

University of Southampton

**How are assistant heads affecting
primary school management and
how do their opinions, attitudes and
beliefs affect their work?**

Keith Watson

Doctor of Education

Faculty of Social Sciences
Department of Education

April 2004

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

EDUCATION

Doctor of Education

Keith Watson

How are assistant heads affecting primary school management and how do their opinions, attitudes and beliefs affect their work?

One of the most significant impacts of the educational reforms introduced since 1988 has been the broadening of senior management in primary schools. The increased accountability and workload placed upon school management led first to the greater involvement of the deputy head and, more recently, to the creation of a leadership scale to both attract and reward other senior managers in schools.

This thesis will look at the emergence of assistant heads onto that leadership scale. Through the use of job descriptions, questionnaires, interviews and a case study the functions that assistant heads are performing in primary schools will be examined and their opinions, attitudes and beliefs about their work will be considered.

What emerges in this study is that the assistant heads are carrying out many significant leadership and management tasks in their primary schools. It also appears that there are three broad types of assistant headship. The first is quasi-assistant headship, where the assistant head's role is indistinguishable from a deputy head role. The second type is the subordinate assistant headship role where the post is clearly below that of a deputy head. The final type is the niche assistant head who has one clear area of significant responsibility in the school.

The thesis concludes that the patterns of assistant headship are varied and that it will take time before a more consistent view of assistant headship is established in terms of the exact roles undertaken in schools and the pay levels that are appropriate with this new form of senior management.

Contents

| | Page |
|---|------|
| Abstract | 2 |
| List of Figures | 4 |
| Acknowledgements | 5 |
| Definitions | 6 |
| Chapter 1 – Introduction | 8 |
| Chapter 2 - Literature Review | 12 |
| Chapter 3 –Methodology | 26 |
| Chapter 4 - Case Study – The St. Mary’s Gate Experience of Assistant Headship | 40 |
| Chapter 5 - Data Analysis - Job Descriptions | 48 |
| Chapter 6 - Data Analysis – Questionnaire Responses | 57 |
| Chapter 7 - Data Analysis – Lickert Scale Responses | 66 |
| Chapter 8 – Conclusion | 100 |
| Appendices | |
| Appendix 1 – St. Mary Gate Job Description | 106 |
| Appendix 2 – Job description data | 108 |
| Appendix 3 – Questionnaire data | 112 |
| Appendix 4 – Lickert Scale responses | 115 |
| Appendix 5 – Questionnaire Example | 122 |
| Appendix 6 – Interview record example | 124 |
| Appendix 7 – Leadership Scale | 125 |
| Bibliography | 126 |

List of Figures

| Figure | Page |
|--|------|
| 1 - The range and frequency of leadership activities recorded by assistant headteachers in 15 primary schools (November 2001-March 2002) | 13 |
| 2 – The roles of the deputy head (Cooper) | 17 |
| 3 – The research process used in this study | 28 |
| 4 - Questionnaire used for research into assistant headship | 34 |
| 5 – Interview Questions | 37 |
| 6 – Percentage of respondents involved in different aspects of management | 48 |
| 7 – Comparison of job description and questionnaire respondents regarding different aspects of management | 57 |
| 8 – The different types of schools in the questionnaire survey | 58 |
| 9 – The range and average leadership points for the assistant headship posts | 60 |
| 10 – The age of the questionnaire respondents | 60 |
| 11 – Lickert scale statements relating to opinions about assistant headship | 66 |
| 12 - Modal Lickert scale statement responses | 66 |

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Nick Foskett for his professionalism and expertise during the course of this work. His guidance ensured its success and this work reflects much that he has taught me. My thanks also go to my school for their support and of course to Carole for being an inspiration in every way as well as the best friend anyone could wish for.

For AC, JJ and CJ.

Definitions

Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) – A post where a teacher acts as a model for other teachers in the school and also does outreach work in other schools

Beacon School – A school that displays excellence and is rewarded with a extra finance to disseminate good practice to other schools

Department For Education and Skills (DFES/DFE/DFEE) – The government department responsible for education. The different abbreviations are according to when reorganisation of government departments occurred.

In-Service training (INSET) – The training organised by a school to train its staff

Key Stage Manager – In this study a person responsible for managing either Key Stage 1 (5-7 year olds) or Key Stage 2 (7-11 year olds)

Leadership Scale – The scale upon which all school leaders are placed and therefore the determinant of their pay

Local Education Authority (LEA) – The local government body responsible for running education in an area

Management Points – Points that are awarded for extra management responsibilities above those expected of a main scale teacher

Management and Support Time (MAST) – Time provided for teachers to be away from class responsibilities in order to carry out management duties or to support colleagues

National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) – A qualification that will be compulsory for all new heads

National College for School Leadership (NCSL) - A college set up by the DFEE to be the centre for the study of educational leadership

Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) – A teacher in their first year of teaching

Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) – The school inspection service

Performance and Data Report (PANDA) – A statistical analysis of the performance of each school based upon their Key Stage test results

Performance Management – The system of appraisal regarding teacher performance that is compulsory in schools

Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) – National tests carried out on all pupils at English schools at 7, 11 and 14 years of age

School Teacher Review Board (STRB) – The organisation responsible for setting the pay levels for teachers

Senior Management Team (SMT) – The leadership group of senior staff who lead and manage a school

Special Educational Needs (SEN) – Specific provision for those children who require modifications to their learning programmes

Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) - The person with management responsibility for pupils with Special Educational Needs

Times Educational Supplement (TES) – A newspaper concerned with current educational issues that contains a detailed job section

Chapter 1 -Introduction

In the decade following the Education Reform Act of 1988 the work of primary schools was transformed by initiative after initiative such as Local Management of Schools, the National Curriculum, Standard Assessment Tests and inspections by the Office for Standards in Education. These changes were so radical that the way schools are now run would be unrecognisable to the head of a 1980's school (Southworth, 1995, p52). As we entered the new millennium many other initiatives have continued to appear such as Performance Management that have changed the management requirements of a school beyond recognition. The 'wind of change' truly swept through education. As the new millennium began further change came in the form of a new leadership scale and within this scale emerged the post of assistant headship. It is against this background of change in primary school management that this Thesis will consider assistant headship and its implications, intricacies, influences and future.

At first schools seemed slow to adapt to the post 1988 changes in terms of how they were led. The head in particular was still carrying by far the majority of the accountability for schools and hence the pressures of modern school leadership. In his research in 1995 Southworth (1995, p52) cited a "lack of reference to other leaders in the school" and concluded, "leadership largely remains the province of the headteacher". He also reported that headship was characterised by "more paperwork, longer hours, more external relations, more meetings and more information to deal with" (Southworth 1995, p52). In response to this new ways of working were called for, partly due to the high number of early retirements but mainly because of stress amongst heads leading to "work overload and, ultimately, job burnout" (Jones, 1999, p492). Running a school seemed to become beyond the ability of a single person alone because, as outlined by Fullan (2002, p12), an "organisation cannot flourish by the actions of the top leader alone". He further went on to assert that:

The commitment necessary for sustainable improvement must be nurtured up close in the dailiness of organisational behaviour, and for that to happen there needs to be many leaders around us.

Fullan 2002, p12

The intense demands of performance outputs, finance, external relations and other pressures meant it became almost impossible for one person to take such a disproportionate amount of the workload and hence newer systems have emerged (Rutherford and Dunne, 2000, p4). These new systems had to make use of the 'many leaders' that Fullan deemed as necessary for successful school management. How could it be otherwise with the modern day bureaucracy? The focus had to change to what the National College for School Leadership have termed 'distributed leadership'. This notion is:

Very different from the model of headteacher as the single, central, heroic leader controlling from the top down. It implies the need for a more inclusive model, where power and responsibility for school leadership is shared across the organisation.

NCSL 2001, p6

Central to this change has been the increasing role of the deputy head. However, the expansion of the deputy head role alone was not enough to meet the demand of new management tasks because a deputy alone could not satisfy the need for the ‘many leaders’ that Fullan called for. Thus we see the increasing relevance of the senior management team (Rutherford and Dunne, 2000, p1). The expansion of these senior management teams and more significantly the kind of work that these managers are carrying out led to a revision of the pay scales for leaders in schools with the new Leadership Spine being introduced in September 2000 (DFES, 2000). With this new spine Governors were given far more flexibility not just over payments for the Head and Deputy Head but in addition they were also given the chance to place other senior staff onto the scale – including the post of Assistant Headship. The intention of the leadership scale was to create more roles that were characterised by “substantial strategic responsibilities for school leadership” so that schools “would have the flexibility to create a leadership group appropriate to their needs” (School Teachers Review Board, 2000, p15). The leadership scale was further designed to;

- Help schools strengthen their whole school leadership,
- Emphasise the role of the team in school leadership,
- Provide additional support to schools in clarifying and strengthening roles,
- Widen the pool of staff defined roles,
- Establish a clear career ladder.

DFES, 2000, p15

In this way the assistant head post can be seen as a direct response to the need for the widening of school leadership. It allowed far more participants in the management of a school and hence provided greater capacity to cope with all of the pressures and changes already mentioned.

Given this excessive workload it was almost inevitable that the management of schools would have to broaden and this then provided the opportunity for far more flexibility regarding school structures. Schools now have the option to share out the heavy workload of school management, perhaps amongst a triumvirate of head, deputy and assistant head rather than the head and deputy axis which might be too narrow or the wide Senior Management Team that might be too large and cumbersome.

Much of this thought regarding school management and the need for flexibility is related to the current notion of school capacity. School capacity has been defined as:

..the degree to which a school can manage the processes of change, handle, generate and learn from change and thereby create the context for sustained renewal.

NCSL, 2001, p3

This idea of being able to achieve ‘sustained renewal’ is all about being flexible and adaptable in management strategies. One could argue that schools need leaders on many levels to make this happen and the notion of a head and a deputy alone performing the function is outmoded. This research will to consider the idea that a

school's capacity to change and achieve its "prime objective – the improvement of pupil learning" (NCSL, 2001, p3) might be better served by a wider leadership team, perhaps of head, deputy head and assistant head. This notion of school capacity is certainly the phrase in vogue in the early part of this millennium and there is a danger that it, along with other initiatives of the NCSL, are too readily accepted without rigorous critique. Although many schools might benefit from this type of 'distributed leadership' (NCSL, 2001, p3) the fact that the NCSL espouses it is not enough in itself. It needs to be investigated at length. It is also important that the research is not always focussed on the head. This is because most "empirical studies of leadership practice at other levels or from other perspectives remain somewhat rare" (Harris, 2003,p10). In this sense we are in danger of having a "leader's view of leadership" (Southworth, 2002, p74) that fails to take account of others in the school, such as the newly emergent assistant heads. A case study will be presented here that shows an assistant head who is already playing a significant role in a school that works on a 'distributed leadership' culture but more examples are needed. This successful experience of the widening of school leadership features assistant headship and this research seeks to investigate what the role in leadership was for other assistant heads. Because the role is so new there are many questions to answer such as:

- What form is the new role taking?
- Is it lightening the workload for head and deputies?
- Is it contributing to successful primary school management?
- What are Assistant Heads actually doing in our primary schools and how do they feel about their work?

At the outset of this research it seemed that the new post had the potential to change the way primary schools are managed. It could also lead to a re-structuring of old management systems and create new relationships within schools based upon these new structures.

In deciding to focus on assistant heads one has to be aware that the new post reflects a more deep lying issue – that of primary school management generally and the way schools will be led in the future - and that this would form a backdrop to all that was being researched. Therefore this thesis will outline:

- a review of the literature concerning the current status of research in the area of primary management with particular focus on Assistant and Deputy Headship;
- the research design;
- a mini-case study of my own Assistant Headship;
- the results of the research into Assistant Headship posts; and
- an analysis of the key issues that emerge.

This will lead to a picture of what those assistant heads under study are actually doing in their new roles and what their perceptions are regarding the work they do. Although a diverse range of experiences and attitudes was to be expected the aim was to be able to draw conclusions about the new work of assistant heads and perhaps even to categorise the different types of assistant headship that are emerging. The final section will suggest what the future for assistant headship might be and how this could help

shape primary school management. The first part of the research therefore is to consider the current state of primary school management.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

This study of assistant headship follows on from many years of research into primary school management and it is important that the study places itself within ‘that which has gone before’. In this sense it has the opportunity to contribute to the body of existing knowledge on the back of previous findings. Hence this literature search ensures that the research is not taking “place in a vacuum” because research is “ a cumulative process whereby knowledge is developed and added to” (Anderson, 1990, p45). The aim is to add to the knowledge of assistant headship and place it within the context of primary school management as it continues to evolve in response to the re-shaping of the profession.

There are other important reasons for a comprehensive and informative literature search. The first reason is that it aids in shaping the research questions more fully and determining the methods to be used in pursuit of the answers to those questions. This was particularly true in this study with regard to the way data could be categorised. Further, it in part justifies the chosen area of study as worthwhile by showing its relevance and interest. The ‘theoretical context’ for the study can be established since it is the literature search that helps to create the context in which the study takes place. In broad terms then, the aim was for the literature search to “summarise previous information and guide future course of action” (Verma and Beard, 1981, p10, q. in Bell, 1999, p91).

It is vital that the review of the literature be a ‘critical review’ and not merely a statement of what had been done previously. The focus was on referring to literature which;

- justified and supported arguments;
- allowed comparisons to be made with other research;
- expressed matters better than I could have done:
- demonstrated my familiarity with the field of the research.

Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 1996, p115, q. in Bell 1999, p92.

With these intentions in mind the review will examine the research background with particular reference to the emergence of assistant headship, what has led to the post being created and why the area is worthy of study.

The role of assistant headship is such a new one that there has been little direct research on the subject. An exception to this is a small-scale study carried out by Smith (2002) which was conducted on the National College for School Leadership Associateship Programme. Smith looked at fifteen schools in the Midlands over a four-month period through the use of logbooks and group interviews. A detailed look at the study aids in setting the context for part of the research and highlights areas that will be investigated here.

The main findings are important because they represent the first attempt at showing what assistant heads are doing. Those main findings of the research are:

- Assistant headteachers are playing a significant role in school leadership

- Assistant headteachers have been appointed to schools of all sizes
- Assistant headteachers are often effective leaders because they are exemplary practitioners with credibility and can empathise with colleagues;
- Schools have adopted creative and flexible leadership groups suited to their own circumstances but able to respond to new challenges;
- The appointment of assistant headteachers has enhanced the capacity for leadership in the school. Their skills, knowledge and expertise is making a significant contribution;
- Not all assistant headteachers are aspiring to headship;
- Many assistant headteachers do not have an adequate amount of non-contact time;

Smith , 2002, p13.

This useful initial research is important even if the sample is relatively small. Nevertheless there were elements that were worth exploring more deeply. The first finding, regarding the ‘significant role’ played by assistant headteachers was based upon the activities undertaken by the assistant headteachers and produced the following results.

Figure 1 - Range and Frequency of leadership activities recorded by assistant headteachers in 15 primary schools November 2001-March 2002

| Activity | Frequency of leadership activities |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Strategic planning | 27 |
| Operational planning | 19 |
| Curriculum development | 14 |
| Analysis of the data | 19 |
| Target setting | 13 |
| Quality assurance | 28 |
| Professional development | 37 |
| Professional support | 34 |
| Teaching – observing and coaching | 11 |
| Relationships | 15 |
| Staffing | 12 |
| Pastoral | 22 |
| Environmental – health and safety | 6 |
| Liaison | 32 |
| Extra curricular activity | 10 |

Smith 2002, p52.

This raises the question of whether similar patterns would emerge with a larger sample particularly because the professional support and development role that came

out as a major activity was the one that could become the most effective use of an assistant head post (See chapter 4). However it was surprising to see that ‘observing teaching and coaching’ did not occur very often because they can go together effectively with professional development and support (See Case Study, below). It is not clear from the research where the distinction lies here. The research also described assistant headship work as ‘significant’ in terms of leadership activity but the examples referred to were often lower level tasks. Teachers who take on management roles can be given management points for their work. A more senior manager in a primary school could have two management points because of their responsibilities. Many of the tasks listed here seemed more appropriate to that level of management such as leading meetings and writing reports. I anticipated finding more ‘significant’ leadership activity in this research such as in Performance Management.

Another significant part of the research highlighted the confusion over the role of the assistant head in deputising for the head. Given that the Teachers Pay and Conditions document (DFES, 2000, p16) states that the assistant head “would have the same professional duties except the duty to deputise in the absence of the head”. Smith was concerned to find out that many assistant heads were in fact deputising and felt that guidance on this area was needed. This was again interesting and worthy of re-examination with a wider sample.

Another part of the research considered the rationale for the appointment of assistant heads. Smith suggested there were six broad categories for appointments, which were:

1. Evolution of a senior teacher into an assistant head
2. Balance of the senior management team
3. Retention of good staff
4. Reinvention, perhaps after the departure of a deputy
5. Politics between head and deputy meaning an ‘ally’ was needed for the head
6. Inheritance, where two schools amalgamate and the two deputies become assistant heads

Smith 2002, p20.

While these categories all seem to have merit they do not indicate weighting about which are the more common. There is also no reference to the likelihood of a combination of reasons working together. Nevertheless they were useful to this research in thinking about how the posts emerge in different situations.

Finally, Smith (2002, p35) made recommendations for the future regarding assistant headship. The main ones were that the act of deputising should be clarified, ways to establish a database of school leadership groups should be explored and finally that a “minimum of 10% non-contact time should be available for assistant heads”. It is difficult to see where this nominal figure of 10% comes from because the non-contact time needed is likely to vary according to the nature of the post. Despite this it did raise the issue of non-contact time that warranted further research with a larger sample.

Overall the work of Smith has been useful in starting the research into assistant headship and a more detailed investigation with a larger sample could see whether

these initial findings are more widespread. It was useful in showing some of the activities of assistant heads and in raising key issues such as non-contact time and deputising, which again could be investigated to see if they arose in other schools. It therefore provided some avenues to explore but the intention of this research was to go beyond a mere description of what was happening with assistant heads. The aim was to explore the thoughts, feelings and opinions of assistant heads towards their work. Although the activities carried out by assistant heads are central to this study an examination of the role in a wider sense was needed and this included setting the post in its position relative to whole school management.

With this need to place assistant headship in its context the wider research background needs to be examined. The focus here was on aspects that were similar and related to the new post of assistant headship. These areas were:

1. General primary school leadership,
2. The role of the deputy head in primary schools, and
3. Advanced Skills Teachers.

To begin with an examination of general primary school leadership confirms the pattern referred to in the introduction regarding the increasing demands on traditional forms of management. This could be summarised by saying;

schools are now more complex organisations to manage than previously, notably with regards to budgets, human resources, professional development and administration generally. Consequently, there is today much more to manage and to take a lead on, with the result that modern headteachers and their deputies work for long hours.

DFES 2000, p16

This has meant the workload for a Head acting alone has become too much because:

..while they (Heads) still enjoy exclusive authority to decide how far to share leadership, they are also held uniquely accountable for the outcomes of their decision.

Wallace, 2001, p15

Add to this the need to be both the Chief Executive and the Leading Professional and the role might become too large not to delegate. Even allowing for pressures of accountability it has become clear that;

The most compelling reason for sharing leadership is now less a matter of principle than of pragmatism in a hostile environment (with) a knock on effect on the increasingly vital role of the Deputy Head.

Wallace, 2001, p16

However as seen in the above reference to the Pay Review Board deputies are also feeling the workload issue bearing down upon them and with this comes a view of headship that is not appealing. It is therefore unsurprising to see that as many as 40%

of deputies do not want to apply for headship (DFES, 2002, p29 and James and Whiting, 1988, p 13).

But does this effect only reach the deputy? Does it not have implications for other managers further down the school, particularly other senior managers, perhaps on a two-point management position within the school? This pragmatic idea, with the need to 'share leadership', is a direct result of the initiative overload that emanates from the DFES. Wallace (2001, p156) further argues that, "the reshaping of headship is largely being done without the heads being involved in the re-designing process: heads are merely the recipients of the product". That product is whatever the DFES or Local Education Authority (LEA) sends to a school next. This is where the task of managing a school appears not just to be beyond a head acting alone but also being problematic for a head working with a deputy. This is where the introduction of the Leadership Scale and the emergence of the assistant headship originated. The management of a primary school is growing in size year by year as more and more is expected by central government. While this thesis will focus on the role of the assistant head from their point of view it may also shed more light on whether posts were created to alleviate the pressures of school management.

In considering this idea of alleviating pressure on headship one needs to consider more fully the notion of distributed leadership. Increasing calls for distributed leadership (NCSL, 2001) are premised on the primacy of "multiple sources of guidance and direction" (Harris, 2002, p11) for successful school management. By "empowering others to lead" (Harris, 2002, p11) a head will achieve greater results through creating collective responsibility. This idea of distributed leadership comes in part from the rejection of the charismatic leader model in favour of a head working with all staff to move the school forward. Difficulties do arise with this 'gospel' from the NCSL however because of the way schools are structured differently, the fact that it could be an imposed system and whether or not it is seen as a thinly disguised method of getting teachers to take on more management responsibility for no further financial reward. Although the emergence of assistant headship itself does not constitute full distributed leadership (which should extend across the whole staff) it does nevertheless represent one form of leadership being shared more widely. Therefore distributed leadership, as outlined in the introduction, needs to be considered in this study of assistant headship.

Of course distributed leadership is only one aspect of the current thinking on leadership generally. Much of the thinking on this area has been collated by the NCSL including an examination of effective school leadership (Reynolds, 2004) that identifies eight important areas of effective school leadership including, amongst other things, a sense of mission, the need to involve others and a concern with teaching. This concern with teaching is also seen in the instructional leadership model (Harris, 2003, p10). This instructional model with the head as the lead learner in a school also exists in many schools alongside leadership that is value led (Day and Harris, 2004). However it seems there is a tension between value led notions of educational leadership and the current political situation. On the one hand there is the:

The more technical and managerial view of school leadership operationalised by the government inspection regime (that is) slightly at odds with the more

values driven view promoted by the NCSL.

Gold, et al, 2003, p127

This managerial view is also linked to the ‘bastardized leadership’ outlined by Wright (2003) where the argument is that leadership “is now very substantially located at the political level where it is not available for contestation, modification or adjustment to local variations” (Wright, 2003, p139). This struggle is relevant to assistant headship because the role itself has the potential to be innovative but how innovative can it be in the current leadership climate? These issues of distributed leadership, instructional leadership, the importance of vision and values and the extent to which leadership is constrained by the current political situation will all be referred to in this study.

In turning my attention to research into the role of the deputy head I looked first at what the DFES suggested the deputy should support the head in doing and this mirrored what would be asked of assistant heads. The support required of both is centred on four areas;

1. Formulating the aims and objectives of the school;
2. Establishing the policies through which they shall be achieved;
3. Managing staff and resources to that end: and
4. Monitoring progress towards their achievement.

DFES, 2000.

However, whether this translates into practice may not be so easy to define because at the present time we do not have a clear enough picture of what deputy heads actually do. For evidence of this we only need to look at the deputy head analysis carried out by Hay McBer (DFEE, 2000) which concluded that no Model of Excellence as produced for Headship could be produced for Deputy Headship because the role is so varied. This research asks a question about whether the role equally varied for the new assistant heads.

There has of course been other research into deputy headship. For instance in a study of 112 deputy heads Cooper (1998) gave an analysis of the tasks carried out by deputies. These tasks were:

Figure 2 – The responsibilities of the Deputy Head

| Aspect | Time |
|----------------------------|-------|
| Planning and policy making | 12.1% |
| Staff management | 10.8% |
| Curriculum and assessment | 10.8% |
| Admin routines | 17.8% |
| Pupils | 12.8% |
| External relations | 5.8% |
| Teaching | 29.9% |
| Total | 100% |

Cooper, 1998, p 11.

It is noticeable that the Teaching and Administration Routines account for nearly 50% of the total time but it must also be noted that the research was conducted in 1994 which is a long time ago in educational terms given the period of great change. Nevertheless similar criteria was used in this study to establish exactly what assistant heads are doing in their work.

The career paths of assistant heads are also of interest. Research into deputy headship was again used as a guide, in particular one study that categorised different deputies into five types:

1. Active aspirants – deputy heads actively seeking headship
2. Potential aspirants – those who have never applied for headship but envisage doing so in the future
3. Unpredictables – deputy heads who have applied for headship in the past but are unsure about whether they will in the future
4. Settlers – deputy heads who have never applied for headship and do not envisage doing so in the future
5. Unavailed aspirants – deputy heads who have applied in the past and will not do so in the future

James and Whiting, 1998, p12-14.

The research suggested that 57% of deputies questioned did not aspire to headship which was a similar result to Smith (2002, p21) who found eleven out of 19 assistant heads in his survey did not aspire to headship. Would other assistant heads fall into these kinds of groups and form a pattern that was similar to the deputy head profile?

The James and Whiting (1998, p12-14) research went on to give further reasons for not aspiring to headship which were:

- The role being seen as characterised by overload and stress
- Current contentment – the dislike of changing from the leading practitioner to chief executive role
- Family – for half of those interviewed it was the reason given
- Self-doubt – especially the worry over having ultimate responsibility
- Discharge of duty – the public accountability that comes with the role.
- External attributions – inadequate funding and government initiatives

Because part of this research is focussed on what tasks assistant heads are carrying out it was important to consider research into the tasks performed by deputy heads. In an even more recent article Garret and McGeachie (1999, p74) concluded that the key responsibilities were:

- Co-ordinating
- General administration
- Working with people
- School ethos
- External relations
- Ensuring quality

- Strategic overview
- Professional development

Garret and McGeachie, 1999, p74.

These areas were certainly worthy of exploration in the research to establish whether parallels exist between assistant heads and deputies, although they do not seem to make it clear where the weighting lies with each of these responsibilities. The research also noted that the age at which people become a deputy is not as important as how long they have been in career. Again this appeared something to include in the research in order to gain a fuller profile of the people who were becoming assistant heads and to this end questions regarding previous posts were included. By also including questions about future intentions the research would provide an overview of the career paths of assistant heads.

The parallels with deputy headship continued in the question of professional development of assistant heads particularly for those aspiring to headship. If assistant headship follows the pattern of the deputy then the role will be “heavily influenced, and ultimately controlled, by the individual headteacher” and also be “dependent on the amount of time available for the deputy to undertake responsibilities” (Garrett and McGeachie, 1999, p69). This research would need to look at what time is given to the assistant head to carry out their roles, what training is given and whether formal training for the role took place. Given that according to Garret and McGeachie (1999, p75) deputies in primary schools lack the management background of secondary deputy heads would the same be true of primary assistant heads?

In carrying out a literature search for this thesis it was interesting to see how few references there were to assistant headship. This was especially true on websites where searches rarely found references to the term. This included DFES, NCSL and other major websites. A rare reference came in the DFES report on the state of educational management, which pointed out that a theme in their study was;

The impression that deputies and assistant heads concentrated too much on developing skills for particular tasks and were unable to see how their role relates to others in the school.

DFES, 2002, p51

This showed a problem of management by deputies that now extends to assistant heads and it raises the question of to what extent the experiences of assistant heads mirror that of deputies. This again emphasises a common theme in this study, which will involve comparing the two roles. Interestingly in this DFES paper the references to assistant heads were often confused with assistant heads sometimes being grouped with deputy heads and at other times not. This uncertainty, even by the DFES, reflected a confusion of where to place the assistant head in terms of other school managers and was again a reason for making the research of the role such an interesting one.

Research has already taken place on the subject of Head/Deputy relationships and how complex and difficult dealings can be but also how vital they are. Hughes and James (1999, p87) have argued that “Effective management of a primary school is

founded on the inter-play between the deputy, ...and the head". Might the addition of a third party be seen to complicate matters further? In this study it was important to consider the relationship between deputy and assistant head.

One of the key sections in Garret and McGeachie's (1999, p75) research was that of professional development. In support of this view Rutherford, and Dunne (2002, p3) suggest that the focus of some deputy head work is on developing the quality of teaching through professional development. Would not an assistant head with a class to teach also be ideally placed to lead the work on the quality of teaching in the school? Again this is an area for research that could impact upon how schools are managed.

Continuing this theme of the importance of professional development in school management, attention was turned to another relatively new role in schools that was primarily concerned with professional development – that of the Advanced Skills Teacher (ASTs). There are many parallels between the role of the deputy and the new role of assistant heads but other posts in schools could equally be said to have similarities with that of assistant headship and ASTs is one of them.

In his study of assistant heads Smith (2002, p52) suggested the major tasks they performed were linked to professional support and development. In many ways this was similar to my own role as an assistant head in that I focussed on the quality of teaching issue in the school and (of course) this is the concept behind the role of the Advanced Skills Teacher (AST). The experiences of ASTs are also worth referring to here because, like assistant head posts, they reflect a new direction in education introduced by the government. Perhaps a reason for the assistant head post might actually be a rejection of the AST role. Although the role may seem attractive to the teacher the problem with ASTs seems to be that 20% of the work will be at other schools (DfES, 2001, p6). What school wants to have their best teacher assisting other schools rather than working at their own? It means a class is losing the best teacher in the school for one day a week and not for the benefit of staff and pupils at the school but instead at another school – a school which incidentally might be a competitor in the LEA league tables. In the review of ASTs it was confirmed that there was to be, "a new statutory duty on head teachers to ensure that they release their ASTs for outreach work" (DfES, 2001, p7). This reflected the fact that many heads were not releasing their ASTs and hence the scheme was proving unsatisfactory. Would it not be far better to create a position within a school akin to an AST - supporting teaching, higher pay, MAST time to work with colleagues – than have an excellent teacher use their skills for the benefit of other schools? This was certainly suggested by a report on ASTs which found that, "The principal duty by far was that of advising other teachers on classroom management and teaching" (DFES, 2002). Further evidence that the post was being misinterpreted or even misused was revealed in the report with the comment that;

Some schools and headteachers wrongly interpreted the AST role as including specialist teaching of pupils without parallel teaching of other teachers.

DFES, 2002, p6

This would not be a problem for an assistant head who could carry out the same sort of role in their own school and be responsible for the quality of teaching but also carry out specialist teaching – such as for booster classes.

However, despite this problem with ASTs the impact on schools was impressive. The report showed that;

For half of the AST's, their impact on teaching and learning in their own school was judged as good, and for just over a third it was judged as very good or excellent

DFES, 2002, p7.

The key tasks that they performed were:

- advising other teachers on classroom organisation and teaching
- delivering outreach work
- producing high quality teaching materials
- disseminating to other teachers materials relating to best practice in educational research
- participating in initial teacher training and the mentoring of NQTs
- producing high quality materials including video recordings
- advising on the provision of in-service training
- participating in the appraisal of other teachers
- helping teachers who are experiencing difficulties

For more than three-quarters of the ASTs the core of their role was the advising of other teachers. Why this is of such interest to me is that this is very close to the role that I perform as an assistant head. I wondered to what extent other assistant heads had taken on a role similar to that of an AST, or at least parts of the role that have been listed here. One of the problems for ASTs seems to have been that, “Performance criteria were in place for less than half of the ASTs” (DFES, 2002). This should not be a problem repeated with assistant heads because their presence on the leadership scale would ensure targets were set and used to measure success. Certainly then, the evidence here tends to suggest that employing a teacher with the remit of improving teaching can impact significantly on a school. Could not the same happen with a change of title to assistant head? Again the question was raised, is this what other schools are doing with their assistant head posts?

Having looked at general primary school management, deputy headship and Advanced Skills Teachers it is necessary from a research point of view to establish the case more fully for why and how the issue is becoming so important that it is worthy of further study.

One of the reasons why this subject warrants enquiry is that whatever the role of the assistant head there could be a danger of a ‘role strain’ similar to that experienced by a deputy who lacks time to manage and be an exemplary teacher at the same time (Rutherford, and Dunne, 2000, p1). How do assistant heads cope with this recurring problem? The balance between deputy and assistant head had to be vital and therefore carefully managed, perhaps with one of the pair being an exemplary teacher while the

other carried the management aspects normally associated with deputy headship. Was this arrangement being used on a wide scale or not?

There were other reasons for thinking the area worthy of research too. Many of the reasons cited as being instrumental in the creation of the Leadership Scale focus on the role being a chosen alternative to deputy headship and beyond (DFES, 2000). But could the assistant head post not also be an alternative for those who do not reach the level required of a deputy head? There may exist the opportunity for the teachers who have been unsuccessful in deputy head applications to instead consider an assistant head role. This might be more suitable and allow them to use strengths in certain areas whereas they do not necessarily have the fully rounded skills a deputy head requires. This may seem a negative view but it could be possible and even pragmatic. Some may also see it as a natural progression from +2 to deputy headship. Little is known about this and yet it could be vital in the way career paths of the future evolve.

So what other reasons are there for researching the role of assistant head? One reason is that the DFES, in its Performance Management reforms of 2000 (DFES, 2000, p15) has given schools far greater flexibility in creating assistant head posts and that therefore it is a central government initiative. Schools were given greater flexibility over pay for senior managers by being able to place senior staff on the Leadership Scale, above the existing management allowances and in return would expect a greater management role in the school. This study will look at whether that has been the case. Are assistant heads actually taking on the significant role in school management that the reform wanted? In many ways these roles are still being worked out and this research is therefore timely in seeing what patterns are emerging and if assistant headship is living up to the expectations placed upon it with the introduction of the leadership scale.

Of course the subject would not be so significant if there were very few assistant headship posts emerging. Evidence of the new role can be seen in the number of job advertisements for assistant headships. For instance, the Times Educational Supplement began carrying advertisements for assistant headship from late 2000 and the trend can also be seen locally such as in Southampton when the internal bulletin of vacancies also first saw assistant head posts in late 2000. This bulletin also began a separate section for assistant heads for the first time in the week of April 23rd 2001 having previously put them under the deputy head section. The increase in adverts is clearly the result of the growing demand for assistant heads and is detailed more fully in the research data section of this study. According to the DFES there are now 7000 assistant head posts in the country although the exact details are still unclear (Smith 2002, p11) with the number in primary education not confirmed.

Another aspect worthy of consideration in this study of assistant headship is pay. For teachers who in the past were unsure about going onto deputy headship and headship there was always the added attraction of higher pay. While differentials still exist the new Leadership Scale gives scope for assistant heads, certainly in larger primary schools, to be earning money similar to that earned only recently by a deputy head (See Analysis chapter). With the added attraction of further pay increases if yearly targets are met assistant heads can earn significantly more than senior managers with two management points without the overall accountability that Headship carries. With Headship being described as the “poisoned chalice” (James and Whiting, 1998,

p13) and leading to “a reduced quality of life, management isolation” as well as the “remuneration not being commensurate with the role” (Draper and McMichael, 1996, p54) could it be that teachers are attracted to the lesser role of assistant head, particularly with the increased salaries on offer? This research will examine the attitudes of assistant heads towards headship generally and how important pay is within their decision making process about their careers.

There are other reasons to research assistant headship too. One is the alternative career path that some professionals may want to follow. Is the traditional route of senior manager to deputy head and head an increasingly unappealing option for many people (James and Whiting, 1998, p13)? The excessive demands outlined above may have contributed to senior staff choosing not to pursue the headship route. Instead could not the assistant head post be seen as a useful stepping stone towards advisory work for the LEAs or perhaps as preparation for a career in Higher Education? These jobs usually require some management experience in schools but by the time a teacher is a deputy they may well be earning significantly more than a grade B Lecturer scale (TES, 10/1/03) and therefore the move may not be as attractive. The post could even be an end in itself – an attractive senior post. The career intention of present assistant heads was worth investigating again because there is no data on the subject.

There are other aspects that centre around the demands on teacher time. For instance, in a DFES study (2002, p41) it was reported that many middle managers cited family reasons for not wanting to become deputy heads and that they wished “to have a life and devote at least some time to matters outside of school”. Could it be that an assistant head role could be more attractive than a deputy role for these teachers? Linked to this reason may be the aspect of the role of the assistant head that centres upon whether teachers shun the deputy/head route because they have a desire to keep on teaching. Does class contact remain a key attraction because it is lessened at deputy head level and almost always denied at headship level? Might assistant headship allow for a position of considerable influence in the school while still maintaining significant teaching responsibilities?

This leads on to another attractive opportunity for assistant headship. One possibility is that it could be used as a role within the school that goes beyond the traditional +2 or +3 management point role and actually takes a significant aspect of the senior management of the school that is usually the domain of the head or deputy. One option for the assistant head post is that it could be a focus for specific and significant development in the school on a larger scale than would be delegated to a +2 manager. It could therefore provide a clear focus for a role that would have a major impact upon the school and therefore be attractive to those wanting more senior roles. It would also have the added bonus of reducing the workload of the head and deputy and allow them to concentrate on other areas of school management. All of these areas were of interest and worth pursuing a line of enquiry on as was another significant development in primary school management – that of performance management.

In conducting the literature search, issues surrounding performance management generally and problems associated with target setting in particular emerged. The introduction of targets has led to a change in educational culture that has not been easy for many. The difficulty has been in introducing targets into a culture that is not used to having them. Change has taken place in terms of pupil targets, throughout the

second half of the 1990's and this first made its way into the teachers pay and conditions through the targets set initially for heads and then for deputies. With assistant heads appearing on the leadership scale, targets had to appear for them too. The problem has been that establishing headship targets has not been easy given that it is the responsibility of the Governing Body to set these targets and to have them verified by an external advisor. These targets for heads can often be the subject of great debate. While they are intended to be the main focus for the work of the head, they often appear to be a distraction. One could argue they might therefore be inappropriately set because of the lack of expertise. The problem can hence be transferred to others on the leadership scale within a school.

The problem can in part occur because of what can be referred to as 'devolved targets'. This is where the head may have a target, of raising standards in reading for instance. The head can then make one of the targets for the deputy or the assistant head relate to reading, and then the same for the Literacy manager. If the target is achieved who really achieved it, one of them, or all of them? And what if it is not achieved, are they all deemed to have equally failed? This research aimed to see if these kinds of problems were emerging for assistant heads. Were the targets clearly set and were they appropriate for the post of assistant headship?

In many ways the list of reasons why this area is worthy of further study and what are the reasons for its emergence can go on and on. However, for this research it is important that a clear focus is identified. So what is that focus to be?

This section has raised a series of issues that could be investigated. Unfortunately it is beyond the scope of this study to cover them all, although ideally they will all be addressed in the future. Therefore many of the smaller questions need to be organised under broader headings that will form the heart of the study. These key research questions are:

1. Why are schools choosing to create assistant headship posts?
2. What is the role of assistant heads in primary school management?
3. How varied is the role of assistant headship and how is it being used flexibly?
4. What has motivated teachers to become assistant heads and what sort of career paths do they have?
5. What similarities exist between assistant headship and other posts such as deputy headship and advanced skills teacher?

By addressing these questions the overall research question will be answered. That question is:

'How are assistant heads impacting upon primary school management and how do their opinions, attitudes and beliefs affect their work?'

There are many aspects surrounding this area that are worthy of research. However, because the role of assistant head could transform the way schools are managed, it is necessary to establish why the posts were coming into being and what these new assistant heads are actually doing. The two are closely linked because the work that these assistant heads are doing is based upon why their posts were created in the first place. Clearly the posts were created to fill a need in the management of the school.

By establishing what the assistant heads are doing should also answer the question of why the posts are being created. Similar to the way in which the research agenda for deputy headship is focussed on what tasks they are performing establishing the tasks currently being performed by assistant heads is at heart of this research.

But mere description is not enough. In carrying out the literature review it seemed that much of the literature merely looked at what was being done by deputies rather than how they perceived their work and the current educational situation. This research was to address this issue. The intention was to go beyond the descriptive into the qualitative realms of the feelings, attitudes and opinions of the assistant heads towards their work. This was in order to gain a fuller understanding of what being an assistant head meant, however diverse that picture was.

Although expecting this diverse picture it was also hoped that there would be broad categories that could emerge as to the different types of assistant heads that exist. Of course this is difficult given the present problems with establishing a clear model of deputy headship and this research had to be conscious not to try to invent categories that did not exist but instead let them emerge from the research if they existed at all. Hence the focus was on painting a picture of what the role entails and how the assistant heads felt about it because in research terms there is a fairly blank canvas on the subject. From this the intention was to draw together any common themes that emerged. This would then lead, towards the end of the research, to suggestions as to the way the role might develop in the future.

Researchers clearly need to gain a fuller picture of what assistant heads are doing and this study aims to play a part in that. By doing this the research will contribute to a profile of the responsibilities being compiled so that eventually a model may emerge of what an effective assistant head does. This will take time but the research has to start somewhere and what better place than with a first hand account of a newly appointed assistant head who is developing the role within his own school? The case study section is an account of my own experiences of the role of assistant head. It was an internal appointment to a role that was in part created for me but was also responding to the needs of the school. As I began the new role the school itself had to establish what it really meant in practice and how it might evolve. This led me to wonder what form the post might be taking in other schools. I felt ideally placed to research the role, as I was a part of its emergence. Hence, in the research I could combine my findings from other schools with a detailed account of how it was unfolding within a school. It was with this background and having examined the literature available that the research turned its attention to the methodology that would suit this study.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

In carrying out research into assistant headship in primary schools it is necessary to be clear about exactly what is meant by research and what the philosophical basis to this research would be. In simple terms;

Research is best conceived as the process of arriving at dependable solutions to problems through the planned and systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of data

Mouly, 1978, q. in Cohen and Manion, 1995, p40

This research would be based upon this 'planned and systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of data' which was to be gathered on the subject of assistant headship. As a researcher there are two key philosophical issues that strike me, both closely related. Firstly, the extent to which the knowledge that is to be accessed actually exists in any 'real' sense and secondly, if it does exist, to what extent does the researcher's own ideas, preconceptions and views affect my interpretation of that knowledge.

To return to the first issue is to risk disappearing into a philosophical abyss in the pursuit of 'truth' that may not even exist (Watson, 2000, p13). However it needs to be done because any research is influenced by the both the philosophy of the researcher and the methods that they choose to employ. In fact they too are closely related. So is this study to take an essentially 'Positivist' attitude to the 'truth' it seeks to find in relation to assistant headship? The answer is an evasive 'to a certain degree'. In this research there will be some claims as to what assistant heads are doing in our primary schools. In this sense there will be something approximating to the 'truth' out there that can be discovered although of course it will only be 'true' for those under study and not all assistant heads generally.

However, the second issue of 'bias' causes more concern. In thinking about this the researcher clearly has to ensure the systems and approaches that they employ enhance the likelihood of high quality research. The content itself also needs to be of high quality with rich data and 'insightful analysis' and then the strategies and methods for the evaluation need to be chosen appropriately. In this sense "It must be our endeavour to produce research of the highest quality" where we "avoid error, bias, partiality, whim and other negative outcome" and therefore "constant vigilance and self-and other-criticism is necessary" (Figueroa, 2000, Ed.D. lecture)

As conscientious researchers we will try but of course never truly escape the clutch of 'bias' because we all differ in how we interpret situations and events. All of us are the product of our time and the influences that have been brought to bear upon our lives and therefore the way we make sense of the world is unique to us. Our perceptions are exactly that, our perceptions, and therefore by definition no one elses. Reflecting on

the work of Monigliano, a historiographer of the twentieth century, Bentley observed that;

No one will 'supersede' Monigliano, but we may choose to see his world through lenses he did not have and paint in colours he would have avoided

Bentley (1999, px)

The point made here is, and it links back to the previous section, the 'truth' that Monigliano created is his 'truth' and as such cannot be denied. To give a first person view here the conclusions in this study will be my 'truths' too. Yes, I will employ what I consider to be the correct research methodologies and procedures and yes, I will be vigilant in my reflections but in the end my thoughts, my ideas and my interpretations will be mine and mine alone. In this sense it will be my 'truth' rather than anything that may be claimed as a universal truth. The extent to which they are 'true' for others will be debated but what concerns me is less the philosophical debate but rather whether my ideas will be thought provoking and illuminating. If they are, then this would make the study worthwhile and therefore an achievement in itself.

Prior to considering the methodologies used it is important to consider the ethical issues relevant to this study. Throughout the research I endeavoured to follow the BERA Guidelines for Educational Research (2004) in an effort "to reach an ethically acceptable position (where my) actions are considered justifiable and sound" (BERA, 2004, p3). I operated "within an ethic of respect" for all those involved in the research and this included "voluntary informed consent" (BERA, 2004, p4). Data was anonymous and this included the names of the schools and the individuals involved in the questionnaires and interviews.

Having established an ethical and philosophical basis to the study it was important to select the methodology that would most suit a study of assistant headship. The first reference point was the methodology used in similar work on deputy headship and headship. The most commonly used method was interview (Garret and McGeachie, 1999) and it seemed appropriate to use this technique but a wider picture of what assistant heads were doing needed to be established before the interview stage and so a variety of methodological techniques were employed for this. The majority of the picture would emerge from these techniques and would then aid in designing the appropriate questions for the final interview stage so that the feelings of the assistant heads towards their work could be further explored. Hence the research would begin with a case study, then move onto an analysis of job descriptions, followed by a questionnaire survey which would lead to the final interviews. This is an eclectic form of data gathering but one that used particular techniques to gain specific information across a range of issues. Figure 3 outlines the whole research process.

The first step in the research route therefore was a reflection of my own experience in the form of a case study of Assistant Headship. I had become an assistant head and it seemed possible that some of the reasons, though of course not all, of those that led to the creation of my post could be shared with other assistant heads. The case study was to precede the survey stage in order for it to act as a means of "identifying key issues

which merit further investigation” (Bell, 1999, p10.). It seemed the appropriate place to begin because the researcher was at the centre of it.

So what are the attractions of a case study? The method was chosen because it is concerned with “the interaction” of factors and events and “sometimes it is only by taking a practical instance that we can obtain a full picture of this interaction” (Bell, 1999, p10). The experience described is an early instance of Primary Assistant Headship and in this sense extremely relevant.

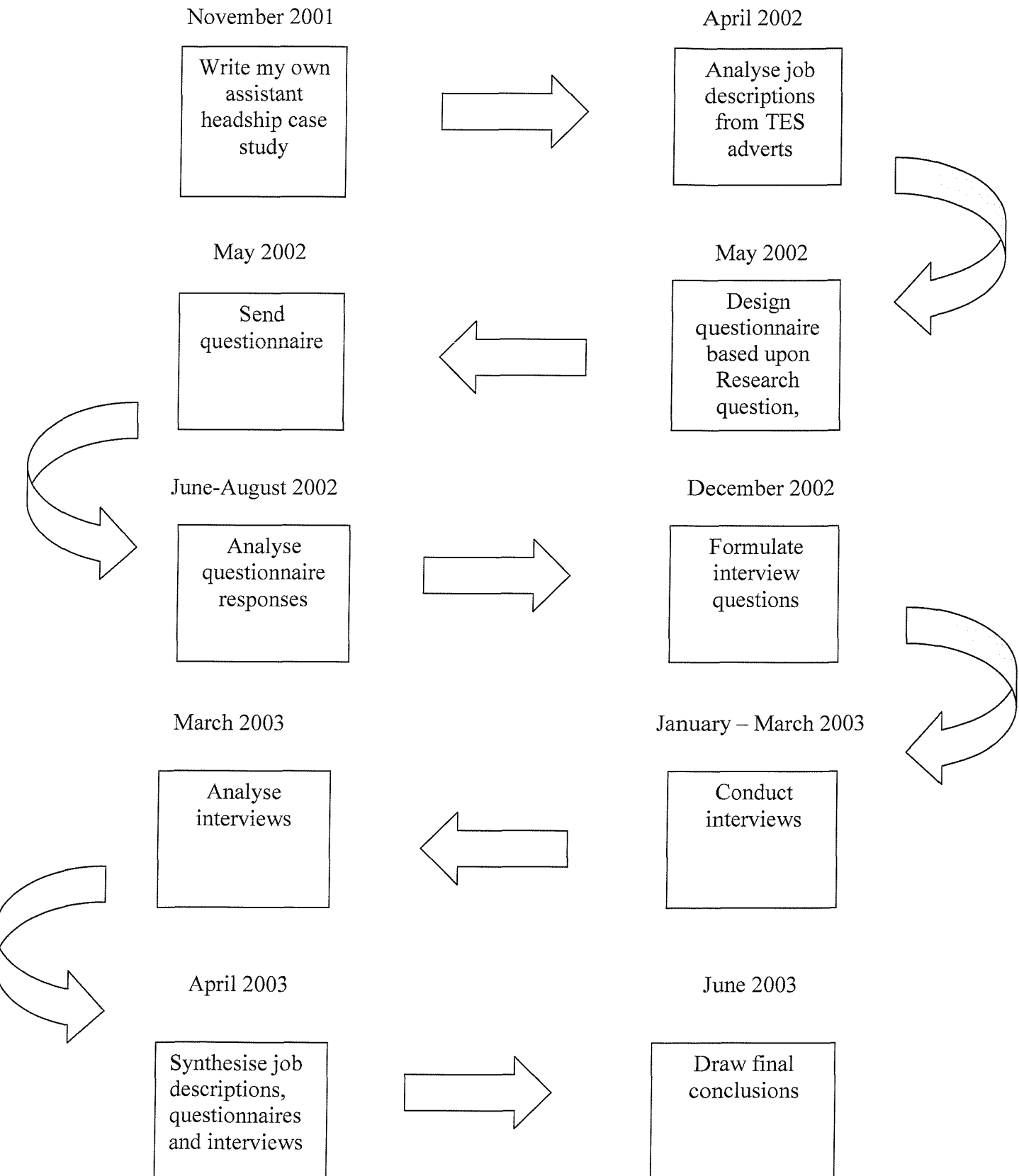
The role described would in some ways be a similar role to the assistant heads under study here and that there would be what Bassey (q. in Bell, 1999, p12) terms a strong “relatability” regarding what the researcher was doing as an assistant head. The intention was for the case study to give insights into why assistant headship is needed generally but more significantly how the post could be tailored to the specific needs of a school. In this way the case study would be “illuminating the general by looking at the particular” (Denscombe, 1998, p30). The case might also highlight some of the complexities that exist that would not necessarily be shown up in a general survey. The particular issues faced could raise potential questions throughout the study that would not occur to a researcher on the outside and in this sense the role would be advantageous to the research. Of course this is a double-edged sword because of the danger of the researchers perception of the role as an assistant head clouding judgements about other assistant heads. The point was not to assume that my situation and experience was being replicated elsewhere.

This issue warrants further examination and some first person reflection because during this entire data gathering process I was still conscious of my own position as an assistant head. As I was using my own work as a mini case study of what it is like to be an assistant head there was a danger I would generalise too much from my own experience. Nevertheless, I felt that it could also be through a single case study that we can gain understanding. My basis here was a belief that it is “through the portrayal of a single instance locked in time and circumstance, he (a researcher) communicates enduring truths about human condition” (Macdonald and Walker, 1975, q. in Simons, 1996). The ‘truths’ that I will be searching for might be reflected in not just my own work but in that of the other assistant heads under research.

Returning to the issue of being both researcher and subject I realise that there is a danger that my “participant observations” could be “subjective, biased, unrepresentative, idiosyncratic” (Cohen and Manion, 1995, p100). However, it is because I am aware of those dangers that I endeavoured to guard against them and separate what was my experience from the other results of the study. I did this by always divorcing my experience of assistant headship from the others that I was studying and by not projecting my version of the post onto all of the other examples. By writing the case study I was able to state my own position and then focus the rest of the research on the other cases. I could not, as any researcher cannot, eliminate myself totally from my research but nevertheless, through the use of the triangulation methods outlined what should emerge is a clear picture of what assistant heads are doing and also what some of them feel about the nature of their jobs. I further endeavoured to do this by interviewing the head, deputy and other assistant head at my school to gain their insights into my role as assistant head and extent to which it

impacts upon the management of the school. This gave another, and vital, element to the case study. The process is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3 – The Research Process used in this study



There was also another possible danger regarding my attitudes and perceptions towards assistant headship. Would I be in danger of exaggerating the role and influence of the role of the assistant head? Could my research be an attempt to convince both others and myself as to the importance of the role? Could I perhaps, at a subconscious level, be trying to justify the importance of assistant headship beyond its true worth because I felt positive findings would be as much about a justification for my own role as for the post generally? In this sense my role could be a problem but equally it should be a strength because I understand the role, the complexities and what it requires. Nevertheless I had to maintain my critical distance and remember this study concerned assistant headship generally and not just my case specifically.

In some ways this was made easier by the fact there were some unique elements to my own case study. Indeed, questions may be raised as to how typical my case is. In many ways it is not. My school is a Beacon school and over 90% of schools are not. I have a role that in part was created to suit my particular strengths. Would most schools create such a role? Probably not. This all means that I could not assume my situation perfectly represents a 'normal' example of assistant headship. However my case study does, I believe, have many representative aspects that I thought could well be borne out in the findings of this research. It is worth reflecting on these key elements which were:

1. The school needed a role that focussed upon the Quality of Teaching and demanded a high status;
2. The workload in managing a school was becoming excessive and needed either a second Deputy or an Assistant Head to cope;
3. The pay offered as an Assistant Head attracted me to stay and dissuaded me from looking elsewhere, hence retaining me;
4. I had decided not to follow the Deputy Head/ Head route but still wanted a job of status and impact – being an Assistant Head who was responsible for the Quality of Teaching provided this.

Although some aspects of this are still unique to my situation I imagined there to be parallels amongst other assistant heads and I wanted to see if any of these aspects were more generally true of other assistant head posts. I therefore wanted to use my case study as a backdrop and example of why assistant headship is an expanding role. My assistant headship is, after all, one of type, even if it is a new and developing type.

There is another reason for including my case study even though it might be an extreme one. Returning to the original intention of the research it is not just to paint a picture of what assistant heads are doing but also to show examples of what they *could* be doing. I believe that because my example shows how an assistant head can play a major part in making a school a Beacon school, with an outstanding OFSTED report, the highest Key Stage 2 SATs results in the LEA and all the other accolades it has received it is clearly an example worth sharing. In this sense its benefit is less as a generalisation of what an assistant head is doing but more an exemplar of what an assistant head could be doing in the future as a key component of school development. I felt this was appropriate in my methodology as long as I did not make claims about assistant headship generally which were really only relevant to my situation.

Following on from the case study was an examination of the national picture. Documentary evidence in the form of Job Descriptions related to the assistant head posts were used. Initially all of the assistant headship job advertisements in the Times Educational Supplement for April and May 2001 were collected and a postal request for the job descriptions was sent. This was to gain an insight into the nature of the roles being advertised and to use as schools for the questionnaire research at a later date. This collection continued from September 2001 until April 2002. This provided the foundation for the research because it represented empirical data about what assistant heads were actually doing, or at least what they were supposed to be doing according to their job description (see below).

This leads on to three important aspects to consider when looking at the job descriptions. The first is response. The letters requesting the job descriptions were written as a researcher and not as a prospective candidate and this was made clear in the letter. Schools had to be aware of why the job descriptions were being requested because to request them as a prospective candidate for the post would be considered unethical. The true reason for the information request would be masked. In all of the correspondence the purpose of the project was clearly explained. This was because “The researcher should ideally anticipate every possible side effect of his procedures and guard against them” (Evans, q. in Bell, 1999, p10). This meant that not all job descriptions were received but nevertheless a 95% response rate was most successful. These 57 returns came from all parts of the country and ranged from the smallest school with 120 on roll to the largest school with 700 on roll. The full breakdown of schools can be seen in Chapter 5 and in Appendix 2.

The second aspect is that because the documents were so large and wide-ranging they had to be classified in order to make comparisons. For this, research into deputy headship was examined and the way in which the tasks of the deputies had been grouped acted as a basis for this research (Cooper, 1998 and Garret and McGeachie, 1999). This provided the categories to base the work of assistant headship around although new priorities had emerged since that research was published such as Performance Management, which merited its own category. Inevitably the job descriptions themselves did not all fall perfectly into the categories and therefore there was a certain amount of interpretation as to which category each task was assigned to. This had to be done otherwise the data would just be too widespread and hence “the translation of responses ...to specific categories for the purpose of analysis” (Kerlinger, q. in Cohen and Manion, 1995, p286) had to be carried out.

The third aspect is the question of whether the job descriptions actually match the work carried out by the assistant head. This is an issue of reliability. Jobs can evolve and there can be a danger that claims about what assistant heads were doing based upon job descriptions may not match the reality of what was going on in the day- to-day work of the assistant head. To try to triangulate these results a checklist of these management activities was included on a subsequent questionnaire to see if the job descriptions matched the reality. Also, the interview stage gave the opportunity to compare the job descriptions with the role as it was actually carried out and this would aid in ensuring ‘convergent validity’ (Cohen and Manion, 1995, p281).

Following on from the job description analysis the ‘mixed methods’ approach was extended because different methods can complement each other and can be

“combined to produce differing and mutually supporting ways of collecting data” (Denscombe, 1998, p84). Having begun to collect documentation in the form of job descriptions a questionnaire was used to gain a wider view of what the role of assistant head entailed in different schools.

The questionnaire was chosen in part because;

The appeal of the questionnaire is that once the information required by the researcher has been identified, it appears relatively easy to construct a list of questions that get straight to the heart of the matter.

Brown and Dowling, 1998, p66

This was the case here with the heart of the matter being what the assistant heads were doing at this point in time and how they felt about it. In terms of the design of the questionnaire the aim was for questions to be “clear, unambiguous and uniformly workable” (Davidson,1970, q. in Cohen and Manion, 1995, p9) to aid simple completion.

The questionnaires were sent for all 57 posts for which a job descriptions had been returned and there were 31 questionnaire replies, a response rate of 53% which compares well with the 40% response rate quoted as being acceptable (Cohen and Manion, 1995, p99). As the job descriptions had been arriving the job descriptions were analysed and the key features were used to assist in the design of the questionnaire alongside the issues raised in the literature search. This lead to a focus upon a range of aspects connected to the role of assistant head including:

- roles and responsibilities
- pay scales
- career
- time in post
- time for management
- induction/training for post
- differences from +2/3 post

The reasons for these choices will be explained during the analysis section. The focus on these areas through a questionnaire gave a quantitative aspect to the research but stopped short of showing how the assistant heads felt about their roles and the nature of assistant headship. A more qualitative element was needed that went beyond mere description into feelings about their experiences as assistant heads. Though the questionnaire would give me the factual information about the roles of the assistant heads it would miss the opinions, attitudes, views and beliefs of the respondents that would complement the empirical data.

Anderson (1990, p7) has said, “ Educational research is the systematic process of discovering how and why people in educational settings behave as they do”. The use of a questionnaire would aid in this discovery, as would the subsequent interviews. With this in mind questions were developed regarding the experiences and feelings of assistant heads using the Likert scale (Brown and Dowling, 1998, p70) based upon the issues raised in the literature search and the job descriptions received. This was

designed to ensure face validity. In constructing the questionnaire for the Lickert scale reference was made to Anderson (1990, p20) including keeping the statements simple, clear and short to avoid confusion. All statements were phrased positively to ensure the values of the answers could be compared. Even though this section looked at the opinions of the respondents it still did not allow for elaboration on any ideas, merely a mark to show the degree of agreement or disagreement. In order to pursue the opinions more fully three open questions were included regarding why the post is needed, what attracted them to it and how their colleagues had adjusted to the new role. A 'catch all' section of any other comments was designed to give the chance to express ideas and thoughts that the rest of the questionnaire did not allow for. This meant the questions had:

- established the roles and responsibilities of the respondents,
- outlined the make up of their senior management team, and,
- given the opportunity for respondents to give their opinion about a range of issues relating to assistant headship in numerical and written terms.

The questionnaire would provide me with the bulk of the information regarding how the new role was taking shape in these schools. The intention was that the questions would elicit opinions because of their open-ended nature. The questionnaire appears as Figure 4.

At the outset of this research the possibility of limiting the sample to schools in Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton LEAs was considered but this would be too narrow a focus and hence the list of schools created from the TES advertisements was used. In this sense the sample was wide enough to provide a good representation of the picture of emerging primary assistant headship as a whole. The questionnaire was piloted with two colleagues who are assistant heads and as a result questions relating to age and previous posts were added. The job description response rate turned out to be 95% of the jobs advertised nationally and from these questionnaires were sent to all 57 of them. Quota sampling was not used as such but this could be done in part by analysing the results for Junior schools in comparison to Infant or Primary schools.

As with all questionnaire responses the question of to what extent the 53% of responses that were received were truly representative was raised. It could not be claimed they were because the data from the non-respondents was not known and hence non-response does affect the validity of the actual responses. This further led to the question of how representative were the responses compared to all of the other assistant heads posts across the country? While such grandiose claims about the national picture of assistant headship were beyond this study given the lack of research into the area so far, data from 31 schools was adding to the body of knowledge about assistant headship and in this sense it was extremely worthwhile.

Returning to the questionnaire survey patterns were sought in the non-response rate to see if they were based upon school type, size or location. This was not the case, as there appeared to be no systematic non-contact pattern, whether by school size, location or type of post being advertised. Clearly one cannot know how the non-respondents views would have altered the findings but, as stated, as one of the first pieces of research into assistant headship the results were interesting to view as an emerging picture of what assistant heads are doing, experiencing and thinking.

Figure 4 – Questionnaire used for research into Assistant Headship

Assistant Head Questionnaire

Name _____ School _____

Start date ____ Leadership Point ____ Age ____ Previous post _____

Specific Responsibilities (Please ring Yes or No)

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|--------------------------------|---|---|
| Key Stage Co-ordinator | Y | N | Curriculum Overview | Y | N |
| Performance Management Involvement | Y | N | Staff Development | Y | N |
| Monitoring the Quality of Teaching | Y | N | INSET Training | Y | N |
| Assessment Manager/ pupil Performance | Y | N | Mentoring (NQT, Students) | Y | N |
| Deputising for the Head/Deputy | Y | N | Developing Quality of Teaching | Y | N |

Teaching Commitment (Please indicate whether full time, 0.5, etc)

Class based _____ Floating/MAST _____ Booster

Additional Comments:

What is the make-up of your Senior Management Team? (please Tick)

Head ____ Deputy ____ Another AH ____ +3 Post ____ +2 Posts ____ Other

What attracted you to the post of Assistant Head?

Why do you think schools need Assistant Heads?

Please read the statement and then ring the numbers according to how strongly you agree or disagree with them. 1 means strongly disagree and 5 means strongly agree. AH is used to denote Assistant Head.

| | Strongly Disagree | | | | Strongly Agree |
|--|----------------------|---|---|---|-------------------|
| The AH post is an important step on the way to Deputy Headship | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| The AH post is an important step on the way to Headship | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I have significantly more responsibility as an AH than a +2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| It is important that an AH has a substantial teaching commitment | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| As an AH I have clear leadership targets | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I have received specific induction as an AH | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| The AH is very similar to the Deputy Head post | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Being AH provides a good alternative for those not aspiring to Headship | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| AH is good preparation for Advisory/Inspection work | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| The AH post has been created because of the increasingly demanding nature of school management | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| The AH post has been created because of the need to reward senior managers with higher pay | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| The AH post has been created because of the reluctance of teachers to become Heads or Deputies | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| The AH has been created because of the Government desire to change the nature of school management | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

How have colleagues in your school adjusted to the new role?

Are there any other comments you wish to make about being an Assistant Head?

I would be willing to do a follow up interview about my role as an AH. Please indicate. Y N

Thank you for taking the time to answer this questionnaire. Keith Watson May 2002

The questionnaire was sent with a covering letter that outlined the purpose of the research and made reference to my own position as an assistant head researching a new role. It also offered a summary of the findings to the schools. This was done to aid the motivation of the potential respondents and many did ask for a summary. Inevitably potential respondents were receiving the questionnaire 'cold' without, personal contact and to aid in making a connection with them and the researchers role as an assistant head was used to make them more likely to complete the questionnaire although this could not be proved. On a practical level the questionnaire was limited to a double A4 size because there is "no more effective deterrent to answering a questionnaire than its sheer size" (Denscombe, 1998, p96). The questionnaires would be received in schools by busy assistant heads who would open the envelope and probably make a quick decision as to whether or not to complete the questionnaire. They were perhaps more likely to complete a single A4 sheet that mainly involved circling numbers and writing short answers. The questionnaire also began with simple factual questions in order to not deter the respondent.

In terms of confidentiality the names of the teachers and schools would not be used in the research including my own school. The research was looking at assistant headship generally and there was no need or reason to refer to schools by name. Here and throughout the research the endeavour was to follow the BERA Ethical Guidelines (2004). This was based upon "an ethic of respect" (BERA, 2004, p5) including having "voluntary informed consent" (BERA, 2004, p5) for the questionnaires and interviews. Having gathered job descriptions from 57 schools and questionnaire responses from 31 schools, interview questions were formulated that addressed the issues that were emerging.

At the outset of the research it had been anticipated that much of the data regarding the opinions, thoughts, attitudes and beliefs of the assistant heads would come from the interview stage. Perhaps the most pleasing aspect therefore was that so much data on these areas came in the written section of the questionnaire. The respondents were most forthcoming in their answers and provided a rich source of information and ideas, often writing at length. The success of this data gathering meant that the interview questions could be quite open and did not need to pursue the same issues again because so much detail had already been obtained. In the interview little time needed to be occupied with what the assistant heads did in their posts or why they thought the posts were being created, except briefly to triangulate earlier findings. Instead the interview was able to move rapidly onto the thoughts of the assistant heads about the key elements of their work and their opinions on the future of assistant headship. With this rationale in mind attention was turned to designing the interview stage.

The attractiveness of the interview is, according to Anderson (1990, p 222) that there are fewer problems with people responding and the interviewer can "clarify questions and probe answers". The job descriptions and first part of the questionnaire had provided an empirical record of what assistant heads were doing in the form of 'tasks' in their schools. However it was the written responses on the questionnaire and the interviews that were intended to produce a form of knowledge that has been described as "softer and more subjective...based on experience and insight of a unique and essentially personal nature" (Cohen and Manion, 1995, p6). Hence the mix of factual information and personal feelings about the work. The interview is useful in clarifying

questions in order to “explore the world from the perspective of the interviewee and to construct an understanding of how the interviewee makes sense of their experiences” (Brown and Dowling, p72). Here it was about clarifying the experience of being an assistant head. Again it is important to distinguish between the lists of the tasks that are carried out and the attitudes, thoughts and opinions of these new assistant heads. Both aspects were vital and interesting and the methods were chosen to gain access to both with the interview allowing assistant heads to reflect thoughtfully on their role and make sense of what they did and how it relates to the wider picture of Primary educational management.

As with the questionnaire the questions used began with the particular and moved to the general. The first questions (See Figure 5) involved confirming the main aspects of the assistant heads’ roles and then quickly moved onto questions designed to make the assistant head reflect on what they thought of their role in specific terms and of assistant heads generally, and finally what ideally the role should be. The main focus then became what direction primary educational management was taking and what role assistant headship was already playing in shaping this direction and how it might play a role in the future. The twelve interviews were carried out over the telephone, recorded and transcribed. The telephone was used for the interviews given the logistical issues in setting up face-to-face interviews. Inevitably the visual element was lost and all of the non-verbal clues that go with it but the two way interaction was still effective and in establishing a relationship that elicited insightful responses. Again the dual role of assistant head and researcher meant more of a connection with the interviewees and hence make them more willing to be interviewed in the first place and also more responsive during the interview itself. Although difficult to prove there appeared a basis for an empathetic understanding and the interviewees were again most forthcoming in their responses.

Figure 5 – Interview Questions

1. What are the main elements of your role?
2. Why do you think more assistant head posts are becoming available?
3. What are your experiences of the role so far?
4. How do you see the role developing in the future?
5. What are the wider implications of assistant headship for primary school management?

Regarding the issue of the sample for the interviews there was a request at the end of the questionnaire for respondents to indicate whether they would be willing to give a follow up interview. This saved the time of phoning all questionnaire respondents but raised the question of the motivation of those who wished to be interviewed. Again, would they be representative of the whole sample? Did they have axes to grind? There was also the issue of ‘response effect’ (Bell, 1987, p139) where respondents might try to please the researcher with their answers or where the researcher might try to

influence respondents with my preconceived ideas. It was an advantage that the researcher knew much about the role of assistant headship but steering answers towards preconceived ideas and one's own thinking on the subject had to be guarded against. The interview was about the interviewee – not the researcher. In terms of being representative, unless they were all interviewed it would not be. Time did not permit this and so choices had to be made regarding whom to interview. Twelve assistant heads were selected for the interview from those who had agreed to be interviewed as indicated on their questionnaire. The chosen ones came from schools of different types (8 Primary, 3 Junior and 1 Infant) and of different sizes. Although not fully representative of the whole it was felt their experiences would shed further light on the prior findings and would provide a range of experience. It seemed possible that some of the claims made regarding the larger job description data might be distinct from the findings from the questionnaire and in turn these would be separate from some of the interview data. These doubts could not be removed, but merely had to be borne in mind when making claims regarding what the data showed. However, it seemed probable that similar themes might emerge in all three sections of the research (job descriptions, questionnaire and interview) and in this way better confirm my findings. This proved to be the case.

In all of the research, there are inevitably issues regarding practicality. In preparing the ground for the research thought was given to what was feasible given the skills of the researcher, the time available and the resources available. For example the interviews would have to be via telephone because there was not the time to travel the length and breadth of the country. As mentioned above this is not as satisfactory as face-to-face interviews but that is the way the research had to be conducted. As the study progressed there were questions over validity and reliability and all that could be endeavoured was to use the methods of triangulation outlined above to address concerns as well as possible. Clearly there are questions over the use of a questionnaire in the sense of whether the respondent actually answers the questions accurately and whether some fail to return their questionnaire (Belson, 1986, q. in Cohen, and Manion, 1995, p99) and these can never be answered in full. However, as referred to at the beginning of this chapter, my attitude was based upon the notion that;

Research is subject to shortcomings, bias, errors at each stage and with reference to each aspect. The researcher has therefore constantly to be aware of and to guard against these, as well as taking positive steps to ensure and evaluate quality.

Figueroa, 2000, p2

That was the intention throughout the research, a rigorous questioning of the data and self-reflection upon the interpretations given.

This research started with the hypothesis that the role of assistant head will become more important in the management of primary schools in the future because it offers a flexible solution to the creation of successful SMTs. Since this evolution is occurring at the moment now is the time to begin the research into that area. If this research can help begin to paint a picture of what assistant heads are doing in our primary schools

and contribute more widely to our understanding of primary management as a whole than it will have been worthwhile.

So at the outset of the research the key questions were in place (page 24) that needed to be explored in the course of the study and the methods that would be employed were established. However, as Riessman has written, during the research the:

..focus for analysis often emerges, or becomes clearer, as I see what respondents say...as {I} interact with subjects, analytic ideas change...features of discourse often 'jump out', stimulated by prior theoretical interest.

Riessman, 1995.

This certainly became the case as was shown in the questionnaire responses, which led to a re-shaping of the interview questions. Although at the outset of the research there were some preconceived ideas of what would emerge (being in the role myself I was bound to) nevertheless it was important to be ready to have those pre-conceived ideas both tested and, if need be, totally revised. Being aware of what assistant headship meant in one school did not mean knowing what form it took in other schools and this is what made the work so interesting. The questions to answer were in place, the methods to find those potentially elusive answers ready, a case study of the experience of assistant headship available to draw upon and the appropriate research skills selected and so the research could begin. The ideal place to begin was with my own case study in order to examine the key question of how assistant heads affecting primary school management and how do their opinions, attitudes and beliefs affect their work.

Chapter 4 – Case Study - The St. Mary’s Gate Experience of Assistant Headship

St. Mary’s Gate Primary School is an inner city school that serves a catchment area that includes 39% of pupils from ethnic minorities and has 16% of children on the SEN register. There are more than 400 pupils on roll that are divided into Reception, Infants and Juniors.

In the late 1990’s St. Mary’s Gate had an OFSTED inspection that where 33% of the teaching was graded as unsatisfactory. Shortly afterwards a new head was appointed who changed not only the structure but the whole ethos and culture of the school (Southampton LEA, 2001). A key strategy in this ‘Change Management’ occurred in September and January of 1998-1999 with the introduction of three Team leaders on +2 management posts to lead the three sections of the school – the infants, lower juniors and upper juniors. Change was not easy because so much needed to be done – planning at all levels needed to be developed and then thoroughly monitored, staff relationships needed to be improved and the notion of professionalism needed to be firmly established. The key issue however was the quality of teaching, which needed to be raised dramatically.

Over the next year great strides were made in this area as was seen in the Southampton LEA School Self-Evaluation report for Spring 2000. Change was brought about primarily through the team managers working with staff, the monitoring of planning and teaching and the general support given in these areas. The Senior Management Team as a whole was strong and comprised the Head, Deputy, Team managers and English manager. The first few years were difficult and the change in culture occurred slowly. The style employed by the head was essentially autocratic at first in a similar way to the style employed by many heads in a pre-Ofsted Period (Harris, 2002, p20) and as time moved on and change occurred it became more supportive.

The system of three team managers had proved effective in managing the change under the close direction of the head. This change was amongst staff who were, in some cases, resistant to this change and involved re-writing the long, medium and short term planning, revising assessment systems and improving the quality of teaching. The improvements were seen through improved SATs scores, judgements made by inspectors and the higher grading by the LEA in their inspections (Watson, 2001). However, by September 2000 the school had moved on significantly and wanted to take new and ambitious initiatives and become a ‘centre for excellence in teaching and learning’. Although improvements had been made in the quality of teaching the head felt more needed to be done in this area and that the implementation of the teaching and learning policy would be more consistent if led by one person. With this in mind a +3 management post was created with the title of ‘Professional Tutor’ which involved a senior teacher assisting with all aspects of teaching including giving support with planning, team teaching, the teaching of demonstration lessons and carrying out assessments tasks. The LEA backed this move. These tasks had previously been the remit of the individual team leaders but it was decided that this aspect of the team leader role should be concentrated under the one title – that of assistant head. This meant the role of the other two team leaders was reduced and both were concerned about the lessening of their role – particularly since they both had aspirations to higher management themselves. In interview one of these team leaders

remembered that at the time she felt part of her job was being 'taken away'. Despite this an internal appointment was made.

The establishment of the role was based upon the notion that while the school had experienced a period of 'Transformational Leadership' a further stage was needed. This transformational leadership had occurred in terms of:

Building school vision, establishing commitment to agreed goals, providing intellectual stimulation, offering individualised support and explicating and the encouraging of high expectations

Bass, 1999, q. in Gold,, et al.2003, p128.

But more needed to be done in terms of raising the quality of teaching and hence pupil outcomes. The post was created to focus on the teaching and learning and hence became an Instructional Leadership model (Gold, et al.2003, p129). Here the school leaders (and in this case particularly the assistant head) focussed on:

Behaviours of the staff as they engage in activities directly affecting the quality of teaching and learning in pursuit of enhanced pupil outcomes

Gold, et al.2003, p129.

The school had had success in putting in new systems and visions but the change had to be fully realised in the classroom experiences of the pupils. The assistant head role provided a role at a sufficiently high level that could impact greatly upon teaching and learning and ensure that the staff were inspired to modify their behaviours to enhance teaching and learning and hence pupil outcomes. The fact that the assistant head was playing such a central role to this was unusual given that the notion of Instructional Leadership is normally associated with the head alone. At all stages the head did oversee the work on teaching and learning but it was the assistant head who managed it on a daily basis and carried out the tasks.

It was at this time that the school became aware of the role of assistant headship and felt that the role being carried out by the Professional Tutor was significant enough to warrant this title. The role was to concentrate on teaching and learning rather than on other aspects common to a team manager and also to look at furthering links with the near-by university as well as cover staff development and INSET needs. The school was keen to develop more of a research-based culture in the school. Many schools are:

Hindered by an anti-intellectual culture in education which positions researchers and theorists as exotic and irrelevant

Gunter, McGregor and Gunter, 2001, p26

This was something the school felt should not be the case. Thus it was that in January 2001 the post of assistant head on Level 6 of the Leadership Scale was introduced.

The post had been created to act as a focus for the development of the quality within the school. However it had also been created to act as a way of retaining the teacher

concerned, that is, myself. Having taken a year out of teaching prior to coming to St. Mary's Gate to study full time for a Masters I had made it clear to the head that I had no intention of seeking a deputy headship. This was despite acting in that capacity for two terms while the deputy was seconded to another school. My interest lay in research and higher education and aware of this the head sought to create a post that would suit my skills, appeal to my interests and reward me financially for the work I did. In this sense the post was created for me and the head has since said she would not have been created it had I not been there. I wonder if this is repeated in other schools. How many of the assistant head posts in other primary schools were designed for internal candidates and how many were aimed at attracting colleagues from outside?

The Assistant Head Role at St. Mary's Gate Primary

Although the role has a long and thorough job description (see Appendix 1) it is in essence concerned with the quality of teaching. The idea behind the post was that primary school management had become complex and time consuming and that in a school such as St. Mary's Gate three senior staff are needed to carry out the tasks as effectively as possible. The Quality of Teaching is a, if not the, key issue in a modern school and the idea therefore was to have a teacher, on the leadership spine, being responsible for this vital area alone.

Although I have used the phrase 'alone' the issue of quality of teaching soon becomes more than a thing alone. In fact it encompasses so much about schooling. As well as the work alongside teachers in planning, teaching and assessing it also involves other things such as mentoring Newly Qualified Teachers, mentoring students through teaching practices, liaising with the university and numerous other areas. This is an outline of how my role as an assistant head has developed which I include because part of the research will examine if this kind of pattern is repeated for other assistant heads.

Professional Development

The work carried out could all come under the heading of professional development because the key task of this role is to improve the quality of teaching. This is achieved through a mixture of internal and external training although the majority by far is internal. This internal work centres upon the three aspects of Instructional Leadership identified by Blasé and Blasé (1998) as being central to successful professional development:

- Talking with teachers (Conferencing)
- Promoting teacher professional growth
- Fostering teacher reflection

Blasé and Blasé q. in Southworth, 2002, p80

All of the areas listed here are premised upon these three aspects.

Planning

Although long, medium and short term plans are in place for each subject at St. Mary's Gate they are under annual review and staff frequently request that I work alongside them in their planning. This may involve certain parts of lesson planning, such as effective plenaries, or be more concerned with specific subject knowledge. At times the subject leader may also be involved in this work.

Formal Observations

The head, deputy and core subject managers carry out formal lesson observations on a regular basis and it is also a regular feature of my work, both formally but also informally where teachers want feedback on their teaching but not necessarily in the form of a whole Ofsted style observation.. This particularly applies to NQTs and new teachers as a basis for the setting of targets. The observations give the school a clear picture of the level to which we are teaching but also the areas which need to be further developed and in this sense they act as the basis for identifying what my work needs to focus on.

Team Teaching

The most successful part of my role, according to the staff, is the team teaching that I carry out. The lesson may be taught with both teachers giving input at the same time or the lesson being divided into sections where one teacher takes the lead. Examples of this are maths lessons where the mental maths may be taught by myself to act as a mini demonstration lesson. What we are aiming for here is for all staff (myself included) being "engaged in the scientific discovery and refinement of the knowledge base of teaching" (Fullan, 2002, p8). Together we are developing our knowledge of what is effective in our teaching, sharing it, and then developing it further. This can involve taking risks with lessons but without the fear of failure. This is especially seen in the relaxing of the restrictions of the literacy hour. We are not a "reactive school" (NCSL, 2002, p7) that is "superficially adorned with every initiative but with little depth or coherence" (NCSL, 2002, p7). We are not merely concerned with settling "on the solution of the day" (Fullan, 2002, p7) but instead critically review any new innovation and make it work for us. Again, following the thinking of Blasé and Blasé (1998) I am applying the "principles of adult growth and development to all phases of staff development programmes". The key to this is encouraging reflection which is "associated with collegial enquiry, critical thinking and expanding teacher repertoires" (Blasé and Blasé, 1998, q. in Southworth, 2002).

At the centre of this exploration is team-teaching and the role of assistant head allows me to do it more rigorously than as a lower level manager. Do other assistant heads perform a similar task I wondered?

Demonstration lessons

This occurs in areas that either the teacher has identified as their weakness or as a result of a formal lesson observation. An example would be a Games lesson where I have taught a demonstration lesson one week, team taught a lesson the following week and then taken on a more observational role in the third week. The class teacher

therefore took more of the lead and used some of the techniques modelled in the previous weeks. In this sense the demonstration aspect is seen as being part of a programme of support aimed at improving the quality of teaching for that teacher in a specific area.

For all of this work the feedback that I give is of vital importance. The feedback will depend upon the experience and ability of the teacher. In this sense it is situational and follows the thinking of Hersey and Blanchard (1988) who looked at four levels of readiness/maturity (R) and four corresponding styles of leadership(S). These were:

| | |
|---------------------------------|---------------|
| R4 High Motivation/High Ability | S4 Delegating |
| R3 Low Motivation/ High Ability | S3 Supporting |
| R2 High Motivation/ Low Ability | S3 Guiding |
| R1 Low Motivation/ Low Ability | S4 Directing |

q. in Martin, 1995, p11

For a student and a weaker NQT I would be more directing and give suggestions in concrete terms of what to do whereas with a highly motivated good teacher there would be a far more even discussion. In all of this work I borrow from the world of counselling in terms of active listening and the kinds of interventions that I make in the dialogue. I am always looking to establish a relationship based upon trust. This will be the basis for all of the work and will enable the teacher to reflect upon their teaching with the focus being on repeating old successes and creating new triumphs. It develops through facilitative interventions and being able to empathise with the teacher. No amount of lesson observations will be effective if the debrief is handled badly. The teacher wants to know how the observer feels they are performing and what they can do to improve. If they trust and respect the observer and the observer is skilled in eliciting the appropriate reflections then the process is successful. This is the aim of the task. The teacher knows where they are and has reflected on what they need to do. Targets are set and, crucially, the teacher feels motivated to achieve them. This is the essence of effective ‘coaching’ and is integral to my role as an assistant head. Is the role being used equally effectively elsewhere?

Assessment work

One of the areas teachers often ask for assistance with at St. Mary’s Gate is ‘levelling’ of work, particularly in writing. As well as running staff INSET on this I often work alongside colleagues to give National Curriculum levels to work and ensure all of the assessment procedures in the school are followed. As I am the Assessment Manager the role does also come under that umbrella but much of this work is developmental. Again my elevated role as assistant head allows me to do this. Might other assistant heads do this kind of work or do they focus more on other areas?

Mentoring

Another role that is prominent in my work as an assistant head is that of mentoring NQTs and students. In this I ensure the smooth transition into teaching following all of the guidelines that are now laid down for NQTs and students (Career Entry Profiles, etc). I create special programmes for NQTs and students which I run myself that go far beyond the expectations for the training of these groups, including direct coaching in lessons, joint lesson observations and group seminars. My position as assistant head allows this. Would I find similar patterns in my research of other assistant heads?

It is worth noting that I see my role as a mentor to all of the teachers on the staff. Certainly some of the middle managers in the school come to me for support and advice and indeed I go out of my way to ensure their welfare. This notion of professional development at all levels even extends to work with the head, for whom I am also responsible in professional development terms. While I cannot offer her the experience she herself possesses I can encourage in her the reflection she needs to have in order to operate as an effective head.

University Links

One of the aims in making St. Mary's Gate a 'centre for excellence in teaching and learning' was to develop the links with the nearby university, particularly as it was expanding its own PGCE course. I achieved this by approaching the university and offering to do some of the Foundation subject training as a part of their course. This involved training all 85 students from the course for a day in History, Design Technology, Art and RE respectively. On these four days the students were given a background to the National Curriculum in these subjects, an outline of the long and medium term planning for the subjects and then practical workshops involving the skills in these subjects. The students then prepared lessons that they taught in the afternoon session before feeding back to their colleagues. Finally, resourcing and other issues were looked at before a reflection upon the work of the day. Feedback from the students was excellent and they appreciated the hands on experience and the knowledge of teachers who are teaching it every day.

It would be wrong to think that my role is really about a series of tasks that I carry out. Yes, I do ensure the systems that the school chooses are maintained but at heart what I am about is relationships. My task essentially is to encourage the teachers to 'buy into' the school ethos. They need to trust me and believe in what we are doing. In this way they will be open and welcoming and ready to say 'I want to get better...how do I do it?' Here I am guided by the thinking of Fullan that "building relationships is the resource that keeps on giving" (Fullan, 2002, p7). Initially there was anxiety regarding my role because some teachers were unsure of the balance between my judging of their work on the one hand and supporting them on the other. I had to work hard at establishing a relationship of trust with all of the staff so that my work was seen as beneficial to their own development. If I support colleagues in their work then I have found that rather than becoming dependent on me conversely they grow stronger and become more independent. They become even more self-motivating and self-generating. The goal is not for me to stop colleagues in the corridor and say 'How is your maths going?' but for them to stop me in the corridor

and tell me how their maths is going! In my Beacon work with other schools this is the part that teachers from other schools find hard to believe. But it does happen! It is seen in not just the rating of teaching as being ‘very good and in some cases excellent’ (Ofsted, 2001, p6) but in the LEA evaluations on the quality of teaching which has seen the school achieve the highest possible grading in 2002 and 2003 (Southampton LEA, 2002 and 2003).

But why invest all of my time and energy on this instead of all the other management tasks that need doing in the school? Because, again referring to Fullan,:

Motivating and energising a disaffected teacher, and forging relationships across otherwise disconnected teachers can have a profound multiplying effect on the overall climate of the organisation

Fullan, 2002, p7.

It is this multiplying effect that we have created, both in year groups and in teams at St.Mary’s Gate. What we focus on is “conditions of work that are conducive to continuous development and prideful accomplishment” (Fullan, 2002, p10).

Of course a lot of this is dependent on my own credibility. It is vital that I am “projecting a high profile on issues to do with teaching and learning generally and ‘walking and talking’ this role during frequent movement about the school” as identified as good leadership by the DFES research report on the current state of school leadership. (Easley et. al, 2002, p16).

Although the role had a clear focus on the Quality of Teaching and it was envisaged that I would perform some of my team manager functions across the school the post was still not fully defined at the outset. The head and I felt that it would evolve and that this would be partly determined by what our priorities became but also by outside influences and initiatives that although we would not be dictated by nevertheless needed addressing. Education today is so much about change and we felt that we needed to be flexible and adaptable to this change. The assistant head post helped with this flexibility even if it meant that the long-term direction was not completely clear at the outset. During the first eighteen months there was sometimes confusion over who exactly certain responsibilities should fall to. In spring 2003 all of the SMT job descriptions were re-written to establish a clear delineation between the respective roles. A case of the “vision and strategic planning coming later” (Fullan, 2002, p5).

Of course not all aspects of the new post have been positive. One of the consequences of my role is that the deputy does less work connected with the quality of teaching than some deputies do and she is concerned about her lack of experience in this area. Her workload is reduced but there is a danger that so too is her professional development towards headship. This is one of the negatives about the post. Another weakness is that I do not always communicate my work to the SMT clearly. At times I may be working with a teacher to improve the quality of their work and the rest of the SMT is unaware of this. It is important that the rest of the SMT is aware of the work I am doing because they play an important role in working with all teachers in different areas.

The main benefit of my role not containing many of the aspects normally associated with deputy headship has been being able to concentrate more fully on learning. I have adopted a research mentality in the work that I do, that although possible with a full time class responsibility or other management responsibilities is nevertheless easier without them. The closest that I have found to the philosophy of what I am trying to do comes from the Master Teacher programme in Texas. Their standards describe:

Practitioners who engage in professional activity and scholarly enquiry for the purpose of improving instruction and the conditions for learning in their schools. These individuals are engaged in the design and delivery of appropriate instruction and modelling classroom management for other teachers

Mayo, 2002, p32.

They see their Master Teacher much as I would like to see myself. That is, someone who:

Is continually engaged in a reflective and reflexive act of inquiry, making instructional decisions based upon research and using theory to inform school level decisions

Mayo, 2002, p32.

Individuals can do this but I now see it as my role to establish this kind of mentality in the school. Being at the level of assistant head allows me to do this but are any other assistant heads performing similar tasks? I was keen to find out.

These are the areas that assistant headship covers at St. Mary's Gate Primary. What is significant to note is that it is a role with a specific purpose as opposed to a general management role. As an assistant head I do not convene or run team meetings – the team managers do this. I do not deputise for the head or deputy – another senior member of staff does this. I do not have a specific role for 'Behaviour' that a senior member of staff might normally have. I do not oversee the curriculum as a whole. I have a clear purpose and that is the Quality of Teaching and because St. Mary's Gate considers that to be vital to the success of a school the post is at the level of assistant headship. It works extremely well at St. Mary's Gate, the question is how does it work elsewhere?

Chapter 5 – Data Analysis of Job Descriptions

The first stage of the data analysis involved examining the job descriptions received from the 57 posts across the country. The intention of this analysis was that it would indicate what assistant heads are actually doing in their roles as leaders and managers in primary schools. In this way the question of whether assistant heads are impacting upon school management could be addressed. The intention was to see if the roles were high levels roles within the school, perhaps being similar to those normally associated with deputy heads. If they were then the work of assistant heads could be considered significant but if not then the effect of assistant heads on primary management would have to be questioned.

As outlined in the methodology section the initial part of the data collection involved requesting assistant head job descriptions from those placed in the job advertisement section of the TES from September 2001 until April 2002. The job descriptions were analysed under twelve general management headings based upon the way deputy head management has been grouped in other research (Cooper, 1998, p11 and Garrett and Macgeachie, 1999, p44). Added to this were the teaching responsibilities and whether or not the role involved deputising in the absence of the head. A percentage figure was calculated for each of the twelve areas and these ranged from the 100% involvement in the Senior Management Team (SMT) to the 14% for parental links. The rest of the results were as follows:

| Management Responsibility | Percentage of Job Descriptions |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Membership of SMT | 100% |
| Performance management | 74% |
| Teaching 0.6+ | 82% |
| Managing a Key Stage | 60% |
| Quality of Teaching | 58% |
| Standards/Assessment | 56% |
| Overview of the Curriculum | 53% |
| Deputising | 46% |
| Staff Development | 44% |
| Managing INSET | 44% |
| Teaching full time | 42% |
| Mentoring | 39% |
| Managing a Core Subject | 32% |
| SENCO | 18% |
| Parental Links | 14% |

Figure 6 – Percentage of respondents involved in different aspects of Management

The key findings from this table were:

- Assistant heads are involved in a wide range of management responsibilities and can therefore be said to be in many cases affecting primary school management at a high level
- All assistant heads in this research are members of the senior management team

- The major management responsibility of assistant heads in this research is Performance Management
- Over half of the assistant heads in this research manage a key stage
- Other main areas of common management responsibility include the Quality of Teaching and having an overview of the curriculum
- Over 80% of the assistant heads in this research teach more than three days a week
- 42% of the assistant heads in this research teach full time
- Nearly half of the assistant heads are expected to deputise in the absence of the head

Each area will now be analysed in turn and in order to see what the main functions of assistant heads are (For a more detailed breakdown see Appendix 2)

1. Membership of SMT (100%)

All of the job descriptions involved the assistant head being a part of the SMT and it is difficult to see how this could not be the case. It could be feasible for an assistant head to only attend SMT meetings regarding their area of school responsibility if that responsibility was clear and distinct. However, any general meeting regarding the running of the school is likely to need the assistant head present because any major decision will impact upon them. Equally if a new initiative is being taken in the school either by the assistant head or someone else then this too impacts on all of the senior managers. The literature review outlined how schools today depend upon ‘many leaders’ (Fullan, 2002, p12) and the 100% membership of the SMT supports this view. The subsequent list of responsibilities also testifies to the level these assistant heads are working at. They are clearly in a position to impact upon the management of their schools. The vehicle for school management often centres upon the senior management team partly because of the notion that two heads are better than one, or perhaps more appropriately here, one head, one deputy and an assistant head are better than one head!

2. Significant involvement in Performance Management (74%)

Apart from the seemingly obligatory involvement in the Senior Management Team the highest figure recorded in the job descriptions was for involvement in Performance Management with almost three-quarters of assistant heads being involved in it. Given the guidelines for Performance Management (DfEE, 1999) that suggests that Team Leaders (a broad term that could cover a range of senior managers) should be involved it was likely that the assistant head would perform part of the Performance Management role. In the introduction to this thesis it was suggested that a key reason for the creation of assistant head posts was that the task of managing a school has grown so much that the responsibilities need to be delegated more than ever. This was due to the expansion of systems such as Performance Management. Performance Management represents one of the new key management tasks facing schools and where there is a large staff it makes sense in terms of time and energy to involve at least two or three senior staff in appraisal of this kind. The success of Performance Management “relies on the role of the team-leaders being carried out professionally to bring about the benefits for pupils through their staff” (Smith and Reading, 2002,p6). This is significant responsibility that merits the level

of assistant headship. It is a major way in which an assistant head can impact upon school management.

It is also worth considering that the involvement of the assistant head in Performance Management also elevates the status of the role of assistant headship in the school. It makes it clear that they are making vital judgements about staff performance and have earned that responsibility.

Performance Management is significant in this study because like assistant headship it represents a new and indeed key development in the evolution of the profession. It is a fundamental shift in how schools are managed just as the post of assistant headship is intended to be. Performance Management has been seen as part of the drive:

to improve the quality of education for all pupils, assisting school teachers to develop and carry out their duties more effectively.

(DfEE, 1999, p34)

The fact that so many respondents are playing a role in Performance Management reflects the growing importance of this aspect of the work of a manager. Because Performance Management seemed to be such a significant responsibility reference was made to it in subsequent interviews (see below). It was also referred to in the questionnaire responses. One such respondent who thought that one of the key reasons for the introduction of the post of assistant head was “to share the workload of performance management” (Questionnaire Respondent 6). As schools come to terms with the impact of Performance Management it is perhaps not surprising that assistant heads are playing a key role in the introduction of this new system.

3. Managing a Core Subject (32%)

In many schools the management of a core subject has been worth a single management point or perhaps two when the subject is in need of re-development because standards are low. Raising attainment in an area such as maths across a whole primary school is a large undertaking and would need well-developed management skills but also perhaps the weight of a senior member of staff to carry through the necessary changes. An assistant head post can provide this status but also attract a high level practitioner.

In addition to this pressure from government down to LEAs and then schools to perform in the core means the management of these areas are vital posts. ‘Key players’ are essential in the role and there can also be an overlap with the Assessment Manager role because Core Subject managers need to know how their subject is performing. This is most obviously seen in Key Stage SATs results which feeds into the Performance and Assessment report (PANDA) which compares schools relative performance. Even school achievement awards are now given based upon performance in SATs (whether for achievement or improvement) and hence a teacher’s financial reward is in part due to performance in the core subjects. The pressure in these areas has never been greater and that is perhaps why almost a third of assistant heads are managing a core subject.

4. Managing In-Service Training (INSET) (44%)

This has often been a role for the deputy head (Garret and McGeachie, 1999, p74) and it is therefore interesting to see that 44% of the assistant heads are involved in it. Is this a further sign of 'distributed leadership' amongst a wider SMT with the role of the deputy being shared out? It is not clear from the descriptions whether the assistant head has sole responsibility for INSET or if it is shared. Certainly it is an increasingly important role in the school given the development in training opportunities over the last three years seen through the development of Standards Funds for areas such as grammar for Writing and other Literacy and Numeracy initiatives (Morris, 2001, p7). It would be interesting to see how much of the assistant head role in INSET is concerned with booking courses and how much involves INSET either directly led or co-ordinated by the assistant head themselves. The case study school increasingly developed its own INSET work because of a growing frustration with external LEA courses. It was felt that the needs of the staff were more effectively met through the use of lunchtime workshops and demonstration lessons rather than external courses. It is beyond the scope of this study but research to ascertain whether a similar pattern exists in other schools but it would be interesting to find out if individual schools initiatives in staff development are common in other schools and what role the assistant head plays within that. Certainly if an assistant head is managing the INSET then they are ideally placed to affect the key aspect of school management – that of raising the quality of teaching along the Instructional Leadership model.

5. Staff Development (44%)

Staff development is often linked to the INSET and it is not surprising to see a figure the same as the INSET figure (44% in this case). One might expect the two to always go hand in hand but in 8 out of 31 instances from the questionnaire respondents an assistant head does manage either staff development or INSET but not both. Whilst it is true that INSET is only a part of staff development it is nevertheless a key component and it is hard to see how a successful staff development leader can operate without also controlling the INSET training and budget. Could it be that the assistant heads are responsible for some, rather than all, of the staff development in the school and therefore do not control all of the INSET training? Whatever the situation this is again a key role in the school and is becoming even more so (Morris, 2001, p4) and it is a role that has in the past been the domain of the deputy head (Garret and MaGeachie, 1999, p74).

Part of this links to responsibility 7 which concerns the Quality of Teaching and indeed responsibility 2, that of Performance Management. The three are entwined because in a model advocated in Performance Management guidelines (DfEE, 1999) a teacher is observed in their teaching and then at the Performance Review meeting targets are set. The key for a school wishing to develop their teaching is to follow this up with support in the classroom. This partly comes under responsibility 7 (Quality of Teaching) but also through providing staff development through courses referred to in responsibility 4 but also through support from a senior manager such as an assistant head in their wider development. The cross-fertilisation of these roles needs to be well thought out and clear in a school and will be referred to again later.

6. Mentoring (39%)

The figure for mentoring was 39% suggesting that mentoring is considered an important role for assistant heads. However the figure may reflect that mentoring work is often part of the hidden job description. Could it be that assistant heads and other teachers mentor NQTs or students without it being part of their normal job description to do so? If an NQT is placed in a year group with a SMT member then they might act as mentor in addition to their normal duties without necessarily having an overall responsibility for all NQTs? Whether a mentor is in operation at a school may depend upon the college arrangements and a school may have more than one qualified mentor on the staff and therefore the responsibility may not be one person's alone. If the assistant head is also responsible for the Quality of Teaching in the school then it makes sense for mentoring to come under their umbrella of influence. Those assistant heads questioned about mentoring at the interview stage confirmed their responsibility for it with students although the extent of the work involved varied from administration of the placements to active involvement in the training of the students.

7. Quality of Teaching (58%)

As has been stated there is some clear overlap here with Performance Management, Staff Development and INSET. According to the questionnaire 58% of assistant heads are responsible for the Quality of Teaching. At 58% the quality of teaching responsibility is clearly an important one for many assistant heads. This suggests a significant amount of responsibility for these assistant heads and reflects the role being vital in a school and therefore at a high level. While it may be that in some cases the role does not extend across the whole school, instead perhaps in teams, it nevertheless is still significant because it is the key role for impacting upon pupil learning. In the questionnaire it was asked whether the assistant heads monitored the quality of teaching even if they were not directly responsible for it as a whole. This was in order to distinguish between the two. 87% of this sample of thirty-one assistant heads indicated they did monitor the quality of teaching, which again indicates a significant role for them in the school. This mirrors the key function of the case study example. It is interesting to see that none of the other job descriptions go as far as the one in the case study in terms of being responsible for the quality of teaching as a whole and in this sense suggests the case study is not representative of the normal work of an assistant head in this study. Some of the work being done under this heading is similar to the areas covered by ASTs. The fact that the work is being done at assistant head level gives it extra weight in the school and of course there is no need for the assistant head to do outreach work one day a week. This pseudo internal AST work might be preferable to the school.

8. Standards/Assessment (including SATs) (56%)

The increase of what has been termed Measurement Driven Instruction (MDI) (Gipps, 1995) means that all senior staff should have some input into standards, indeed all management could be said to be connected to attainment, however indirect the link may appear. It is therefore surprising to see that only 56% of assistant heads are directly involved in this area. Could it be that there is an Assessment Manager who is managing that area even though the work of the assistant head will impinge

upon it? Or perhaps the deputy keeps a tight handle on this area, particularly with regard to the PANDA and comparative work that would be needed for LEA School Self Evaluation which now proliferates (Watson, 2002).

Of course 56% does represent over half of the assistant head job descriptions and that can be said to be a significant percentage of the jobs advertised nationally over a seven-month period. The role of the Assessment Manager/Standards Manager certainly could fit the group of assistant heads that falls under the umbrella of having a single clear task or role to perform in the school. It could be seen, given the importance of results as outlined in section 3 regarding Core subject management, that the role of Assessment Manager is vital in effectiveness in any school and that this therefore warrants the level of assistant head in its own right.

9. Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) (18%)

Only 18% of the schools were employing the assistant head as a SENCO which is an example of the assistant head post being used to raise the profile of a key role within a particular school. The schools concerned are likely to have a high proportion of SEN pupils and it is a key issue for that particular school and therefore extra funds and profile are being given to that area to attract a senior manager of ability. This is taking advantage of the flexibility now afforded to schools through the introduction of the leadership scale which, as mentioned earlier, was one of the reasons for the introduction of assistant headship posts. The extra prestige of the title and the enhanced pay that comes with assistant headship allows a school to give extra weight to an area it considers of vital importance in its school. Further research into assistant headship as a vehicle for change with SEN children would also be interesting as would the role of assistant headship in Special Schools, only one of which appears in this research.

In looking more closely at the SENCO's in the questionnaire section it was interesting to note that of the four SENCO's covered three of them were on the first leadership point. This suggests the post of SENCO is a significant one in the school (probably because of the large numbers of SEN pupils in the school) and has warranted the raising of the status into a leadership position beyond the previous two management points level that may have existed. However it is a specific role in the school that is unlikely to impact upon many tasks and initiatives in the school unconnected with SEN and in this sense is a 'niche' role within the school, specific and vital to that individual school. While SEN is clearly a major issue in these schools it seems likely that these assistant heads, unlike others who have wider and more prominent responsibilities, will be less well prepared for the advancement in management terms. They are unlikely to be able to move straight to headship (as many here could) because of their lack of involvement in many aspects of school leadership. Nevertheless it is again interesting to see the post being used specifically to elevate the status and pay of an established role that in a certain situation warrants it.

10. Curriculum Overview (53%)

Another area again traditionally associated with deputy heads (Cooper, 1998, p11) is the overseeing of the curriculum. The fact that 40% of assistant heads are now involved in this again represents the management of the school being further divided

beyond the traditional head/deputy axis and adds to the picture of assistant heads affecting the management of the modern primary school.

The need for curriculum review gained momentum after the publication of Curriculum 2000 with its emphasis on more cross-curricular links and the call for integration of aspects such as thinking skills. Again this could be a single responsibility for the assistant head. It may also be that the role involves a working group, perhaps led by the assistant head involving other staff who are developing their area of the curriculum or cross curricular links in areas such as the Arts. It would need someone at the level of assistant head because it usually requires some measure of experience to be fully able to understand the whole curriculum. The idea of curriculum leadership also emerged in the questionnaires. One respondent thought it could be a key priority especially if there were two assistant heads:

one for curriculum leadership and quality of teaching (where they can concentrate fully on the classroom, free of responsibilities whilst the colleague deals with other issues.

Questionnaire Respondent 8

Although this assistant head is linking the curriculum overview role with the quality of teaching role it does point towards a view of assistant headship already discussed. That is, a role that goes right across the whole school but is specific and not related to the day-to-day running and administration of the school. Although the aspects might have been part of a deputy head job description in the past a deputy head would not have been able to ignore 'other issues'. This shows how an assistant head post can be distinct, in fact it could be termed another 'niche' role. Certainly the responsibility for the curriculum is a key role in the school and again reflects a high level of responsibility for an assistant head.

11. Parental Involvement (14%)

The figure of 14% that are involved in Parental Involvement could represent a specific post being created such as with the SENCO posts. Alternatively, it could just represent an issue that is important to that particular school and therefore appears on the job descriptions of all senior staff at the school. Given the low percentage it did not perhaps warrant inclusion in the categories. It was more prevalent in the first batch of job descriptions but as more data came in its importance declined. This raised the question that there could be other categories that could have been included at the outset and indeed the one category that did emerge as more data appeared was that of Key Stage manager, hence its inclusion in the list of responsibilities.

12. Key Stage Manager (60%)

In 60% of cases the assistant head is a key stage manager. This reflects the situation of the mid 1990's when school management often comprised of head, deputy and two key stage leaders on a +2 management allowance. The fact that over half of the respondents are carrying out this role reflects the elevation in status of the post and also the growing demands of the post. The post can now resemble actually managing your own school in microcosm. This view is reflected in the fact that ten of the

schools in this sample have two assistant heads and no deputy head (See Chapter 6). The significance of the assistant head as a key stage manager became clear in all aspects of the data gathered. One respondent in the questionnaires reflected on the assistant head post by saying that it was “useful in our case, with one head and two key stage managers”(Questionnaire Respondent 28). They did qualify the statement by saying a school does not necessarily need an assistant head and that “it very much depends on the individual school. A deputy head system is equally effective”. The assistant head as a pseudo-deputy will be discussed in more detail in another section but it is important here to distinguish that the normal deputy system would be different because the deputy in such a school would be in addition to the key stage co-ordinator. To all intents and purposes we see the assistant heads doing the role of the deputy for half of the school under the supervision of the head. In this sense the need for the deputy is not obvious unless again the name is changed and the two key stage co-ordinators are both called deputies.

The level at which some of these assistant heads are working should not be underestimated. The role of key stage co-ordinator was also referred to in other written answers to the questionnaire with one respondent noting that while “the role of the assistant head is still vague my main role is key stage 2 co-ordinator” (Questionnaire Respondent 11). This suggests that the key stage manager aspect is clear-cut. This pattern was repeated in many of the job descriptions and reflected an issue about the feelings of some assistant heads towards their work – that they were not always clear on and therefore how could they expect other staff to be clear. It was a recurring theme of this research that the post, being quite diverse, will take time to be fully established in the minds of all teachers.

Some of the Key Stage co-ordinator roles appear to be good preparation for headship because they are so comprehensive. The list of responsibilities mirrors that of deputy heads in many cases and as such must be considered similar to the preparation that many deputies have had. Hence it is conceivable that promotion to headship is possible without necessarily needing to go through the stage of deputy-headship. This is particularly true for the assistant heads who have no deputies in their school some of whom were key stage managers. This was the case with one Key Stage 2 co-ordinator who was responsible for eight of the twelve responsibilities listed and therefore had sufficient management experience to be able to take up a post as head in September 2002. It seems likely in the future that more assistant heads may make the move straight to headship if their post has been as widespread as being a Key Stage co-ordinator in a large school.

Teaching Responsibilities

In turning the attention to the teaching element of assistant headship the data shows that in 42% of cases the assistant head is teaching a class full time. It might seem surprising that the figure is this low because many deputy heads have to teach at least 0.8 (Cooper, 1998, p12). However, it does raise questions about the opportunity to carry out work at the level of assistant head if there is no or very little non-contact time. This is particularly true for the school that identified 12 of the areas of responsibility and only left out the SENCO and core management roles. How successful that assistant head would be given full teaching commitment must be open to question. When is there time to manage all of the other twelve things, given that

they will all occur outside class time? At a time when workload is increasingly a key issue in the profession (TES, Jan 2003) it would seem impossible for a manager to perform to the required level while having a full teaching commitment. In addition to the full teaching commitment figure the survey also showed that 82% of these assistant heads are teaching for at least 0.6 of the week. This means therefore that only 18% of these assistant heads have more than two days for their management tasks. It would be interesting to compare this figure with the time that deputies have for their management tasks. As the role of assistant head evolves and perhaps stabilises in the future it will be fascinating to see what balance occurs between deputy head management time and assistant head management time.

Total Number of Roles and Responsibilities

Having looked at each responsibility separately, it is important to look at them as a whole. There are fourteen roles listed although the teaching ones overlap. Most of the assistant heads have six to nine responsibilities with a few having less and some more. The average is eight responsibilities but there is clearly a large difference between having four and twelve responsibilities, which is the range. The school that only has four responsibilities has clearly made the post for a SENCO because that is the need for the school and again reflects the post being created for a specific reason within the school rather than a wider and more general management post. The post that has twelve responsibilities is clearly demanding and it does raise the question of what the deputy is doing in that school. Indeed this is a question for all of these posts and warrants further research. How is the role of the deputy and assistant head balanced in different schools?

What can be said about the work carried out by assistant heads in this survey is that a full range of management responsibilities are present. This includes key aspects such as curriculum leadership, responsibility for standards and ensuring the quality of teaching is of a high standard. This suggests that assistant heads are playing a key role in the management of these schools. It also reveals that the range of responsibilities varies for different posts and that many of the assistant heads have little non-contact time to carry out their management tasks.

Chapter 6 – Data Analysis - Questionnaire Responses

General

The analysis of the job descriptions revealed that assistant heads were playing a major role in the management of some primary schools. Although the sample was small in terms of primary schools across the country it nevertheless did show that in these schools assistant heads were undertaking a wide range of management responsibilities. The use of a questionnaire sought to build upon this data (See Appendices 4 – 6 for detailed figures). The data in this section comes from the thirty-one questionnaire responses from the fifty seven schools covered in the job description survey which represents a 53% response rate (See Appendix 3 for an example and Appendix 4 for details of the responses). Three of the schools had two respondents each which means the survey was actually dealing with twenty-eight schools albeit with thirty-one assistant heads. This must be considered high given that a response rate of 40% is considered to be average. (Cohen and Manion, 1994, p99). It could be that this high response rate was due to the fact that the respondents were themselves the centre of the research. Indeed, many asked for a copy of the findings from the research. It is also somewhat flattering to have a letter addressed to the assistant head for research purposes.

The first part of the questionnaire was intended to triangulate the findings of the job descriptions. Figure 7 shows that the figures on the questionnaire although similar in

| Management Responsibility | Percentage of Job Descriptions | Percentage from Questionnaire respondents |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Membership of SMT | 100% | 100% |
| Managing a Core Subject | 32% | 60% |
| Managing INSET | 44% | 53% |
| Staff Development | 44% | 53% |
| Mentoring | 39% | 73% |
| Performance Management | 74% | 100% |
| Standards | 56% | 73% |
| SENCO | 18% | 13% |
| Quality of Teaching | 58% | 87% |
| Overview of Curriculum | 53% | 53% |
| Parental links | 14% | - |
| Managing a Key Stage | 60% | 60% |
| Teaching full time | 42% | 25% |
| Teaching 0.6+ | 82% | 80% |
| Deputising | 46% | 80% |

Figure 7 – Comparison of Job description and Questionnaire respondents regarding different aspects of Management

many areas are quite different in some others. These include managing core study, mentoring, Performance Management, quality of teaching and deputising. Inevitably this does suggest that the thoughts and opinions of the respondents will be more

prominent in these areas because a higher proportion of them are directly involved in these aspects. This may be especially true with regards to deputising and the nature of deputy headship generally. Again it is emphasised that generalising beyond the schools in any one section of the research is always difficult but this concern does not negate the thoughts and opinions of these assistant heads – it is just a reminder that they are merely a partial representation of the whole picture.

Many of the other responses generally do triangulate the findings of the job description survey. What emerges is a diversity of experience the key elements of which were:

- 7-11 schools are by far the largest creator of Assistant Head posts in the primary sector as a whole
- The average leadership point is between 4 and 5
- The assistant heads have an average of 8 areas of management responsibility
- Over half of the Assistant Heads are in their thirties with the average age being 37
- The average teaching commitment is 0.75 days a week
- Over a third of the schools have no deputy, with the role replaced with two or three assistant heads
- The responsibilities generally mirror the findings from the Job Description survey except for the growing prominence of Performance Management, managing a core subject , mentoring and quality of teaching

Each of these issues will now be examined in more detail.

School Type

For the thirty-one schools that responded to the questionnaire the breakdown in terms of school type was as follows:

| Type of School | Number of schools | Percentage |
|----------------|-------------------|------------|
| Infant 5-7 | 1 | 3.2% |
| Junior 7-11 | 6 | 19.4% |
| Primary 5-11 | 21 | 67.7% |
| Middle 9-13 | 2 | 6.5% |
| Special School | 1 | 3.2% |

Figure 8 – The Different Types of Schools in the Questionnaire Survey

The Primary school is clearly significantly represented in these results. In the original list of 57 posts there were 52 schools because some schools had more than one post. The schools comprised 5 Infant schools, 15 Junior schools, 28 Primary schools, 3 Middle schools and 1 special school. In this study is mainly Primary schools (aged 5-11) that are employing assistant heads. Could the reason for this be that a Primary is generally larger and therefore has both the finance and the flexibility to widen the management structure? However, there are more primary schools across the country and therefore one might expect there to be more represented in this study. More research into this aspect is needed.

Leadership Points

Not all of the respondents included their leadership point on the questionnaire (five were missing) but for the twenty-six that did the average point was 4.48 with a range of 1 to 13. It is important at this point to clarify the relevance of the pay attached to leadership points. Appendix 7 shows the Leadership Scale and reveals that, for instance, the first point on the scale was £31, 416. Given that the average point in the survey was between 4 and 5 it is interesting to see that Leadership point 4 pays £33, 834 a year (at September 2003), which is £5,000 above the top of the general pay scale for a teacher who has also passed through the threshold. It is also £1,800 above a teacher on top of the pay scale who has passed through threshold and has two management points. This shows the extra financial award for the assistant heads as opposed to being a +2 manager.

At the other extreme the highest point of the scale in this survey was Point 13 which pays £42, 240 per annum which is considerably more than some heads. However, this was at the special school and therefore might be considered unrepresentative because the next highest point was Point 9, which pays £38, 277 per annum. Interestingly this was at one of the middle schools. The highest level for an Infant/Junior or Primary assistant head is Point 8, which pays £37, 344 per annum. Again this suggests that assistant headship is more likely to occur in larger schools, although a larger sample would be needed to confirm this idea.

Further to this idea is the fact that the one infant respondent is only on Point 1 of the leadership scale. The difficulty for the small school of course is that they still have as much work to do as other schools because budgets still need to be set and paper work completed. There is less work in terms of Performance Management and monitoring the quality of teaching because of fewer staff but nevertheless the work demands are great and might make an assistant head role attractive. In this instance it could be that the assistant head role might be attractive to governors of small schools as an alternative to deputy headship because it is cheaper.

It is also interesting to look at the number of responsibilities. While not all of the responsibilities listed require the same amount of time or level of management skill (See below) nevertheless it is interesting to see the wide variance in the number of responsibilities for assistant heads on the same leadership point. For instance schools 3 and 4 are both on Point 3 but one has ten management responsibilities and one has only three. It is noticeable that the Infant assistant head has eight management responsibilities but is only on Point 1. The average number of responsibilities is 7.58. However, when the respondents on points 1 to 4 (below the average point level of 4.48) are examined their average number of responsibilities is 7.67, which is actually higher than the group average. This suggests the leadership points of these assistant heads have little to do with the number of responsibilities they actually hold.

These responsibilities have not been weighted and it does not automatically follow that an assistant head with more responsibility areas will always do more work, or higher level work than an assistant head with less on their list. However, an assistant head on leadership point one with eight responsibilities does seem excessive when compared to other teachers on leadership point four who according to this survey have the same responsibilities. Is it a case of this is all the school can afford? Is it because

the post is so new that accepted or reasonable responsibilities have not been established as to what is expected of an assistant head? Throughout this research that does seem to be the message coming through. Schools are still trying to work out what exactly assistant heads can do and how they should be rewarded accordingly.

Figure 9 – The range and average leadership points for the assistant headship posts

| Type of school | Range of leadership points | Average leadership point |
|----------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Infant | 1 | 1 |
| Junior | 4-8 | 6 |
| Primary | 1-7 | 3.67 |
| Middle | 2-9 | 5.5 |
| All | 1-13 | 4.48 |

The figure for Primary is revealing (Figure 9) because the average leadership point here is 3.67, which is lower than the whole group average but the average responsibilities for the Primary group is 8.0 which is above the group average for responsibilities. This again suggests that having more areas of responsibility does not necessarily mean the assistant head would be on a higher leadership point. It is still early days with a new system but this data does show that there are marked differences in terms of what is expected of an assistant head on the same leadership point. It also shows that more leadership points do not necessarily mean the assistant head will have to manage more things.

Age

The average age of the assistant heads in this survey was 37 with the range being between 28 and 55. This therefore represents nearly all teachers except those in their first or last five years of their career. A fuller breakdown is as follows:

| Age | Number | Percentage |
|-------|--------|------------|
| 20-29 | 5 | 23.8% |
| 30-39 | 11 | 52.4% |
| 40-49 | 1 | 4.8% |
| 50-59 | 4 | 19.0% |

Figure 10 - Ages of Questionnaire Respondents

Only 21 of the 31 actually gave their age and so this raises issues about the reliability of the results for this group. Reasons for no-response can only be guessed at but include a reluctance to divulge age, filling in the form hastily and missing the question and thinking it not to be relevant or important.

Over half of the assistant heads in this study are in their 30's and this is perhaps to be expected given the change at this stage of a career into more senior management positions. The new role could be particularly appealing to those aspiring to deputy headship who are not yet ready for it but who can get a taste for whole school management in selected areas. It also seems possible that there are many leaders who held two management points for many years who carried out significant management tasks in the school who were candidates for assistant headship. Two ideas occur here,

the first is that this survey looks at jobs that were advertised nationally and therefore had the potential to attract wide fields. This would make the task of any internal candidate more difficult because of the greater competition. It also leads to the second point which is that if a head merely wants to promote a manager from two management points to assistant headship they can do so internally. If they are advertising nationally it suggests they do not feel secure in their internal candidates. Teachers well established in their schools on two management points are perhaps less likely to apply for a new post because of the change it will bring. It might also be that having been in one school for so long will have counted against them securing a deputy head post. However there is also the issue that some assistant heads might actually be appointed internally because it is a way that is used to reward and retain good staff. In the past a good senior manager would be 'stuck' on two management points and would therefore apply for a deputy head post at another school. Now there is the flexibility to reward and retain this manager with more responsibility and status as well as more money. This idea of rewarding what was already being done was identified by one respondent who said they felt they had been given the post because they felt that "were doing the work anyway" (Questionnaire Respondent 17).

This research is amongst the first to create a picture of what assistant heads are doing in primary schools today and hopefully even larger scale projects will follow that will develop these findings even further. One aspect that may emerge is the extent to which schools are making internal appointments to the level of assistant head.

Previous Position

The assistant heads in this survey come from a diverse range of previous positions. 47% said they were a relatively senior manager previously (here I have used the notion of two management points or above as a senior manager) with exactly the same number coming from below this level. 6% are from Advisory/Inspectorial work. One of the attractions in moving positions may well have been financial because a manager moving from two management points to assistant headship at Level 4 would receive a pay increase of £4,100. From one management point the increase would be £5,700. For some of these assistant heads that is quite an improvement in pay.

The average leadership point for those who previously held management positions is 4.3 and for those who did not hold management points it is 4.0, which is only marginally different. This again reflects the different roles to which they are being appointed even though they are under the same umbrella – that of assistant head. Allied to the anomalies over the number of responsibilities not necessarily meaning higher leadership points it does suggest the area is muddled. One would have assumed that senior managers moving onto the leadership scale would have moved much higher than those new to whole school management. This suggests the scale is acting as a form of 'fast-tracking' for those promoted from the lower positions and does again show the flexibility of the leadership scale. It also makes one question the need for the management point system. Could those on one management point not simply be moved to the highest point on the management scale? The factor stopping this is probably cost. A teacher on M4 with a management point would earn £7,644 less than an assistant head on Level 1 of the Leadership scale. Perhaps the reason it is not is that the leadership scale comes with many more issues attached such as targets, pay review, etc. At the moment, for those on top of main scale, through the threshold and

with at least two management points the leadership scale surely seems the better option. It remains to be seen how many schools take this option over the next few years.

Of course school budgets need to be considered here. The exact leadership point may be decided merely because of the size of the school and what can be afforded. Larger schools with higher budgets are better placed to employ assistant heads further up the leadership scale. Again this warrants further investigation in the future.

In terms of previous positions perhaps the most interesting cases here are those of a Numeracy consultant and advisory teacher who have both come back into schools via the assistant head post. Each case is of course individual and there are only two cases here but it is interesting to see that the assistant head post is seen as appropriate for someone returning to schools from LEA work. The cases are clearly different in that the Numeracy consultant only went back to a school on point two whereas the advisor (subject or area not disclosed) went in on point 6. Again this suggests that the determining key factor for a leadership point is what the school itself considers appropriate rather than a general expectation of the level and responsibilities of an assistant head.

Teaching Commitment

The average teaching commitment for assistant heads in this survey was 0.75 of a week, which equates to over a day of non-contact time. The range is from full class teaching time (eight respondents) to no class teaching time (three respondents). It would be interesting to compare this with deputy heads. A constant complaint of deputy heads (Muijs and Harris, 2003, p6) has been the amount of teaching time they have in addition to all of their management work. The problem for both assistant heads and deputies is that not only does the time spent on teaching stop them from performing their management functions but it also takes a great amount of time to prepare the lessons they are teaching. This is particularly true if, as in twenty three of the thirty one cases here, the non-contact time is a day or less because the lessons they are not teaching probably still have to be prepared by themselves for someone else to teach. Being a class teacher is not just about being in the classroom on the day but involves all aspects of the management of the class including creating displays, liaising with the other teachers that teach the class and preparing on-going things such as assemblies. In addition there is all of the reporting, parents evenings and other contact with parents that is part of the daily life of a class teacher. While in some ways this class contact can be seen as strength because it keeps the assistant heads in close contact with the day-to-day experience of being a class teacher it is nevertheless demanding. It takes time and focus away from managing the school and therefore makes the role less effective. Clearly some of the posts here are not so wide ranging to the extent that the assistant head is playing a key role in running the school and therefore their teaching is less likely to be affected. However, where the assistant head has substantial responsibilities that require significant time commitment then their teaching of a class may suffer.

This is perhaps why the assistant heads that have no class responsibilities are on point 6 or 7 of the leadership scale, which is above the 4.48 average mentioned previously. This leads to the suggestion that a high leadership point implies less teaching because

of a lot of responsibilities. Indeed closer examination reveals that the average leadership point for assistant heads who teach full time is 2.83 which is below the average of 4.48. This theme will be further developed when looking at answers on the Lickert scale questions concerning the importance of teaching for assistant heads.

This subject of teaching commitment also links to workload. Indeed what may lead to a further growth of assistant headship is the debate over workloads (TES, Feb. 2003) and the perceived failure of management points. Following the workload agreement (DFES, 2003) the whole role of management points has been called into question and their possible removal has been advocated. The fact that 37% of primary teachers have a management point (TES, March 2003) has led the DfES to conclude that these points are in many cases really retention points disguised as management points. The proposal is that if extra administrative staff will in the future do many of the management tasks then most, if not all, of the management points will not be needed. Therefore anyone with a 'real' management responsibility should move onto the Leadership scale. If they do then it is likely that many of these will become assistant heads and the role will therefore be expanded enormously.

Leadership Structure

In considering the role of assistant heads in Primary School Management it is important to set their roles in the context of the leadership structure in which they work. Knowing what the leadership structure is indicates the relevant importance of their position. This was particularly the case where no deputy head post existed in a school.

Perhaps the most surprising revelation in this survey was that of the 28 schools under consideration, nine did not have a deputy head. This equates to 68% of the schools having a deputy but significantly 32% not having one. This is an amazing revelation. If a key intention of assistant headship was to widen the management structure in a school to better support the head and deputy why, in almost a third of cases, has the deputy role been considered not to be needed?

Closer examination suggests the answer is that all of the schools that do not have a deputy have at least two if not three assistant heads. This shows the leadership structure being widened but also being made flatter at a senior level. This is being achieved by splitting the roles and responsibilities of the traditional deputy between two or three assistant heads. This again suggests that size and hence finance is vital in having the flexibility to use the assistant head post creatively.

The implications of all of this are that primary schools do not necessarily need deputies. This has been the case in the past with small schools but the creation of the assistant head post allows it to happen in schools of any size. If, in some cases, assistant heads are replacing deputies then clearly they can be said to be affecting primary school management. What is seen in some of the cases is two key stage coordinators virtually running their own school (Infant or Junior) within the primary, overseen by the head. In some cases this occurs with a deputy present but not in all cases. The work is therefore similar to what has occurred in the past but the structure has clearly changed.

Another point to note is that where there is a deputy in a primary school in the past there may well have been two key stage leaders on management points whereas now they may well be assistant heads. This again reflects the increasing importance of the key stage leader post and the increasing workload. This trend may well continue in the future which again impacts upon leadership structures.

Another question that this raises is will there be a future for the role of the deputy? If 32% of these schools have already decided a deputy is not needed will this trend develop even further? Of course this is an extremely small sample but it does raise interesting questions for the structure of management in the primary school of the future. The thought seems to be not that schools need someone to deputise for the head and hence need a deputy but instead that the management of a school is a complex business that demands much of the management and therefore would benefit from a wider senior management team to carry out the diverse roles at the appropriate level. The question is not how can the traditional structure of the head and deputy head manage the school but given all that needs managing what is the most effective way of doing it? Heads, deputy and assistant head or perhaps head and two assistant heads?

It is interesting to consider why two assistant heads are better than one deputy. The thought that they are cheaper is not logical because there are two of them on the leadership scale and this is likely to be more expensive than a deputy and a senior manager on two management points. Besides, the assistant heads will progress up the scale each year and therefore the pay will increase further. However, they would be cheaper than a deputy and an assistant head. It might also suit the school to have management tasks divided evenly between two higher level managers. This sharing of the workload would be the decisive factor and the need to deputise merely a minor issue. So why not two deputies instead? Possibly because deputies would expect a higher pay level. The pay for deputies in schools is fairly standard because it is usually related to the size of the school. As this thesis is showing the levels at which an assistant head is to be paid are still not clear, it is an evolving situation.

Returning to the issue of the leadership structure, if the Leadership Group is taken to be head, deputy, assistant head and any manager on three management points then the schools in this research can nearly all be said to have a management team of three or four members (two had five members). Within this there is wide variance between having a deputy or not (68% do as mentioned previously) and 29% of the schools do have a manager on three management points. It would be interesting to see what roles the managers on three management points did in comparison with the assistant heads. It seems likely that just as there is a blur between much of what deputies and assistant heads do so might there be a blur between what assistant heads and managers on three management points do. The key distinction should be that assistant headship encompasses management that goes across the whole school whereas management at plus three merely takes an aspect of management. Further research would be interesting to see if this is indeed the case.

This section has looked at the background to both the schools that these assistant heads are working in and at the assistant heads themselves in terms of age and experience. The attention now turns to what the opinions, attitudes and beliefs of these assistant heads are with reference to their responses to the Lickert scale statements from the questionnaire.

Chapter 7 - Lickert Scale Responses

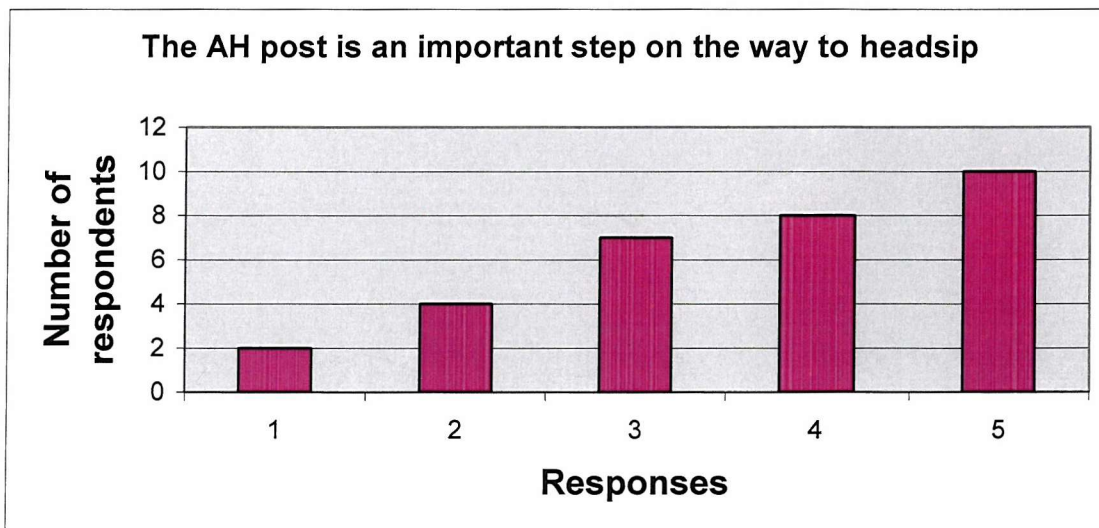
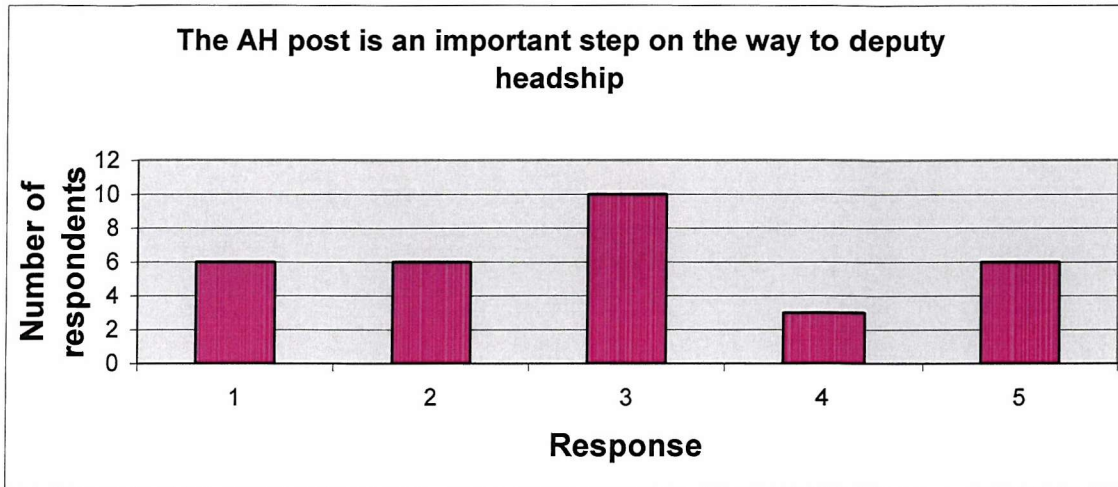
Having examined the data regarding what functions assistant heads are performing attention now turns to examining the views of assistant heads with regard to issues surrounding their posts. In this way the research is not merely looking at the effects of assistant headship but also provides an insight into the minds of the assistant heads and how they perceive their role and the work they do. Respondents were asked to score a range of statements relating to assistant headship from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Figure 11 shows the statements themselves, the mean score and the range of answers for each statement. A more detailed breakdown can be seen in Appendix 4. In addition the modal responses have also been presented in graphical form to indicate how many respondents gave each response (Figure 12).

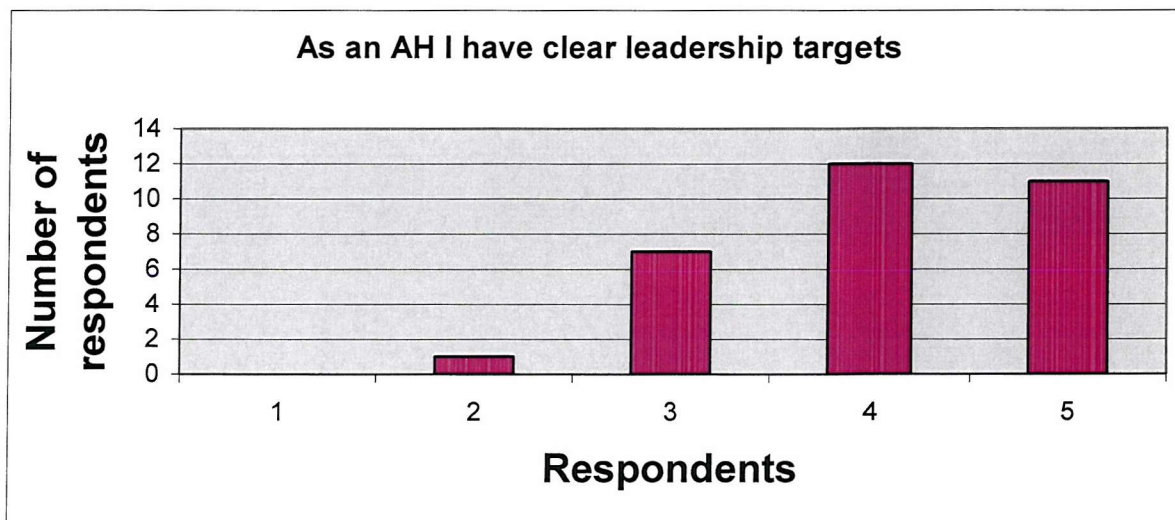
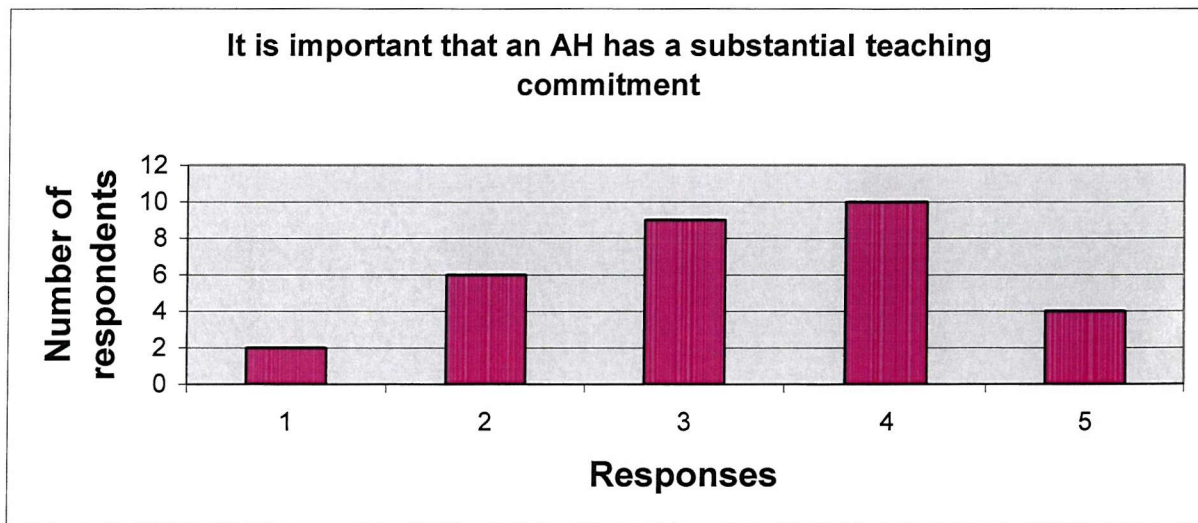
Figure 11 – Lickert Scale Statements relating to opinions about assistant headship

| Statement | Mean | Range |
|--|------|-------|
| The AH post is an important step on the way to Deputy Headship | 2.90 | 1 – 5 |
| The AH post is an important step on the way to Headship | 3.65 | 1 – 5 |
| I have significantly more responsibility as an AH than a +2 | 4.16 | 1 – 5 |
| It is important that an AH has a substantial teaching commitment | 3.26 | 1 – 5 |
| As an AH I have clear leadership targets | 4.06 | 2 – 5 |
| I have received specific induction as an assistant head | 2.06 | 1 – 5 |
| The AH is very similar to the Deputy Head post | 4.06 | 2 – 5 |
| Being AH provides a good alternative for those not aspiring to Headship | 3.19 | 1 – 5 |
| AH is good preparation for Advisory/Inspection work | 2.94 | 1 – 5 |
| The AH post has been created because of the demanding nature of school management | 4.06 | 1 – 5 |
| The AH post has been created because of the need to reward senior managers with higher pay | 3.03 | 1 – 5 |
| The AH post has been created because of the reluctance of teachers to become Heads or Deputies | 2.48 | 1 - 5 |
| The AH has been created because of the Government desire to change the nature of school management | 3.26 | 1 – 5 |

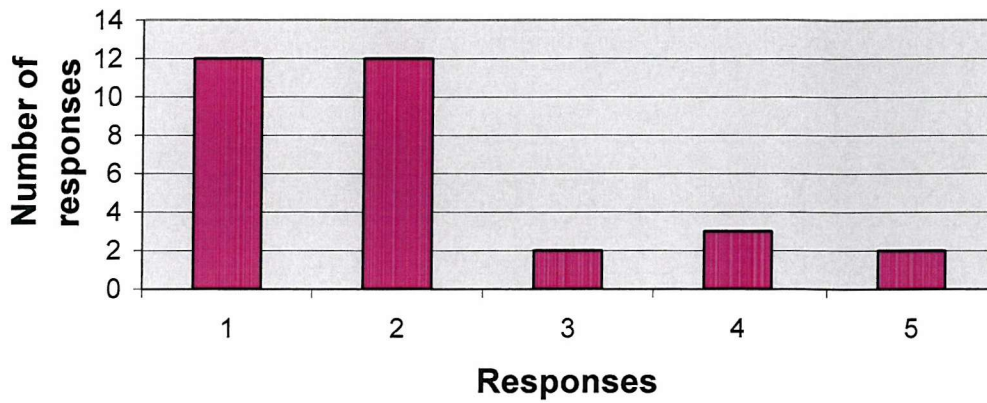
Figure 12

Modal Lickert scale statement responses

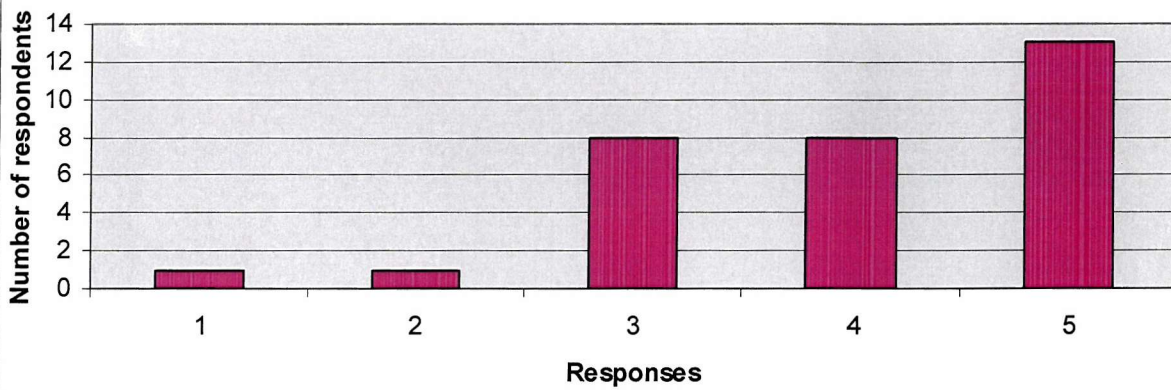




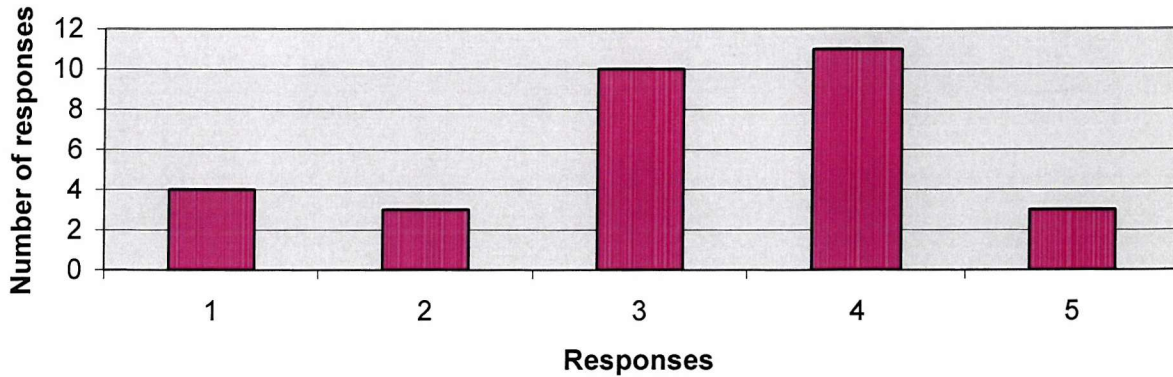
I have received specific induction as an AH

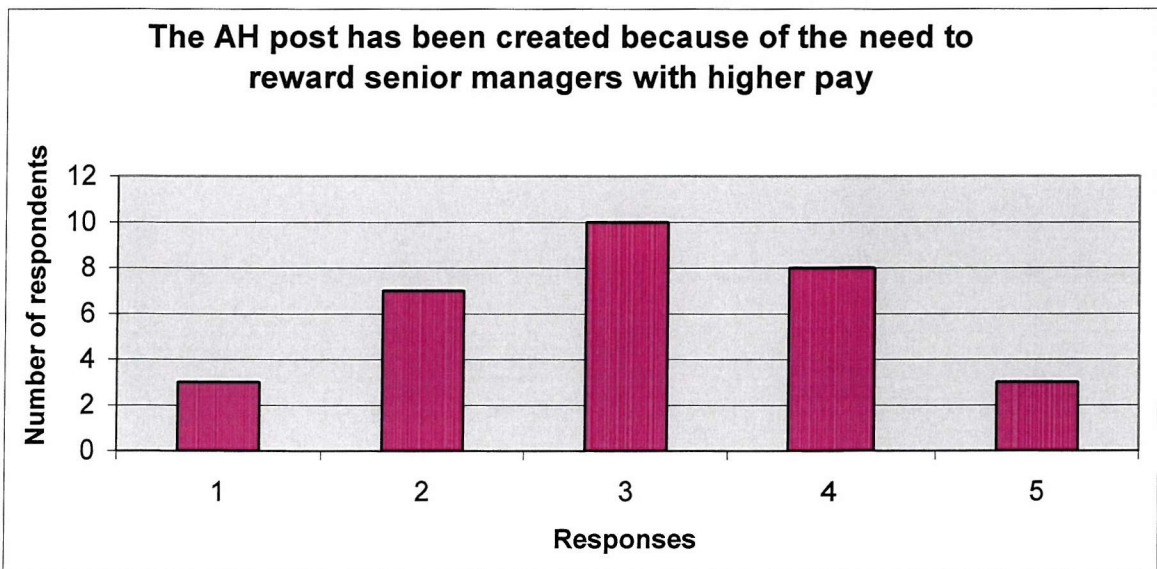
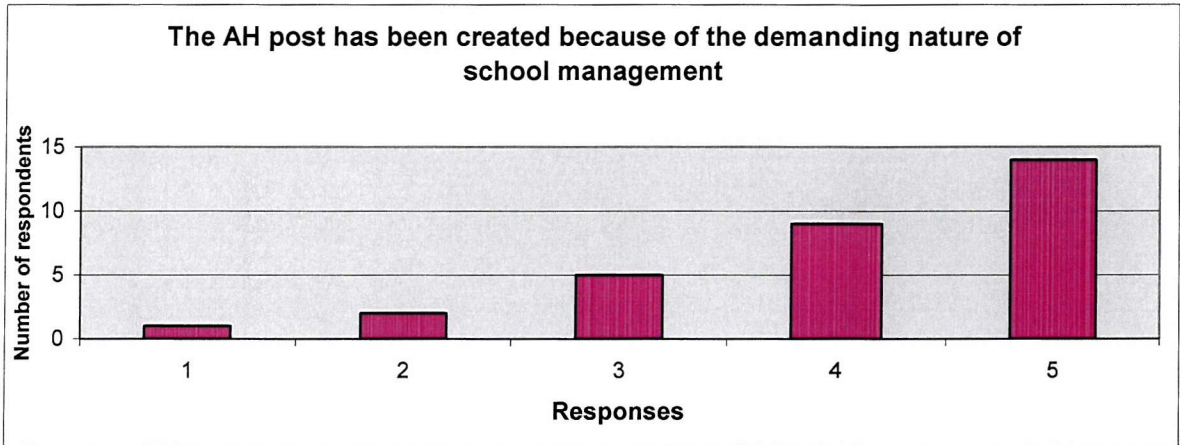
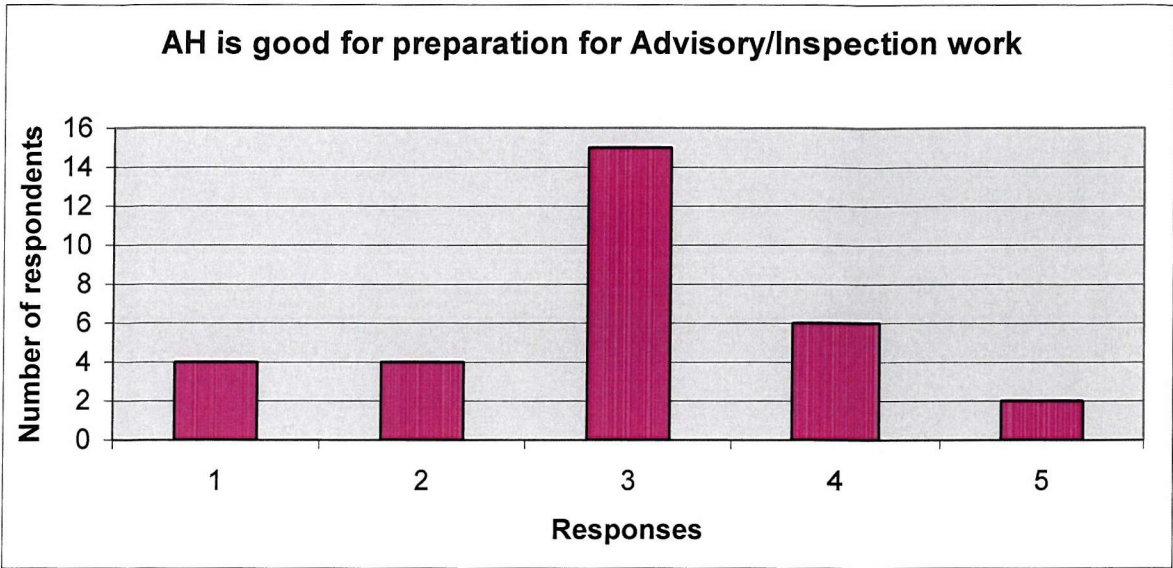


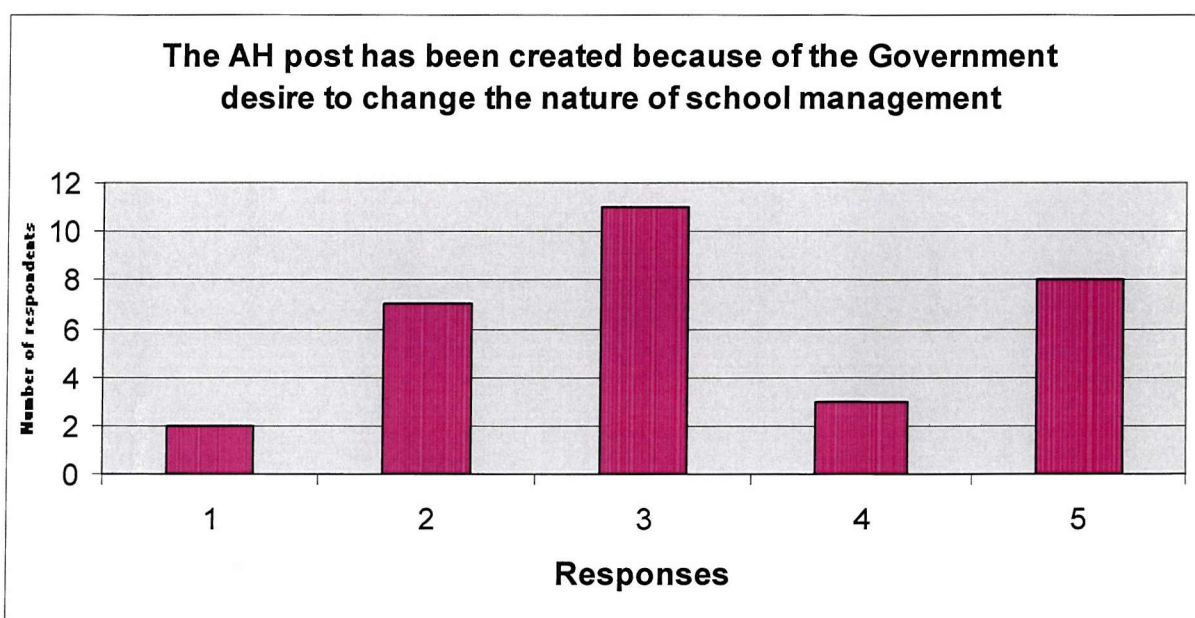
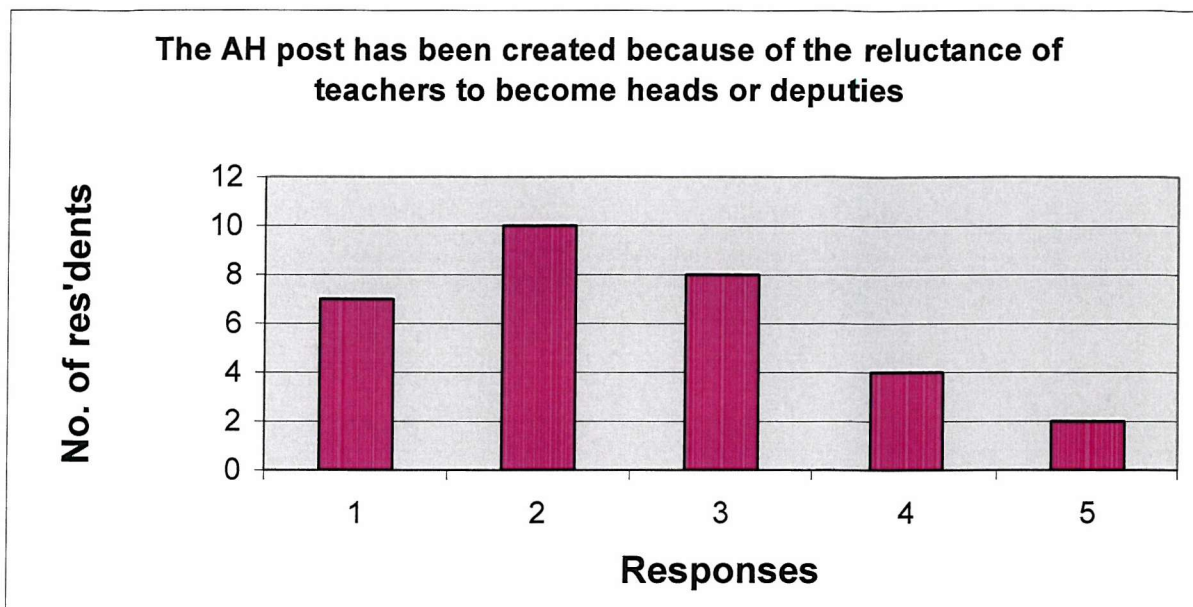
The AH post is very similar to the deputy head post



Being an AH provides a good alternative for those not aspiring to headship







There is great diversity in the opinions expressed on these Lickert scale responses with most of the statements eliciting the full range of scores. This suggests that the role is very different for different people and that the experiences of the new postholders are wide and varied. The averages range from 2.06 to 4.16, which corresponds roughly to disagree and agree, but there are no statements that are viewed stronger than this. The key findings from this section were:

- The assistant heads believe the major reason for creating the post was because of the demanding nature of primary school management
- The assistant heads see their posts as very similar to that of deputy heads

- The assistant heads generally believe that they have significantly more responsibility when compared to +2 managers
- The assistant heads generally have clear leadership targets
- Assistant heads are not receiving specific induction to their posts

What is apparent from reading the responses was the range of reflection evident in them. While some were only just beginning to learn the nature of assistant headship others were very clear in their views about what their role meant, the tasks they had to perform and the impact they were having on the school. Some were able to summarise the role succinctly and accurately such as the assistant head who wrote the reason for assistant headship is:

The increased demand for quality within schools – an assistant head is a high level practitioner that bolsters the senior management team and the leadership of the school

Questionnaire Respondent 16

This quote covers so much that is experienced by many of the respondents in this research. It refers to sharing the pressures of school managers across more leaders in a school but makes it clear that the role is not merely of a manager but of a ‘high level practitioner’. The assistant head needs to be the teacher who is judged as at least ‘Good’ in OFSTED lesson grade terms because if they are not they will hold little credibility with the staff. This quote was an accurate summary of many of the findings in this section.

Each of these statements that appear in Figure 11 will now be examined in more detail. In referring to these statements the data gathered from the written comments on the questionnaire and from the interviews will also be used because they often covered similar ground (See Appendix 6). Although using evidence from different methods (Lickert scale, written responses, interview) it seems the best way to organise it is under the statements because these statements get to the heart of the post as it is and what the main issues concerning assistant heads are.

The AH post is a step on the way to Deputy Headship

The views on whether assistant headship was good preparation for deputy headship were fairly equally divided with an average of 2.90. The range went from 1 to 5 and included six people who strongly disagreed with the notion which evenly matched the six who thought it was an important step along the way. This must surely reflect the differing experience of these respondents. It seems likely that for those respondents who strongly agree that the post is a step on the way to deputy headship do so because the move for them was a conscious step in the progress of their careers. Conversely for others the post may be a step on the way to something else or even that the respondents see themselves as already at the level of a deputy head.

The experience of having been an assistant head should be useful to any teacher if they were then seeking to be a deputy head because having been an assistant head they would have had senior management experience at a significant level across a school. It is difficult to speculate what response may have come had the question

been worded differently, perhaps if the question had read ‘*The assistant head post is a useful step on the way to deputy headship*’ then the mean may have been far higher and the agreement stronger. However, I wanted to see if the respondents *did* see the post as being a step on some kind of career ladder that, although not always followed, is nevertheless the normal progression of a school manager - that of senior manager on two/three management points to deputy and then head. One aim of this research was to see whether there needs to be a step on the career ladder from assistant headship to deputy headship or could they indeed be on the same level? The fact that the score came out fairly neutral suggests that the views on this are mixed and that some do see it as a step towards deputy headship. Others clearly disagree because they think it is unnecessary or indeed because they see the post as already equivalent with being a deputy. It will be interesting to see if this view is altered or remains the same over time. Certainly for some respondents the view is that being a deputy before being a head is no longer a requirement.

For some of the respondents in this survey a key issue did appear to be that the post is seen as a ‘step up’. One respondent commented that they felt attracted to the post because of the “challenge” and because it would “give an overview of the whole school” (Questionnaire Respondent 14) which is important in management development. Others were more direct and commented that “Personally I see it as valuable experience on course to deputy headship and headship” (Questionnaire Respondent 9). The word ‘course’ appeared a few times and again suggested a pre-determined direction with assistant headship neatly bridging the gap between management points and deputy headship.

Another possibility that emerged was that a school might actually see assistant headship as internal preparation for their own deputy headship. A school could train its own future deputy head by appointing an assistant head who could learn the deputy role. Fullan (2003, p19) has written that “nothing fails like succession” and certainly it can take time for a new deputy to settle in and learn the culture of the new school. Might an assistant head be better placed to accede to their role? One respondent reflected this by writing, “My school needed someone to step into the deputy’s shoes if she left” (Questionnaire Respondent 25). Perhaps this was wishful thinking on her part but nevertheless the idea of the assistant head post being used as a training one for internal deputy headship is definitely possible. This is forward planning indeed!

The views of the respondents to assistant headship as preparation for deputy headship will of course reflect the way in which they work in the school. There may be a clear distinction between the level of work of the deputy compared to the assistant head whereas in some other schools the work may be either similar or at least equally important. One respondent had this experience because they wrote, “I am accepted as a deputy, no distinction is made” (Questionnaire Respondent 22). An outsider in this school would merely assume they are watching a deputy at work.

The fact the full range of responses was given to this statement and the fact that the average is almost neutral suggests that different interpretations and expectations of the role exist across the country. The post appears to be flexible enough to be either a lesser form of deputy headship in some schools or as the same as a deputy headship in others. Hence the respondents from the schools where there is no deputy all score this question as either one or two reflecting their experience of effectively working as a

deputy head without seeing the role as a stepping-stone. Indeed they can be said to have stepped.

It will be fascinating to see how attitudes to this change over time. It is still early days for assistant headship and the way the post can most effectively be used is still to be established and indeed experimented with. This is seen in the schools that have no deputy but instead have two or three assistant heads. Whether this will be as successful (or even more successful) as the traditional model of head and deputy remains to be seen and should be the subject of further research over the next few years. There appears no reason why the post should not prove equally effective but it could also be used in other ways to support school management.

Attitudes in the future will of course be affected by the changes we are now witnessing. Many of the assistant heads in this study may in the future be heads and might be more accommodating to the notion of assistant headship in their own schools, perhaps in place of deputies or perhaps to support deputies. The whole notion of assistant headship as integral to school management should slowly develop and enter the culture of primary schooling. Its exact level and place at the moment remains varied.

The AH post is an important step on the way to Headship

What is noticeable here is the difference between the score for preparing for deputy headship, which was 2.90, and that of preparing for headship, which was 3.65. The modal response was also the highest mark reflecting some strong identification for this statement. One could argue that because assistant heads are being asked the question they are likely to say that the post is vital in preparation for headship because this immediately elevates the status of their own job. A case of 'well they would, wouldn't they'.

Becoming an assistant head should be an extremely useful experience for those intending to become heads in the future and it is difficult to see how this can be argued against because any post that elevates the status and responsibility of a manager will give them a better understanding of how to manage a school. Of course there may have been respondents who do not see headship as a goal and therefore do not think of it as a natural step. There is also the point that while an assistant headship may be very useful on the road to headship for the reasons listed above it does not have to be a step that is taken and in this sense therefore does not seem to be important because there is a more established route to headship which is through two management points followed by deputy headship. It will be intriguing to see if in the future the assistant head post expands further to cover many of the old two/three management point posts (as mentioned previously regarding key stage leaders) and almost becomes expected before becoming a deputy and hence head. In the previous section reference was made to assistant headship as being a bridge between management points and deputy headship for some respondents. Perhaps in the future a more rapid movement onto the leadership scale may occur in place of some management points and hence the progression towards headship will be clearer for those who aspire to it.

This issue is very much the crux of these research findings. At the moment the pattern seems to be that the assistant head post is being interpreted extremely widely with some assistant heads being exactly the same as a deputy while at the other end of the spectrum some assistant heads are merely the same as old style senior managers who were on two management points. The question over the next few years is will this remain so or will the status of the assistant head rise to be similar to that of the deputy or will it settle clearly below the deputy and be similar to the old style management points? If it does will these old style management points become obsolete? Or perhaps the pattern will remain the same and there will continue to be wide diversity in the role dependant upon the way that school is run. Given that the leadership scale is so wide this may well be the case. The picture is diverse and may always be so because the leadership scale allows for greater flexibility. It will obviously take time before the answer to these questions becomes clear but this research should hopefully help make the picture that is emerging that much clearer.

The comments on preparation for headship are revealing. One respondent was quite sure about the significance of taking on the role and stated that assistant headship

Is not a role you can take on if you are not wishing to become a deputy head or head – too much is involved. A term as an Assistant Head prepared me to be acting deputy next term

Questionnaire Respondent 25

This was not the situation described in the case study where the assistant head had no intention of being either a head or a deputy! Clearly the respondent does not see the other possibilities but merely the post as part of a linear career progression and as a useful training opportunity towards deputy headship and then headship.

Others referred to it more indirectly with reference to National Professional Qualification for Headship training which indicates their interest and indeed probable intention to become heads in the future. One said the attraction of the assistant heads post was:

Responsibility and the involvement with strategic whole school issues – also the option to go for NPQH training for headship in the same post.

Questionnaire Respondent 1

The notion here of whole school issues is important because, as already discussed, managers on two allowance points can have many responsibilities but this does not always mean they impact upon the whole school. Being on the leadership scale as an assistant head should mean this and the post should provide such a whole school opportunity for management. Another respondent referred to the post of assistant head as being “ Good experience for preparation for headship” particularly because it was “school based work” (Questionnaire Respondent 10). Others who had already passed the NPQH saw assistant headship as a “challenge” and a chance of “putting into practise some of the skills learned through the NPQH” (Questionnaire Respondent 24).

As if to summarise the views of this group of assistant heads one simply said “ I want to become a head one day and assistant headship provides an important stepping stone” (Questionnaire Respondent 23). Again the notion of stepping stone in the sense that the assistant head post is, or can be, a valuable part of the journey to headship. Therefore for many assistant heads the post is serving the purpose of developing their management skills on the way to headship. The view, although in the majority amongst this sample of assistant heads, is not universal however because some do not necessarily see it as preparation for headship and feel, according to one interviewee, “happy working at the level of assistant headship without wanting to be a head” (Questionnaire Respondent 31).

I have significantly more responsibility as an assistant head than as a manager with two management points

This question was intended to see if there was a significant difference between the work of an assistant head in comparison with a teacher on management points. There is a step up in pay and status but is that reflected in the work? Although there is always the danger that the respondents will overemphasise their role in order to make it sound more demanding or significant than it really is it is still interesting to note that this statement had the strongest agreement of all the statements on the questionnaire (4.16). Given the reservations over reliability already mentioned it does seem from these respondents that they at least feel the work they are doing carries more responsibility. This is especially the case here with the modal response being 5. In fact it was the highest modal response on any of the statements with 16 respondents. Certainly the job descriptions that were analysed in the previous section are testimony to the wide range of responsibilities being undertaken by these assistant heads.

The word responsibility is interesting here because it implies not just that there is more to do (the question specifically uses the word ‘more’) but that there is more responsibility placed on the manager. This is a key point because an increase in management role can cover a variety of different aspects. These include:

- the same responsibilities that were carried out before but on a far wider scale – particularly true for a year or team leader who managed two or three people in a range of areas but is then required to perform some of the same functions across the school
- new things to do that have not been done before – tasks that are specific to an assistant head that go beyond the previous work done
- more things to do - perhaps a whole host of different responsibilities, some of which may be lower level such as timetables or playground rota's but are nevertheless time consuming

In addition to this notion of an increase in management role the main demand however may be the weight of the responsibility rather than the actual tasks themselves. At this level it is likely that key decisions affecting the school may need to be taken by the assistant head and with this comes the weight of expectation of making the right decision, communicating it well and ensuring it is successfully implemented. It is not quite the ‘buck stops here’ but they need to be taking more

important decisions themselves and dealing with the consequences of these decisions. This is management at a different level and it is as much this aspect of responsibility that is a key difference rather than just having more to do. The point is that what is done has more significance and impacts far more on others and the school as a whole. This is what should distinguish the assistant heads from a teacher on management points. The questionnaire seems to back this assumption with a relatively high score. Many of the job descriptions also support this observation by showing tasks that are clearly about the running of the school such as performance management functions and those tasks specifically related to the quality of teaching, which is of course the key purpose of all schools.

The responses to this statement cover the whole range again although in this case only one respondent scores the question with a mark of 1. Significantly this was a teacher who was previously on two management points as a key stage co-ordinator and who has been moved onto the leadership scale to carry out the same function. This means for him there was no change in job and hence no change in work, merely a change in title. In this case the converse might be true and that the assistant head has less responsibility than before. This assistant head further commented that the:

Job description was less than that of my previous job as a key stage one manager which involved SENCO, Literacy, Personal, Social and Health education co-ordination as well as no set release time.

Questionnaire respondent 6

The issue here is that the teacher was carrying out a significant management role already that in many other schools may have been worth three management points but more significantly is exactly the kind of post the assistant head post has been designed for. It is management at senior management level because it is effectively running half of the school (alongside a key stage co-ordinator for the other key stage) under the guidance of a head and deputy. In the past it may have been that the key stage manager would be on two management points rather than be on the leadership scale as an assistant head is now. This again backs the assertion that more key stage leaders may become assistant heads in the future. This certainly seems to be a suggestion amongst these respondents. Indeed in this sample 60% of the assistant heads were key stage leaders.

However, it again emphasises the point that primary management does vary generally and the responsibilities given and rewards allocated are by no means uniform. It seems likely that the same is true of assistant headship. This is why some managers previously on two management points merely changed the title and not the workload. The advantage of assistant headship of course is that the leadership scale gives greater flexibility over pay. This means placing the teacher on the relevant leadership point could more appropriately reward the kind of job outlined above. There will still be inconsistencies but the flexibility is greater than with old style management points, which rarely went above three in primary education.

There were further reflections on the differences between a +2 management posts and assistant headship. One respondent said one key difference was an “involvement in overall management and leadership of the school” but also added that the “position

and responsibility was already what the majority of my role had become” (Questionnaire Respondent 1). Here is a teacher who was performing a standard management role but the job grew and grew to become significant in terms of running the school. The school needed to recognise this both in terms of status (the title of assistant head) and in terms of financial reward (movement to the Leadership scale). This situation is further echoed by the teacher who reflected that their own promotion and that of a colleague was reward for the fact “we were doing the work anyway” (Questionnaire Respondent 17). There is a sense here of the profession catching up with the work already being done by many managers. The best summation for this group of assistant heads comes from the teacher who reflected that the post “Acknowledges all of the work I have been doing for years” (Questionnaire Respondent 19). Years without either the pay or the status that the work warranted. Although for them the difference between their +2 management role and the new assistant head role was not great the difference between assistant headship and what the +2 role was originally intended to be is different.

The size of the school can also play a part in this because all schools need leaders for each subject and each area (such as assessment) and at a small school with perhaps as few as four staff each teacher will have a lot of areas to manage. The differences between a teacher on two management points in a large primary compared to a small primary could be marked and therefore it follows that the same might be true for assistant heads. The infant assistant head who had eight areas of responsibility but is only on point 1 of the leadership scale might agree with this!

The overall conclusion to this statement is that the assistant heads do see their role as having significantly more responsibility than a manager on two management points. Sixteen of the thirty-one respondents score a five for this statement, which reflects that for many the difference has been significant. One respondent made the point that for her it was “the next step up the Team ladder” and was right because she wanted “to take more of a deciding role in managing the school” (Questionnaire Respondent 12) as a part of her career development. The notion of being one of the decision makers is significant here and reflects the ideas regarding managing at a different level, or as one respondent termed it, “at a real level” (Questionnaire Respondent 14).

Interestingly, while two of the three schools that have two assistant heads who have responded score the statement the same at one of the schools one respondent scores it a three while the other one scores it a four and hence thinks they have more responsibility than previously. This may be due to one having their role re-titled as in the above case and one being promoted to the role but it is not clear from the questionnaire. What is clear from these responses is that for these assistant heads their role generally involves more responsibility than working as a manager with two management points. The next question therefore has to be how does it compare to being a deputy head?

The Assistant Head is very similar to the deputy head post

The response to this statement is one of general although not complete agreement. The mean score is 4.06 with a range from two to five including thirteen respondents who awarded a mark of five. In addition twenty-one of the thirty-one graded it either four or five, hence suggesting a strong agreement with the statement.

Following on from the previous statement, which made a distinction between the traditional senior manager on management points and the assistant head, the responses here suggest a view that there are strong similarities between the assistant head post and the deputy post. Again it will depend upon the experiences of these assistant heads and there is the thought that the respondents may again want to elevate the status of the assistant heads post by saying that their role is like that of the deputy. Of course we can ask the question if these teachers have never themselves worked as a deputy how do they know if their role is similar? Might they again be overstating the case? Perhaps, but they will have worked alongside other deputies at times and seen what they do and there is also far more research into what deputies do as outlined in the literature search and this is probably the benchmark they use. Nevertheless the feeling of these assistant heads is that their role is very similar to that of the deputy head and it is these feelings and attitudes that are under consideration here.

The first point to make is that the data does suggest that some of the respondents are already clearly working exactly as a deputy would because there is no deputy in their school and their job description clearly shows that. One school reported that, “We have two assistant heads and no deputy so we are doing the job of a deputy” (Questionnaire Respondent 4). The question has to be asked though why are they not called deputies? Surely one or both of them are expected to deputise in the absence of the head. There are actually ten schools in this survey that report the same thing – that is, no deputy but two or three assistant heads. This finding is similar to the previous research into assistant headship, which found examples of assistant heads posts existing with no deputies being present (Smith, 2002, p5). This highlights the confusion for many over the true nature of the role. This is well illustrated by another respondent who was herself, “Unsure about the distinction between the deputy and assistant head” (Questionnaire Respondent 12). This is because some schools are not making a distinction and the assistant head is performing the same function as the deputy would normally do but they merely have a different name. The respondent further adds, “I do not feel a school necessarily requires both – our school has two assistant heads and no deputy” (Questionnaire Respondent 12). This view is based upon the notion that what an assistant head does is the same as what a deputy does and fails to recognise the alternative management roles an assistant head could fill without being the traditional deputy. This teacher perhaps has this view because that is their experience of assistant headship and they have not seen a variety of practices because the role is so new. Certainly in subsequent interviews it became apparent that many of the assistant heads thought that their version of assistant headship would be fairly typical and many were surprised to hear descriptions of the different types of assistant headship that do exist. Similarly another respondent reported “I was a CPS +2 manager in the school and was offered it before the previous deputy left. I am now deputy but have not changed the job title” (Questionnaire Respondent 22). Clearly they have been involved in running the school at a significant level and the change from assistant head to deputy head would only be a name change and not a role change.

This confusion and differing views about assistant headship was also highlighted well by the respondent who wrote:

The jobs of assistant head were created in our school due to a lack

of response to advertisements for a deputy. The staff member who was acting deputy did not want to continue, but was happy to apply for a shared post. The term assistant head seems to imply lower status than the deputy but our job description requires us to deputise for the head when necessary. We are unsure of the actual difference between deputy head and assistant head.

Questionnaire Respondent 12

The first part is interesting because the school believed that an assistant head post would be more attractive and so, in this case, it proved to be. Again the point is made that these assistant heads do deputise despite this not being in the official remit of the assistant head post. Clearly the reason for them being unsure of the difference is that for them there is no difference! This was also true for some of the other respondents and raised the question of why they were not just given the title of deputy head if that is indeed their role? This type of confusion again emphasises the newness of the role and that it will take time before consistent patterns of assistant headship emerge.

These thoughts are common in the questionnaire responses with comments such as “ I am accepted as a deputy, no distinction is made” and “ the (the staff) treat me as they do the deputy” (Questionnaire Respondent 22). As if to reinforce the point yet another respondent commented:

We have traditionally had one head and one Key Stage 1 and one Key Stage 2 co-ordinator system with no deputy. Assistant head has just replaced the name but with the same responsibilities.

Questionnaire Respondent 28

This version of assistant headship was described in detail by one interviewee who painted a picture of the two assistant heads running their own sections of the school with the head overseeing them. Clearly there has not been a structural change at this school but merely a change in semantics. The issue of ‘deputising’ still remains for this school although they have clearly managed before, probably by each key stage leader effectively deputising for issues that related to their own key stage. Again, in one interview an assistant head said the head “just asks whichever one he sees on the way out” (Interviewee 1). Again we see a structure that has two key stage managers effectively running their own school under the overall control of the head. The chance to use the assistant head post on the leadership scale certainly suits a school like this although again could they not equally be called deputies? It would be interesting to know why their titles were changed to assistant heads rather than deputies.

The other key issue here is deputising. When the assistant head post was conceived it was done so with the idea that those wanting senior management but not necessarily the responsibility of running the whole school would be attracted to it. But there are practical considerations here. What happens if the head and deputy are off-site on the same day, a not irregular occurrence given the proliferation of courses to attend? The answer is supposed to be that a third senior member of staff deputises which may of course be possible in a large primary. If, like many under study here, the post is to manage teams or whole key stages then the need to deputise for the head is clear and

indeed essential. In a small school however would it be right to leave an inexperienced member of staff in charge while a more senior assistant head is on the premises? No it would not. In cases such as these it may come down to what is practical. The intention of the legislation seems to be that the assistant head should not necessarily be burdened with the extra responsibility of deputising, perhaps because they have a clear and distinct role in the school that is not directly related to the everyday management of the school. However common sense suggests that when they need to be called upon the assistant head will deputise.

It is fascinating to see that in three of the schools that have no deputy they do not score this question as a five. Is this because they have more than one assistant head and hence share the role unlike a deputy who would have the whole role to themselves? It seems likely.

Given that the assistant heads surveyed here vary between point 1 and point 13 on the leaderships scale then it would seem likely that for some of them the role is similar if not in some cases exactly the same as a deputy. Equally, for some on the lowest management point their role is quite removed from the deputy role. What is important is that the post of assistant head **can** be like the deputy. This is either in terms of tasks carried out (as the job descriptions show) but also in terms of the status of the role even if the tasks are not the same as are traditionally associated with the deputy head.

There are some cases where this is true and there is a clear distinction between the deputy head and assistant head. One respondent noted that, “all of my colleagues are very comfortable with my roles – they see I work hard and see me as a go-between to the head and deputy head”. This mirrors the old notion of the deputy acting as a link between the staff and the head that used to be a characteristic of some schools. It would seem here that there could be an emergence of this situation in some assistant head posts where it is clearly the head and deputy head that run the school and the assistant head is in a far lesser management position and in some ways is closer to the staff. Certainly some of the assistant heads who focus on their classroom role as one of keeping in touch with the class teacher may support this idea. This view was certainly repeated by another respondent who noted that their role was:

To liaise between staff and the head. A practitioner of the things implemented by management so I am able to empathise with staff and speak from first hand experience.

Questionnaire Respondent 24

This teacher, like the previous one, seems to be allying themselves with the staff or at least seeing themselves as separate from the head and deputy which tends to suggest they are not fully integrated into the senior management team. That is not to say the role could not work like this but it is different from some of the cases under scrutiny here. Their role is not similar to that of the deputy like some of the other respondents referred to. This is a key finding in the research – some assistant heads are clearly working at, or equivalent to the deputy level while some are clearly at a lower, more supportive level.

Of course the leadership scale does allow for this given the pay differentials. An assistant head on level 2 of the leadership scale would not be expected to play a significant role as an assistant head on level 8. Their role is more likely to be closer to the old +2 manager level than that of a deputy head.

Interestingly, in two of the three schools that have two respondents the teachers themselves give different scores despite working in the same school. Clearly for one of them in each school they do not feel the same as their colleague about the role. I wonder if they have ever discussed this!

It is important that the assistant head has a substantial teaching commitment

This question refers not just to the workload implications for an assistant head but also the nature of the work and whether it is really about playing a significant management role across the school or whether the majority of the assistant heads time is spent teaching. Are they a teacher or a manager first?

The score for this statement was a fairly neutral 3.26 with the full range from one to five. The statement itself refers to a teaching commitment generally rather than a class commitment because senior teachers are increasingly involved in teaching different groups such as booster classes and the Springboard maths initiative. Nevertheless along with the question regarding time spent teaching, which revealed the average time to be 0.77 of a week, it is clear that a significant part of an assistant head's work is teaching and most often class teaching.

Whether an assistant head should teach is a question open to debate. As a manager with key responsibilities in the school the assistant head needs time to be able to manage effectively, particularly if they are to carry out performance management and the quality of teaching duties that require them to be in other classes watching others teach, at least some of the time. They cannot do this if they are always themselves teaching. Given that all of the assistant heads in this survey are involved in performance management then time should be provided to perform these as well as all of the other tasks. However this is not always the case. The data shows that eight of the respondents do not actually have any non-contact time. It is difficult to see how they could carry out performance management tasks if they have no non-contact time. Either the head or deputy head carries out formal lesson observations or they are involved in other data collection about the teacher (work sampling and monitoring of the planning). It is still difficult to see how this is making effective use of the assistant head in the performance management system. Perhaps, while the assistant head has no regular non-contact time, they might receive a few hours a term to watch colleagues teach. This is speculation but it seems only logical that all respondents are involved in performance management. If that is the case the point still remains that the assistant heads are being given very little time to impact upon other colleagues teaching. The time should be there to manage effectively. Of course budgetary constraints may prevent this or if not constraints then alternative budgetary priorities but schools do need to think about what the priorities are that are more important than management time for assistant heads. In part the government has responded to this need by introducing guaranteed non-contact time for managers from September 2003 following the workload agreement of March 2003.

Time to manage is clearly an important issue. If it is accepted that most people would like more time to do things (who asks for less?!) then why do many of the respondents here consider it important that they have class contact rather than full time to manage. Partly it may be because they enjoy the teaching and want to keep in contact with the children, particularly in terms of the close relationships that can be built up with a class. Perhaps they also see it as vital in keeping closely attuned to the demands placed upon the class teacher on a daily basis. This could be something that is in danger of being lost by a manager who is not teaching a class on a daily basis. The respondent who talked of being “able to empathise with staff and speak from first hand experience” (Questionnaire Respondent 24) suggested this. By having a class they are in a position of having to implement every new strategy and initiative whether internally or externally imposed and can see directly the impact of the change and also the manageability of it. It is an insider view to the classroom that a more distant manager may not necessarily possess. All of this is fine if the assistant head has both time and energy to teach and manage effectively. The difficulty is in knowing when the two are compromising each other.

Assistant heads from this sample generally still see themselves very much as class teachers and many spoke of the need to “keep up the teaching element of the job” (Interviewee 3). Interestingly those on higher leadership points don’t always think that they should have a lesser teaching commitment. One might imagine an assistant head with the heaviest workload would not want the teaching commitment but that is not the pattern here although it has to be remembered from earlier statements that the leadership points themselves do not always correspond to the number of responsibilities undertaken. This area was intriguing and was followed up at the interview stage when talking about their responsibilities by asking to what extent would the assistant heads under study perform their role more effectively without a teaching commitment. The response was generally similar in that the interviewees although saying there is never enough time to manage everything nevertheless were “reluctant to be away from my class too much” (Interviewee 9). This identification with being the class teacher first and foremost was a recurring picture. Partly this may be because some clearly would not need complete non-contact to fulfil their role, however those who were performing the role akin to a deputy might do. There is also not a pattern between those schools with no deputies thinking there should be no class contact. Interestingly some of the schools where there is no deputy actually score the statement with a five, strongly advocating the teaching commitment. They must see the teaching as beneficial and that the need for it outweighs the need for non-contact time. The assistant head in the case study felt that they were neither performing the class teacher or assistant head roles to their potential. This assistant head role, with its focus on ‘coaching’ other teachers required a lot of time to be spent away from any class responsibility and eventually necessitated the removal of all class responsibility. This is however an unusual situation compared to most cases in this research. This was the right decision for that situation but clearly some of the respondents in this study feel that it is not necessary for them. This may be due in part to the fact they do not have as prominent a role in the management of their schools as in the case study example. Different situations, different needs. Again, a case of the flexibility of the role allowing for ‘situational’ decisions.

As an Assistant Head I have clear leadership targets

One of the key distinctions between being on the leadership scale and being on management points is that targets are set each year against which the assistant heads performance is judged in order that a pay increase can be awarded. Given that this is a clear distinction from being on management points it seems vital that the targets are made clear and set effectively. An average score of 4.06 does suggest that for the majority of assistant heads in this survey that is the case and there is only one case of a teacher scoring the statement as a two with no assistant heads scoring it as a one. The fact that less than a third gave the highest score suggests that although the process has begun well it is still in need of further refinement.

The positive response to this statement has to be seen as an encouraging sign for primary management. If leadership goals are being set for more and more managers then it should mean that school management is improving. Of course the setting of targets by themselves does not ensure improvement. The setting of appropriate and meaningful targets and the subsequent achievement of these targets ensure the improvement. A recent comment by a head that “I don’t run a primary school, I run an archery club – with targets everywhere” (q. in *The Independent*, 21/4/03, p1) is a warning that targets can become all too invasive. However, if they are used selectively and appropriately they can play a part in successful school management. The key point here however is that there is now a system in place that can allow the process to happen. The system is being put in place and so the potential for the improvement in primary management is there and now that a widening of management is also possible then effective primary management should be easier to attain. Some of this is reflected in the positive written responses from the assistant heads in this survey.

Typical of the positive responses was a statement by one of the assistant heads who said that she had, “Clear responsibility for projects, working with parents, developing Teaching Assistants, etc” (Questionnaire Respondent 8). This is a case of the assistant head having a well-defined role to play in the management of the school with the areas of responsibility precisely defined to avoid confusion. Another respondent said that one of the main attractions of the post was the “clear leadership role offered by the school” (Questionnaire Respondent 16). This was especially interesting because the comment came from a former advisory teacher who would be used to the target driven culture experienced within LEA work. It also reinforces the idea of the role of assistant headship being about leadership and not merely management.

Clear targets are perhaps even more necessary where there are two assistant heads. This was the case at one of the sample schools where “the roles of the two assistant heads were very clearly defined from the outset” meaning adjustment “had been quick” (Questionnaire Respondent 8). This is another case of everyone knowing what they had to do and therefore being able to get on with it immediately.

Similarly in an interview one assistant head said it was, “vital the target areas were clearly defined so we knew what we were working towards” (Interviewee 11). This contrasts with some experiences where respondents commented that the role was not so clearly defined at the outset and it was hoped that the role would “evolve” (Interviewee 4) over time. In all of the roles there is a certain amount of evolution because of the nature of change in our educational world but to not have a direction

for the role at the outset is inefficient and not the model of the modern professionalism that teaching should be aiming for.

Despite the generally positive responses clear targets are not always the norm. One respondent commented that:

At the moment the role of assistant head is still quite vague. I would say my main role is Key Stage 2 co-ordinator. We are still trying to develop the role of assistant head but it is still early days.

Questionnaire Respondent 11

This is an example of someone elevated to the post of assistant head when the school is not clear on either the level of responsibility it should entail or what the key tasks should be. The respondent writes, "I would say my main role..." which shows how unsure they are about their key purpose and what targets they should be working towards. The school is trying to work out how best to use the role and the comment that it is early days suggests they have no fixed plan but will expect the post to evolve over time. This can be dangerous because new roles and new responsibilities can be given that bear little or no relation to the targets that are supposed to be working towards by the assistant head. These targets judge the success of the assistant head and therefore they should be at the centre of the core purpose of the assistant heads' work. It has to be wondered in this case just how clear and appropriate these targets are.

So why is it vital that assistant heads have clear leadership targets? This comes back to the whole government initiative about rewarding teachers for remodelling the profession. Central policy in public services for this government has worked on the premise that an increase in salary is only given if new standards are adopted and targets achieved. It is a measurement culture and it is through measurable achievement that pay rewards are granted. As mentioned above it is part of what sets those on the leadership scale apart from those on management points. It is designed as a vehicle for ensuring progress. One assistant head reflected this by saying in an interview, "I know that if I hit my targets I am helping the school move forward" (Interviewee 8). Again this is true if the targets are appropriately set. Others do not respond so readily to the targets culture and question the government 'obsession' with targets. The head of the case study school suggested that targets "get in the way of the work we do". This was because "situations change so quickly that targets are quickly superseded by other priorities". The government agenda clearly does not suit all schools.

Where targets are set however it is important that not just the assistant head is aware of their targets but also that the rest of the staff are clear as well. In this study it emerged that some of the staff in these schools are not made aware of either the significance of the new role let alone the targets being worked on. One respondent wrote of the staff that, "Some are not clear on my responsibility" (Questionnaire Respondent 13). It is interesting that this is the case given that leadership targets are generally being set. The assistant heads know what they are doing but the problem may be that their work is not being communicated clearly enough to the rest of the staff. The staff will usually know what the remit of the deputy is but consideration

needs to be given to how the staff should have the assistant head role explained to them. This is a problem of the communication in the school and must make the work of the assistant head difficult because the staff are not really aware of who is responsible for what. It may also need time for the staff to adjust. In the case study example the assistant head, having previously been an acting deputy head for two terms, had staff still occasionally coming to me to ask about issues that in the absence of the head, are clearly the remit of the deputy. This was despite making it clear that his responsibility was for the quality of teaching and professional development. This shows that the way a school is managed needs to be explained to the staff themselves as well as outside observers and indeed it needs to be done on a regular basis.

There are other issues regarding targets for assistant heads. While it is vital that the assistant head knows exactly what their key tasks are, actually finding targets on which to hang this can be difficult unless the targets are about pupil performance. The difficulty, as with all target setting in schools, is not finding what is easy to measure and focusing on that but finding out what is important to measure and focussing on that. Of course pupil performance in exams is vital but so are other things such as the quality of teaching, the behaviour and social development of the pupils and the extent to which the whole curriculum being offered develops the whole child. While the problems that surround choosing these targets are not specific to assistant heads it is still a problem for them. This may explain why some of the respondents only scored this statement as a two or a three. A lot would depend upon the culture of the school and the function of the governors within the school and to what extent they are skilled at setting appropriate targets. It could also depend upon whether the role is a new one that will need clearly defining. If it is an old one such as where the assistant head has changed from being a key stage co-ordinator to an assistant head but is still carrying out the same roles as before then targets will be needed to establish the difference in the new role. Again, some of the schools where there is no deputy do not have the clearest of targets which is surprising because their role is clearly so vital to the achievement of a successful school. Perhaps this again reflects the lack of importance attached to targets by some schools. Continuing this theme one interviewee said “to be honest, I just do my job and forget about my targets” (Interviewee 12). Again the picture confirmed is that targets are being set but the relevant importance of them varies between assistant headship posts. Unfortunately for some assistant heads, like this one, the exercise is merely a paper one. Despite this the conclusion however is that targets are generally being set that are generally clear although more could be done to make them more explicit and again perhaps time will alter this.

I have received specific induction as an assistant head

The thing that is difficult to establish with this statement is the extent to which induction is carried out well at all levels of school employment. The figure is the lowest of all the statements in this survey, at 2.06, with twelve of the respondents giving the lowest score and only two giving the highest score. If research was carried out on other posts within a school would a similar statement produce a similar score? Anecdotal evidence from a group of seventeen students with a variety of educational backgrounds that were taught in a Masters unit on the local university's Educational Management Masters course that covered induction certainly suggests that poor induction is not unique to assistant heads. Their experience was of little formal induction with the emphasis more on just asking questions as they went along. Of

course the sample here is unrepresentative but in discussing induction with the students it became clear that, for them at least, good induction was the exception rather than the rule. It was therefore perhaps not surprising that the experiences of assistant heads mirrored that of others in the educational world.

But the focus here is upon assistant headship. It seems that induction for a person who is either being internally promoted or is just carrying on their role under a new title is particularly difficult. Many aspects of general induction such as looking at school policies, the location of resources in the school, etc are simply not needed and it might be argued that a specific induction into the role of assistant heads is not required either.

This was certainly the experience in the case study. The teacher was already carrying out their role as a manager with three management points when it was decided to move them to the leadership scale to raise the status of both the teacher and the post, to give greater financial reward and to try to retain the teacher's services. At no point did the assistant head and head formally discuss how the role would be different because to all intents and purposes it would not be. Neither did they specifically say how the position in the school was different in relation to the deputy. This could have been difficult because the assistant head had previously been the acting-deputy and had decided to not to apply for the post when it became available. As it turned out there were no such problems but a formal induction would have been the correct procedure.

To not have a formal induction can be dangerous because the role itself should be different for many of the reasons already discussed such as being an elevated role, the importance of performance targets and the whole nature of more senior management and what that might imply. By not inducting someone fully into the role a school risks not clearly outlining the role and this can result in having to go back and almost do induction retrospectively, or worse still, reactively as problems occur. Where it is done well the new assistant head has a clear view of where the school is and what the priorities are but more importantly what their role in the development of the school will be. They will be able to begin working on their core purposes from day one and will be able to communicate this to the rest of the staff as well. No one should be in doubt over the role of the assistant head and this means the assistant head themselves need to be clear about what their key functions are to be and the context in which they are operating.

Having said all of this about induction – and to reiterate, it should be done in full to ensure everyone is clear about the roles and responsibilities – the newness of the post is also a factor. Referring to the case study again it is certainly true that the role has evolved and indeed is still evolving, almost on a weekly basis. This is one of the differences between being a teacher on management points instead of on the leadership scale. The assistant head works daily with the head and deputy on decisions that affect the school and in the specific areas that are their domain (Quality of Teaching) actually takes the lead in the majority of cases. This is the distinction between real senior management rather than just having some management responsibility. This was never said at a formal induction but is the way the role and indeed the relationship between the assistant head and the head evolved. This is partly why the questionnaire referred back to the roles and responsibilities because the roles

originally planned do evolve over time and often go far beyond the remit of any job description. This is why although a proper induction is vital even more important is the constant dialogue between the assistant head and head to ensure the smooth running of the school. This view seemed to be shared by the interviewees who said that regular discussions with the head in the early days of the post were the 'norm' rather than specific induction. This was especially true for the internal appointees that were interviewed. Perhaps for an assistant head on the lower levels of the leadership scale who does not have a close day to day working relationship with the head then initial induction might be even more vital.

The conclusion therefore is that the induction of new assistant heads is far from good. This probably mirrors the induction of staff at all levels of education and it is an issue that should be addressed if we are to expect people to function effectively from the start of their employment. However, induction cannot be seen as ensuring that the assistant head becomes immediately integrated into the management of the school. This integration comes over time and needs to be worked out by both the head and the assistant head.

Being an assistant head provides a good alternative for those not aspiring to headship

The average score of 3.19 is again a fairly neutral score with the full range of marks being given. Is this range due to the fact that for some of the respondents they have it clearly fixed in their mind that they are pursuing a headship and that the assistant head post is a useful and logical step on the way and to not see it this way somehow diminishes it? Perhaps for some. There is always the thought that anyone who says they are not necessarily following a certain path does so either because they lack the ability to do it or it is safer to not indicate that you are going for something that you might not attain.

The experience factor may be significant here because more of the younger teachers disagree with the statement. Perhaps they lack the experience of seeing what other options are available and also perhaps they are more set on the headship route and see any other career intention as lesser and not the point of being an assistant head. Equally while the more experienced teachers may be aware that there are other possibilities in the educational world might they also be managers for whom headship has not come and may perhaps never will. It is therefore both easier and safer to emphasise the possibilities open to assistant heads in their future careers. Again this is speculation but not perhaps not without some merit. It has to be noted that the word experience in educational terms is used rather than age because teachers come to the profession at different ages and some older entrants to the profession can rise quickly to senior posts, therefore this is the key factor rather than age alone. What can be said is that the assistant heads bring a range of opinions to this statement that again reflect the different perceptions of the role for each of them.

The Assistant Head post is good preparation for Advisory/Inspection work

Again a fairly neutral score (2.94) although this time below the mean score available. The range was again from one to five although 81% of the respondents scored either

two, three or four. Again it is perhaps an option that not many have considered previously and so perhaps a neutral mark is to be expected.

Advisory work demands a mix of the relevant subject and pedagogical knowledge but allied to the ability to work effectively with schools to provide both training and support. The experience of having been an assistant head should provide a new advisor with the knowledge of how schools are run and this is vital in working closely with schools to implement plans. It is hard to see how the knowledge gained from senior management of a school would not be useful in advisory work but merely being useful may not be the same as being good preparation. One could ask what would be good preparation? Perhaps working with the LEA on projects to see how an LEA delivers training and support or working with local teaching training providers to develop INSET skills. Perhaps because advisory work is so different there is never really adequate preparation and the respondents are saying this by scoring the statement neutrally. Being an assistant head may help but there could be far more appropriate preparation than that alone.

It might be questioned again to what extent some of the respondents in this survey have considered the prospect of advisory work. For many the thought will probably be about movement towards headship (see the score for preparation for headship) and therefore they will not see the assistant head role as relevant to advisory work. It is interesting to see what the two respondents who have worked as advisors think about this issue. These two respondents worked either as an advisory teacher or a Numeracy consultant and do not score this statement highly, giving responses of two and three respectively. As they have worked in this field their views need to be respected and the question asked why do they not see it as good preparation? Perhaps they see the roles as being so different they do not really complement each other. Conversely one wonders if they actually see their advisory work as good preparation for assistant headship. Indeed, for one respondent the attractions of an assistant head post were explained thus:

(A) Senior Management Team post came up at the right time as I was preparing to leave the Advisory Service. A clear leadership role was offered by the school (and the) opportunity to work with the existing head and deputy.

Questionnaire Respondent 16

It is only a single case, which cannot be generalised from, but it does show that moving from advisory work to an assistant head post is a possibility. Certainly with the leadership pay scale offering greater financial incentive it now means assistant heads can be paid more than some consultants if they are placed high enough up the leadership scale and although money alone does not define status it must be a factor in career decisions. Clearly there are different levels of advisory and consultancy work. In the local LEA for instance the Numeracy consultants were recruited from no higher than posts of two management points which would put them on a par or below most assistant head recruits. In this sense the assistant head post is seen as a similar level to consultancy work rather than as preparation for it. Advisory work could be seen as likewise and as the assistant head post becomes more established and recognised it may actually provide an alternative to teachers thinking about advisory/consultancy

work because the pay might be better and the chance to work in a good school more attractive.

Again it will be interesting to monitor in the future whether more staff move from advisory work into assistant head posts and indeed to look more at where assistant heads are coming from. For this study though it seems that this selection of assistant heads do not really see their position as good preparation for advisory work.

The Assistant Head post has been created because of the increasingly demanding nature of school management

Although this statement again receives the full range of responses the overall average of 4.06 represents a clear feeling that the respondents agree that the post is in part a response to the increasingly demanding nature of school management. The fact that 14 respondents indicated a 5 on their questionnaire also testifies to the very strong agreement. As outlined in the introduction to this work the scope of school management has continued to grow and grow and many of the major issues facing the profession in the early part of the new millennium are related to workload and bureaucracy (TES, August 2002).

As well as the high mean for the statement the comments also reflect the widespread agreement with this view. For one respondent it was a case of:

More and more decisions are school led with the role of the head increasing. Assistant heads can share some of the workload and have access to headship training.

Questionnaire Respondent 1

Here it is seen working both ways. The assistant head takes on some of the work that was previously the domain of the head or deputy. This reduces their workload but it also accelerates the management learning of the assistant head who may previously have had to wait for a deputy head post to receive that level of training and responsibility. The quote also reflects a mature view of the post recognising that it can involve training for future headship. The existence of the National Professional Qualification for Headship as the vehicle for much of management learning is now being established (Tomlinson, 2003, p9). However, there is a realisation in these questionnaire responses that much of the real training comes from being in a significant management post and the position of assistant headship makes this possible. However much the NPQH is pushed forward the learning for most heads is done in school.

As was quoted previously one assistant head said:

More and more decisions are school led with the role of the head increasing. An assistant head can share some of the workload.

(Questionnaire Respondent 1)

This is an interesting point because the expansion of primary school management is not just about having to implement government decisions and new initiatives such as performance management it is also about the workload increasing because of the numerous devolved powers that now exist. This includes areas such as budgets and contracts and aspects over the running of the school that were previously the remit of the LEA. One interviewee made the point that “there is just so much to do and learn, I don’t know how the head and deputy coped before” (Interviewee 1). Hence it is not just a case of more to do but more areas to cover and therefore more or at least wider expertise is needed. Therefore having a wider SMT with wider skills to call upon makes sense.

This theme of wider responsibilities requiring time to manage and hence the need for major aspects of the management of a school to be delegated beyond a single deputy is a recurring theme in the written responses and the interviews in this study. At the heart of this notion of the tasks being distributed beyond the head and deputy head. It has been suggested that,

in many respects the role of assistant head has evolved from the deputy heads role (and) in response to the recognised need to distribute leadership more widely to secure the long term improvement in terms of change.

Muijs and Harris, 2003, p6

This idea was supported by many of the respondents such as the following quote which, in many ways, sets out the intrinsic nature of assistant headship:

The workload is now too much for a head and a deputy head. The need is to differentiate the curriculum responsibilities from the day to day management of the school.

Questionnaire Respondent 2

This quote more than any others in this section really outlines what the assistant head post has become – a response to the excessive demands placed upon too narrow a leadership structure in primary schools. In this specific case the assistant head is taking on significant aspects of the running of the school to allow greater time and energy to be spent by the head or deputy on the overall running of the school. This includes the day-to-day aspects of the school that do not have to fall under the remit of the assistant head. This is seeing the potential of the post to allow a senior teacher to carry out large aspects of school management that are not concerned with this day to day work that needs the head or deputy to be involved in. As mentioned by another respondent earlier it might be for specific projects or for key areas such as the quality of teaching but it is not merely ‘deputising’ for the head in on-going school management.

However, while this is one view of how the post would work best it is clearly not the way it is used for many of the assistant heads in this study. In many cases the work is the same as the deputy or at least very similar in terms of tasks being carried out. Again a case of schools interpreting the post as they see best for their school.

Another area that is worth reflecting on is how many of the schools in this survey have had their management structure changed by the introduction of the assistant head post. Although many clearly have not seen a change in role, merely in the title with the work remaining the same, for others there has been a change. One such school said one of the reasons for the new post was “to create a good structure in the Senior Management Team” in order to “share responsibilities”. This respondent also makes the point of saying it was also to “support the deputy” (Questionnaire Respondent 21) which again relates to the workload issue and shows this assistant head in a subordinate management role. This is not the major finding in this area however.

A most significant finding in this section is that ten of the schools have at least two assistant heads and no deputy. One respondent reflected that “Having two assistant heads allows more people the opportunity to be involved in school management and leadership” (Questionnaire Respondent 22) than if there was a single deputy. In some cases this does not appear different from having a deputy and an assistant head although it was perhaps thought that a deputy role would signify seniority over the assistant head. One interviewee made the point that if the two assistant heads are in separate key stages each key stage is equally represented whereas if a deputy is based more in one key stage than another then there is an imbalance. She felt the structure of the two assistant heads “represented each key stage effectively in decisions” (Interviewee 3) and therefore was a productive structure to employ.

Either way it suggests the workload warrants more than two people managing the key aspects of the school. This respondent also speculated that having more assistant heads posts “may lead more people to apply to become deputy heads and heads” (Questionnaire Respondent 2). This respondent sees the role as in part preparation for deputy headship since it makes the point that the assistant head will have a better understanding of what it is needed to manage a school. It does clearly lessen the jump from a management post with two points to a deputy headship although as already mentioned for some there would be no jump from assistant headship to deputy headship. Nevertheless, for those with less responsibility as an assistant head it clearly is good preparation.

Continuing this theme of redistributing the workload one detailed reflection came from an assistant head who saw the post as useful because it could:

Share the workload of performance management. I specialise in key stage 1 but liaise and have a part in decision making which is especially important when it relates to the key stage you are managing. This allows the head and deputy head to have clearer insight into needs, budget, staffing, etc.

Questionnaire Respondent 6

In some cases we have seen assistant heads as key stage managers with no deputy but at this school there is also a deputy, which means four senior staff managing the school. Not surprisingly it is a large school and warrants this level of management. The assistant heads would have previously been on management points rather than the leadership scale. This does reflect that to be a key stage manager now requires work that in terms of time and energy can be beyond the old status and remuneration of

management points. This response also suggests that the structure allows the two assistant heads to more accurately feed the correct information about how the school is working to the head and deputy head. This should have happened with their structure anyway but perhaps the elevation to assistant head status means the job is being done more rigorously and hence more effectively.

For others in the survey the emphasis was on the potential the post had to offer in terms of reducing workload. One commented that:

I feel that my role will develop more into management taking the load from the head and deputy. This is where I see the value of assistant headship.

Questionnaire Respondent 11

This quote shows a slight naivety and perhaps even a overblown sense of their own potential importance because they see their future work as ‘making life easier’ for the head and deputy head by doing some of their work for them. It is also interesting to see that they say their role will ‘develop into management’ which begs the question what are they doing now that justifies them being on the leadership scale? Perhaps they only see tasks directly related to large whole school issues as truly managing. It again reflects the disparate views and experiences of the assistant head respondents in this survey and again underlines the fact that assistant heads are not a homogenous collection. Rather, they reflect a body of professionals ranging from those like this respondent who are new to any form of management to those who obviously play a major role in the management of their schools.

Despite this disparity over this issue there are common themes that emerge. The responses are littered with comments regarding the way in which assistant headship can be used to share workload. Another interviewee saw it as a way, “To spread management commitment and forge a link between the head and classroom teachers” (Interviewee 6). This point echoes back to the points made earlier about the assistant head post sometimes being in the mould of a traditionally held view of part of the deputy’s role – the Go-between, or “intermediate and visible presence between staff and head” (Muijs and Harris, 2003, p7). The respondent goes on to characterise their role as the “eyes and ears of the management team”. This again reminds us how widespread the senior management role needs to be and that the assistant head post is ideal for being used flexibly to cater for the complex needs of primary management and the ever-increasing workload.

The Assistant Head post has been created because of the need to reward senior managers with higher pay

The full range of responses was again awarded but the average of 3.03 perhaps reflects the teachers’ dislike of discussing pay. The notion of teaching being a vocation where money is not a key issue seems to be reflected again in this survey. Certainly teaching is not a profession that is associated with high pay and as mentioned earlier this is one of the reasons it fails to attract some of the best undergraduates. These respondents do seem to view the workload issue as being more

significant in the creation of assistant headship rather than the need for greater pay rewards.

There were a few references to pay in the questionnaire written responses and they did refer to being attracted to the prospect of more money but they either went hand in hand with being given more responsibility or being recognised for the work already being done. For instance one respondent reported that “ I also wanted more responsibility and more money” (Questionnaire Respondent 21) while another explained it was “an internal appointment and more money for doing the same job” (Questionnaire Respondent 28). This again shows the post attracting people into management again also being used as a tool to reward to the growing management role of those other than the head and deputy.

There is also the issue of retention here and this was referred to by some of the respondents. A successful manager on two management points in the past might have looked for a deputy headship and hence been lost to the school. The assistant head post provides the opportunity to reward the manager both with greater responsibility (and hence status) but also with a financial incentive to stay. This is particularly true because on the leadership scale a teacher has the opportunity to progress up the scale each year and hence there is a yearly incentive to stay in the same school. Although one respondent suggested more assistant heads might apply for deputy posts because they have ‘tasted’ more senior management there could be a danger that conversely assistant heads may think that the pay they are receiving is sufficiently high for them to want to remain in their post. This would be particularly true if they are contented at their school. One interviewee who reflected this commented that although they had contemplated looking for a deputy headship once they were given an assistant head post that “provided more money and the chance to stay at a good school” (Interviewee 6) they decided to stay. It would be interesting to see if these few examples become more common in the future. It will of course depend upon how far up the scale they are and their satisfaction with their role within the school. One assistant head writing about why the post is attractive said:

A school of our size needs a Senior Management Team of four. Also it (the post of assistant head) can retain good staff.

Questionnaire Respondent 9

This is particularly true if the assistant head works in a larger primary school that could well pay more to an assistant head than a smaller primary could pay to a deputy. This may make the assistant head more selective in the posts they apply for because the deputy headships they might go for will need to offer more financially.

Many of these points were summarised by the assistant head who commented that the reasons they were attracted to the post were they “felt we were doing the work anyway to maintain high standards”, for the “money” and because they “did not want to change school” (Questionnaire Respondent 17). This reflects that there is no one reason for wanting any post but a combination of reasons. It also hints at a possible new trend in that because of the flexible pay options that schools have that staying at a school where you are successful and well rewarded is a good option and one that an

increasing number of teachers may take. Of course the picture is not all rosy as one assistant head noted by saying, “The pay is fine but not in relation to the hours I spend” (Questionnaire Respondent 4). This is recognition that they are now being better rewarded although will probably never be fully recognised for all of the work they do.

This greater pay also has implications across the leadership scale. If former senior managers are now earning more on the leadership scale then the deputy head needs to be on a level above them which may put up their pay which in turn may lead to the pay of the head increasing to ensure an appropriate pay differential. Again it will take time for the appropriate pay levels for assistant heads to be established and hence their levels in comparison with heads and deputy heads.

A separate issue regarding pay is the one concerning the use of two assistant heads but no deputy head. When asked why schools need assistant heads one respondent commented:

They don't necessarily – they need a management team that can manage all of the responsibilities. Assistant heads offer a cheaper alternative.

Questionnaire Respondent 26

The first part of the statement makes sense and is referred to in a previous section but the issue here is the second comment. If the school decides the best option to ‘manage all of the responsibilities’ effectively is to have a head and then two other managers on the leadership scale is the choice of the assistant head post for those two (or even three or more) based upon the notion of saving money? The response implies that while a school may not be able to afford a deputy head and an assistant head it could afford two assistant heads if their pay was lower than that intended for the deputy. All schools are different and have to adapt to their budgetary constraints and it will be interesting to see in the future if the structures of schools respond to the possibility of having a flatter management structure with the head above a layer of two or three assistant heads rather than another tier involving a deputy. One assistant head who was interviewed said “the structure of head, deputy and assistant head works more effectively for us” (Interviewee 7). Research into the make up of senior management teams in primary schools over the next few years may show a change from the past and it seems likely that the leadership scale will be seen to be the catalyst for that change and that the role of the assistant head on that scale will be a major factor.

The comments about pay were certainly less than those about workload and the increasing demands of primary management and the neutral mean also shows that it is not the major reason for the creation of the post as far as these respondents were concerned. Nevertheless for some of the assistant heads surveyed here it certainly persuaded them to remain in their schools and it will be interesting to see if this trend develops further in the future.

The Assistant Head post has been created because of the reluctance of teachers to become heads or deputies

This statement received one of the lowest mean scores of 2.48 despite the full range of responses being given. This was to be expected in this survey because it became clear that many of the teachers do want to become heads in the future. The mean does mirror the one for assistant headship being ideal preparation for headship. The relatively young age profile also reflects professionals 'on their way up' as they see it and the traditional view of headship being at the apex of this progression is still strong within this group. This view is in opposition to the one expressed in the case study. At the outset of the research it seemed possible that there would be more assistant heads that rejected the notion of wanting to be a head but this appears not to be the case and the case study example is very much in the minority on this issue. These respondents seem far more likely to embrace assistant headship as a widening of their management experience and hence being a useful and in some cases vital step on the way to headship. Given that the other statements in this section were generally agreed with, particularly the role of allowing the sharing of the workload, it is perhaps not surprising that the mean was lower.

The Assistant Head post has been created because of the government desire to change to nature of school management

This statement also received the full range of responses and an average of 3.26 reflecting some, though not a strong feeling that the government created the post to assist in changing school management. Is this again because the respondents feel there are other more important reasons or that this is only a part of the complex reason for the new post?

There is also the issue as to the extent to which these respondents have carefully considered the views of the government on this change. The validity of the questionnaire generally has already been discussed previously but it is worth mentioning that this is the last Lickert scale question of the survey and there can be a tendency for the respondent to rush towards the completion of the form. It is not possible to know how long the respondents took over deliberating over each statement or to what extent they have thought through fully the issues referred to here. This may be especially pronounced with this statement partly because it is the last one but also because it concerns government policy on pay reform that they may not know a great deal about, especially if they are still relatively inexperienced.

Nevertheless, there is a government agenda to improve schools (Morris, 2002, p6) and part of this involves experimenting with types of schools such as city academies, beacon schools, etc and with this naturally comes the need to experiment with structures within schools. It is surprising that the assistant heads in the survey do agree more with the statement given that the government themselves are constantly talking about re-modelling the profession. Perhaps these assistant heads are not so aware of the issues nevertheless they certainly do not feel strongly that the post is part of the government plan to change the nature of school management

Further Questionnaire and Interview Responses

The previous section, although grouped around Lickert statements, included some of the written responses and interview answers because the quotes referred to some aspect of the area being considered. There were other issues that emerged through these written answers and the interviews and these are also worthy of consideration (See Questionnaire p29 and Interview Questions, p33). They will now be explored according to the specific questions asked.

With regard to what attracted respondents to the post there were a variety of reasons given because of course every situation is different as is every assistant headship. Nevertheless there are some common themes that emerge some of which have already been touched upon such as the post offering a clear role and an opportunity for career development.

One idea that echoed the earlier responses was the notion of it being the next stage within a career progression. One view was that it was “good experience for preparation for headship” (Questionnaire Respondent 12). Another respondent said the post was the “Next available step in my school as all co-ordinators in my school have no aspiration to move up the management scale” (Questionnaire Respondent 2). This idea of obtaining career progression within your own school is attractive because there is less change involved. Others talked about ‘internal promotion’ as being an attraction and as suggested before further research into this area in the future with regard to what percentage of assistant heads were internally appointed would be useful. Another respondent reflected this by writing:

Having been at this school for a couple of years I was ready to move on. Initially I wanted a deputy headship but the post of assistant head came up.

Questionnaire Respondent 9

This again reinforces the retention issue referred to in the previous section because a manager that would have been lost to the school has been accommodated successfully. Another spoke of the fact they “Didn’t want to change school” (Questionnaire Respondent 17). There was also a case where “My Head suggested I went on the leadership scale” (Questionnaire Respondent 18) which must again be either to do with retention or reward. Similarly a good teacher that has left could be enticed back with greater reward and for one respondent this was the case because they saw a major attraction of their post as being able to “return to a previous school” (Questionnaire Respondent 27).

The issue with internal appointments is that they are not just a response to greater management workload but also a means of retaining good staff. The retention issue was also prominent in some of the interviews. One interviewee said

I was looking to move and so the Head put me on the leadership scale to keep me. My title changed but not really my work.

Interviewee 6

The opportunity to manage at a higher level was also reflected in the written comments as being attractive. Reasons for wanting the post included “being a key stage co-ordinator” and “being part of a management team” (Questionnaire Respondent 29) as well as wanting “additional responsibility and whole school issues” and the chance to deal with “personnel and curriculum issues” (Questionnaire Respondent 25).

Thus we see a variety of reasons attracting people to the post but they centre upon the chance to manage at a higher level. This was echoed in the responses of the interviewees but was summarised most comprehensively by the teacher who saw the post as representing three distinct aspects, which were “Greater input into the life of the school, challenge and personnel fulfilment” (Questionnaire Respondent 4). Put like this it is easy to see why the post would appear attractive.

The written answers and subsequent interview responses to the question ‘Why do you think schools need assistant heads?’ centred upon the notion of the great demands of school management needing more people to share the tasks as was reflected by the respondent who wrote that the:

workload is too much for a head and deputy alone. Using an assistant head allows more people the opportunity to be involved in school management.

Questionnaire Respondent 17

This notion of greater “shared management responsibilities” (Questionnaire Respondent 14) is echoed throughout the responses but often with reference to it “depending on the size and structure of the school” (Questionnaire Respondent 29). One of the schools created the post because they “needed another deputy as it had grown from 340 to 600 pupils” (Questionnaire Respondent 7). This response is unusual because it refers to needing ‘another deputy’ and not an assistant head and yet that is what they got. Again this is an example of no real distinction being evident between the two. It is interesting to speculate whether cost is an issue regarding appointing assistant heads rather than deputy heads. In at least one case the respondent felt it was a case of “the assistant head offering a cheaper alternative” (Questionnaire Respondent 30).

As has been seen in other sections despite the fact that the role of the assistant head was not designed to deputise there was reference to doing this in the responses, or as one respondent put it “to run the show when the head is away!”. It is interesting to see that it is a reason in its own right to have the post.

An astute response to this question was provided by the respondent who, thinking about why schools need assistant heads, simply said, “They don’t necessarily need one – they need a management team that can manage all of their responsibilities” (Questionnaire Respondent 26). While agreeing with this argument it is also true that the assistant headship post provides the flexibility to create an effective and well rewarded management team that can adjust to the ever changing demands of modern primary management and, as this quote suggests, can manage all of the responsibilities.

The question concerned with 'How have colleagues in your school reacted to your post?' was designed to see if the role was well accepted by staff but also ascertain whether the role was clearly understood. Where the change has worked well the roles are clearly defined and staff know what the role of the assistant heads are. At one school:

The change accompanied a large change in our school. Teaching staff have adapted to the three Assistant Heads and no deputy. They draw on each for their particular subject/responsibility areas.

Questionnaire Respondent 2

This appears to be a school where the areas are established and confusion is minimal. The word 'fine' appears on a few occasions, as does the word 'positively'. Some have found staff supportive perhaps because the staff "understand the time and responsibility and commitment" inherent in the role. One assistant head was well received because of what they brought to the post. They wrote that:

there was a gap in the 'skills' that the management had – they seemed pleased that the gap is being addressed – by me!

Questionnaire Respondent 26

This is again evidence of the assistant head filling the niche role. Anyone new to a school who can fill a void is likely to be well received and it is always interesting to see if, after the honeymoon period, they continue to be as popular.

Of course not all assistant heads found the transition so easy with regard to the reaction of colleagues. One noted that, "Other colleagues are unsure and a little confused but the younger/newer colleagues see it as another person as a line manager" (Questionnaire Respondent 1). This emphasises the importance of communication in the school to ensure that everyone knows the responsibilities of everyone else. More worryingly was the assistant head who responded to the enquiry about how their colleagues had reacted by saying, "I'm not sure they know about it!" (Questionnaire Respondent 19). This suggests poor communication but it may also show a teacher who has carried on the same role as before and merely has a new title and so to all intents and purposes there has been no change in terms of how other staff view her. This echoes the number of responses who say the treatment was "no different" (Questionnaire Respondent 25), particularly where there is no deputy head and hence "no distinction is made" (Questionnaire Respondent 22). One assistant head commented on the elevated role in terms of status by saying that while the response had been 'positive', the "greater responsibility brings some 'trepidation' from less experienced staff" (Questionnaire Respondent 5). This reflects that for new staff the role is probably viewed as similar to that of the deputy whereas more experienced staff may take longer to adjust to the new position.

One issue that emerged was the generally positive nature of the responses towards the post. Many felt challenged by the new post and described a sense of excitement at "getting to really manage things that matter" (Interviewee 5). Although accepting that

the role was hard and that there was a lot of work to do the respondents did communicate a sense of purpose in describing their roles and although a question specifically related to job satisfaction was not asked there was generally little negativity in the responses. When this negativity did appear it was generally in response to “overload due to more government initiatives” rather than internal problems in the school. It will be intriguing to see if this positive view continues when the assistant heads have been in post for a long time.

The final area of consideration was what the future might hold for the post. Interviewees who speculated on the future of assistant headship felt the role would become more widespread and reiterated that it would look different in different settings. In this sense they saw the future of the role as situational – dependent on the needs of any one school. In many ways this was seen as the attraction of the post in terms of school management.

In considering all of this information regarding assistant headship, whether from job descriptions, questionnaires or interviews, what has emerged is that the experiences, attitudes and beliefs of assistant heads are varied but also fascinating. But what are the key themes that emerge from this study of assistant headship?

Chapter 8 -Conclusion

The key purpose of this study was to establish how assistant heads are affecting primary school management and what their opinions about their roles are. This aim was in part because of the “paucity of research studies” (Muijs and Harris, 2003, p6) on deputy and assistant heads. This study has provided one of those much-needed investigations into the work of assistant heads. The study was also needed because of the changing structure of primary school management. As the role of the deputy has expanded it has in part led to the rise of the assistant head post. The growth in ‘distributed leadership’ in this form is premised on the idea that “effective leadership need not be located in the person of one leader but can be dispersed within the school” (Muijs and Harris, 2003, p6). This dispersal now includes the assistant head being able to play a major role in the school as has been seen in many cases in this study.

In considering the roles of assistant heads different categories of assistant headship have emerged in this study and the conclusion begins with reference to these types. Although diverse, the assistant headships in this research can be categorised around three broad headings, which are:

1. **Quasi – Deputy Headship** - Assistant headship as an alternative or equivalent to deputy headship where the assistant head shares some of the responsibility for leadership
2. **Subordinate Deputy Headship** - Assistant headship as an additional senior management post that is above the old management post levels but below deputy headship
3. **Niche Assistant Headship** - a post within a school that is specifically relevant to that school that operates at a high level, perhaps based upon some specialist knowledge

These categories are not always discrete and there can be overlap between the niche category and the other two. However they are useful in understanding the different possibilities of assistant headship as seen across these fifty-seven cases.

The first of these categories is where assistant headship is an alternative or equivalent to the role of the deputy. Throughout the data gathering process there were examples of job descriptions that were indistinguishable from that of a deputy head. The respondents themselves spoke of there being “no difference” (Questionnaire Respondent 27) and of course in ten cases there were no deputies in the school under study – just assistant heads performing the roles associated with the traditional deputy. This development is surprising. It is surprising because the one clear difference between the role of a deputy and an assistant head is that when the assistant head role was created it was not intended that they would deputise in the absence of the head (School Teachers Review Board, 2000, p15). Despite this 46% of schools in this survey see deputising appearing in the job description. Is this legal? It is certainly not what was intended by the legislation.

What has emerged in this study is that the assistant heads generally do want to deputise because it is a useful experience for them in career terms. For those aspiring to headship the chance to deputise is an attractive one and much can be learned from deputising even for a few hours. For a few of the assistant heads the time spent deputising can detract from time spent doing whatever is the core purpose of the assistant headship. This was seen in the case study. However most, if not all, assistant heads in this survey seem to accept deputising as a part of their job and indeed many do not make a distinction between the two. Some of these assistant heads are deputies in all but name.

The key though is less about deputising in the absence of the head but more about carrying out a role that is synonymous with that of a deputy. The quasi-deputies in this study were usually on higher leadership points and were clearly at the forefront of the leadership of their school, being responsible for key areas such as performance management. These assistant heads appear to be having a significant effect upon their school.

The second type of assistant headship that emerges is that of an additional senior management post, which is above the +2 management post, but also below the deputy headship role. This supportive role was, in some cases, depicted by respondents as a link between classroom and management, almost a go-between for staff and head/deputy. Although involved in some aspects of senior management these assistant heads were not at the forefront of school leadership and were often on the lower leadership points. These assistant heads have the potential for development. They are often carrying out management tasks but as yet are not really leaders within the whole school. That could come with the right opportunity but it will also require the right training. This could come in the form of NPQH but it will be mainly dependent upon the individual head and how they view the development of their future leaders. Certainly the post provides an opportunity for this development.

The third broad category is assistant headship is a niche post within a school. In this category the school sees a need that is vital in improvement and, in an attempt to attract someone of the right ability, places the role at the level of assistant head. The post could be on higher level such as for quality of teaching or data management, or on a lower level for a specific aspect such as a core manager or SENCO. For some respondents the assistant head role is exactly the same as the deputy but for this group it is about having the same respect and authority as the deputy rather than carrying out the same tasks. One respondent emphasised this viewpoint by writing:

I think an assistant head needs to make his or her own niche in the management of the school which is distinct and different – almost equal to the deputy.

Questionnaire Respondent 1

This version of the assistant head post sees the role filling a particular need in the school and in this sense is 'distinct and different' from being a lesser deputy role.

The three categories, although general, illuminate the role and its possibilities. The first two reflect the flexibility of the leadership scale and it is easy to see how the

assistant heads could be placed on the continuum according to their responsibility. It is worth reiterating however that the amount of responsibility and the leadership point in this study did not always correlate. It will take time for this to happen as schools become more used to the different types of assistant headship and what might be reasonably expected at different points on the leadership scale.

The categories referred to are based upon the data collected in this study with regard to what assistant heads are actually doing in primary schools. So what else can be said about how these assistant heads are influencing primary school management? The analysis shows that in over half of cases they are:

- Playing a key role in performance management
- Managing a key stage
- Taking a major responsibility for the quality of teaching
- Have significant involvement with standards and assessment.

In over a third of cases they are:

- Taking an overview of the curriculum
- Being responsible for managing INSET
- Managing staff development
- Carrying out mentoring
- Managing a core subject.

The assistant heads in this study generally have a significant teaching commitment, on average 75% of the week and 42% teach full time. They work mainly in primary schools, are on an average point of 4 –5 of the leadership scale and have an average age of 37. A third of those in the questionnaire survey surprisingly work with no deputy head in the school. What all of this shows is that these assistant heads are playing a significant role in the leadership of primary schools.

In addition to establishing the functions of assistant headship this research was designed to establish the feelings, attitudes and beliefs of the assistant heads. The assistant heads in this study see themselves as having significantly more responsibility than those teachers on management points and many believe their role is the same as a deputy role. Their posts are generally characterised by clear leadership targets but they do not receive good induction into their roles. They believe that the role has been created primarily because of the increasingly demanding nature of school management rather than through poor pay, government attempts to reform the profession or reluctance for promotion amongst some staff. This theme was frequently referred to and is summarised well by the respondent who said:

With increasing emphasis on strategic planning and development assistant head posts are necessary to support heads and deputies and other teaching staff.

Questionnaire Respondent 26

Many of these assistant heads see their posts as an important step on the way to headship. For one assistant head:

An assistant head post broaches management possibilities and encourages talented teachers with less longevity to manage in addition to teaching.

Interviewee 3

Another characterised an assistant head as “ a person who is motivated, ambitious and is going places. Probably to headship” (Interviewee 5). Although not uniform this kind of view was quite prevalent with the role being further characterised as being a “springboard position” (Interviewee 3). Indeed one assistant head from this group had already secured a headship. Few of the respondents see the role as either an alternative to headship or as preparation for LEA work. The post was however seen as useful in retaining and recruiting excellent staff.

Although some generalisations could be made the opinions were still quite diverse and reflect the different backgrounds and experiences of the assistant heads under consideration. As if to reflect this wide-ranging view of the role one assistant head noted that the post “very much depends on the individual school size and staffing – it can be whatever you want it to be” (Questionnaire Respondent 28). This flexibility assists a school in organising their management but it does bring inconsistency with the post. One cannot be sure exactly what responsibilities an assistant head has and in this sense the prestige of the post is lessened. Nevertheless the assistant heads do feel positive about their role and are generally keen to take on more management responsibility and play a more major role in school management. For one or two in this survey that could amount to deputy headship ‘on the cheap’ although that is not the view of the majority.

One of the things this research has done is present a case study of a successful assistant headship. This study involved a niche post that had a clear mandate, to improve the quality of teaching. In this sense it fell squarely in the instructional leader model (Harris, 2003, p10). The case study showed how an assistant head could impact upon the core purpose of a school without duplicating the role of a deputy. Having said that this case study is clearly in a minority compared to the others represented here. The majority here are either the quasi –deputy or subordinate deputy type already mentioned. This may be because of the cost involved or due to a reluctance to entrust the quality of teaching element to an assistant head rather than a deputy. Whatever the reason the case study is unusual but despite this it should still be considered an option for schools who want to restructure in a way that would allow for greater development in teaching and learning.

What are the implications of all of this for school structures in the future? It seems from this evidence that the flexibility offered by the post allows for more innovation in primary school management with different combinations on the leadership scale being possible. The leadership scale does provide opportunities for more creative management particularly in retaining capable staff with enhanced roles and financial rewards that are beyond the old management point system. The notion of distributed leadership which was outlined in the introduction is relevant here. The thesis began by referring to the ‘many leaders’ (Fullan, 2002) that modern schools need and the portraits of assistant headship painted in this study are good examples of this.

One interviewee suggested “Two assistant heads in one school acting as effective key stage managers under the overview of one head” (Interviewee 1) as being the best solution to modern primary management. One assistant head that was interviewed went further and speculated about heads in the future overseeing a few schools with assistants running each one on a day to day basis and hence there being a wide leadership group. Time will tell if these notions are fanciful or not.

One other element to consider in the future is the Fast Track programme aimed at identifying managers and providing leadership training as early as their Post Graduate courses. The subordinate assistant head posts described here may be achievable by Fast Track teachers relatively early in their career and may be a vehicle for even more rapid advancement.

So what can be concluded about assistant headship? If it can be shaped appropriately then the post clearly has great potential. These cases, although by no means flawless, do provide examples of the post impacting successfully on primary educational management. This was seen in the diverse roles being undertaken and the various responsibilities being entrusted further down the school management hierarchy. Indeed in some cases the hierarchy itself has been subverted with the removal of the deputy post. The schools in this study have shaped the post to their needs, whether quasi-deputy, subordinate deputy or niche post. In this they appear to be successful such as the respondent who felt “very positive. The new management structure is working well” (Questionnaire Respondent 10). Of course this study cannot fully substantiate the claim that they are being totally successful because that would need evidence about how each school is performing but the opinions of these assistant heads are clearly positive about the contributions they are making. With its potential to retain and financially reward staff, ease the management workload and be a tool to respond to the ever changing educational world it is not surprising that most of the assistant heads in this study saw the future as positive for assistant headship.

This study has illustrated how the role of assistant head has the potential to alter the way in which primary schools are structured. However, it is worth reiterating that structure alone will not ensure progress. Structural change can be merely superficial when the “change required is in the culture of what people value and how they work together to accomplish it” (Fullan, 2002, p6). Central to the development of this culture change could be the assistant head if it focussed on the ‘Instructional Leadership’ form (Southworth, 1995) as modelled in the case study. The important fact is that the assistant head could play a significant role in establishing the right culture in a school whether as a quasi-deputy, a subordinate deputy or within a niche role. However they are used, used they should be because as this study has shown they are already impacting upon the primary leadership and they have great potential to do so even more in the future.

Appendix 1

JOB DESCRIPTION: ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER : PROFESSIONAL TUTOR:

PURPOSE OF THE JOB

- To be responsible for high quality teaching and effective learning in the school
- To support staff in raising the quality of their teaching
- To play a key role in the performance management of staff and to co-ordinate and evaluate all staff training

RESPONSIBLE TO

The Headteacher

KEY TASKS

N.B. The work of the Professional Tutor will be in addition to the requirements of all CPS teachers, including the leadership of a subject or aspect within the school.

1. To plan and implement on-going professional development programmes for all staff
2. To lead, develop and coach teachers, giving practical advice and guidance on all aspects of teaching and learning as outlined in our school policies
3. To model good practice, for example through providing demonstration lessons and by working alongside teachers in their classrooms.
4. To develop materials for the monitoring and support of teachers, including video recordings of best practice
5. To be aware of latest research and new initiatives related to effective teaching
6. To disseminate materials relating to best practice and current educational research in teaching and learning
7. To form effective links with the local authority and higher education institutions, including initial training colleges.
8. To co-ordinate the training of PGCE Students in Foundation Subjects
9. To advise on the provision of in-service training for teaching and support staff and co-ordinate relevant training sessions. This may involve the development of other teachers as presenters.
10. To advise the headteacher on the needs of individual staff and the management of their performance.

11. To give particular support to those who are experiencing difficulties.
12. To co-ordinate visits to the school from other educational institutions.
13. To co-ordinate the induction and mentoring of all new staff including newly qualified teachers and student teachers.
14. To review those school policies which relate to effective teaching and learning at least annually.
15. After due consultation to accept changes to the above in response to the changing needs of the school.

Appendix 2

Summary of Areas of Responsibility According to Job Descriptions

| Code for school | Scale | SMT | Manage core | INSET | S.Dev. | Mentor | P.M. | Standards |
|-----------------|-------|-----|-------------|-------|--------|--------|------|-----------|
| A | - | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| B | - | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| C | - | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| D | - | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| E | - | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| F | - | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| G | - | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| H | - | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| I | - | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| J | - | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| K | - | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| L | - | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| M | - | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| N | - | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| O | - | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| P | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Q | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| R | 7 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| S | 7 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| T | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| U | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| V | 7 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| W | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| X | 6 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Y | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Z | 10 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| AA | 10 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| BB | 5 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| CC | 5 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| DD | 9 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| EE | - | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| FF | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| GG | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| HH | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| II | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| JJ | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| KK | - | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| LL | - | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| MM | 5 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| NN | - | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| OO | - | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| PP | 6 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| QQ | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| RR | 10 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| SS | - | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|-------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| TT | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| UU | 8 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| VV | 6 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| WW | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| XX | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| YY | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| ZZ | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| AAA | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| BBB | 5 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| CCC | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| DDD | 5 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| EEE | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| FFF | | 57 | 18 | 25 | 25 | 22 | 42 | 32 |
| % | | 100% | 32% | 44% | 44% | 39% | 74% | 56% |

Responsibilities (continued)

| School | SENCO | Q. of T. | Curriculum | Parents | Teach FT | Teach 0.6+ | Deputising | Total |
|--------|-------|----------|------------|---------|----------|------------|------------|-------|
| A | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 6 |
| B | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| C | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 6 |
| D | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 6 |
| E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| F | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 6 |
| G | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 9 |
| H | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 9 |
| I | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| J | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 4 |
| K | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 10 |
| L | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| M | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| N | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 5 |
| O | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 6 |
| P | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| Q | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| R | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 6 |
| S | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 6 |
| T | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 7 |
| U | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 6 |
| V | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| W | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 5 |
| X | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| Y | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 5 |
| Z | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 8 |
| AA | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 6 |
| BB | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 7 |
| CC | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| DD | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| EE | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| FF | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 9 |
| GG | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 6 |
| HH | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 6 |
| II | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 6 |
| JJ | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| KK | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 5 |
| LL | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 5 |
| MM | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 8 |
| NN | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 6 |
| OO | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 5 |
| PP | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 5 |
| QQ | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| RR | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| SS | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 7 |
| TT | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 9 |
| UU | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 4 |
| VV | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 6 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----------|
| WW | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 9 |
| XX | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| YY | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 6 |
| ZZ | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 6 |
| AAA | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 10 |
| BBB | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 9 |
| CCC | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 8 |
| DDD | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 8 |
| EEE | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 9 |
| FFF | 10 | 33 | 23 | 8 | 24 | 33 | 23 | 359 |
| % | 18% | 58% | 53% | 14% | 42% | 82% | 46% | Ave = 6.3 |



Appendix 3 (i)

Background and Responsibilities of Questionnaire Respondents

| School | Type | Start | L.P. | Age | Previous | KS Co | PM | Mon. QT |
|--------|---------|----------|---------------|----------------|------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| 1 | Pri | 01-Sep | | 51 | Main | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 2 | Pri | 01-Jan | 6 | - | - | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 3 | Pri | 01/04/01 | 3 | 29 | Ass't | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 4 | Pri | 01/09/01 | 3 | 49 | Sen Man | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 5 | Pri | 01/09/01 | 4 | 29 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 6 | Pri | 01/09/01 | 4 | 35 | ICT | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 7 | Pri | 01/09/01 | 3 | 36 | KSMAN+2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 8 | Pri | 01/09/01 | 5 | 38 | Yrlead/Ass | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 9 | Junior | 01/09/01 | 5 | 52 | Actdep | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 10 | Junior | 01/09/01 | - | 28 | Litman | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 11 | Junior | 01/01/02 | 8 | - | - | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 12 | Junior | 01/10/01 | 4 | - | - | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 13 | Primary | 01/09/01 | 7 | - | - | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 14 | Primary | 01/01/02 | 6 | - | - | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 15 | Primary | 08/04/02 | 1 | - | - | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 16 | Primary | 01/09/01 | 6 | 34 | Adviser | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 17 | Junior | - | - | - | - | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 18 | Junior | - | - | - | - | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 19 | S | 01/09/01 | 13 | 51 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 20 | Primary | 01/04/02 | - | - | - | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 21 | Infant | 08/04/02 | 1 | 28 | Teacher | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 22 | Primary | 01/09/99 | 3 | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 23 | Middle | 01/09/02 | 2 | 39 | Num cons | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 24 | Primary | 01/09/00 | 7 | 36 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 25 | Primary | 01/01/02 | 1 | 55 | teacher | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 26 | Primary | 10/04/02 | 3 | 31 | ICT | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 27 | Middle | 10/04/02 | 9 | 31 | ICT | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 28 | Primary | 01/09/01 | 7 | 30 | teacher | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 29 | Primary | 01/01/02 | 3 | 33 | Kscoord | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 30 | Primary | 01/01/02 | 2 | 29 | KScoord | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 31 | Primary | 01/01/02 | 3 | 30 | kscoord | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| | | | 119 | 774 | | 18 | 31 | 27 |
| | | | A=4.48 | A=36.86 | | 60% | 100% | 87% |

Appendix 3 (ii)

Areas Of Responsibility of Questionnaire Respondents

| School | Core | As't | Deputise | Curric. | S.Dev | INSET | SENCO | Mentor |
|--------|------|------|----------|---------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 3 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 5 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 6 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 7 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 8 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 9 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 10 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 11 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 12 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 13 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 14 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 15 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 16 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 17 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 18 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 19 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 20 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 21 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 22 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 23 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 24 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 25 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 26 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 27 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 28 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 29 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 30 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 31 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 32 | 18 | 23 | 23 | 16 | 15 | 16 | 4 | 23 |
| % | 60% | 73% | 80% | 53% | 53% | 53% | 13% | 73% |

Areas of Responsibility (continued)

| School | Q of T | Total | Teaching | Non-contact | Deputy | AH | + 3 manager | +2 manager |
|--------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | 1 | 8 | 0.8 | 0.2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| 2 | 1 | 7 | 0.8 | 0.2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 3 | 1 | 10 | 0.9 | 0.1 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| 4 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| 5 | 1 | 6 | 0.9 | 0.1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| 6 | 1 | 9 | 0.9 | 0.1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| 7 | 1 | 9 | 0.8 | 0.2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 8 | 0 | 7 | 0.8 | 0.2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| 9 | 0 | 7 | 0.8 | 0.2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 10 | 1 | 9 | 0.9 | 0.1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 11 | 1 | 7 | 0.6 | 0.4 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 12 | 0 | 5 | 0.8 | 0.2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| 13 | 1 | 10 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 14 | 1 | 8 | 0 | 0.6 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| 15 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 16 | 1 | 10 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 17 | 1 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 18 | 1 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 19 | 1 | 7 | 0.4 | 0.6 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 20 | 0 | 7 | 0.8 | 0.2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 21 | 0 | 8 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 22 | 1 | 11 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 23 | 1 | 7 | 0.8 | 0.2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 24 | 1 | 7 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 25 | 0 | 5 | 0.7 | 0.3 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 26 | 1 | 7 | 0.4 | 0.6 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 27 | 1 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 28 | 1 | 10 | 0.9 | 0.1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 29 | 1 | 8 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 30 | 1 | 11 | 0.8 | 0.2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 31 | 1 | 11 | 0.8 | 0.2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 32 | 23 | 235 | 23.1 | 7.5 | 20 | 43 | 8 | 17 |
| | 77% | 7.83 | 0.77 | 0.23 | 0.66 | 1.43 | 0.27 | 0.57 |

Appendix 4 (i)

Lickert Scale responses to Questionnaire on Opinions about Assistant Headship

| School | School | DH | Head | More | Teach | Targets | Induction | Similar | Alt. | Prepfor Ad | Demand | Reward | Reluctance | Govt |
|----------------|--------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | Pri | 1 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 3 |
| 2 | Pri | 3 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 2 |
| 3 | Pri | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 4 | Pri | 3 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| 5 | Pri | 5 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| 6 | Pri | 3 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 5 |
| 7 | Pri | 2 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 8 | Jun | 3 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| 9 | Jun | 3 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| 10 | Pri | 5 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 11 | Pri | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| 12 | Jun | 3 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 2 |
| 13 | Pri | 3 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 3 |
| 14 | Pri | 3 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| 15 | Pri | 5 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| 16 | Pri | 4 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 5 |
| 17 | Pri | 1 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18 | Jun | 1 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19 | S | 2 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| 20 | Pri | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| 21 | Inf | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| 22 | Pri | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 4 |
| 23 | Middle | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 5 |
| 24 | Pri | 5 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 25 | Pri | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 5 |
| 26 | Middle | 4 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| 27 | Pri | 3 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| 28 | Pri | 1 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| 29 | Pri | 2 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 30 | Pri | 1 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| 31 | Pri | 1 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 5 |
| Total | | 90 | 113 | 129 | 101 | 126 | 64 | 124 | 99 | 91 | 126 | 94 | 77 | 101 |
| Average | | 2.9 | 3.65 | 4.16 | 3.26 | 4.06 | 2.06 | 4 | 3.19 | 2.94 | 4.06 | 3.03 | 2.48 | 3.26 |

Appendix 4 (ii)

Written Responses to the Questionnaire

What attracted you to the post?

1 – Responsibility and involvement with strategic whole school issues – also the option to go for NPQH training for headship in same post

2 – Next available step in my school as all co-ordinators with responsibility in my school have no aspiration to move up the management scale

4 – Greater input into the life of the school, challenge and personal fulfilment

5 – Involvement in overall management and leadership of the school. Position and responsibility already what majority of my original role had become.

6 – School 100% Bangladeshi – new challenge. Job description less than previous job as KS1 manager which involved SENCO, Literacy, PSHE coordination as well with no set release time!

7 – Internal promotion

8 – Clear responsibility for projects, working with parents, development of Teaching Assistants

9 – Having been at this school for a couple of years I was ready to move on. Initially I wanted a deputy headship but the post of AH came up.

10 – Good experience for preparation for headship. School based work. Have spent last four years as part of LEA Advisory team

11 – At the moment the role of AH is still quite vague. I would say my main role is key stage 2 co-ordinator. We are trying to develop the role of AH but it is still early days.

12 – Next step up from team leader. Wanted to take more of a leading role in the managing the school. Career development.

13 – Some are not clear on responsibility

14 – Challenge. Would give me an overview of whole school. Further management opportunities

15 – Career development

16 – SMT post that came up at the right time as I was preparing to leave Advisory service. Clear leadership role offered by the school. Opportunity to work with existing Head/Deputy

17 – Felt we were doing the work anyway to maintain high standards. Money. Didn't want to change school

19 – My Head suggested I went on the Leadership scale.

21 – The opportunity came up within my own school. I also wanted some extra responsibility and more money

22 – I was CPS +2 in the school and was offered it before the previous deputy left. I am now deputy but have not changed the job title (from AH)

23 – I wanted to return to school as deputy but initial job application/interview feedback encouraged me to apply for assistant headship. I want to become a Head one day and AH provides important stepping stone for me as a 'returner' to school

24 Challenge and putting into practice some skills learned through NPQH

25- Additional responsibility and whole school issues. Personnel and curriculum issues

26 – Different type of school (Mid)Co-ed rather than boys geographical reasons and ICT departmental role

27 – Returning to a previous school

28 – Internal appointment and more money for doing the same job. Stepping stone to headship

29 – Key stage co-ordinator in a Primary school

30 – Being part of a management team

Why do you think schools need Assistant Head's ?

1- More and more decisions are school led with the role of head increasing. AH can share some of the workload and have access to headship training

2 – Having AH's allow more people the opportunity to be involved in school management/leadership. This may lead more people to applying to become DH/Heads

4 – We have two AHs and no deputy, so we are doing the job of the Dh

5 – Our school has two Ahs and no DH.

6 – To share the workload of performance management. I specialise in KS1 but liase and have a part in decision making especially important when it relates to KS you are managing – allows head and Deputy to have clearer insight into needs, budget, staffing, etc

7 – This school needed another deputy as it had grown from 340 to 600

8 – *In particular where there are two – one for curriculum leadership and quality of teaching where Ah can concentrate fully on the classroom, free of responsibilities whilst colleague deals with other issues*

9 – *A school of our size needs an SMT of four. Also it can retain good staff.*

10 – *Very positively. New management structure is working well.*

11 – *I feel that my role will develop more into management taking the load from the head and deputy. This is where I see the value of the AH.*

12 – *Unsure about the distinction between DHT and AHT. I do not feel that a school necessarily requires both – our school has two AH's but no deputy.*

13 – *Depends on the size and structure of the school*

14 – *Shared management responsibilities*

15 – *To spread management commitment and forge a link between head and classroom teachers – 'eyes and ears' of management team*

16 – *Increased demand for quality within schools – AH is a high level practitioner that bolsters SMT and leadership of the school*

17 – *Workload is too much for H and D. Need to differentiate curriculum responsibilities from day to day management, etc*

19 - *It acknowledges all I have been doing for years.*

21 – *To create a good structure to the SMT and to share management responsibilities. Support for the deputy.*

23- *With increasing emphasis on strategic planning/development, AH posts necessary to support Heads/Deputies and teaching staff. AH posts broach management possibilities and encourage talented teachers with less longevity to manage in addition to teaching – AH can also be used to retain or recruit excellent teachers.*

24 – *To liase between staff and head. A practitioner of the things implemented by management so able to empathise with staff and speak from first hand experience*

25- *My school needed someone to step into the deputy's job if she left and to lessen the workload*

26 – *They don't necessarily – they need a management team that can manage all their responsibilities. AH offers a cheaper alternative.*

27 – *This school has no deputy but two assistant heads, so therefore they are essential*

28 – *Useful in our case, with one head and two key stage managers. I think it very much depends on individual school. A deputy system is equally effective. No dep*

29 – *I think it depends on the size and structure of the school*

30 – *To work as a cohesive unit in SMT, to move the school forward. To run the show when the head is away! Deputise Cheaper alternative to 2 deputies:????*

How have colleagues in your school reacted?

1 – *Other colleagues are unsure and a little confused but younger/newer colleagues see it as another person as a line manager*

2 – *The change accompanied a large change in our school. Teaching staff have adapted to the three AH's and no deputy. They draw on each for their particular subject/responsibility areas.*

4 – *Haven't asked! Will need time to establish self and the role*

5 – *Positively although greater responsibility brings some 'trepidation' from less experienced*

6 – *I am unsure – was not in school before this post.*

7 – *Fine – now beginning to have staff come to me rather than the deputy*

8 – *Roles of two Ahs very clearly defined from outset so adjustment has been quick*

9 – *Very well*

10 – *Early days yet! Enjoying the challenges. Good training ground for headship. I feel LEA treats Ahs the same as DH – conferences, course, etc*

11 – *All my colleagues are very comfortable with the role – they see I work hard and will use me as a go-between to the head and deputy*

12 – *Very positively. Good level of support, both directly (courses) and indirectly (lots of moral support)*

13 – *Some are not clear on responsibility*

14 – *Very supportive. They do understand the time and responsibility and commitment though.*

15 – *Has made no difference to teaching colleagues as becomes a change of title*

19 – *I'm not sure that many know about it!*

21 – *They have been very supportive, particularly as it was an internal appointment.*

22 – *I am accepted as a deputy, no distinction is made.*

24 – *Have accepted me as class teacher, I am gradually being given more management tasks so at present they are not aware of the changes.*

25 – *No problems – treat me as they do the deputy*

26 – *There was a gap in the ‘skills’ that the management had – they seem pleased that the gap is being addressed – by me!*

27 – *No noticeable difference*

28 – *No different. We have traditionally had one head and one KS1 and KS2 co-ordinator system with no deputy. Assistant head has just replaced the name – same responsibilities.*

29 – *Fine. In our school it is just because of the structure with both AH’s equal with no deputy.*

30 – *Fine – no change*

Other Comments

1 – *I think an AH needs to make his own niche in the management of the schools which is distinct and different – almost equal to the deputy*

4 – *The pay is fine but not in relation to the hours I spend*

5 – *I believe many schools are replacing deputies with Ahs.*

6 – *It would be useful to have additional training on role and expectations of AH. I am doing a management course at present and the role has hardly been mentioned.*

7 – *Can’t do it with class responsibility. I have more workload than the deputy*

9 – *Personally, I see it as a valuable experience on course to DH/H*

12 – *The jobs of Ahs were created in our school due to a lack of response to advertisements for a deputy. The staff member who was acting deputy did not want to continue, but was happy to apply for a shared post. The term AH seems to imply lower status than the deputy but our job description requires us to deputise for the head when necessary. We are unsure of the actual difference between DH and Ah.*

13 – *In a large school should not be class based*

14 – *It would be nice to know how other AH feel about their role and whether they see it as being clearly defined and separate to a deputy head’s role.*

15 – *Enables me to find out more about management of school and to put into practice theory learned through NPQH course*

22 – *It seems to be interpreted in different ways in different situations*

23 – *The previous Ah became the deputy.*

24 – *Change needed to maintain enthusiasm for profession and to move to where my experience gained through life was considered (age 55)*

25 – *It is not a role you can take on if you are not wishing to become a DHT or HT – too much is involved. A term as an Ah has prepared me to be acting deputy next half term.*

26 – *I left a +4 secondary for the AH post on L9-13. (Oh really)*

27 – *Although I feel it is important to have a role of a class teacher, it places a lot of extra responsibility, paper work, etc on me and sometimes it is difficult for the class of Year 1 children that I teach.*

28 – *Two assistant heads in one school act as effective key stage managers under overview of one head. I think post depends very much on the individual school's size and staffing – it can be whatever you want it to be. **I'm starting a headship in September***

Appendix 5

Questionnaire Example

Specific Responsibilities (Please ring Yes or No)

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Key Stage Co-ordinator | Y <input checked="" type="radio"/> N | Curriculum Overview | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Y N |
| Performance Management Involvement | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Y N | Staff Development | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Y N |
| Monitoring the Quality of Teaching | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Y N | INSET Training | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Y N |
| Management of a Core Subject | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Y N | SENCO | Y <input checked="" type="radio"/> N |
| Assessment Manager/pupil Performance | Y <input checked="" type="radio"/> N | Mentoring (NQT, <u>Students</u>) | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Y N |
| Deputising for the Head/Deputy | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Y N | Quality of Teaching | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Y N |

Teaching Commitment (Please indicate whether full time, 0.5, etc)

Class based ✓ YRS Floating/MAST _____ Booster _____

Additional Comments: 1 day every other wk out of class.

What is the make-up of your Senior Management Team? (please Tick)

Head ✓ Deputy ✓ Another AH ✓ +3 Post _____ +2 Posts _____ Other _____

What attracted you to the post of Assistant Head?

Having been at this school for a couple of years I was ready to move on. Initially, I wanted a D.Hship but the post of AH came up.

Why do you think schools need Assistant Heads?

A school of our size (3 form entry) needs an S.M.T of 4. Also, it can retain good staff.

Please read the statement and then ring the numbers according to how strongly you agree or disagree with them. 1 means strongly disagree and 5 means strongly agree. AH is used to denote Assistant Head.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|-------------------|---|---|----------------|---|
| | Strongly Disagree | | | Strongly Agree | |
| The AH post is an important step on the way to Deputy Headship | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| The AH post is an important step on the way to Headship | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I have significantly more responsibility as an AH than a +2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| It is important that an AH has a substantial teaching commitment | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| As an AH I have clear leadership targets | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I have received specific induction as an AH | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| The AH is very similar to the Deputy Head post | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Being AH provides a good alternative for those not aspiring to Headship | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| AH is good preparation for Advisory/Inspection work | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| The AH post has been created because of the increasingly demanding nature of school management | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| The AH post has been created because of the need to reward senior managers with higher pay | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| The AH post has been created because of the reluctance of teachers to become Heads or Deputies | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| The AH has been created because of the Government desire to change the nature of school management | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

How have colleagues in your school adjusted to the new role?

Very well!

Are there any other comments you wish to make about being an Assistant Head?

Personally, I see it as valuable experience on course to D.H/H.

I would be willing to do a follow up interview about my role as an AH. Please indicate. (Y) N

Thank you for taking the time to answer this questionnaire.

Keith Watson January 2002

Appendix 6

Interview Record Example

1. What are the main elements of your role?

Confirmed that it was still as listed on the questionnaire

2. Why do you think more assistant head posts are becoming available?

To recruit and retain staff

To fast track people towards headsip

There is far too much admin. to do

the fact that there is now threshold may be a deterrent

I came into the profession late and want to move up quickly

3. What are your experiences of the role so far?

Positive and the pay is greater

The deputy still has a larger role than I do

My main areas are as a line manager for different things e.g. a year group

Still feeling my way

4. How do you see the role developing in the future?

I anticipate far more of these posts

Paperwork will not decrease, even if it is supposed to be electronic

Particularly needed if the school is more than two form entry

Non-teaching deputies are more and more common and the same may happen with some assistant heads

5. What are the wider implications of assistant headship for primary school management?

There will be more inequalities across schools in terms of affording them

Performance management is the key to much of this and will be stronger in the future

Have heard of 5 assistant heads in a five form entry school but doesn't think they have a deputy

Appendix 7

The Leadership Scale

PART III QUALIFIED TEACHERS : **LEADERSHIP GROUP** Pay spine for the leadership group

4.1 A head teacher shall be paid such salary based upon the leadership group pay spine set out in paragraph 4.4 as the relevant body shall determine in accordance with paragraph 5 – ADD LINK TO PARAGRAPH 5 OF SECTION 2.

4.2 A deputy head teacher shall be paid such salary based upon the leadership group pay spine set out in paragraph 4.4 as the relevant body shall determine in accordance with paragraph 11 – ADD LINK TO PARAGRAPH 11 OF SECTION 2.

4.3 An assistant head teacher shall be paid such salary based upon the leadership group pay spine set out in paragraph 4.4 as the relevant body shall determine in accordance with paragraph 13 – ADD LINK TO PARAGRAPH 13 OF SECTION 2.

The pay spine for members of the leadership group is:

| Spine point | Annual Salary England and Wales £ | Annual Salary Inner London £ |
|--------------------|--|---|
| L1 | 31,416 | 37,359 |
| L2 | 32,205 | 38,148 |
| L3 | 33,009 | 38,952 |
| L4 | 33,834 | 39,777 |
| L5 | 34,677 | 40,620 |
| L6 | 35,544 | 41,487 |
| L7 | 36,507 | 42,450 |
| L8 | 37,344 | 43,287 |
| L9 | 38,277 | 44,220 |
| L10 | 39,261 | 45,204 |
| L11 | 40,278 | 46,221 |
| L12 | 41,208 | 47,151 |
| L13 | 42,240 | 48,183 |
| L14 | 43,290 | 49,233 |
| L15 | 44,367 | 50,310 |
| L16 | 45,549 | 51,492 |
| L17 | 46,599 | 52,542 |
| L18 | 47,769 | 53,712 |
| L19 | 48,951 | 54,894 |
| L20 | 50,166 | 56,109 |
| L21 | 51,408 | 57,351 |
| L22 | 52,683 | 58,626 |
| L23 | 53,988 | 59,931 |
| L24 | 55,329 | 61,272 |
| L25 | 56,700 | 62,643 |
| L26 | 58,107 | 64,050 |
| L27 | 59,544 | 65,487 |
| L28 | 61,020 | 66,963 |
| L29 | 62,535 | 68,478 |
| L30 | 64,089 | 70,032 |
| L31 | 65,676 | 71,619 |
| L32 | 67,308 | 73,251 |
| L33 | 68,979 | 74,922 |
| L34 | 70,686 | 76,629 |
| L35 | 72,444 | 78,387 |
| L36 | 74,235 | 80,178 |
| L37 | 76,083 | 82,026 |
| L38 | 77,964 | 83,907 |
| L39 | 79,863 | 85,806 |
| L40 | 81,861 | 87,804 |
| L41 | 83,904 | 89,847 |
| L42 | 86,004 | 91,947 |
| L43 | 88,155 | 94,098 |

Bibliography

Anderson, G. (1990) Fundamentals of Educational Research London: Falmer

Anderson, L. Wise, C. and Bush, T. (2001) "*LEAs and foundation schools: headteachers' perceptions*" in Management in Education Vol. 15, No. 1 p 21 – 25.

Bell, J. (1999) Doing Your Research Project Buckingham: Open University Press

Bennett, N. and Smith, B. (2000) "*Assessing the impact of professional development in educational leadership and management*" in Management in Education, Vol. 14 , No. 2, pp27.

Bentley, M. (1999) Modern Historiography London: Routledge

BERA (2004) Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research Nottingham: BERA

Brown, A. and Dowling P. (1998) Doing research/Reading Research London: Falmer

Campbell, J. (1999) "*Recruitment and Retention and Reward*" in Education 3-13 Oct, 1999, pp24-31.

Carter, K. and Jackson, D. (2002) "*Leadership in urban and challenging contexts; perspectives from the National College for School Leadership*" in Leadership and Management Vol. 22, No. 1 pp7-13.

Cohen, L. and Manion, L. (1994) Research Methods in Education London: Routledge

Cooper, D (1998.) "*A role with a view?*" in Management in Education Vol. 12, No. 4, pp11-14..

Crawford, M (2002) *The Charismatic school leader – Potent myth or persuasive effect?*" in School Leadership and Management Vol. 22, no. 3 pp273-287.

Day, C. and Harris, A. (2004) "*Effective school leadership*" Nottingham: NCSL

Dunscome, M. (1998) The Good Research Guide for small-scale research projects Buckingham: Open University Press

DFES (2000) School Teachers' Review Body Report London: DFES.

Draper, J and McMichael, P (1996) "*Sitting on a lonely crag: Senior Primary School Staff consider Applications for Headship*" in Management in Education Vol. 10. , No. 4, pp459-473.

Earley, P., Evans, J., Gold, A., Collarbone, P. and Halpin, D. (2002) Establishing the current state of school leadership in England London: DFES

Fullan, M. (2002) Leading in a culture of Change San Francisco, Jossey Bass

Fullan, M (2003) Change forces with a vengeance London: Routledge-Falmer

Garret, V. and McGeachie, B. (1999) “*Preparation for Headship? The role off the deputy head in the primary school*” in School Leadership and Management, Vol. 19, No. 1, pp67-81.

Gipps, C.V. (1995) Beyond testing: Towards a Theory of Educational Research Lewes: Falmer

Glenny, M., Lewis, D. and White C. (1996) *Power Sharing at Selwyn College – Auckland, New Zealand: The Co-Principalship Model* in Management in Education, Vol. 10, No. 4, 32-33.

Gold, A., Evans, J., Earley, P., Halpin, D. and Collarbone, P. (2003) “*Principled Principals?*” in Educational Management and Administration, Vol. 31, No. 2 pp127-138.

Gronn, P. (2000) “*Distributed Properties: A New Architecture for Leadership*” in Educational Management and Administration vol. 28 p317-38

Gunter, H., McGregor, D and Gunter, B., (2001) “*Teachers as leaders: a case study*” in Management in Education Vol. 15 No. 1 pp 26 28.

Harris, A. (2002) “*Effective Leadership in schools facing challenging contexts*” in Education Management and Administration Vol. 22, no. 1 pp15-26.

Harris, A (2003) “*Distributed Leadership in Schools: Leading or misleading?*” in Management in Education Vol. 16, No. 5, pp10-13.

Harvey (1994) “*Empowering the Primary School Deputy Principle*” in Education Management and Administration Vol 22 no. 1 pp26-34

Holland,J. and Ramazanoglu (1994) “*Coming to Conclusions: power and interpretation in the researching of young women’s sexuality*” in Maynard, M. and Purvis, J. (Ed) Researching women’s lives from a feminist perspective London: Taylor and Francis

Hopkins, D. and Levon, B. (2000) “*Government Policy and School Development*” in School Leadership and Management Vol. 20, No. 1, pp15-30.

Hughes M. and James, C. (1999) “*The Relationships Between the head and the Deputy Head in Primary Schools*” in School Leadership and Management, Vol. 19, No. 1, pp83-95.

The Independent (21/4/03)

James, C. and Whiting D. (1998) “*Headship? No thanks!*” In Management in Education Vol. 12, No. 2, pp12-14 .

Jayne, E. (1996) "*Developing more Effective Primary Deputy (or associate) Heads*" in Educational Management and Administration Vo 24 No. 3, pp317-326.

Jones, N.(1999) "*The Real World Management Preoccupations of Primary School Heads*" in School Leadership and Management, Vol. 19, No. 4 pp483-495.

Kerry, T. (2000) "*Crisis? What Crisis? It's just a normal day for a Deputy!*" in Management In Education, Vol. 14 no. 5 pp14-16.

Lomax, P. (1996) "*Site-based Managers or Educational Leaders?*" Management in Education Vol. 10, No. 2 p25.

Martin, T. (1995) "*Giving feedback after a lesson observation*" in Mentoring and Tutoring, Vol. No.3, pp

Mayo, K. (2002) "*Teacher leadership: the master teacher model*" in Management in Education Vol. 16, No. 3, pp29-33.

Morris, E. (2001) Time for Standards: Reforming the school workforce DFES.

Muijs and Harris, A. (2003) "Teacher Leadership – Improvement through empowerment" in Educational Management and Administration Vol. 31 no. 4 pp437-448

National College for School Leadership (2001) Leadership Development Framework Nottingham: NCSL.

OFSTED (2001) Advanced Skills' Teachers: Appointment, Deployment and Impact London: HMI.

Purvis, J.R. and Denison, W.F.(1993) "*Primary School deputy headship – has ERA and LMS changed the job?*" in Education 3-13, pp15-21.

Ravey, F. (1997), "*Progress in Primary management*", in Management in Education Vol. 11, No. 3, p3-4.

Ribbins, P. (1997) "*Heads on deputy headship: Impossible Roles for impossible role holders?*" in Educational Management and Administration vol. 23 no. 3 pp295-308

Riessman (1995)

Romles, D., Riley, K. and Docking, J. (2000) "*Are LEAs making a difference through leadership?*" in Management in Education Vol. 14, No. 1 pp23-26.

Rowan, J. and Taylor, P. (2002) "*Leading the English primary school: fact and fiction*" in Management in Education Vol. 16, No. 3 p 17-23.

Rutherford, D. and Dunne, D. (2000) "*The role of the deputy head – The Green paper and beyond*" Paper presented at the BERA conference 7-10 September 2000.

Shipton, J. and Male, T.(1998) “*Deputy headteachers and the NPQH*” in Management in Education Vol. 12 No. 3 pp16-17,.

Simons, H. (1996) “*The Paradox of Case Study*” in Cambridge Journal of Education, Vol. 26 No. 2, pp225-240.

Smith, A. and Reading, M. (2002) “*Reviewing performance management – impact and implications*” in Management in Education Vol. 16, No. 3, p6-11.

Sommefeldt, D. (2001) “*Nurturing environments? Reflections on leadership training*” in Management in Education in Vol. 15, no. 1 p12-19.

Southampton LEA, (2002) *Quality of Teaching at St. Mary’s Gate Primary* : Southampton LEA

Southampton LEA, (2003) *Quality of Teaching at St. Mary’s gate Primary*: Southampton LEA

Southworth (1995) Looking into Primary Headship London: Falmer

Southworth,G (1999). “*Primary School Leadership in England: policy, practice and theory*” in School Leadership and Management, Vol.19, No. 1 pp. 49-65.

Southworth G. (2002) “*Instructional leaders in schools: reflections and empirical evidence*” in School Leadership and Management Vol. 22 No. 1 pp73-91.

Times Educational Supplement (10/1/03)

Tomlinson, H. ((2003) “*Leaders and Leadership; Leadership Teams, Leaders and Middle Managers*” in Management in Education Vol.16, No. 5, pp6-9.

Wallace, M. (2001) “*Sharing Leadership of Schools through Teamwork*” in Educational Management and Administration Vol. 29(2) pp153-167

Watson, K. (2000) Truth Educational Doctorate University of Southampton

Watson, K. (2002) School Self-Evaluation – A Case Study Educational Doctorate University of Southampton

Webb, R. and Vulliamy, G.(1995) “*The changing role of the primary school deputy headteacher*” in School Organisation, Vol. 15, No. 1,pp55-62.

Wright, N., (2003) “*Principled ‘Bastard’ Leadership?*” in Education Management and Administration Vol. 31 (2) pp139-143.