *teach an excessive number of* pupils but the pattern of differences was broadly in line with the headteachers by improvement group. *Secondary staff from the Low Start Group (N=176, 35%) were most likely to disagree strongly that the size of their class(es) makes unreasonable demands on the time required for preparation and marking*. Almost equal proportions of staff from the Moderate (N=60, 25%) and the High groups (N=100, 26%) disagreed strongly to it. This, again, corresponds with results of the headteacher survey.

8.7 School Conditions: Collaborative Cultures

Headteachers and key staff were surveyed to establish their perceptions of the current state of their schools in relation to collaborative practices and cultures. Most headteachers' responses to all items on school culture were rated very positively by both primary and secondary heads, though, again, the primary heads were more likely to

report somewhat higher agreement on most items related to aspects of school culture than their secondary peers.

In particular, almost two thirds of primary heads (N=233, 62%) agreed strongly that *there was ongoing collaborative planning of classroom work among teachers* in their schools, compared with just under a third of secondary heads (N=111, 31%) who reported this. There was much lower agreement ("agree strongly") that *pupils felt safe in their schools* for the secondary (N=204, 57%) than the primary sample (N=311, 82%) In addition, only just over a third of secondary heads (N=134, 37%) agreed strongly that *teachers and other adults in the classroom worked collaboratively* whereas twice as many primary heads (N=291, 77%) indicated that this was the case in their schools. Secondary heads (N=145, 40%) were, also, much less likely than their primary colleagues (N=298, 79%) to agree moderately or strongly that *parents often visited the school.*

The majority of the key staff reported higher levels of agreement to most items relating to the culture in their schools. This is broadly in line with findings from the headteacher survey in which most primary and secondary heads responded positively to all items on school culture. In particular, close to 95% of the key staff agreed moderately/strongly when asked whether *teachers in their school mostly work together to improve their practice.*

Considerable sector difference was also noted in relation to all items on school culture. Primary key staff reported higher levels of "strong" agreements and lower levels of "moderate" agreements than their counterparts in secondary schools. This is, again, in line with patterns of responses from the headteacher survey.

At the secondary level, key staff in high disadvantage schools were also more likely than their peers in low disadvantage schools to agree that *most teachers in their school shared a similar set of values, beliefs and attitudes.* This once again corresponds with headteachers' perceptions.

School disadvantage was also found to be related to different items on school culture compared with secondary headteachers' responses. Key staff in high disadvantage schools were relatively more likely than those from low disadvantage schools to agree strongly that i) *the goals they are expected to accomplish with their pupils are clear to them*; ii) *there is no conflict in their mind about what they are expected to do*; and iii) *the school is actively involved in work with other schools or organisations.*

Taken together these results suggests that the achievement of a common vision, or mind set is likely to play a particular role in motivating and focussing the collective efforts of staff to promote improvement in pupil outcomes as a high priority within high disadvantage contexts.

8.7.1 School Improvement Groups
Overall there were few statistically significant differences between the three improvement groups in relation to most items on school culture, except for heads' perceptions of how often *parents visited their schools. For both the primary and the secondary samples, heads serving the Low Start Group of improving schools were somewhat less likely to agree that parents often visited their schools*. For example, 69% of primary heads in the Low Start Group, compared to 86% of those in the Moderate and High Groups respectively, agreed moderately or strongly that parents often visited their schools. At the secondary level, 33% of headteachers in the Low Start Group, in contrast to 49% of those in the High Group, agreed that this was the case.

Key staff responses differed based on the three improvement groups for three items on school culture. At the primary level, Key Stage managers from the High Start Group schools were the most likely to agree strongly to the statement that *parents often visit the*

school. This is in line with the headteachers' responses. Primary key staff from the Moderate Group were the most likely to agree strongly that *the goals they are expected to accomplish with their pupils are clear to them*.

For the secondary key staff sample, higher proportions of heads of department from the High Start Group were more likely to agree strongly that *pupils feel safe in their school*. Figure 8.3 illustrates this result and points to the difference in perceptions of behavioural climate.

Figure 8.3: Three improvement groups and key staff responses to whether their pupils feel safe in their school (secondary)
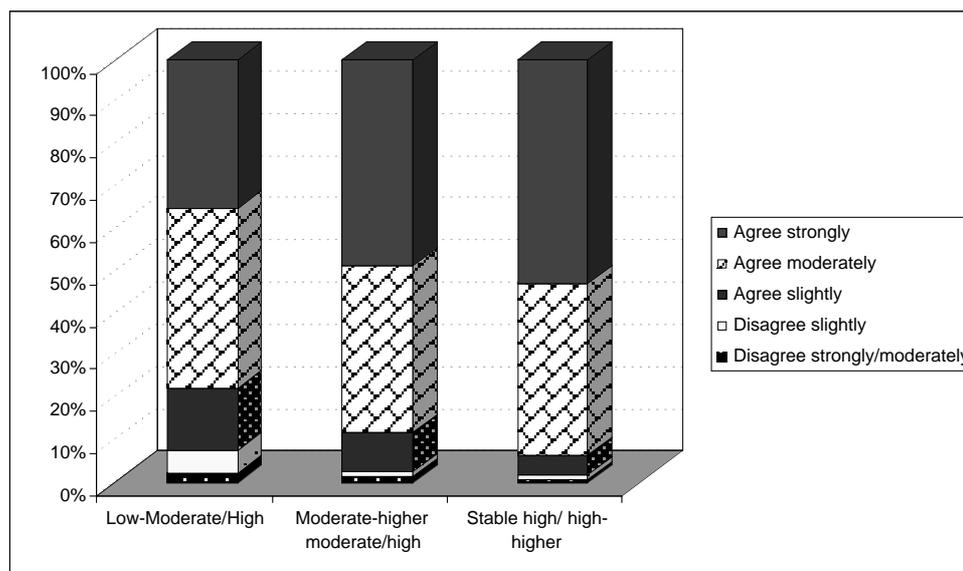
8.8 Building And Sustaining Improvement: The Extent Of Change

8.8.1 Changes in school conditions over time: disciplinary climate
Headteachers and key staff were surveyed to explore perceptions of the extent of change in practice over the last three years in a range of aspects related to school climate and culture. Where change was reported for both samples it suggested some or a lot of improvement rather than decline in pupil behaviour over the last three years. For both the primary and the secondary sample there were significant differences related to the three school improvement groups.

Heads in the Low Start Group were more likely to report a greater degree of improvement in *pupil behaviour*. In contrast, relatively less improvement was reported by those in the High Start Group schools (it is likely that behaviour in such schools was already good and not in need of change). Primary heads reported relatively less change over the last three years than their secondary colleagues. The most marked difference in responses was in relation to *pupils' missing class*. At the primary level 28% of heads in the Low Start Group (N=40) indicated improvement in this area compared with only 7% of heads in the High Start Group. A striking 79% (N=131) of secondary heads in the same improvement group noted improvement in pupil behaviour over the last three years compared with only 29% of those in the High Start Group. Tables 8.6)

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Table 8.6: Improvement groups and secondary heads' responses to "pupils' missing class"

Improvement Groups	Extent of change			
	Much worse/ worse now	No change	Better/ much better now	Total
Low to Moderate/High	3	32	131	166
	(2%)	(19%)	(79%)	(100%)
Moderate to Higher Moderate/ High	5	34	37	76
	(6%)	(45%)	(49%)	(100%)
Stable High/ High to Higher	6	74	33	113
	(5%)	(66%)	(29%)	(100%)
Total	14	140	201	355
	(4%)	(39%)	(57%)	(100%)

Key staff perceptions supported those of the heads in the survey in terms of degree of improvement in non academic areas. In terms of sector differences, some patterns are similar to those noticed in previous sections. When asked about *pupils' absenteeism* and *pupils' lateness to lessons and school*, primary key staff were more likely to report that they are better/much better now, compared with their colleagues in secondary schools. However, when asked about *pupils' missing classes* and their *turnover*, more secondary key staff than their primary counterparts were likely to report significant levels of improvement. Key staff were asked to report on extent of improvements over last three years in the incidence of *physical conflict* and *bullying* among pupils, *vandalism of school property*, *physical and verbal abuse of teachers* as well as level of *pupil misbehaviour*.

Among these, the highest number of key staff reported no change for *physical abuse of teachers* and the lowest number reported no change when asked about *pupil misbehaviour*. Between 30%-50% of staff reported improvements with regards to the above items: a higher number of staff reporting improvements in terms of *reductions in bullying* among pupils while the lowest (30%) was noted for *reductions in physical abuse of teachers* (note such abuse is very rare in most schools).

There was a marked sector difference found for all above items. More primary staff than their counterparts in secondary schools reported improvements in terms of *reductions in physical conflict and bullying* among pupils; and *improved pupil behaviour*. Higher proportions of primary staff reported no change when asked about *vandalism of school property*, *physical and verbal abuse of teachers*; whereas their secondary colleagues were more likely to report improvement in relation to these three items (but it is likely that many of the no change responses in primaries were related to the rarity of such incidences of teacher abuse).

Significant differences were found between all three improvement groups when asked about change in the discipline climate of the school in last three years. Key staff from the High Start Group were the most likely to report "no change" for all items relating to discipline climate (which is likely to reflect a good discipline climate already in place). In contrast, those from schools in the Low Start Group were the most likely to report that it is "better now" or "much better now". This is in line with the results for headteachers.

Close to half of key staff from the Low Start Group reported that *pupils' lateness to school* and *absenteeism* was much better now (i.e. reduced). In terms of changes in *pupils' motivation for learning*, those from the Moderate Start Group (N=75, 56%) were most likely to indicate this was "better now" compared with those from the Low Start Group (N=119, 48%).

These results strongly support the view that there is an important association between

changes in the behavioural climate amongst pupils and improvement in academic results (value added progress and attainment levels) particularly for Low Start schools, those making significant gains on a low base.

8.8.2 Changes in school conditions over time: the school
Here we examine heads' and key staff perceptions of the extent of improvement/change across their school over the last three years. The evidence from the headteacher and the key staff surveys indicated that there was a fairly strong degree of correspondence in general views on change in school conditions between headteachers and other key staff.

For primary and secondary heads the majority indicated considerable improvements had occurred in a range of areas including: *commitment and enthusiasm of staff, an orderly and secure working environment, enhanced local reputation* and *improved pupil behaviour and discipline as a result of a whole school approach* (Tables 8.7 and 8.8).

This is in line with school effectiveness and improvement research that points to the importance of the behavioural climate as a key characteristic of effectiveness (Sammons et al 1997; Teddlie & Reynolds 2000) and the results of previous case studies of improving and turnaround schools (Haydn 2001, Ofsted 2001).

Secondary heads also reported some or a lot of change in terms of *more pupils going into further/higher education* (N=230, 64%). Secondary heads (N=287, 79%) were relatively more likely to report *improvements in homework policies and practices* than primary heads (N=262, 70%). More primary than secondary heads reported no change in *staff absence* (44% versus 29%) or *mobility* (43% versus 32%), but this may indicate an absence of problems three years before in these areas.

Key staff were also asked about any *reduction in staff mobility* in the past three years. One third of the respondents indicated there had been no change and another third of the respondents indicated some change. Six out of ten reported some/a lot of change when asked about *enhanced local reputation of the school*. Secondary staff were more likely to report a lot of change than their primary counterparts.

Between 50%-70% of key staff reported some or a lot of change in terms of *enhanced commitment and enthusiasm of staff, changes in the homework policies and practice*, and *improvements in terms of achieving an orderly and secured working environment* over past three years. There is a sharp sector difference found here, with higher number of primary staff reporting a lot of change compared to those in secondary schools.

Table 8.7: Headteachers' perceptions of change in school conditions (primary)

Improvement Groups	Extent of Change				
	No change	A little	Some	A lot	Total
Enhanced commitment and enthusiasm of staff	54	50	121	151	376
	(14.4%)	(13.3%)	(32.2%)	(40.2%)	(100%)
Promoted an orderly and secure working environment	79	47	85	166	377
	(21%)	(12.5%)	(22.5%)	(44%)	(100%)
Enhanced local reputation	64	65	125	121	375
	(17.1%)	(17.3%)	(33.3%)	(32.3%)	(100%)
Improved pupil behaviour and discipline as a result of a whole school approach	78	55	107	136	376
	(20.7%)	(14.6%)	(28.5%)	(36.2%)	(100%)

Table 8.8: Headteachers' perceptions of change in school conditions (secondary)

Improvement Groups	Extent of Change				
	No change	A little	Some	A lot	Total
Enhanced commitment and enthusiasm of staff	32	49	150	130	361
	(8.9%)	(13.6%)	(41.6%)	(36%)	(100%)
Promoted an orderly and secure working environment	41	58	137	125	361
	(11.4%)	(16.1%)	(38%)	(34.6%)	(100%)
Enhanced local reputation	44	53	107	156	360
	(12.2%)	(14.7%)	(29.7%)	(43.3%)	(100%)
Improved pupil behaviour and discipline as a result of a whole school approach	44	70	127	119	360
	(12.2%)	(19.4%)	(35.3%)	(33.1%)	(100%)

For both the primary and the secondary sample, heads in the Low Start improvement group were relatively more likely to indicate a substantial amount of improvement across their school over the past three years. In contrast, no change was more likely to be reported by those in High Start Group.

For example, 29% (N=45) of primary heads and 30% (N=49) of secondary heads in the Low Start Group indicated "a lot" of improvement in terms of *a reduction in staff mobility* in their schools, in contrast to only 12% (N=15) of primary heads and 11% (N=13) of secondary heads in the High Start Group

Over half of secondary heads (516%) in the Low Start Group reported a substantial degree of improvement in terms of *an enhanced local reputation*, compared with less than one in three (30%) in the High Start Group. A similar but much less marked pattern was found for the primary sample.

A substantial degree of improvement in *achieving an orderly and secure working environment* was reported by over half of primary heads in the Low Start Group (54%). In contrast, one in three of those in the High Start Group (34%) indicated this. This difference is more noticeable for the secondary sample. Almost half of secondary heads in the Low Start Group (45%) reported a lot of improvement in this aspect, in contrast to only 18% of those in the High Start Group.

A similar pattern of association was also found in the extent of change/improvements in four other areas: *reduction in staff absence*, *improved homework policies and practice*, *enhanced commitment and enthusiasm of staff*, and *improved pupil behaviour and discipline as a result of a whole school approach*.

Significant associations were also found between key staff responses and the three school improvement groups. Overall, those key staff from schools in the Low Start Group were the most likely to report "a lot" of change in last three years with regards to improvement across a range of school conditions. More differences were found within secondary schools than primary schools. In particular, there was an association between key staff response and school improvement groups for the following items: *Enhanced local reputation*; *Enhanced commitment and enthusiasm of staff*; and *Promoted an orderly and secure working environment*.

Taken together, the survey results for headteachers and key staff support the view that rapidly improving schools effect improvement across a range of areas to do with practice, climate and learning conditions that have a mutually reinforcing impact and help schools to break out of a low attainment state into an upward trajectory. It appears that such

change is particularly associated and marked for secondary schools with a past history of low performance .

8.8.3 Changes in structures, cultures, and curriculum, pedagogy and assessment

At the secondary level schools' improvement is related to the extent of reported change in leadership practice in relation to almost all the aspects of school structures, culture, and curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. These aspects were discussed in more detail in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. In contrast, far fewer associations were found for the primary sample, particularly in relation to change in school culture.

8.8.3.1 Changes in structures

At the primary level statistically significant differences in the extent of reported change between the three school improvement groups were particularly noted in relation to building external collaborations (structure). Heads in the Low Start Group were somewhat more likely to report a moderate or a substantial amount of change in terms of *working collaboratively with the LA* (Low Start 42% versus 37% in the Moderate Group and 24% in the High Group) and *building community support for the school's improvement efforts* (Low Start 39% versus Moderate Start 28% and High Start 25%).

In addition, we found significant associations relating to change in (re-structuring the organisation. Nearly two thirds of primary heads in the Low Start Group (N=98, 62%) reported a substantial amount of change in leadership practice in relation to improving internal review procedures in their schools over the last three years, whereas around half in the Moderate Group (N=49, 52%) and less than half (N=57, 46%) in the High Start Group indicated that this had occurred.

At the secondary level, schools' improvement group was also found to be related to greater reported change in structures. In Chapters 4, 5 and 6, change in four areas of leadership practices was discussed under Structures: i) Structuring the organisation, ii) School improvement, iii) External and internal collaborations and iv) Teacher leadership. We found significant differences between the three school improvement groups and the extent of reported change in relation to almost all items on structuring the organisation, school improvement and external and internal collaborations. Secondary heads in the Low Start Group schools were relatively more likely than those in the other two improvement groups to report a moderate or a substantial amount of change in leadership practice in all these areas in their schools over the last three years.

For example, in terms of structuring the organisation, in total 79% of heads of the Low Start Group of secondary schools reported a substantial amount of change in *improving internal review procedures*, compared with 61% of those in the High Start Group of schools. Likewise, over half of heads of the Low Start Group (57%), compared with only 34% of those in the High Start Group, reported a substantial amount of change in *ensuring wide participation in decisions about school improvement.* Another example is secondary heads' responses to the extent of change in *helping clarify the reasons for their schools' improvement initiatives* where 63% of the Low Start Group reported a lot or very significant change in this aspect compared with just over half of those in the High Start Group.

Significant differences in the extent of reported change were found between school improvement groups in relation to all the items on external and internal collaborations, including: *working collaboratively with the Governing Body, the LA, the SMT/SLT* and *encouraging collaborative work amongst staff.* For example, the majority of heads of the Low Start Group (N=101, 61%) reported a substantial amount of change in *working collaboratively with SMT/SLT* whereas less than half of those in the High Start Group (N=53, 46%) reported this. Also, 42% (N=69) of secondary heads in the Low Start Group, compared with only one in five (N=23, 20%) of those in the High Start Group, indicated a

lot of change in *working collaboratively with the LA.*

In contrast to primary head teachers' results, primary key stage managers' responses did not differ based on the improvement group of the schools. In contrast, for secondary schools, the responses differed for three items related to changes in school structure. For all these items on head teachers' leadership style in relation to school structures, staff from the Low Group schools were most likely to agree strongly and those from schools in the High Group were most likely to agree moderately to them compared with their counterparts:

- Works in collaboration with other schools;
- Ensures wide participation in decisions about school improvement;
- Works collaboratively with the Local Authority (LA).

8.8.3.2 Changes in culture
Interestingly no clear pattern of association between schools' improvement group and heads' reported change in school culture was found at the primary level. However, for secondary schools statistically significant differences in the extent of reported change were found between the three improvement groups in relation to almost all the items on culture. This suggests that achieving radical cultural change is relatively more important for the improvement of pupil attainment in secondary schools, particularly for schools starting from a low attainment base.

These items were categorised as setting directions, developing people and managing the teaching and learning programme and discussed in overall terms in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. Again, heads in the Low Start Group generally report more change in these aspects over the past three years compared with their colleagues in the other two improvement groups.

For example, over half of heads of the Low Start Group of secondary schools (N=87, 52%) indicated a substantial degree of change in *demonstrating high expectations for pupil behaviour*, compared with 36% (N=41) of those in the High Start Group. A lot or very significant change in *demonstrating high expectations for pupil achievement* and *demonstrating high expectations for staff's work with pupils* were also reported by 64% (N=107) and 59% (N=98) of secondary heads in the Low Start Group respectively noted this for these two items , compared with 50% (N=58) and 42% (N=48) of those in the High Start Group of schools.

In addition, half of secondary heads in the Low Start Group (N=84, 50%) indicated a substantial amount of change in *developing an atmosphere of caring and trust*, in contrast to 39% (N=44) of those in the High Group who reported this and only 29% of those in the Moderate Start group (Table 8.24).

Interestingly, there were no significant relationships found between the three improvement groups and the way key staff responded to any of these items related to school culture in either sector.

8.8.3.3 Changes in curriculum, pedagogy and assessment
There were significant associations between schools' improvement group and the amount of change in leadership practice reported in relation to curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, but these were most evident for responses by heads in the secondary sector. This was particularly noted in terms of the reported use of *coaching, mentoring and class observation, and assessment* to improve teaching and the *use of data.*

For the primary sample, heads in the Low Start Group were somewhat more likely to report a moderate or a substantial amount of change in terms of *using coaching and mentoring to improve the quality of teaching, encouraging staff to use data in their work* and *encouraging staff to use data in planning for individual pupil needs*. A similar pattern

of association was found for the secondary sample in relation to the three items. For secondary heads, relatively more change was reported by those in the Low Start Group in relation to *using coaching and mentoring* and *using data to improve teaching and learning*. Half of secondary heads in the Low Start Group (N=85, 52%) reported a lot of change in this aspect, compared with 40% of those in the High Start Group.

In the secondary sector the schools' improvement group was also associated with the amount of reported change in relation to a number of other items on class observation and assessment. Heads in the Low Start Group were relatively more likely to report a substantial degree of change relating to *regularly observing classroom activities* and *working with teachers to improve their teaching after observing classroom activities*. Relatively more change in leadership practice was also reported by heads in this improvement group for items related to *incorporating research evidence into their decision making to inform practice* and *using pupil achievement data to make most decisions about school improvement*.

For example, 84% of secondary heads in the Low Start Group reported a substantial amount of change in *encouraging staff to use data in their work*, compared with 70% of those in the High Start Group. Likewise, substantial change in *regularly observing classroom activities* was indicated by 65% of secondary heads of the Low Start Group, compared with 55% of those in the High Start Group.

It thus appears that heads in schools that had made rapid improvement from a low base were likely to have focused more upon the use of a range of specific strategies to change teachers' classroom practices, particularly in the secondary sector. All heads in secondary schools reported a considerable change in the extent of encouraging the use of data teachers, but this was a particular emphasis in Low Start secondary schools.

Turning to key staff responses, once again almost equal levels of agreement were found between schools from the three improvement groups within the primary sample. In contrast, for secondary schools, key staff responses differed based on the three improvement groups. This again corresponds with the results for headteachers.

When the Heads of Departments were asked whether the headteacher in their school *allocates resources strategically based on pupil needs*, those from the Low Group schools were the most likely to agree strongly. When asked whether the headteacher *utilises support staff skills for the benefit of pupil learning*, more of those from the Moderate Group agreed strongly compared with their counterparts in the other improvement groups. Those from Stable High/High to Higher schools were the most likely to agree strongly when they were asked whether *the headteacher encourages them to consider new ideas for their teaching*.

8.9 Teaching Policies And Practices

Secondary heads had somewhat lower agreement about the extent to which *the school timetable provides adequate time for collaborative teacher planning* ("agree strongly": 21% secondary versus 37% for primary heads), and *teachers' strategies enable pupils to construct their own knowledge* ("agree strongly": secondary 8% versus 24% for primary heads). The large majority (around 80%) of heads from both sectors believed *there were more opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning now than three years ago*. This seems to be a strong feature in both sectors

Secondary heads were more likely than primary heads to indicate moderate to strong agreement that *pupils of similar academic ability were grouped together in most subject*

areas (70% versus 50%).

No clear pattern of significant associations was found between schools' level of improvement and heads' views on teaching policies and practices for the primary sample.

Significant associations, however, were again identified for secondary schools. Heads in the Low Start Group (N=125, 75%) were somewhat more likely to agree moderately or strongly that *pupils of similar academic ability were grouped together in most subject areas* compared to those in the other two improvement groups (the Moderate Start Group: N=53, 71%; the High Start Group: N=73, 64%). In contrast, those in the High Start Group (N=75, 66%) tended to indicate somewhat stronger agreement than those in the other two improvement groups that *there were more opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning now than three years ago* (the Moderate Start Group: N=41, 55%; the Low Start Group: N=85, 51%).

There was very little evidence of differences in key staff views in relation to school improvement group in items referring to teaching policies and practices. A statistically significant difference was noted only for one item in secondary staff responses in relation to the extent that *teachers in their school have a sense of collective responsibility for pupil learning*. Those from schools in the High Start Group were the most likely to agree strongly to it. In all, 43% of the key staff from the High Start Group agreed strongly that this was the case compared with 42% from the Moderate Start Group and 35% from the Low Start Group.

8.10 Extra Curricula Programmes

Most primary and secondary heads agreed that their schools provided a broad range of extracurricular activities for children. In addition, around 60% of primary and secondary heads reported that *most pupils regularly participated in at least one extracurricular activity* in their schools. Secondary heads were more likely to indicate that *their school provided after school academic support activities* (85% secondary versus 46% for primaries). However, a little over half of primary (55%) compared with around four in ten secondary (43%) heads indicated that *most of their teachers participated regularly in at least one extracurricular school activity*.

However, both sectors heads in schools of the Low Start Group indicated higher agreement that *their school provided after school academic support activities.* In all 53% of primary heads and 89% of secondary heads in this improvement group, compared with 41% of primary heads and 78% of secondary heads in the High Start Group, reported moderate to strong agreement on this item.

Also in both primary and secondary schools heads in the High Start Group were somewhat more likely to agree moderately or strongly that *most of their pupils participated regularly in at least one extracurricular school activity*. In both sectors around 68% of heads in this improvement group indicated so. There was no marked difference in heads' views on this item between the other two improvement groups.

For the primary sample heads in the High Start Group (N=75, 61%) were relatively more likely to indicate strong agreement that *most of their teachers participated regularly in at least one extracurricular school activity*, compared with 58% (N=54) in the Moderate Start Group and 49% (N=79) in the Low Start Group. This may reflect differences in priorities and in other pressures between these groups of schools related to their attainment histories.

8.11 Extended Services

The introduction of extended services is a key feature of recent policy development in England. There were a number of differences between the primary and secondary school heads in the extent to which different extended services were reported as available.

In both education sectors heads in the Low Start Improvement Group were relatively more likely to report *some or full access to parenting support*, *including structured parenting support programme*. In contrast, those in the High Start Group were somewhat more likely to indicate *no access* to this type of extended service within their schools, and this tendency appears to be stronger for the secondary sample ("no access": secondary 53% versus 33% primaries).

Heads from schools in the Low Start Group secondary group (N=61, 37%) were relatively more likely than those in the other two improvement groups to indicate *full access to swift and easy referral to health and social services* (25% of the Moderate Start Group and 22% of the High Start Group respectively). In addition, they were somewhat more likely to report *community access to school facilities*: half (N=83) indicated *full access* to this extended services compared with 42% of the Moderate Start Group and 35% of the Low Start Group.

Only a small proportion of primary (N=45, 12%) and secondary (N=41, 12%) schools relied greatly on *an extended schools coordinator/manager*, and around 40-46% did not have one in delivering extended services. Partnerships were used to some extent or greatly by over half the primary (N=241, 64%) and secondary (N=184, 52%) school sample in *providing services,* and *cluster relationships with other schools or Children's services* were also noted at a similar level (50% primaries; 47% secondaries).

Heads reported that their teachers were relied on *greatly* to *run out of hours activities* (49% primary, 44% secondary) or *to some extent* (41% primary, 48% secondary). Primary heads in particular reported that their own involvement was *greatly relied on to lead the strategy for extended services* (39% primary compared with 15% of secondary heads). Primary heads were also much more likely to report *great personal involvement in establishing/running extended services* (29% primary versus 8% secondaries).

For both primary and secondary schools those in the Low Start Group were somewhat more likely to report *great or some reliance on an extended school's coordinator/manager in providing extended services*[11]. 48% of secondary heads and 42% of primary heads in this improvement group, compared with 23% of secondary heads and 33% of primary heads in the High Start Group, indicated that they did so.

Also in both education sectors *cluster relationships with other schools or Children's services* were somewhat more likely to be used greatly or to some extent by heads in schools from the Low Start Group. More of those in High Start schools (47% secondaries and 47% primaries) tended to report *no reliance on these cluster relationships in providing extended services within and around their schools* (the Moderate Start Group: 44% primary, 41% secondary; the Low Start Group: 35% primary, 33% secondary).

For the primary sample, great reliance on the *involvement of teachers to run out of hours activities* were relatively more likely to be reported by heads in High Start schools (N=68, 55%), whereas those in Low Start schools were more likely to indicate some (N=76, 48%) or no (N=17, 11%) reliance on the involvement of teachers in providing extended services. For secondary schools, partnerships were relatively more likely to be used to some extent or greatly by heads in Low Start schools (N=96, 60%). By contrast, the

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; Secondary: $\_^{=19.45,??df=6,??p<0.01??}$

figures were less than half of heads in Moderate Start (N=37, 49%) and High Start Groups (N=49, 43%).

These results indicate that proportionately more of the Low Start Group of rapidly improving schools from a low base tended to be involved in extended schools provision. This may reflect differences in the needs of the pupil populations and communities served and availability of resources.

8.12 Summary

This section provides a summary of the results of the analyses of surveys of primary and secondary headteachers and comparisons of the views of key staff in highly improving/highly effective schools in relation to the characteristics of these schools (by context and sector). It highlights the similarities and differences in leadership characteristics and strategies in establishing foundations and building and sustaining improvement between the three school improvement groups (Low Start, Moderate Start and High Start) over the last three years. It also explores sector differences and those related to school contexts.

Key findings:
1. Differences by School SES Context

- School context is significantly associated with schools' improvement groupings. Stable High attaining and effective schools were much more likely to be low disadvantage schools (measured by % FSM of pupil intake Bands 3 and 4) whereas highly improved effective schools from a low base (Low Start Group) were relatively more likely to be high disadvantage schools (measured by school FSM Band 3 and 4).

- High disadvantage secondary schools were relatively more likely to be served by less experienced headteachers and to have had several changes in headteacher over the last ten years (3 plus changes).

- Overall, key staff in high disadvantage schools in this sample reported more positive views on *school conditions*, *school culture* and *workload volumes*. They were also more likely than their counterparts in less disadvantaged schools to report higher levels of *headteacher efficacy*. In contrast, staff in low disadvantage schools were more likely to report favourable views about their *workload complexity*[12].

2. Differences by Sector

- Primary headteachers were relatively more likely than their secondary peers to report improvement in aspects of *academic press* and *school culture* in the past three years. Primary heads gave relatively less favourable responses than their secondary colleagues to most items relating to *leader self-efficacy* although views were generally favourable.

- Primary key staff were more likely than their secondary counterparts to report positive views on all items related to *leadership distribution and practice*. They

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[12] It must be remembered that this study includes only highly improved high disadvantaged schools and this pattern would be less likely to be found in less successful schools.

also reported a substantial amount of change over the last three years in the *school conditions* (e.g. disciplinary climate).

- Primary key staff perceived higher levels of leadership practice provided by *the headteacher* and *deputy headteacher* and they were also more likely to report that leadership practice is provided by *the LA*. Primary key staff also perceived higher levels of their own involvement in leadership activities and collective planning in the school.

3. Differences by School Improvement Group

- In both education sectors stable high effective schools (the High Start Group) were more likely to have experienced headteachers in post, those who had been in post for more than eight years.

- Schools making rapid improvement on a low base (those in the Start Group) were relatively more likely to be led by a younger and less experienced headteacher. Such schools were also more likely to have had several changes (3 or more) of head in the last decade. It is important to note that this is likely to link to the finding on school context since relatively more high disadvantaged schools were in the rapid improvement Low Start Group.

- Findings in relation to education sector were also associated with school improvement group. Differences by school improvement group were more common and generally stronger for the secondary sample.

- For secondary schools in particular, there were marked differences between the three improvement groups in relation to the extent of reported change in almost all the aspects of *school structures*, *culture* and *curriculum, pedagogy and assessment*. Compared to other areas of change analysed in our surveys (e.g. academic press, extracurricular programmes and leadership distribution) where fewer differences were found, these three areas appeared to have been a strong focus of change and improvement particularly for secondary heads in the Low Start Group. To achieve rapid and sustained (over three years) improvement from a low base it appears that a focus on these areas is particularly important, especially in the larger and more complex organisational context of secondary schools.

- In the secondary sample, *the LA* was seen to have played a greater role in the provision of leadership practice by both headteachers and key staff in the Low Start Group.

- Secondary key staff from Low Start schools were the most likely to report that SMT/SLT in their schools *participate in ongoing, collaborative work* and *have a positive role in development of policies on lesson planning*.

- In both sectors we found significant differences between the three school improvement groups in relation to *the use of data to improve the quality of teaching and learning*. Analysis provides evidence for the hypothesis that effective headteachers promote and ensure that staff *adopt evidence-based approaches to the use of assessment data, intervening early and monitoring and evaluating continually at school, department and classroom level*. This seems to be particularly important for the improvement strategies of schools improving from a low attainment base (the Low Start Group).

- Also in both primary and secondary schools, significant differences were found between the three school improvement groups in terms of the extent to which

headteachers reported change/improvement across their school, including *disciplinary climate*, *reduction of staff mobility* and *enhanced commitment and enthusiasm of staff*. More improvements/change were likely to be reported by heads and the key staff in the Low Start improvement group. This supports the findings on their rapid academic improvement in the analyses of national assessment and examination data.

- *This observation also provides evidence for our hypothesis that effective headteachers have a positive influence upon the 'mindset'[13] of the school and its culture and staff and student relationships. This is in line with the conclusion of the literature review (strong claim 4) that school leaders tend to improve teaching and learning and pupil outcomes indirectly and most powerfully through their influence on staff motivation, commitment and working conditions.*

There were also broad similarities between the three improvement groups in relation to school culture, the way that leadership tasks were distributed or shared within schools and the kinds of leadership practice provided by SMT/SLT in school. This suggests that these aspects of leadership practice vary less in relation to school improvement and effectiveness group and supports the view that there are some common core features of leadership in all highly effective/improved schools.

8.13 Key Messages

To our knowledge, this interim analysis is the first example of a survey of highly effective and improved schools that has sought to explore similarities and differences in headteacher and key staff perceptions of major features of school leadership according to their school's improvement and effectiveness history.

1. The categorisation of schools into three distinctive groups reveals that there are statistically and educationally significant differences in certain leadership features and practices. In addition, other important influences are found to show significant associations with the pattern of staff responses related to headteachers' years of experience in total and in their current schools, the number of headteachers in post in the last ten years, school sector and socio-economic context.

2. There are important relationships between school context and the school improvement group, and between school context and headteachers' time in post. The less stable leadership histories of schools, particularly secondary schools in high disadvantage, challenging contexts is evident and is a feature that points to the likely importance of supportive initiatives by NCSL and others in relation to leadership, training, development and succession planning.

3. There are distinct features that differentiate schools in the three start improvement groups. There is strong evidence that schools in the Low to Moderate/High group had made greater improvements in changing school culture, climate and addressing teaching and learning and use of performance data during the last three years.

4. Participants from Low Start schools were significantly more likely to report substantial improvement in pupil behaviour, attendance, attitude and motivation. These aspects are likely to be important precursors and facilitators for improvement in

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[13] A term coined by James et al. (2006)

students' academic achievements, especially in high disadvantage contexts. These findings are in accordance with those of reviews of school effectiveness and improvement research (Sammons 2007).

5. Headteachers in the Low Start Group were more likely to prioritise strategies to improve teaching and learning and the use of data than those in the High Start (stable high effective) Group. This was evident for schools in both sectors but particularly those in the secondary sector.

Additional data collected from the surveys included details of the three strategies identified as most influential in improving pupil academic outcomes by the head teachers and will be analysed to establish which combinations of actions are perceived to have been most important. Further analyses will help to indicate which combination of each actions appear to be most frequently adopted by schools in the three improvement groups and in different contexts. In addition, qualitative data will be examined to explore patterns of similarities and differences in approaches between the three improvement groups and schools in different SES contexts. A follow-up survey of heads and key staff is planned to further explore aspects identified as potentially important from the initial integration of quantitative and qualitative evidence.

Structural equation modelling will be used to further examine underlying dimensions in the responses to both surveys. This will establish whether the theoretical scales derived from the literature are empirically confirmed in our sample. In addition, these quantitatively derived dimensions will be related to hypothesised models of the proposed links between different features of leadership practice and measures of pupil outcomes and change in outcomes over time. We will seek to explore their predictive ability, as indicated by relationships between several measures of change in pupil academic outcomes derived from the national data sets and from staff and headteacher perceptions of degree of change in non-academic pupil outcomes collected in the surveys. Combined with evidence obtained from the qualitative strand, this analysis strategy for the quantitative strand will help to test and refine models of the hypothesised relationships between leadership and pupil outcomes (direct/indirect, and moderating and mediating influences).

Part 3: Ways Forward

Chapter 9

9.0 Introduction

This first tranche of data collection and analysis provides a broad picture of the key features of headteachers' leadership and leadership practices in highly effective and improved schools. The questions asked of headteachers and their key staff through a large scale survey and later in face to face interviews in twenty selected case study schools were informed by an initial comprehensive review of the existing research literature on successful headteachers that identified seven strong claims about leadership (Leithwood et al, 2006). This final chapter summarizes the findings at the halfway stage of the research; relates these to the 'Seven Strong Claims' where appropriate; and raises issues for further investigation in order to explore specific associative relationships between effective leadership in primary and secondary schools and student outcomes. It explores, also, the implications of the interim and emerging findings for policy and practice.

So far the evidence we have collected and analysed provides stronger empirical support for the view that there are important *indirect effects of leadership* on pupil outcomes in addition to those direct influences which headteachers exercise. The emerging findings from this study also point to the headteachers' leadership activity varying over time by years of experience in the school, by school sector and by school context. The evidence shows that the range of activities undertaken and, possibly, the direct influence of the head, is greater in disadvantaged secondary school contexts where the level of challenge is often greater.

In this final chapter, we explore the emerging evidence in relation to four fundamental questions:

1. What is it about headteacher leadership in these schools which has enabled the school's effectiveness to increase or be sustained over several years in terms of student outcomes?
2. How are these headteachers contributing to creating and sustaining school effectiveness?
3. Are there differences between headteachers in different phases, different school sectors, in different FSM contexts, and in schools with different 'improvement' trajectories?
4. Are there identifiable sequences or patterns of actions taken by incoming headteachers?

Further analyses of the quantitative survey results are planned to explore underlying dimensions and test models of hypothesised relationships between different features of leadership and changes in school organisation and processes and changes in student outcomes (in measured attainment and value added indicators and in participants' perceptions of changes in other student outcomes such as behaviour and engagement). These will use a range of techniques, including structural equation modelling.

Question 1: What is it about headteacher leadership in these schools which has enabled the school's effectiveness to increase or be sustained over several years in terms of student outcomes?

9.1 The Primacy Of The Headteacher

It is clear, from the data gathered so far, that school staff perceive that it is headteacher leadership that remains the major driving force and which underpins their school's increased or sustained effectiveness and improvement. As our literature survey suggests, their leadership:

> *'serves as a catalyst for unleashing the potential capacities that already exist in the organisation'.*
>
> *(Leithwood et al, 2006, p. 5)*

The headteacher as 'primus inter pares' (Claim 1) is supported by both the quantitative and qualitative evidence (see Chapter 7).

9.1.1 Alignment: a key strategy

The data show that a *key strategy* in the endeavours of the heads to improve the cultures of teaching, learning and achievement in their schools is the *alignment of* structures and cultures with 'vision' and 'direction'. In effect, they *repositioned their schools internally* through changing expectations, aspirations, structures and cultures so that they were able to build and sustain performance. They increased effectiveness through a sustained focus upon raising the quality of teaching and learning whilst at the same time raising the levels of individual and collective efficacy and involvement of staff.

Each of the case study headteachers has established a strong narrative about the journey of school improvement that provides the direction of travel, shapes behaviour, and generates motivation among staff. This is a 'meta-strategy' as it provides the foundation for the alignment of cultures, structures and values.

Next steps: to investigate in more detail headteachers' influence on i) succession planning; ii) pupil engagement; and iii) pupil learning by comparing similarities and differences in the strategies used between the rates of improvement in three groups of schools: low to medium; medium to high and sustained high.

9.2 Positioning For Improvement: More Than A Repertoire Of Basic Leadership Practices

The findings confirm the second of our 'Seven Strong Claims for Successful Leadership': that successful headteachers engage in, and are acknowledged to demonstrate four core sets of leadership qualities and practices: building vision and setting directions; understanding and developing people; redesigning the organisation; and managing (directly or through others) the teaching and learning programmes. However, there were differences in the degree of their perceived emphasis between heads in primary and secondary and heads in relatively advantaged and relatively disadvantaged schools.

9.2.1 Improving the teaching and learning

It should be noted that many more of the schools improving from low to moderate/low to high were in disadvantaged contexts; therefore, there are strong similarities in the results of comparisons of survey responses for these groups.

Greater emphasis was given to specific strategies to improve teaching and learning and the use of data in schools in disadvantaged contexts and the low to moderate group. This was more noticeable for secondary schools.

The data show that the vast majority of primary headteachers (81%) had taken an action that was focussed on improving the teaching and learning programme, in combination with a range of other foci, the most common of which were related to; redesigning the organisation (44%); setting directions (31%); developing people (36%); increasing the academic emphasis (34%); and distributing leadership (16%). For secondary heads: 89% reported a priority action related to improving the programme; 46% to setting direction; 25% to the academic emphasis or press; and 23% to developing people. Further analysis of the items related to improving the teaching and learning programme indicated that this included a wide range of actions that will be further subdivided.

A strong emphasis on the use of performance and assessment data and target setting was evident in comments about specific priority actions in most schools e.g.

> *'Giving specific data to individuals and teams to help inform planning and target setting'.*

Amongst secondary schools the main priority activities listed as intended to improve the teaching and learning programme included a strong emphasis on using performance data:

> *'Pupil tracking, target setting and mentoring scheme'.*

Other strategies included a curricula and/or assessment focus:

> *'Improve/change curriculum on offer at Key Stage 4'.*

The use of performance data was particularly noted in schools in disadvantaged contexts and those that improved from low to moderate/high over the three year period.

Examples of staff development related strategies rated as priorities included:

> *'Managing some teachers' learning'.*
> *'Building a learning network'.*

In secondary schools there was also greater mention of priority actions related to pupil behaviour and pastoral matters:

> *'Innovative pastoral structure'.*
> *'One to one student mentoring'.*
> *'Review of rewards and behaviour policy'.*

In relation to teachers' classroom practice a range of actions were specified such as:

> *'Focus on the role of the middle leader'.*
> *'Develop a culture of research and innovation'.*
> *'Development of a learning toolkit for staff'.*

There was also mention of specific changes which related to structures, such as:

'Becoming a 'Specialist College' - a big impact.

Next steps: to investigate and classify in more detail the patterns of strategies headteachers in different sectors and in schools in different SES improvement groups use to position their schools for improvement.

Question 2: How are these headteachers contributing to sustained school effectiveness?

9.3 Diagnosis And Differentiation

The data strongly suggest that these heads did not engage *simultaneously* in developing, implementing and sustaining all the strategies recognised in the literature as being necessary for effective leadership, but that they prioritized according to context. For example, the physical teaching and learning environment in half of the case study schools was, or had recently been outdated or in a state of disrepair, so that, in order to raise levels of self-efficacy, pride and behaviour of pupils, changing this was a priority for headteachers. Here, the availability of additional funding via Government programmes and the impact of specialist schools status was often noted as important to enable physical improvement of the site and resources.

It was the ability to identify the most important changes and to ensure that these were made which was a key characteristic of these headteachers. The headteachers in the case study schools did not pursue only one strategy in their quest for success. Rather, they combined a number but prioritized within these. In other words, they were able to *diagnose* (needs), *differentiate* (in levels of importance and timing of strategies to meet these) and actively *co-ordinate* these strategies. They applied their judgements about the timing, nature of change and prioritized their change strategies in their schools in different ways, according to their diagnosis of need in relation to purpose and context.

9.4 Building Care, Learning And Achievement Cultures: Changing Expectations And Improving The Quality Of Practice

The literature on leadership in general rarely focuses upon the work of headteachers in building cultures which *both* promote student engagement in learning *and* raise students' achievement levels in terms of value added test and examination results, although the professional communities' literature focuses on this form of leadership. Our data suggest that headteachers were perceived by their staff to focus primarily upon:

i)   Creating and sustaining cultures of high expectations for themselves and others by staff and students;
ii)   Distributing responsibilities and accountabilities, particularly in disadvantaged (high FSM) contexts;
iii)   Nurturing care and trust with collegiality;
iv)   Improving relationships between staff and students;
v)   Connecting student behaviour with student outcomes. All heads were perceived to have influenced the quality of classroom practice through encouraging more consistency in classroom teaching approaches (e.g. adopting the 'three part' lesson espoused in national policy documents);
vi)   Engaging productively with external agencies in ways which provided

added benefits to the school.

Perceptions of key staff in relation to heads' involvement in managing the teaching and learning programme were less unequivocal. This may be seen to problematize Claim 3 in the literature that, 'all the practices within this category have been associated with successful turnaround leadership' (ibid, p. 9). However, the qualitative data suggest that all heads build robust systems for monitoring student progress so that decisions about teaching and its organisation and differentiation may be informed by this. It may be, then, that whereas primary school headteachers influence pedagogy directly (e.g. by modelling teaching) as well as indirectly through AFL and monitoring systems, secondary heads delegate the former (and perhaps the latter) to others, especially middle managers.

Next steps: to probe the direct and indirect ways in which secondary school heads manage the teaching and learning programmes in order to build care, learning and achievement cultures, and to seek evidence of the impact of these on staff and student engagement in learning.

9.5 Leading The Learning: Being Responsive To Context

Our Claim 4 that school leaders, 'improve teaching and learning indirectly and most powerfully through their influence on staff motivation, commitment and working conditions' (ibid, p. 10) was well substantiated by our data analyses. There were many examples of heads: i) aligning CPD to the school development plan; ii) improving the physical working conditions for staff and students; iii) nurturing staff self-efficacy and motivation; iv) engaging in succession planning through, for example, clarifying roles and distributing responsibilities to selected staff; and v) building inclusive teams of staff in order to break down barriers to the commitment to whole school vision. The timing and application of these strategies were responsive to context but all were used.

Next steps: to explore the ways in which different strategies for encouraging adult learning are applied at different times and in different contexts and the evidence of their impact on staff and students.

9.6 Distributing Leadership

The data pointed to the recognition by heads of the importance to the success of the school of broadening participation of staff, consulting with them on a regular basis and, in some cases, the increased involvement of students in school wide decision-making processes. There was evidence, also, of the reshaping and broadening of the senior leadership team into a group which represented more strongly the 'core' business of teaching and learning standards. However, significant differences in the patterns of perceived distribution are evidenced in survey and interview data between primary and secondary, between relatively high and relatively low disadvantaged schools and in particular between schools in different improvement groups in the secondary sector. Those in more highly disadvantaged schools perceived there to be a higher degree of distribution, in contrast to those in relatively advantaged schools.

Next steps: our Claim 5 that, 'total leadership accounts for, 'a much higher proportion of explained variation (in student achievement) than is typically reported in studies of individual teacher effects' (ibid, p. 12) and Claim 6 that, 'there are relationships between the use of different patterns of leadership

distribution and levels of value added student achievement' (ibid, p. 13) will be addressed more fully through a tight focus upon these relationships in the second survey and case study data collection and analysis in the next phase of the project.

9.7   Values And Virtues

Our final Claim 7, was that, 'at least under challenging circumstances, the most successful school leaders are…flexible rather than dogmatic in their thinking within a   system of core values, persistent…resilient and optimistic', and that, 'such traits help explain why successful leaders facing daunting conditions are often able to push forward when there is little reason to expect progress' (ibid, p. 14). All the data confirm these two statements and go further in demonstrating, also, the nature of such values-led, flexible, persistent, resilient and optimistic leadership in the face of the challenge of parental passivity, emotionally and intellectually alien community environments and, in some cases, national policies which were not perceived by the heads to be of particular benefit to the school.

Next steps: to seek, collect and analyse examples of these values and virtues as they have been enacted in particular contexts at particular times.

Question 3: What are the differences between headteachers in different experience phases, different school sectors, different FSM contexts and in schools in different improvement trajectories?

9.8 Similarities And Differences By Improvement Groupings Of Schools

9.8.1 Similarities across improvement groupings
Although there were some differences between the three improvement groups in terms of how leadership was distributed within schools, overall, there appeared to be more similarities than differences, particularly in relation to i) the extent to which leadership practice in school was provided by other people or groups; ii) the way that leadership tasks were distributed or shared within schools; and iii) the kinds of leadership practice provided by SMT/SLT in school. *There were, however, differences in the levels of decision-making and accountability within distributed leadership practices in different schools.* This was the case for both primary and secondary schools. We can thus conclude that successful headteachers of improving and effective schools do not differ much in their approaches to distributing leadership (this is in line with findings in the literature review c.f. Strong claims 2 and 5 in particular).

9.8.2 Differences by improvement groupings in extent of change
In both primary and secondary schools significant differences were found between the three improvement groups in terms of the extent headteachers reported change/improvement across their school, including aspects related to disciplinary climate, reduction of staff mobility and enhanced commitment and enthusiasm of staff. More improvements/changes were likely to be reported by heads in the Low to Moderate/High improvement group. This finding provides evidence for our hypothesis that effective headteachers have a positive influence upon the mindset of the school and its culture and staff and student relationships in the school. This is in line with the conclusion of the literature review (strong claim 4) that school leaders tend to improve teaching and learning and pupil outcomes indirectly and most powerfully through their influence on staff motivation, commitment and

working conditions. This is likely to be especially important for schools in challenging circumstances which start from a low base in terms of student attainment.

9.8.3 Differences in secondary schools by improvement grouping
For secondary schools in particular, there were marked differences between the three improvement groups in relation to the extent of reported change in almost all the aspects of school structures, culture and curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. Compared to other areas of change analysed in our surveys (e.g. academic press, extracurricular programmes and leadership distribution) where fewer differences were found, these three areas appeared to have been a strong focus of change and improvement, particularly for heads in Low to Moderate/High improvement group in the secondary sample. To achieve rapid and sustained (over three years) improvement from a low base it appears that a focus on these areas is particularly important, especially in the larger and more complex organisational context of secondary schools.

9.8.4 Differences by improvement groupings in the use of data
In both sectors significant differences were found between the three school improvement groups in relation to the reported use of data to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Analysis provides support for the hypothesis that effective headteachers use and ensure that staff adopt evidence-based approaches to the use of assessment data, intervening early and monitoring and evaluating continually at school, department and classroom level. In addition, whilst the use of data to inform individual pupil target setting was widespread, it was a particular feature of the Low/Moderate/High improvement group. These features seem to be particularly important for the improvement strategies of schools improving from a low attainment base.

9.9 Headteacher Experience And Rates Of Change In Schools

The experience factor: headteachers' perspectives
The headteacher survey revealed significant associations between heads' years of experience in the current school and the extent of reported change for both the primary and the secondary sample. Less experienced heads tended to report more change in relation to a range of areas of leadership practice in their schools over the last three years. This was particularly noted in terms of setting directions and redesigning/ restructuring the organisation (i.e. structure and culture) and developing people to improve teaching and learning. This pattern was identified for both primary and secondary heads. It indicates that during their early years of leadership in a school, headteachers are much more active in initiating specific and wide ranging changes to effect improvement.

Relationships were also found between the extent of disadvantage context of a school (measured by FSM band) and the amount of change in leadership practice reported by primary and secondary heads. Although overall both primary and secondary heads in high disadvantage contexts were relatively more likely to report change in leadership practice in their schools, the relationship with context was found to be strongest for secondary schools.

Primary and secondary heads reported a moderate or a substantial amount of change on the majority of the items in relation to structures, culture, and curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. This pattern lends some empirical support to the second strong claim about successful leadership identified in the literature review conducted at the outset of this study, i.e. most successful leaders seem to draw on the same repertoire of basic leadership practices,

including building vision and setting directions, understanding and developing people, redesigning the organisation and managing the teaching and learning programme. However, this seems to be mediated by context, with a greater number of practices being required to effect change in more disadvantaged schools.

9.9.1 Differences by school improvement grouping
The experienced headteachers of successful and highly improved schools tended to report relatively less change. This is likely to reflect the fact that such heads probably made more significant changes at an earlier point within the first five years after taking up post (as supported by case study evidence and written comments). More experienced heads of successful schools are more likely to focus on embedding change and maintaining the improvements already achieved.

9.9.2 Differences by years of experience in school
The headteacher's years of experience as a head in their current school is significantly associated with more items on change in structures, culture, and curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. The closer relationship between heads' experience and the extent of reported change in these three areas provides evidence to support the hypothesis that effective headteachers employ different improvement strategies depending on their experience and their perceptions of the need for change in their school. Further analyses by school improvement group reported in Chapter 8 investigated this aspect further and supported the hypothesis that schools from a low point (i.e. improving from low to moderate/high) have made the most changes.

9.9.3 Differences by SES context
The finding that heads in high disadvantage schools were more likely to report change in leadership practice in their schools supports the hypothesis that effective headteachers in challenging circumstances have to be more responsive to school cultural and policy contexts in order to improve pupil outcomes and make greater efforts to effect improvement in a range of ways. Seeking to make improvements in only one or two areas is unlikely to be sufficient by itself. For example, a study of improving secondary schools Gray et al (1999) noted that both tactical and more deep seated changes were needed and that more successful schools used a range of approaches to support continued improvement (in policies, practices and culture). The interim findings suggest that effective heads in challenging circumstances need to employ a broader range of strategies in order to implement and manage change and especially seek to stimulate specific improvements in teaching and assessment, culture and mind set and the use of performance data.

9.9.4 Differences by sector
There is also evidence of differences by education sector. More primary than secondary heads reported a substantial amount of change in providing assistance to staff in setting short-term goals for teaching and learning, providing specific CPD opportunities related to teaching, and encouraging staff to thinking of learning beyond the academic curriculum while develop a strong academic focus. Compared to primary heads, secondary heads tended to report more change in relation to the use of and prioritising of regular classroom observation, coaching and mentoring and redesigning resources for teaching. This suggests that effective headteachers in primary schools may use different strategies to influence classroom practice in comparison with their secondary counterparts. This may reflect primary headteachers' greater contact with staff and the curriculum, given the smaller size and more generalist approach to teaching in the primary sector. Secondary heads are more likely to use indirect approaches

(operating via the SLT and Heads of Departments) to support the development of teaching and teachers.

Overall, the results show that there was greater reported change associated with the headteachers length of service as head in their current school, (more change being reported by headteacher in the early years of headship), than with either sector differences or differences by FSM context for measures related to structures, culture and curriculum pedagogy and assessment. This suggests that although context is important and that greater efforts seem to be needed to effect and sustain improvement in pupil outcomes in more challenging contexts, the key stimulus for change is associated with the early years of headship Matthews and Sammons (2005).

9.10 The Experience Factor: Key Staff Perspectives

Key messages from the survey of key staff complement those from the headteacher survey. Overall, the majority of primary and secondary school leaders reported moderate or strong agreement on the important role of headteacher leadership practices in relation to school structures, culture, curriculum, pedagogy and assessment:

- Primary key stage managers were more likely to report higher levels of agreement compared to secondary heads of departments; and
- Key staff from high disadvantage schools reported stronger agreements than their counterparts from less disadvantage schools.

This finding fits with the literature that indicates that a change of head can act as a catalyst for improvement of schools in difficulties:

- Key staff's own length of experience was not associated with the way they perceived their headteacher leadership practices and school improvement approaches. This is in contrast to the influence of years of experience in the school for the headteacher that emerges as a crucial variable in relation to perceived change;
- Higher proportions of key staff perceived that the headteacher works in collaboration with the local authority, governing body and the school's SMT/SLT. Comparatively fewer perceived that the headteacher involves external people or organisations in the school's improvement efforts e.g. dialogue between pupils and adults, engaging parents, building community support and ensuring wider participation;
- With regards to the culture of the school, most school leaders perceived that their headteacher has a very important role in setting the direction, but not as many agreed that he/she develops people or discusses educational issues with staff. For example, a higher degree of agreement was reported when school leaders were asked about whether their headteacher gives a sense of overall purpose or demonstrates high expectations from staff and pupils; whereas agreement was a little lower when they were asked whether the headteacher models a high level of professional practice or develops an atmosphere of caring and trust.

Agreement by school leaders differed in relation to their perceptions of their headteachers' involvement in pedagogy and assessment. A substantial number of key staff noted that the headteacher uses data to plan for individual pupil needs and to make decisions about school improvement. However, not as many agreed that headteachers were involved in the detail of curriculum development and the pedagogy of improvement. Moderate levels of agreement were identified with

regards to the headteachers' perceived involvement in the promotion of CPD activities and the encouragement of teachers to think innovatively about their practice.
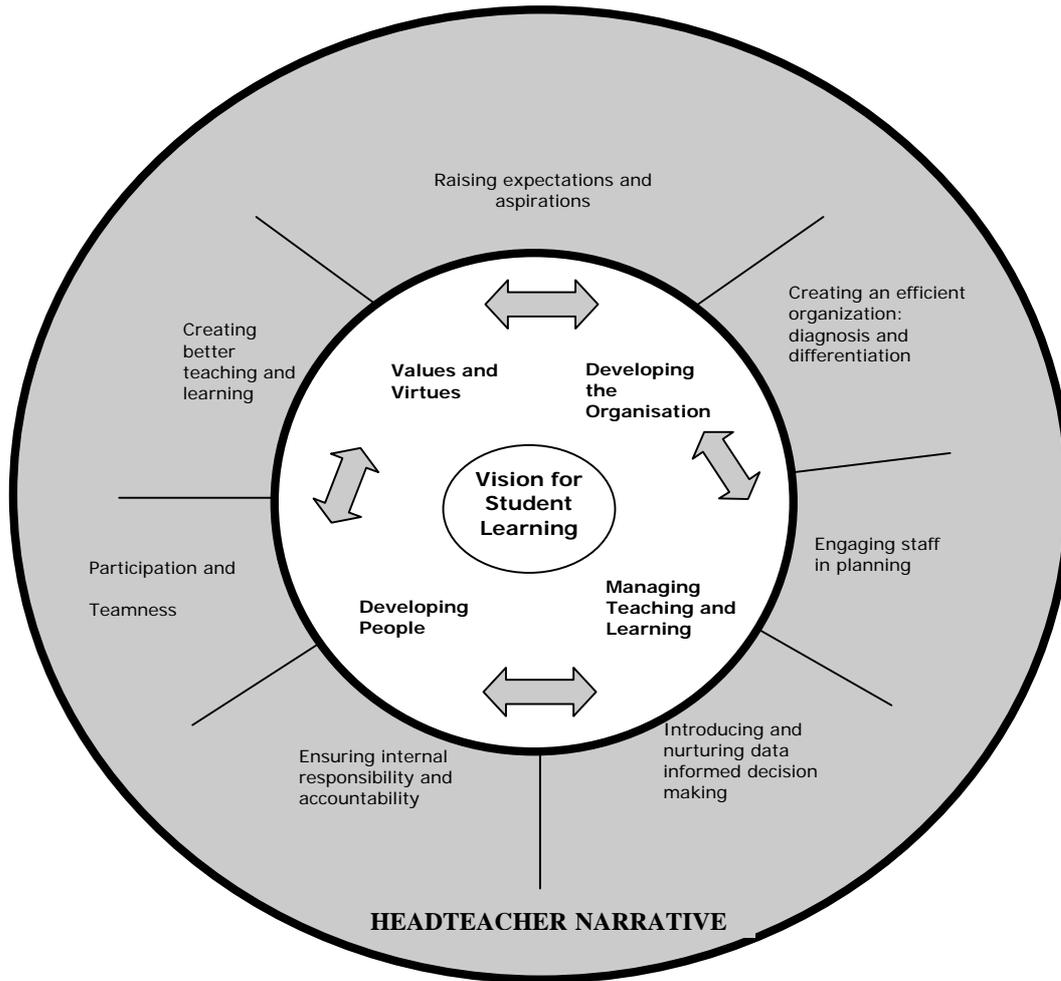
Next Steps:

i) to identify patterns of actions taken by headteachers in different case study and survey schools in different experience phases of their leadership which are perceived to have led in the improvement of student outcomes and relate these to school sector, improvement trajectories, SES and staff (efficacy, motivation, pedagogical skill levels) contexts. We believe that these could provide powerful sources of guidance for new school leaders and an empirically grounded, robust framework for leadership training and development; and

ii) to identify more precisely, patterns of distributed leadership in the case study schools and to investigate whether particular patterns are associated with differences in level of value added student progress and attainment within and between primary and secondary schools; and

Question 4: Are there identifiable sequences or patterns of actions taken by incoming heads?

Although, as suggested in our 'seven claims' review of the literature, heads draw upon the same range of qualities, strategies and skills, the combination will vary as will the way they are applied, since this relates closely to their personal traits. This helps to account, for example, for the different ways in which they distribute leadership among staff. We use the term 'layered', or 'nested leadership' (Fig. 9.1) to indicate the presence of core aspirations, expectations, qualities and strategies which are available for use. Old images of the head as 'juggling' among priorities do not provide a sufficiently accurate representation of the skilfully differentiated, careful, focussed (if sometimes intuitive) and caring ways in which these headteachers appear to exercise their responsibilities and accountabilities for raising standards in response to multiple initiatives; again, however, there were differences in the relative strength of these by sector and by school context (measured by FSM Band).

Figure 9.1: Nested leadership

Next steps: to examine the nature of nested leadership more closely in the next phase of data collection.

9.11 Findings: Ten Key Messages

The research thus far has illustrated how linking qualitative and quantitative data enables the statistical significance of some broader patterns of actions linked to improvement to be identified in conjunction with understandings of detailed accounts of actions in particular schools. As yet, however, the results are based on interim analyses of survey and case study data. Further analyses will examine the extent to which respondents can be clustered to establish whether, for example, 'improvement' groupings of staff and schools can be identified that have adopted similar leadership strategies; and this will include structural equation modelling. The following is a summary of the key messages from heads and key staff in Chapters 4-8.

Summary of Key Messages

1. The Primacy of the Headteacher

Headteachers are still perceived as the main source of leadership by school key staff. Their leadership practice shapes the internal processes and pedagogic practices that directly result in school improvement especially for schools in challenging circumstances.

The leadership of the head has an important direct effect on the way teachers think about the leadership and management of their teaching and learning practices which, indirectly, influences pupil outcomes (chapters 7 and 9).

Leadership for improvement requires the alignment of structures, values and vision. This is orchestrated and reinforced by the headteacher in successful and improving schools (chapter 7 and 9).

Leaders in improving schools select, sequence and harmonize improvement strategies so they reinforce and support each other. This 'layered' or 'nested' leadership allows staff to maximize the improvement efforts without being distracted by competing strategies or priorities (chapter 7 and 9).

2. Leadership Qualities and Values

Headteachers are adaptive in their leadership and management strategies, within a core values framework governed by principles of care, equity and performance.

2.3   Flexibility, persistence, resilience and optimism within a system of values – led practices are key qualities of successful headteachers, particularly those facing daunting conditions (chapter 4).

2.4   The head leads in ways which demonstrate responsiveness to local culture and national policies, within clear ethical frameworks which emphasise care, equity and performance (chapter 7 and 10).

3. Expectations and Outcomes

Headteachers' expectations and aspirations emanated from a view of pupil achievement which incorporated improved behaviour, academic, personal and social and affective dimensions.

3.4   The setting of high expectations for staff and students was a central strategy in developing the teaching and learning programmes (chapter 5).

3.5   School success in raising student outcomes rests on the establishment of high achievement-focussed school cultures in which care and trust are predominant features (chapter 5).

3.6   Introducing a whole-school approach to pupil behaviour management is positively associated with improved student outcomes (chapter 5).

4. Leadership and Teaching and Learning

Agreement by key staff differed in relation to their perceptions of their headteachers' involvement in pedagogy and assessment. A substantial number of key staff noted that the headteacher uses data to plan for individual pupil needs and to make decisions about school improvement.

However, not as many agree that headteachers are involved in the detail of curriculum development and the pedagogy of improvement. Moderate levels of agreement were identified with regards to the headteachers' perceived involvement in the promotion of CPD activities and the encouragement of teachers to think innovatively about their practice.

4.6   Head and other leaders had expanded the curriculum beyond the confines of the traditional academic subjects, in order to boost student engagement in school and, thereby, their achievement (chapter 6).

4.7   A key leadership strategy in the effective schools was that of placing a high priority and consistent emphasis upon improving classroom teaching across the school (chapter 6).

4.8   Allocating and distributing personnel and resources appropriately so as to foster student achievement was a focus for a significant number of headteachers and other leaders in the schools (chapter 6).

4.9   Head and staff in the schools were using increasingly detailed analyses of student progress and achievement data to inform their teaching (chapter 6).

4.10   Introducing a whole-school approach to pupil behaviour management is positively associated with improved student outcomes (chapter 5).

5. Leadership Distribution

All headteachers distributed leadership, but the forms, purposes and extent of distribution varied.

5.5   Effective leadership relies upon an increasingly close and collaborative relationship between headteachers and the SLT (chapter 4).

5.6   The creation of new 'distributed' leadership roles and patterns was a consistent feature of the effective schools (chapter 4).

5.7   Broadening participation in and communication about change needed to promote improvement is a key leadership strategy (chapter 4).

5.8   Development of student leadership in some schools was considered to be a means of enhancing pupil outcomes (chapter 5).

6. Leadership and Strategic Change

Headteachers used a range of strategies in building the effectiveness capacity of the school. Their leadership and management of schools' vision, direction, change agenda, and the direct and indirect influence which they exercise in relation to expectation raising, capacity building, staffing, leadership and management structures, cultures and pedagogy are key to the improvement of schools.

6.4   The majority of primary and secondary school key staff reported moderate or strong agreement on the important role of headteacher leadership practices in relation to school structures, culture, curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. However, whilst most key staff perceived that their head had a very important role in setting the direction, not as many agreed that he/she developed people or discussed educational issues with staff (chapter 7).

6.5   One-quarter of the key staff attributed the school's success in improving student outcomes to the head's strategic vision in positioning the school so that it could respond to change in a robust way (chapter 7).

6.6   Prominent strategies that the head used to promote a positive response to change within the school included:
          •   Developing the leadership potential of staff within the school by

- giving them additional responsibilities.
- Giving developing leaders opportunities to attend external leadership courses.
- Aligning CPD with the school development plan, and increasingly relying more upon internal models of CPD, rather than external courses.
- The head responding positively to external policy changes, and in this way providing a positive role model for how staff responded to change.
- Building a strong, caring and inclusive staff team was commented upon as important by the majority of participants across the case study schools, in ensuring all staff were committed to helping students achieve their best, as well as being aware of their role in achieving that vision (Chapter 7).

7. Leadership Differences by Improvement Groupings

Schools which have improved from a low point (i.e. from low to moderate/high) have made the most changes.

7.6 The categorisation of schools into three distinctive groups reveals that there are statistically and educationally significant differences in certain leadership features and practices (chapter 8).

7.7 There are important relationships between school context and the school improvement group, and between school context and heads' time in post (chapter 8).

7.8 There are distinct features that differentiate schools in the three improvement groups. There is strong evidence that schools in the Low to Moderate/High group had made greater improvements in changing school culture, climate and addressing teaching and learning and use of performance data during the last three years (chapter 8).

7.9 Participants were significantly more likely to report substantial improvement in pupil behaviour, attendance, attitude and motivation. These aspects are likely to be important precursors and facilitators for improvement in students' academic achievements, especially in high disadvantage contexts (chapter 8).

7.10 Heads in the Low to Moderate/ High Group were more likely to prioritise strategies to improve teaching and learning and the use of data than those in the Stable High effective group (chapter 8).

8. Leadership Differences by Experience

Effective headteachers employ different improvement strategies depending on their experience and time in post and their perceptions of the need for change in their school. During their early years in a school (0-3 years), headteachers are more active in initiating changes to effect improvement.

8.2 Level of leadership experience of the head has an association with the level of change implementation to structures in the school (chapter 4).

9. Leadership Differences by Sector

There were differences between the leadership practices and influence of primary and secondary headteachers.

9.4 More primary than secondary heads reported a substantial amount of change in providing assistance to staff in setting short-term goals for

teaching and learning and encouraging staff to thinking of learning beyond the academic curriculum (chapter 7).

9.5   Compared to primary heads, secondary heads tended to report more change in relation to the use of and prioritising regular classroom observation, coaching and mentoring and redesigning resources for teaching (chapter 7).

9.6   Secondary heads are more likely to use indirect approaches (operating via the SLT and Head of Departments) to support the development of teaching and teachers (chapter 7).

10. Leadership Differences by Socio-economic Context

There are relationships between the extent of the disadvantaged context of schools (FSM band) and the amount of change in leadership practice reported by primary and secondary heads.

10.6   Most successful heads seem to draw on the same repertoire of basic leadership practices, including building vision and setting directions, understanding and developing people, redesigning the organizing and managing the teaching and learning programme. However, this seems to be mediated by context, with a greater number of practices being required to effect change in more disadvantaged schools (chapter 4).

10.7   Effective heads in challenging circumstances have to be more responsive to school cultural and policy contexts in order to improve pupil outcomes and make greater efforts to effect improvement in a range of ways. Improvements in only one or two areas are unlikely to be sufficient (chapter 8).

10.8   Effective heads in challenging circumstances (disadvantaged contexts) employ a broader range of strategies in order to implement and manage change and especially seek to stimulate specific improvements in teaching and assessment and the use of performance data (chapter 8).

10.9   Changes in efforts to engage parents in school improvement were more likely to be reported by heads with less experience at their current school, and by headteachers in more disadvantaged contexts (FSM 3 and 4 schools) (chapter 4).

10.10 The use of performance data was reported more conclusively by schools improving in disadvantaged contexts (chapter 6).

Discussion

The research so far has provided evidence of a number of leadership qualities, virtues and strategies which were reported by heads, key staff and colleagues as being central to improving their schools to promote change. The qualitative data, in particular, point to the **primacy of the headteacher, as 'primus interpares', in leading others in leading change; and of the creation of cultures which combine high expectations of staff and students with high levels of care. In these successful schools, there is clear evidence that 'Every Child Matters'**.

The various changes in curriculum, pedagogy and assessment and leadership structures and cultures were widely perceived to have promoted increased pupil and staff engagement and self-confidence and thus led to raised levels of engagement and attainment as cultures of aspiration, care and achievement grew. So far the evidence we have produced **provides stronger support for**

the indirect effects than for the direct effects model of the way heads influence pupil outcomes. The emerging findings point also to the **heads' leadership activity varying over time (being stronger in the early years of headship in a particular school), by school context,** tending to be greater in disadvantaged (and usually) in secondary school contexts, and by school sector.

Our data so far suggest that the sample of highly effective and improved schools are not unusual (except in their strong positive impact of pupil outcomes), in that their leadership practices do not seem to be radically different from those in other schools. What may be more unusual is the mindset, culture and extent of strategic direction and clear focus that involves a commitment to a consistent and sustained focus on improving teaching and learning over several years achieved via changes in structures, culture, and curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.

Conclusion

We believe that the interim results summarised here, and the many other findings described in our full interim report, provide important insights about how successful heads improve student learning and how they adapt their practices to the unique features of the contexts in which they find themselves whilst maintaining a strong values-led ethos. Our interim results support, refine, extend, and add to claims justified by the earlier reviews of evidence about successful school leadership. Nonetheless, we still have more case study data to collect, a second wave of surveys to administer; and the quantitative data will be subject to structural equation modelling (see chapter 3). Data collected during the remainder of the project will considerably deepen and add to the findings and key messages of this interim report.

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