

# Up close and personal

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*An investigation of headteacher  
departure from Anglican primary schools  
in England*

Volume 1

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**THE FOLLOWING FIGURES HAVE BEEN  
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**FIGURE 1 (PAGE 77)**

**FIGURE 6 (PAGE 114)**

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# **ABSTRACT**

Headteacher supply is of critical concern to policy makers and Governing Bodies in England as many schools continue to experience difficulties in recruiting school leaders despite succession planning and school organisation strategies at national and local level. Church of England schools appear to experience greater difficulties in recruitment and a lack of focus on leaders of Anglican schools in the empirical literature has resulted in little being known about the nature of Anglican school headship and why headteachers of this category of schools leave.

This study focused on the scale and nature of headteacher departure of headteachers leaving Church of England primary schools in England during one academic year, examining the influences leading to headteachers' decisions to leave a post and exploring what might have persuaded headteachers to remain in post as Anglican school headteachers.

In employing a sequential explanatory qualitative dominant mixed methods design, the study utilised data from two postal surveys and a number of semi-structured interviews with headteachers and Chairs of Governors in a complementary and negotiated manner. An inductive thematic analytical approach allowed a focus on the experiences and voices of headteachers which are heard through the conceptual framework of Wenger's theory of communities of practice.

The haemorrhage of headteachers leaving Anglican school headship includes a group of headteachers not currently recognised in the discourse about headteacher supply: headteachers choosing to leave headship altogether and Anglican school headship in particular. Many headteachers leaving headship altogether are leaving with few or no plans and with no intention to return to headship at a later date. Of those headteachers leaving for a substantive headship many are electing to move to a non-Anglican school. Some of these



are leaving with no intention of returning to headship of an Anglican school in a future career move.

Headteachers experience dis-identification with members and/or the practice of four communities of practice (Professional, Nurture, Family, and Spiritual) as they negotiate meaning for themselves through relationships, mutuality of engagement, imagination, alignment and participation.

This thesis argues that there are substantive issues associated with Anglican headship which influence headteacher departure. Anglican headship has a historical dimension which intersects with public and personal dimensions of headship in particular ways which reflect historical aspects of Christianity and Anglicanism, the history of Anglican schools in England and individuals' own faith perspectives. Five expectations coalesce in the experiences of headteachers as members of the spiritual community of practice which present challenges as headteachers negotiate meaning for themselves in their own identity work. The expectations can lead to 'dis-ease' and dis-identification with members and/or the practice of the spiritual community. It is this 'lack of fit' which can lead to a decision to leave an Anglican school, headship *per se* and Anglican school headship in particular. Personal faith can be a powerful influence in the lives of some headteachers and this study also concludes that experiencing a calling from God can influence headteacher departure.

The thesis concludes with implications for policy and practice which would enable schools to reduce the haemorrhage of experience and expertise from Church of England schools.



I am grateful to the University of Nottingham for awarding me a two year studentship in support of this study. Without it I would not have been able to continue pursuing this long held dream of researching a subject close to my heart.

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There is no question that conducting this study and writing this thesis has been a considerable challenge that has tested me to my limits and beyond. I have learnt much about myself through the process as well as about the subject of headship. To my friends and teaching colleagues who have supported me, thank you all. But especially to Jane Tapp, my fellow 'salmon running up stream', thank you. To John and Rosie Gawthorne, my erstwhile supports and 'book ends', thank you.

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This thesis is dedicated to my husband Derek whose race has finished but who joins the 'great cloud of witnesses' (Hebrews 12: 1) watching and cheering me on as I run the race that God has called me to run.

◀

*For Derek*

1962 - 2004

*'Because'*

*Because of your love for me 'to the power of four'*

*And because of the grace of God*

*I stand*



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# Abbreviations

APP	Assessing Pupil Progress
CFR	Consistent Financial Reporting
CM	Community Maintained School
CoP	Communities of Practice
CVA	Contextual Value Added
DBE	Diocesan Board of Education
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families
DDE	Diocesan Director of Education
DfE	Department for Education
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
FFT	Fischer Family Trust
FSM	Free School Meals
HE	Higher Education
HTPM	Headteacher's Performance Management
ISR	Individual School Range
LFM	Local Financial Management
LMS	Local Management of Schools
M.Div.	Masters in Divinity
MM	Mixed Methods
MMR	Mixed Methods Research
NAHT	National Association of Headteachers
NATSOC	National Society for the Promotion of Religious Education
NCSL	National College of School Leadership
NCTL	National College of Teaching and Leadership
NFER	National Federation for Educational Research
NOR	Number on Roll
NPA	National Pension Age
NPQH	National Professional Qualification for Headship



<b>NrWS</b>	<b>New Relationship with Schools</b>
<b>OECD</b>	<b>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</b>
<b>PAfS</b>	<b>Professional Adviser for Schools</b>
<b>PCC</b>	<b>Parochial Church Council</b>
<b>PLASC</b>	<b>Pupil Level Annual School Census</b>
<b>PPA</b>	<b>Planning and Preparation Time</b>
<b>RE</b>	<b>Religious Education</b>
<b>SALT</b>	<b>Speech and Language Therapist</b>
<b>SATs</b>	<b>Standard Assessment Tasks</b>
<b>SBM</b>	<b>School Business Manager</b>
<b>SEF</b>	<b>School Evaluation Form</b>
<b>SEN</b>	<b>Special Educational Needs</b>
<b>SENCo</b>	<b>Special Educational Needs Coordinator</b>
<b>SIAS</b>	<b>Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools*</b>
<b>SIAMS</b>	<b>Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools</b>
<b>SIP (1)</b>	<b>School Improvement Partner</b>
<b>SIP (2)</b>	<b>School Improvement Plan</b>
<b>TES</b>	<b>Times Educational Supplement</b>
<b>TAIT</b>	<b>Thematic Analysis of Interviews</b>
<b>THOR</b>	<b>Thematic Analysis of Open Response Questions</b>
<b>TLR</b>	<b>Teaching and Learning Responsibility Point</b>
<b>TPS</b>	<b>Teachers' Pension Scheme</b>
<b>VA</b>	<b>Voluntary Aided</b>
<b>VC</b>	<b>Voluntary Controlled</b>

**\*Changes were made to the SIAS Framework in 2012. It is now called the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Framework (SIAMS).**



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# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. Up close and personal**

The impetus for this study emerged from the desire to explore why headteachers leave. I am a 'left' headteacher myself. Two headships, the first of a Church of England Voluntary Aided (VA) Junior School and the second, headship of a Community Primary School, are part of my teaching career spanning eighteen years. Leaving at a 'young' 41, I did not retire when leaving my second headship. I did not fit the pattern of leaving for another headship in a headship 'career'. I did not leave for reasons of competency or stress. I made a choice for many different reasons to pursue a different avenue for a period of time.

My interest also stems from a range of experiences as a headteacher that are part of my own life's journey. They included supporting colleagues in their own journey to headship and those struggling with the complexities and demands of headship. Anecdotally I knew there were heads leaving who were not taking up a subsequent headship of another school and who, like myself, were certainly nowhere near retirement age. Cluster meetings were often punctuated with news that a headteacher had resigned. Speculation would inevitably follow unless there was a clear 'reason', e.g. moving to a larger school, career advancement or retirement. Sometimes a headteacher themselves would reveal that although they were leaving their post, it wasn't for the publicly declared or commonly accepted reasons that they were leaving. Some of these heads were in their forties. As a young and perhaps somewhat idealistic headteacher I wondered about the underlying reasons these heads in particular and heads in general were leaving.

I loved headship. I loved making a difference and I loved working with the myriad of children and adults my job enabled me to engage with. When

appointed to the post of headteacher of the Church of England school I had not really thought through the differences that exist in leadership of a faith school compared to leadership of a non-faith or non-church school. The opportunity to become a headteacher of an Anglican school 'happened' unexpectedly and early in my deputy headship and I took the opportunity offered. A second headship on relocation after marriage appealed because I could see that my skills could make a difference there. This happened to be a community maintained primary school and I remember well some of the differences that startled me. With hindsight perhaps I was naïve despite a teaching career in several Anglican schools and in community maintained schools in England. There were a tacit set of assumptions and expectations I operated within when head of the Anglican school which were not present at the community primary school. Similarly there were a set of parameters, unspoken assumptions and attitudes about the teaching of Religious Education (RE) and Collective Worship to name but two, in the community maintained school. Perhaps these things were just part of the character of the particular schools I led. But nevertheless, leading these two schools at times generated a mixture of emotion and response. To some extent some things felt natural to me in terms of faith perspectives, some challenged me in terms of the expressions of 'Anglicanism' apparently expected and their absence intrigued and puzzled me when I moved to the headship of the community maintained primary school.

As the successive years of headship rolled by I often wondered about the unique identity of schools that come from history, context and religious character and particularly of my experience as first a teacher, then deputy head and finally head of an Anglican school. As a Christian I wondered about how other heads managed issues of personal faith within the environment of church schools and community schools.

Then as I began to make the decision to leave headship to pursue doctoral study, I wondered if there were 'more of me'. That is to say, were there other headteachers who were leaving headship and who might not return to it? Where were they going and why were they leaving?

Initial reading around the subject led me to wonder where heads, such as myself and those I knew of, might be 'in' the data with its apparent focus on career stages, development phases and retirement (e.g. Day and Bakioglu, 1996; Earley and Weindling, 2007; Fidler and Atton, 2004) and other 'leavings' related to stress, burnout or competency (e.g. French, 2009; Kruger, van Eck and Vermeulen, 2005) or the riskiness of headship (Thomson, 2009). These core literatures about headteacher supply and demand, recruitment and retention and what is known about headteacher departure will be examined in more detail in Chapter 2.

Being a headteacher is to both hold a form of public office and fulfil an extremely politicised role within a landscape of social and educational change and yet the role of headteacher retains something intrinsically nobler and longer lasting than the plethora of political initiatives to which headteachers and governing bodies have to respond and implement. School leaders must have an 'eye' to the present and the future of their schools, their communities and the impact of their actions on their pupils.

A long standing interest in the nature and work of 'church schools' and the relationships between school, community, church and diocese 'pulled' me into reading about headteacher careers and lived experiences and why headteachers leave the profession. Exploratory reading into 'church schools' indicated that although there is considerable research into school leadership of all schools generally, with a significant body of research having been carried out into leadership of Catholic schools (e.g. Grace, 2002), studies into headship tend to focus on issues of supply and demand recruitment and retention and succession planning. A review of relevant empirical studies will be presented in Chapter 2. There appeared to be a paucity of research specifically focused on Anglican schools and Anglican school leadership and, in particular, the reasons contributing to the departure of headteachers from a particular school or from headship altogether.

This is despite the important historical place of Church of England schools and the contribution that they have made to the English education system

(Burn, Marks, Pilkington and Thompson, 2001; Elbourne, 2009; Chadwick, 1997; Francis and Lankshear, 1993; McKinney, 2008; Webster, 1954; Worsley, 2013) and that a quarter of all primary schools in England (25.3%, N=4,470) have the religious designation of 'Church of England' (Church of England, 2007).

In short, personal experience of the many complexities, challenges and joys of being a headteacher in 21<sup>st</sup> Century England underpins my research interest in why headteachers leave headship of a specific school and/or leave headship altogether.

Thus were sown the 'seeds' of this research study that fuses personal and professional experience in an investigation of headteacher departure from Anglican primary schools in England.

## **1.2. A photographer's lens**

Throughout the thesis, reference will be made to the title and various interpretations of the title, 'Up close and personal'. A photographer uses long distance, mid-distance and close-up lenses depending on whether he or she is photographing a panoramic view or the inside of a beautiful tulip whose petals inside are a different colour or hue to that of the outside.

The focal length of a lens will alter depending on the purpose of the task in hand and the subject matter. So it is with this thesis. The focus of the examination of headteacher departure moves between long distance, mid and close as I consider the issue of departure.

First, I turn to the title of this thesis in order to provide some background and rationale for the way this thesis has been organised and to set the scene for the use of metaphor and imagery which will be used in the telling of a number of stories throughout the thesis.

The phrase 'up close and personal' draws on my own interests at many levels and in many spheres of both personal and professional life - interest in national issues, politics and trends, life-long hobbies and an interest in people as individuals. Growing up included many conversations with two grandfathers both 'nuts' about photography as I learnt about light meters and focal lengths on my mother's ancient voigtlander camera and light and exposure in the development of my early photographs of Mont Blanc in grainy black and white.

A film titled 'Up Close and Personal' (Up Close and Personal, 1996) was instrumental in my decision of how to 'tell' the story of this research study. For inexplicable reasons, the title, the plot and key images from the film have been retained in my memory over many years. The film told the story of two journalists, one a 'rising star', Sally 'Tally' Atwater, and other a seasoned news professional, Warren Justice, played by none other than the enigmatic Robert Redford. Justice was ultimately killed but not before he had passed on the secrets of good investigative reporting to his protégée. In the film they reported on a jail riot with a focus on the larger picture (institution wide prison riot) before focusing in and onto the lived experiences and stories of individual rioters through the use of close-up camera shots and the telling of stories of a number of prison inmates.

The thesis will consider headteacher departure through lenses of three different 'focal lengths' and one conceptual lens. By using the device of different 'lenses' I tell a combination of three interweaving and interlocking stories: the story of my own research journey, the story of the study and the stories of headteacher participants.

The thesis will examine headteacher departure through a panoramic perspective, a mid-focal length lens and a close-up lens. By these I mean:

- *panoramic perspective*: national – by which, for the purposes of this study, I mean Anglican primary schools in England;
- *mid-focal length perspective*: headteacher participants grouped into three categories (to be defined in Chapter 3) and
- *close-up perspective*: focus on individual headteacher perspectives and lived experience.

The extent and nature of headteacher departure is also seen in this thesis through a theoretical lens, that of the concept of 'communities of practice' (Wenger, 1998). This will be used to understand, interpret and conceptualise the reasons, influences and triggers which contribute to headteacher departure. This theoretical lens will be introduced in Chapter 2 and used a motif in presenting and interpreting the data in Chapters 6 and 7.

### **1.3. Research questions**

This study investigates headteacher departure from Church of England primary schools in England in 2008-2009. The study seeks to answer the following five research questions (RQ):

RQ 1: Who is leaving?

RQ 2: What are the characteristics of those leaving and of their schools?

RQ 3: Where are headteachers going 'to'?

RQ 4: Why are headteachers leaving?

RQ 5: What might have persuaded headteachers to stay?

The term 'church school' is often used by those who work in 'Church of England' or 'Anglican' schools and so throughout the thesis the term 'church school' will, on occasion, be used. This term along with the history of 'Church of England' schools will be explored in depth in Chapter 2 in order to place the study within the context of school leadership and the particular context of Anglican primary schools in England.

## **1.4. Outline of the thesis**

Chapter 1 has provided an explanation for my personal interest in headteacher departure and of headteacher departure from Church of England primary schools in particular. It has detailed how the research questions stated above (1.3) had their first embryonic beginnings and indicated the professional knowledge I bring to the study. This chapter has explained how the thesis is presented, through the use of 'lenses' of different lengths and types as different stories are told, examined, interpreted and understood as if by a photographer. The following overview of the structure of the thesis will provide a 'map' by which the reader might 'navigate' the thesis.

Chapter 2 is in four distinct sections. Firstly, it will outline the policy context and establish what is known about headteacher supply and recruitment within the context of the need for effective leaders. It will consider the policy response and solutions to the perceived problem.

Secondly, following this review in respect of headship in general, Chapter 2 will set out some of the issues facing Church of England schools in particular and their role within the 'dual system' of church and state education in England. It presents some background to the need for Church of England schools to address the recruitment and supply issues of headteachers. To provide some background to the focus of this study on Church of England schools I present some models of the theology of education and some models of belonging and mission in order to set the scene for understanding the lives, work and 'lived experiences' of Anglican headteachers.

Thirdly, Chapter 2 will review the extant literature in respect of the reasons which contribute to, influence or cause headteacher departure from a post and/or the profession. It will review the reasons currently reported in the quantitative data available for England before considering the findings from the empirical literature including career stages, premature departure, personal response to critical incidents and 'snakes and ladders', the changing role of

headteachers, the impact of stress and workload issues and issues of 'self and sanity' or self-sacrifice.

Finally, this chapter will introduce 'Communities of Practice' as the overarching theoretical framework or 'lens' which will be utilised in Chapters 6 and 7.

Chapter 3 will detail the mixed methods (MM) approach taken for this study. This chapter provides a rationale for the use of a sequential explanatory qualitative dominant mixed method design and details extensively the different stages from research design through data generation, data analysis and results to the interpretation and dissemination stages. A detailed visual map illustrates the processes and products of the study. Chapter 3 will also provide a rationale for the integration of findings as presented in this thesis in Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Chapter 4 reports the response rates of the study and presents findings related to the extent of headteacher departure from Anglican primary schools in England (who is leaving and how many) in 2008-2009. It will argue that the study contributes to existing knowledge about headteacher departure by virtue of (i) scale - the large numbers of headteachers, Chairs of Governors and schools represented and (ii) by virtue of providing a valuable focus on an important 'subset' of schools within England (Church of England primary schools). It will also provide a description of the sample (who is leaving) detailing characteristics of those leaving and their schools.

An Interlude precedes Chapter 5 in which I outline findings related to the fourth research question and main focus of the study, 'why headteachers leave'. This question will be addressed in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 with data and findings considered through the theoretical 'lens' of communities of practice (Wenger, 1998). These chapters will also consider the fifth research question, 'what might have persuaded headteachers to stay'.

Chapter 5 reports findings related to career stages.

At the beginning of Chapter 6 I introduce a diagram (Figure 11) which illustrates the three characteristics and the related dimensions of communities of practice (domain and mutual engagement, community and joint enterprise and practice and a shared repertoire) as they relate to four communities of practice explored in Chapters 6 and 7. These four communities of practice are: Professional, Nurture, Family and Spiritual.

Chapter 6 explores the nature of headship as it is experienced by headteachers within the Professional and Nurture communities of practice as they are formed within the performative and standards culture of education today. The lived experiences of headteachers are then considered in respect of the Family as a community of practice and how the demands of headship affect individuals' lives and decisions. For all three communities of practice discussed, some conclusions are drawn in respect of how forms of membership and the formation of identity contribute to headteacher departure.

Chapter 7 is devoted to aspects of Anglican school headship and how these present substantive issues for headteachers that influence decisions about departure. In this chapter I argue that three dimensions underpin the lived experiences of headteachers as members of the Spiritual community of practice: historical, public and personal dimensions. I illustrate how the interplay of these dimensions coalesces in five expectations which are held by members of the spiritual community. I explore how aspects of practice which emanate from the historical dimension of headship can lead to dis-identification with the members and/or practice of the community resulting in challenges for headteachers in their own identity work. This chapter also considers aspects of faith focusing on experiences of headteachers which reflect their personal relationship with God.

In Chapter 8 I argue the original contribution to knowledge that the study makes to the extant literature about headteacher supply. I summarise the findings and conceptual conclusions as they relate to headteacher departure in general and to Anglican schools in particular. In particular, I address the fifth research question, what might have persuaded headteachers to stay,

before drawing together the implications for action and dialogue for members of communities. I critique the study before providing a succinct summary of the original contribution to knowledge and suggesting three possibilities for future research. The chapter concludes with some personal reflections as to the journey of the research project and my own learning as a researcher.

# **CHAPTER 2**

## **CONTEXT AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Introduction**

Firstly, this chapter will present the policy context surrounding headteacher supply and departure. It will present the concern of governments about headteacher supply and recruitment and provide an overview of the perceived reasons for these concerns about leadership of primary schools in England, namely, an anticipated demographic 'time-bomb' and low numbers of aspirant headteachers.

Secondly, I will consider the situation as it pertains to faith schools and Anglican primary schools in particular, giving some background contextual and historical detail about the nature and work of Anglican schools and considering relevant theological perspectives. I will also outline some of the issues for Church of England schools and their role within the 'dual system' of church and state education in England, presenting some background to the need for Church of England schools to address the recruitment and supply issues of headteachers. I will present some models of the theology of education and models of belonging and mission in order to set the scene for understanding the lives and lived experiences of Anglican school headteachers.

Thirdly, this chapter will consider the extant literatures about why headteachers leave a post and/or headship. I will consider the primary reasons headteachers leave from the empirical literature, including career stages, premature departure, personal response to incidents and 'snakes and ladders', the changing role of headteachers, the impact of stress and workload issues and issues of 'self and sanity' or self-sacrifice.

Finally, this chapter will introduce 'Communities of Practice' (Wenger, 1998) as the theoretical lens for the study. I will first provide the rationale for using communities of practice through some personal reflections before outlining the characteristics and dimensions of communities of practice that are pertinent to this study and the interpretation of the data through the later chapters of this thesis (Chapters 5, 6 and 7). I detail aspects of domain and mutual engagement, community and joint enterprise and practice and a shared repertoire, before outlining briefly the concept of a constellation of communities of practice. I conclude this section on communities of practice by providing some thoughts on the relevance of the theory of community of practice as it relates particularly to the context of this study.

## **2.2. The policy context: the problems**

### **2.2.1. The need for effective headteachers**

The need to recruit and train headteachers affects many countries. The abilities of young people on leaving formal education are central to England's ability to compete competitively in a global 'market place'. Therefore the quality and nature of provision is of paramount importance. Education is not just about every child, their safety and well-being and individuals fulfilling their potential as laid out in the Every Child Matters agenda (DfES, 2003; 2004a) and enshrined in the Children Act 2004. It is not even about social change through the role schools can play in families and communities (Alcock, 2008; Ball, 1990, 2006; DfES, 2004b, 2007; Lingard and Ozga, 2006) or even about raising standards (Dorking, 2000; Wallace, Leydon, Montgomery, Winstanley, Pomerantz and Fitton, 2010) although all these things are admirable and laudable aspirations. It is about the 'good' of society both at home and abroad. Education is important to our national identity and the continuance of values and beliefs (Bell and Stevenson, 2006; Ward and Eden, 2009). Bell and Stevenson go further, hinting at the importance of 'outcomes', young people with skills pertinent to national priorities, some priorities being about the country surviving in a global competitive environment:

Educational institutions are now, more than ever before, required to produce students with the appropriate skills and capabilities to match national priorities. Education also is now seen to be important in developing national identity, citizenship, social cohesion and social justice (Bell and Stevenson, 2006, p.74).

Those involved in primary and early years' education are involved in laying the foundations of those skills and capabilities that are central to the future prospects of individuals, families, communities and nation states. Education policy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century sits firmly within the context of our global relationships, standing and ability to trade on a competitive basis.

School leaders are charged with the education of children and young people. They are central to the standards agenda in England that has dominated policy and practice since the Thatcher government introduced the National Curriculum and standardised testing in the primary years as a result of the Education Reform Act (ERA) of 1988.

The performance and effectiveness of headteachers as agents of school improvement and, by extension, on impact on pupil learning *and* outcomes is considered critical by policy makers and researchers alike even though some have doubted there is sufficient evidence to support a clear link between headteachers or senior leaders and pupil outcomes (Hallinger and Heck, 1999).

Since their introduction in 1992 successive Ofsted frameworks and a pervasive belief in the 'all-telling' truth and power of data are part of the story to raise standards and improve the England's ranking in international rankings (e.g. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)). The drive for improvement is relentless. Accountability of schools to stakeholders at local level (e.g. parents, Governing Bodies) is higher than ever as the power and influence of the Local Authorities are curtailed by free market education policies in the form of parental preference, academies and free schools.

Effective school leaders are central to the quality of education (Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, and Hopkins, 2006; Leithwood and Riehl, 2003). The considerable body of literature about effective schools where pupils make expected levels of progress and achieve or exceed nationally set benchmarks reflects the growing belief that vision, drive and passion are part of successful leadership (Starratt, 1995). Interpersonal skills and the ability to inspire others are key aspects of leading and managing the learning of children and young people (Stevens, Brown, Knibbs, and Smith, 2005). In an absorbing portrayal of heads as actors in a drama Starratt argues that the role requires heads to engage in acting as if in a drama (1993). Therefore there is a need for training and development that supports heads in the 'drama of leadership' – this goes beyond the skills and competences supported, developed and assessed during the training and accreditation process of the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) introduced in 2000 in England and Wales.

Government acts swiftly against schools deemed to be performing poorly or making inadequate – and tardy progress - towards floor targets and data benchmarks. Schools judged as underperforming and or failing by Ofsted and the focus on data to assess performance and effectiveness become 'visible' - under the spotlight. Labels are assigned. Over the years a range of terms has been applied to schools not 'making the grade': Schools facing challenging circumstances (SFCC), Special Measures, coasting, the list is endless. The name is immaterial – 'you just aren't good enough'. Once 'satisfactory' was satisfactory. 'Satisfactory' is now the new 'inadequate' as the bar is raised ever higher by successive governments of all political hues and successive Ofsted frameworks define and benchmark all aspects of teaching and learning, pupil well-being and the school's engagement with families and its local community. 'Lists' of schools under threat or those now 'in scope' become the latest information from the Department for Education (DfE) to monitor along with your school's pupil progress and attainment data. There is considerable impetus to avoid appearing on the latest list if your attainment data is 'not up to scratch' (e.g. at Key Stage 2) however good pupil progress may be as evaluated against baseline entry data. National Challenge and interventions occur. Closure can result. Schools are reopened as academies

sponsored by an approved sponsor by order of the Secretary of State for Education (Academies Act 2010).

School leaders at every level and in whatever capacity are under scrutiny. Governing Bodies of failing schools can be replaced by interim boards. The quality of provision and the quality of teaching and learning is evaluated and judged externally against successive Ofsted Frameworks. Statutory Performance Management of headteachers by Governing Bodies and of teaching staff by senior school leaders has been part of the annual appraisal cycle in every school for some years (West-Burnham, Bradbury, and O'Neill, 2001) as defined within the annually updated School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (e.g. DCSF, 2008a). Revisions to performance management are imminent which will radically alter the dynamic in schools for performance related pay and assessment of teacher capability.

For Anglican schools in England, additional inspections judge aspects related to distinctiveness, collective worship, RE and the effectiveness of leadership and management as it relates to leadership of a church school. These Statutory Inspections of Anglican Schools (SIAS) complement the judgements of Ofsted but focus on aspects peculiar to schools where a Christian ethos and distinctiveness has long been cherished. Anglican dioceses now need to respond to the changing landscape of accountability and academies with a focus not just on their traditional 'support' role but rise to the challenge to hold Anglican schools to account for the quality of provision *and* the standards and outcomes resulting from that provision (see Dearing, 2001; Chadwick Review, 2012).

All those involved in teaching and learning are under scrutiny. None more so than the headteacher. The 'buck stops' with them.

### **2.2.2. Supply and demand**

Against this backdrop is a shortage of headteachers, both at home (England) and abroad (e.g. USA, Australia, New Zealand where headteachers are called

administrators and principals respectively). Whether the situation is called a crisis (USA) or a shortage (Australia) there is a considerable body of literature concerned with headteacher supply. I will first provide an overview of the issues related to supply and demand before considering what is known specifically about faith schools and Anglican schools in particular.

***(a) Anticipating a void: expectations of a demographic 'time-bomb'***

Data on the numbers of headteachers leaving a post and or headship is limited and, in England, is predominantly based on annual surveys of adverts for senior leaders (e.g. Howson, 2002, 2005, 2007a, 2007b, 2008a, 2008b, 2009, 2010a, 2010b, 2011).

These annual reports and surveys tracking the movement of senior leaders (heads, deputy heads and assistant heads) report what is known about the state of the labour market in England and Wales based on advertisements and re-advertisements that appear in the national press and returns from postal questionnaires to those schools. Historically, schools have advertised for headteachers and deputy headteachers through the Times Educational Supplement (TES) but there is no longer a legal requirement for schools to advertise nationally, so enabling schools to advertise online or locally through local authority job lists or religious press such as the Church Times (Anglican) or the Catholic Herald (Roman Catholic) if they so choose.

The common theme of the annual surveys and reports by Howson is that significant numbers of headteachers are leaving posts, response rates to adverts are low, applicant levels reported by schools are low and some schools report the need for re-advertisement on one or more occasion (Howson, 2002, 2005, 2007a, 2007b, 2008a, 2008b, 2009, 2010a, 2010b, 2011).

A sphinx like 'shape' has dominated discussions nationally about the extent of the problem of headteacher supply (e.g. National Governor Association (NGA) and National College for School Leadership (NCSL) Conference, 2007; Howson, 2002, 2005, 2007b). The 1970s saw increases in pupil numbers and

an extensive recruitment drive for new recruits to the teaching profession (Cranston, 2005). That generation of new teachers, often referred to as part of the 'baby boomer generation' (i.e. those born around the end of the Second World War), are part of a long expected demographic 'time-bomb', expected to 'go off' and cause a mass exodus of experienced and long serving headteachers from schools between 2009-2011. The OECD report into improving school leadership in England noted that government predictions based on the annual survey carried out by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) that retirements might be as high as 3500 in 2009, a peak of approximately 50% (Higham, Hopkins and Ahtaridou, 2007, p.48). The age profile of teachers and headteachers, including this large group approaching their late fifties and early sixties and the lack of aspiring headteachers (deputies and assistant headteachers) is the cause of the sphinx shape that has so alarmed policy makers in the last decade.

Data trends indicate that the numbers of primary schools seeking to appoint a new headteacher have remained stable around the 2000 mark for some years (Howson, 2002, 2005, 2007a, 2008a, 2008b, 2009, 2010a, 2011). In sequence the figures for the intervening years are: 2,174 (2001), 1,969 (2002), 1,898 (2003), 2,125 (2004), 2,038 (2005), 2,147 (2006) (Howson, 2007a, p.5).

Although Howson's surveys are conducted in respect of adverts for senior leadership posts (headteachers, deputy headteachers and assistant headteachers) the majority of the responses that Howson receives each year from schools are from primary schools, usually being in the region of 80 – 82%.

What is clear, however, is that significant numbers of primary schools advertise for a new headteacher each year and these figures are rising. The last 'dip' in figures occurred in 1998 and 1999 after the changes to the Teachers' Pension Scheme had caused a 'spike' of 2,534 posts to be advertised in 1997.

However, reported data can be confusing. Some annual reports of the 'State of the Labour Market for Senior Staff in Schools in England and Wales' by Howson report figures relating to the number of posts advertised from September to the following March (e.g. Howson, 2007b), from September to the following April (e.g. Howson, 2010b) or from September to the following May (e.g. Howson, 2008b; Howson, 2009). 'Annual surveys of senior staff appointments in schools' (again by Howson) report data for a calendar year.

Similarly, figures reported at different times for the same period can be different. For example, the number of primary head teacher posts (vacancies) advertised during 2006 was 2,147 (Howson, 2007a, p.5). A subsequent report reports 2,108 for the calendar year 2006 (Howson, 2010a, p.6). Similarly, apparent discrepancies are to be found in the data for the years 2001-2006 but reported figures in the same two documents are the same for the years 1989 to 2000. Although data is often updated in subsequent reports by Howson (e.g. some are published in September, some in January and some are a June update), and there may be very cogent reasons for the apparent discrepancy such as additional figures being available after publication of the original report it is quite difficult to establish sets of figures for detailed comparison when time periods reported can change as data analysis becomes more comprehensive and indicates emerging and new aspects.

Data from the government's Pensioner Statistical System (PENSTATS) and annual Statistical Returns provide some additional data regarding the age profile of headteachers leaving and whether their retirements are due to age related retirement, premature retirement or ill-health retirement (e.g. DCSF, 2007a). Although their figures are for teachers and therefore include headteachers, they indicate that age related retirements are rising (1989-1990 to 1990-1991) from their lowest number in 1991-1992 (3,170 age related retirements) to 2006-2007 (8,300, provisional figure). Similarly, premature retirements (i.e. those headteachers electing to retire before the then National Pensionable Age (NPA) of 60) have steadily risen since 1998-1998. Spikes and dips into both trends have occurred in the two or three years nearest the changes to the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) in 1997.

It is not just the large numbers of headteachers leaving that has concerned policy makers in recent years but the potential for increasing numbers to do so. A benchmark study of school leadership in England to explore the state of leadership development and practice by Earley, Evans, Collarbone, Gold and Halpin (2002) found that 63% of headteachers were aged 46-55 and 44% of deputy heads were in the same age bracket. Six out of every ten headteachers were planning to remain in post, three in ten were considering moving schools and four in every ten were considering retirement or early retirement (Earley et al., 2002, p.7).

A study conducted by Stevens et al. (2005) as a follow-up 'reappraisal' to that conducted by Earley and his team (Earley et al., 2002) reported that half of all headteachers in the study had intentions to retire or move to a different headship within three years, again flagging up concern about the movement and potential imminent attrition of headteachers.

It was at this point in the available data that the notion for an investigation into why headteachers leave was conceived. It would 'speak' to a subject and very real concern of policy makers at that time.

Since the start of the study, the trend in the number of primary headteacher vacancies has shown a slight downward trend. Numbers of posts advertised for 2008 were 1932 and were 1846 for 2009, defying predictions of a bumper year of retirements expected in 2009 as the effects of the 'baby boomer' generation nearer retirement (Howson, 2010a). However, it is too soon to say whether this trend will continue. The perceptions and fears of a 'time-bomb' leaving many schools without headteachers may well have proved unfounded. Organisational factors such as school amalgamations, federations and academies change the 'landscape' in which headteachers operate. Unique contextual factors might influence timing of departure or retirement plans as might the impact of national initiatives on individuals such as pension reforms (2007 onwards). The financial crash of 2008 and the wider economic picture may play a part also.

Therefore, this study reports an investigation into an area of policy which, although as yet 'the world has not fallen in' as a result of the expected demographic 'time-bomb', still remains a concern as government, governing bodies and schools navigate uncharted waters in terms of academies and how that might affect issues of headteacher supply and recruitment.

### ***(b) Faith schools***

Schools which fall outside the 'norm' find recruiting a new headteacher more difficult. Schools which are small (e.g. Group 1), located in areas of the country where housing is more expensive (e.g. London and South-west) or those with a religious character find it harder to recruit than those without those contextual characteristics (e.g. Howson, 2002, 2005, 2007a, 2007b, 2008a, 2008b, 2009, 2010a, 2010b, 2011).

'Faith schools' fall into the category of 'hard to recruit to'. First, the term needs to be defined. 'Faith school' is a colloquial term often used by Tony Blair during the three Labour governments (1997-2010) and covers schools which have a religious character or which have a defined 'religious designation' as defined by successive Departments for Education. Often referred to as 'church schools' in common parlance, these include schools with a Christian character, i.e. whose roots are within the Christian church and are of a particular denomination. These include Anglican (Church of England, commonly referred to as 'C of E' or 'CE'), Roman Catholic (RC) and Methodist. In England and Wales the majority are Anglican essentially for historical reasons and by virtue of the Church of England is considered to be the religion of 'the state'. The second largest category is Catholic schools and the smallest category Methodist or in a few cases, schools with a combined denominational designation. Smaller numbers of other schools of religious designation or character exist: these are Jewish, Muslim and Sikh.

Howson's annual surveys have shown that faith schools are susceptible to experiencing particular difficulties in recruiting a new headteacher and often have to advertise on more than one occasion. Roman Catholic schools have been found to be particularly at risk of this, in part perhaps because of

additional requirements regarding the faith or beliefs of potential applicants and a requirement to hold a Catholic Teaching Certificate for headship appointments. A substantial body of empirical research exists into the leadership of Catholic schools, e.g. Grace (2002), Hunt, Oldenski and Wallace (2000) and McLaughlin, O'Keefe and O'Keefe (1996).

In England, Anglican schools have not received the same attention in terms of empirical research as Catholic schools internationally have received. Research has focused on the aspects of Christian distinctiveness and ethos, mission (e.g. Johnson and McCreery, 1999), spiritual development (e.g. Davies, 2007), the teaching of Religious Education (e.g. Davies and Francis, 2007) and whether or not pupils from faith schools perform better than those not at faith schools (e.g. Schagen, Davies, Rudd and Schagen (2002). Relatively few studies have explored the nature of faith in terms of how faith schools of different traditions 'transmit' beliefs and values (e.g. Johnson, 2002).

An essential element of difference is the historical and theological basis of schools which have a religious designation or character (e.g. Catholic, Anglican etc). The historical and theological basis for Anglican schools will be discussed in Chapter 2.4. to form a basis for future discussion in Chapter 7.

The issue of whether or not 'faith schools' or 'church schools' as they will be called throughout this thesis are relevant in a pluralist society is not the subject of this thesis although this is hotly debated by Christians and humanists alike. The contentiousness of the subject bubbles under the surface of our national psyche, sometimes creating a temporary storm in the media. Much debate has ensued for years around admissions and who and what church schools are 'for' with the Church of England occasionally responding to accusations of elitism (e.g. articles in the religious and secular press). However, such is the broader context of the study.

Headteacher departure from Anglican schools is not well researched. To my knowledge there has not been a study into any aspect of headteacher relating

to Anglican primary schools in England in particular. Data that exist is that which is contained within the annual surveys and reports by Howson already referred to. Research and surveys regarding aspects of supply and demand, recruitment retention tend to be all encompassing rather than into schools with a particular character or 'religious character' (e.g. Earley et al., 2002; Higham et al., 2007; Stevens et al. 2005; Thomson, 2009). This study contributes to the extant literature by virtue of its focus on Anglican primary schools in England.

A stinging rebuke was issued to church authorities (Anglican and Roman Catholic) in January 2007:

As ever, church schools, schools in London, and some small schools in rural areas, were mostly likely to re-advertise senior staff posts. There is little excuse for the high levels of re-advertisements amongst faith schools. Church authorities have not addressed this problem over the past decade; they must do so now or face the consequences (Howson, 2007a, p. 2).

Church schools, both Anglican and Catholic appear to face more difficulties appointing a new headteacher. Figures show that many schools have to re-advertise and fail to attract many applicants to forward to interview. Trend data for Anglican schools between 2001/2002 and 2005/2006 indicates that re-advertisement rates have been rising (Howson, 2007a, p.12). With the exception of one year (2002-2003) in which the rate was far lower at 34%, re-advertisement rates have been 40%-44%.

For 2006-2007 (September 2006 to March 2007) 28% (N=683) of the primary schools that returned questionnaires were Church of England (Howson, 2007b, p.7). This is higher than the percentage of returns from Roman Catholic schools (10%, N=683) reported in the same table (Howson, 2007, p.7, Table 7) and represents 35% of the total number of primary schools advertising during this period (Howson, 2007, p.25). Although the report does not provide the numbers of Anglican and Catholic schools who advertised a

post in the given period, it reports that returned questionnaires indicated that 30% of Anglican schools and 33% of Roman Catholic schools had needed to re-advertise the post of headteacher (p.9). .

Although in the same report (2007b) Howson reports the percentage of questionnaires received from Anglican and Roman Catholic schools from the survey and these have been consistently higher for the period 2003 to 2007 than for 2000-2003 (25%-30% and 21%-23% respectively), the report does not indicate whether this is reflective of a trend and rise in adverts placed by Anglican schools or whether the percentage of Anglican schools seeking a new headteacher is in line or at variance with the national trend for primary school adverts generally.

Subsequent to designing and conducting this doctoral study, a recent review of twenty years of survey data by Howson (Howson, 2010a) reported trend level data which places the focus of this study into context. The report highlighted the trend in respect of re-advertisements by faith schools showing that higher percentages of faith schools often re-advertise a post (2010a, p. 30). The trend graph for faith schools (primary, secondary and special schools) indicates that figures for all years (1997/8 to 2008/9, for the period September to the following August) are always higher for Church of England schools than for Roman Catholic schools. The report does not define the percentages of faith schools in each of primary, secondary and special phases. Although it is not possible to infer from a comparison with the trend graphs for primary headteachers (Howson, 2010a, p.25), it is interesting to note that the trend for primary school headteachers over the same period (1997-1998 to 2008-2009), stays within a band approximately low 20%s to just below 40%. The trend for all Catholic schools while having an upward trend stays within a band approximately late 20%s to low 40%s. However, the trend for Anglican school re-advertisements is significantly higher than that of both the Roman Catholic trend line and all primary schools: the line stays within a band approximately mid to low 40%s to nudging the 60% mark.

Although a doctoral study does not provide the time or resources to conduct a longitudinal study which might have explored whether the number of headteachers leaving Anglican schools is similar or at variance with Catholic schools or all schools nationally, this study aims to provide a snapshot of headteacher departure from Anglican schools in 2008-2009. As such it will add to existing data and knowledge about the extent of headteacher departure generally but contribute new knowledge about departure from Anglican schools in particular.

***(c) Insufficient supply – recruitment issues***

The number of vacancies created in recent years by this 'time-bomb' is not matched by supply, i.e. there are insufficient numbers of teachers aspiring and applying to fill those vacancies created by retiring headteachers.

Annual surveys conducted by Howson report trends that show difficulties in recruitment of headteachers (e.g. Howson, 2002; 2005; 2007a; 2007b). A common theme across many years has been insufficient numbers of teachers applying for headships and the quality of applicants. Significant numbers of Governing Bodies resort to repeat advertisements, sometimes on several occasions. Schools that find it particularly difficult to recruit are small, rural schools, schools in London and faith schools.

***(d) No longer an aspiration: views about headship***

There is a considerable body of research that seeks to assess the extent of teacher aspiration and encapsulate why teachers may not be applying for headship. Earley et al. (2002, p.21) found that 4 out of 10 deputy and assistant heads had no plans to become headteachers (45%, N=260). In an Australian study Lacey found higher figures: 88% of teachers had no intention to become a principal or deputy principal (2002).

I turn now to consider the reasons why teachers and senior leaders not aspire to the 'top job'? A number of reasons appear to be limiting ambition and pursuit of headship that emerge from perceptions of headship, discourse about the role and the policy climate.

**(i) Headship unattractive and a risky venture**

Headship has become an increasingly risky business for headteachers both personally and professionally (e.g. Cooley and Shen, 2000; Cranston, 2007; Cranston, Tromas, and Reugebrink, 2004; Howley, Andrianaivo, and Perry, 2005; Pounder and Merrill, 2001). Thomson highlights this in her book aptly titled 'Heads on the block' (2009) in which she examines the impact of policy and increased accountabilities on headteachers and argues that the job carries with it many risks both personal and professional which disincentivises dedicated teachers and leaders who face an uphill battle to 'make a difference' to the children and young people in their schools and make a difference in the communities their schools serve.

Perceptions often drive aspiration. Negative perceptions diminish aspiration. What causes perceptions and the forming of opinions and judgements about individual career paths? How is headship perceived?

Perceptions can be formed by the rhetoric about headteachers in the national and local media and discourage senior teachers from applying for headship (Blackmore and Thomson, 2004; Thomson, Blackmore, Sachs, and Tregenza, 2003). These can be both 'positive' and negative portrayals. By 'positive' I mean those portrayals which laud and fete those heads deemed to be exceptional, successful and outstanding leaders. The 'kind of headteacher that inspires all headteachers' to do more and be better and so on. By negative I mean the kind of press portrayals that negatively portray the life and decisions of individual heads, where criticism, scorn and ridicule are poured upon individuals for some 'crime', real or perceived.

Success can lead others to place a school and its headteacher on a metaphorical pedestal. This may be because of exam or SATs' results or for the particularly effective or speedy way a headteacher has 'turned around' a failing school. Portrayals of headteachers as heroic leaders able to turn failing schools round are part of the discourse that 'is' education. As Blackmore and Thomson highlight in their forensic examination of Australian and English print media described through a series of intercontinental 'postcards' to each other

the positioning of headteachers as exemplars, 'sirs and dames' is part of positioning by both government and headteachers (Blackmore and Thomson, 2004). In England, government has sought to emphasise the equalisation possibilities of education, of social mobility through education and personal qualities of grit and determination that will enable individuals to 'make good' and succeed. Similarly, headteachers lead schools within an education system in which the 'market' is king. Parental preference is often defined by the media as parental 'choice', creating a pressure on headteachers to not just lead good, successful schools but to be seen to do so. Headteachers who succeed in both improving schools dramatically and, 'coincidentally' delivering national policy are laudable and feted, awarded honours (e.g. knighthoods, dames). Blackmore and Thomson argue that this normalization of headteachers as 'heroic' almost solitary figures, whether they be the 'knights and dames' of the realm or maverick heads, is potentially dis-incentivising aspirant headteachers. Although the image of the heroic head is perhaps less evident in studies about leadership and the rise in importance of distributed leadership, nevertheless the concept of a super-head (e.g. Fidler and Atton, 2004, pp.193-194) is still evident in public perceptions of headteachers.

Education is not just the political 'hot potato' so beloved of successive governments, all things 'educational' – and a headteacher's reputation - is 'fair game' in the world of 24 hour rolling news where the time must be filled. Social media is the forum for many exchanges of views between parents and can lead to unsubstantiated 'facts' being shared indiscriminately. Heads can find themselves on the back foot without being aware of how or why a story started. Negative reporting in local and national press may be accurate or it may malign a headteacher who believes that they are acting in the interests of the children. School restructuring, policies, provision – all are of immense interest to parents, governors and pupils.

But pedestals may not be places of permanent rest within a constantly changing landscape. Success can easily turn to disaster if a school's data trend heads downward, if accusations are made of impropriety or the Governing Body awards what appear to be excessive financial

enhancements. Heads are in the firing line whether there are justifiable reasons or not. Rumour and gossip do not wait for an impartial verdict. As Blackmore and Thomson comment the media in England appears to favour 'savagery' and 'barbaric practices of demonizing individuals' (2004, p.317).

It is perhaps therefore the representations both of heroes and of 'fallen' heroes that are disincentives to aspirant headteachers.

*(ii) Impressions of a life dominated by school*

Described as being 'a poisoned chalice' (Woods, 2006) the 'top job' can be relentless (Bristow, Ireson and Coleman, 2007) demanding time, energy and commitment sometimes to the exclusion of all else. Southworth (1995) describes headship as being a 'way of life' (p.135), using the words of Ron, the headteacher subject of Southworth's ethnographic case study. Headship is a way of life that consumes your very self by the way the concerns of headship dominate thinking even when a head is not 'at work', resulting in a fusion of personal and professional identities that went far beyond the time-consuming nature of headteachers' lives (p.135).

The hours that heads work, the words and subliminal messages of what is said in and about school, all contribute to the impression teachers have of the life of a headteacher. If headteachers portray their role as divorced from their pupils due to heavy bureaucratic and burdensome accountabilities rather than a job that is 'worth it' and 'doable' (Boris-Schacter and Langer, 2006; Gates, 2004) this may negatively influence previously aspiring or undecided teachers.

Demands and pressures on time, personal space and work-life balance may therefore be factors that discourage teachers from contemplating headship (Cooley and Shen, 2000; Pounder and Merrill, 2001).

Is the job desirable if it might have a negative impact on your personal life, long term health and personal relationships? Perhaps the job is undesirable due to the perceived long hours, time demands and pressures that are

thought to go hand in hand with being a headteacher, particularly in small schools where headteachers often have a substantial teaching commitment and a class responsibility.

Potential applicants appear aware of the possible negative impact that headship may have on their personal lives, their long term health and the impact the job may have on their marriages and family relationships (Cooley and Shen, 2000; Pounder and Merrill, 2001; Woods, 2006). Potential future headteachers appear to be making a decision not to apply for headship posts as a result of their desire to maintain a work-life balance (Cranston, 2007; Cranston et al., 2004). It would appear that the potential 'gains' do not outweigh the potential 'pain' (Howley et al., 2005).

### (iii) Principal disengagement

Gronn and Rawlings-Sanaei (2003) have called this reluctance to seek promotion to headship as 'leadership or principal disengagement' and argued that the roots of such disincentive may lie in increased paperwork and bureaucratic demands at every level within teaching and the leadership of schools that has accompanied the relentless drive for school improvement to raise standards. Earley et al. similarly found that perceptions of headship and possible 'disengagement' is 'likely to be a product of work intensification or their perceptions of it among senior colleagues ... compound[ed by] changing sources of professional identity and career' (Earley et al., 2002, p.183).

To work in education is to work in a climate of continual change (Earley et al., 2002). Those in senior leadership roles have to respond to national and local policy and lead change within their organisations, a role that requires a multiplicity of skills and flexibility in addition to a deep knowledge and understanding of teaching and learning. This need to respond and manage change is as true today as when Hall and Southworth observed key characteristics of successful headteachers:

[headteachers] need to be: future-orientated; capable and sophisticated managers of multiple changes; able to live with changes

in proactive and productive ways; aware of the professional learning needs of themselves and the school's staff; active in orchestrating developmental activities which support staff and which advance the school's capacity to improve (Hall and Southworth, 1997, p.167).

The concept of being the lead learner has gained traction over the years (Bennis and Nanus, 1985; Boris-Schacter and Langer, 2006). As Bennis and Nanus comment:

Nearly all leaders are highly proficient in learning from experience. Most were able to identify a small number of mentors and key experiences that powerfully shaped their philosophies, personalities and operating style ... Learning is the essential fuel for the leader, the source of high-octane energy that keeps up the momentum by continually sparking new understanding, new ideas, and new challenges. It is absolutely indispensable under today's conditions of rapid change and complexity. Very simply, those who do not learn do not survive long as leaders (Bennis and Nanus, 1985, p.188).

However, leading learning through being a lead learner is more than having a philosophical position, 'mind-set' or leadership style. Leading learning can be absorbing for 'effective learners are greedy' (Fullan, 1992, p.59). Such an approach to learning on personal and professional levels can lead to more than effective organisational change. It can lead to the ability to sustain personal energy and motivation as 'lifelong learners unafraid to publicly model intellectual curiosity' (Boris-Schacter and Merrifield, 2000, p.85). It can mean that headship feels like 'the best job in the world' (Earley and Weindling, 2007).

#### (iv) Training for headship

In addition to issues related to perception of the role as demanding, difficult and potentially risky the inadequacy of training may be playing a part in disincentivising teachers from applying for a headship (Bright and Ware, 2003; Sherman, 2005). Preparation of headship in the form of the National

Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) in England does not guarantee that these teachers will apply for headships (Bright and Ware, 2003).

#### (v) Strategic decisions

Research would also suggest that potential headteachers are being selective where to apply for headships and making decisions based upon a range of factors. Earley et al. (2002) found that most respondents said that they would prefer not to go to a school in challenging circumstances. A study by Barty and Sachs (2005) found that shortage of applicants in two states in Australia was caused by a 'mosaic' of factors that were related to specific and contextual characteristics. Potential applicants weighed up the pros and cons of individual posts taking into account location, size of school, the presence of an incumbent (i.e. Acting Head) and the local political context. In short, applicants exercise strategic thinking in their decision making rather than being disincentivised purely by aspects of the role itself.

### **2.3. Policy context: the solutions**

In anticipation of the demographic 'time-bomb' exploding in 2009-2011 as headteachers retire and to address the apparent lack of interest and aspiration for headship among many teachers policy solutions have been introduced at national and local level. Principally these are succession planning initiatives and school organisation strategies.

#### **2.3.1. Succession planning strategies: growing future leaders**

It is widely accepted that unplanned headteacher departure can impact hugely on the sense of drive and purpose that an effective headteacher needs to communicate to their staff, pupils and community. Resignation that leads swiftly to an 'interregnum' can lead to instability and pupil progress and results can be adversely affected. This is particularly so in smaller schools which

might not have a deputy headteacher or senior teacher who can 'act up' temporarily. The resulting problems of unplanned headteacher departure and succession and a possible and perhaps lengthy interregnum of up to a year's duration are not easily or quickly overcome necessarily once a successor takes up post even though it is recognised that the appointment of a substantive headteacher usually has a positive effect (Leithwood et al., 2006).

Consequently, a range of programmes that encourage schools to develop the talent in their staff have abounded in recent years. In the England these are run predominantly by the National College for School Leadership (NCSL), now the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL, following a merger of NCSL with the Teaching Agency in April 2013) and emphasise distributed or shared leadership rather than the development of competencies based on the delegation of tasks. This policy of 'growing your own leaders' (Harris and Townsend, 2007; Hartle and Thomas, 2003) has spawned such programmes as 'Leading from the Middle' and Leadership Pathways' aimed at identifying future leaders and nurturing their talent. Fast track programmes to take aspiring and talented teachers and immerse them in a successful school with an approved mentor exist in the form of the Heads for the Future programme. The NPQH identifies and tests future leaders before they are awarded accreditation as future headteachers.

The success of these programmes depends on the successful identification of potential future leaders (Barker, 2003; Brundrett, 2001; Gunter, 1999; Holligan, Menter, Hutchings, and Walker, 2006; Howley et al., 2005; Rhodes and Brundrett, 2006). Additional opportunities are offered to potential leaders for experience as an acting head perhaps during an interregnum or for a short period at another school. This experience can positively influence otherwise reluctant teachers to consider headship (Draper and McMichael, 1998; Whittaker, 2006).

In respect of faith schools a comprehensive strategy was planned by the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) with the National Society (NATSOC) for Anglican Schools and the Catholic Education Service (NCSL,

2010). This identified areas where diocese and governing bodies in particular could focus attention, namely building capacity and identifying and developing potential school leaders.

In addition, a number of programmes and initiatives exist or are in various stages of development that enable teachers to consider a career in church schools and headship of a church school. Examples include Church School Certificates (Bishop Grosseteste University and Liverpool Hope University), 'aspire' days (e.g. Diocese of Lincoln) and development of bespoke programmes for particular areas of the country (e.g. Diocese of Lincoln in planning, Diocese of Gloucester in development).

### **2.3.2. School organisation strategies**

Flatter organisational structures have gone hand in hand with political moves to restructure education at local level. This has been part of national policy in the England to increase autonomy at local level as schools respond to the needs of their communities and central government reduces the power and influence of Local Authorities. A myriad of organisational options exist both for schools internally and on a wider plain.

Internal organisation of schools has changed the nature of headship through the development and training of School Business Managers (SBM) and other staff who may work across a number of schools within a geographical locality. 'Shared' SBMs have been joined by shared Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCo) and Family Support Workers (FSW) to support pupils and families. The notion of collaborative partnerships is patchy to date as formalised arrangements can be hard to achieve even where historically clusters of schools have worked effectively together. The introduction of Teaching and Learning Responsibility Points (TLR) has led to the more effective use of 'non-contact time' and a distinction between Planning Preparation and Assessment Time (PPA) and leadership or management time that is focused on school improvement priorities and whole school initiatives aimed at raising standards.

Formalised partnerships in the form of federations where schools are linked through shared leadership or governance mechanisms may lead to two or more schools being led by one headteacher irrespective of whether the schools are located on single or multiple sites and whether there is a hard federation with one governing body or a soft federation with each school retaining its own governing body. Federations have often occurred where schools are geographically close and/or where schools are small and possibly rural. Another trigger for federations has been when one school has needed the support of a more successful school and or leader, or when retirement is expected and recruitment is anticipated to be problematic. The organisation of federations in the Netherlands and their impact on pupil achievement was influential in the introduction of federations in England and challenged the traditional model of one school, one headteacher (Lindsay, Arweck, Chapman, Goodall, Muijs and Harris, 2005; Lindsay, Muijs, Harris, Chapman, Arweck and Goodall, 2005; Potter, 2004). Interest in the question of whether each school needs its own headteacher led to a focus on the needs of schools driving the decision to federate or not (Heath-Harvey, 2006). Federations remain part of the increasing set of solutions that governing bodies can consider when faced with a headteacher resignation and offers the opportunity to undertake a strategic review of the needs of the school community.

Alongside the possibility of federation has been a range of headship 'models' that can be seen along a continuum. These models range from sole leadership (one school, one head) through supported leadership (where one head is supported by others, e.g. consultant leader, in the role and tasks of leadership for a fixed period of time), dual leadership where two leaders are equally recognised and operate a form of job-share or co-headship) to shared leadership in which two or more leaders collaborate effectively with no specific role responsibilities (Barnard, 2006; Barnes, Coleman, Creasy, and Paterson, 2006; Court, 1998, 2003; Glatter and Harvey, 2006; Harris, Brown, and Abbott, 2006; Nightingale, 2006; Paterson, 2006).

To some degree, the debate about the nature of school organisation and leadership models has moved in the last few years. Academies and free schools are now part of the educational landscape and as they 'flex their muscles' in responding to local needs to develop provision that meets those needs, leadership models are changing. Executive headteachers are increasingly cross-phase (e.g. 3-18 schools, academies or umbrella trust models) and the independence and freedoms accorded academies and free schools encourage trustees and governing bodies to be innovative. Umbrella trusts provide for the possibilities of closer more formal partnerships of schools as a result of the Academies Act of 2010. Sponsorship of another academy, perhaps one on the 'National Challenge' or 'in scope' list provides another opportunity to reconsider traditional forms of leadership.

## **2.4. Context of the study: Church of England primary schools**

Education in England is characterised by a 'dual system' of schools that comprises faith schools (i.e. schools with a religious character) and non-faith schools (commonly called 'community' or 'community maintained' schools but historically called 'county schools'). I will first provide a brief overview of how this dual system evolved before discussing theological models of education and models of belonging and mission to place this study into context.

### **2.4.1. Education for the masses – the beginnings of church schools**

The dual education system of today has its roots in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century movement of the Church of England to educate the masses. Joshua Watson, whose work and life were celebrated in 2011 by the Church of England and the National Society of the Promotion of Religious Education (NATSOC) led in the establishing of schools for the education of 'the poor' (Webster, 1954).

In quite an astonishing manner the state initially disassociated itself from education, seeing it as 'of no concern of theirs' and in many ways a threat to

the status quo. Education of 'the masses' had the potential to create disharmony, dissent and rebellion as people were emboldened, empowered, even liberated by education, skills and knowledge (Chadwick, 1997).

However, the Christian Church has, since its earliest days, been built on the principles of freedom from oppression, liberation and tolerance, faith, hope and charity (e.g. William Wilberforce and his fight for the abolition of slavery). History is littered with the courage and deeds of ordinary men and women who stood up for what they believed, values often rooted in their personal Christian faith or in the beliefs of the Christian Church and the teachings of Jesus as recorded in Scripture. Such a man was Joshua Watson who believed that education brought with it better life chances but also the chance to access knowledge of the teachings of the Christian faith and the Anglican catechism in particular and grow in understanding of faith (Webster, 1954).

The creation of the 'National Society for the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church' in 1811 led to more than an estimated million pupils being educated by 1830 and 17,000 schools being recorded by 1851 (Elbourne, 2009). The initial lack of interest by the state in providing education and the interest and commitment of the Church of England is seen in the control of schools by the local incumbent (vicar) and not the government or a state body and in the name of the Society. The name includes the definition of its aim and reach – national. It includes the definition of the 'target audience' in today's parlance – the poor. It defines the nature and purpose of the Society – education in the principles of the established church, namely the Church of England. Not only were the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic to be taught, so too were the tenets of the Christian faith, and in particular the beliefs of Christianity as understood within the traditions and practices (rites and rituals) of Anglicanism.

'The Fourth R' published in 1970 and now commonly called the Durham Report after its author the Bishop of Durham (The National Society, 1970) helpfully articulates the two purposes of the early church schools and makes clear the interconnection between the commitment to the faith of individuals

and the commitment of the Church of England to service on a broader plain (education of the masses):

It is extremely important to recognise at the outset that the Church of England voluntary school of today is an institution whose roots go back into a past where its role was seen as two-fold. It was *general*, to serve the nation through its children, and *domestic*, to equip the children of the church to take their places in the Christian community (italics mine) (The National Society, 1970, p.207).

Debate ensued throughout the middle decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century regarding the role of the state possibly due to competition between Anglicans and Catholics regarding the award of state grants towards the building and upkeep of school buildings. They did however engage in one important additional aspect, setting standards for the qualifications required of teachers (Chadwick, 1997, p.8).

The early schools provided by the National Society for the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church were established during a time of great social and industrial change. The Industrial Revolution in England (approximately the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century) spawned many inventions and innovations from sewers and aqueducts in the field of construction, canals and railways in transport, technology in the pursuit of mass production, communication (e.g. Morse code and the telegraph), light and power and the beginnings of electricity. The world was opening up and Britain wanted to be in on the act. As the politician, William Edward Forster, after whom the Elementary Education Act was named in 1870 (Elementary Education Act, 1870) is reported to have said:

Upon speedy provisions of elementary education depends our industrial prosperity (quoted in Chadwick, 1997, p.10).

And so the state took responsibility for the education of all.

However, there has remained a partnership and sometimes an uneasy set of 'shifting alliances' between various branches of the Christian Church (Church of England, Roman Catholic, non-conformist etc) and the state ever since (Chadwick, 1997) with both conflict and compromise being part of that relationship (Chadwick, 1997; 2001). As Chadwick, in her comprehensive analysis of the relationship between church and state and between different traditions and branches of the Christian Church (particularly Anglican and Roman Catholic), identified that, while the Church of England lost some of its freedoms and control, it did retain something more intangible:

The Church of England inherited a deep sense of responsibility for education at all stages from parish school through to the university, with a duty to ensure that Christian doctrines and moral values flowed in the life-blood of the nation (Chadwick, 1997, p.13).

This then is how the current 'dual' system of state and church education came into being. Legislation about the nature of education emerged from a belief that education for all was essential to the prosperity of the nation. This appears to have taken precedence over the central tenets of belief that individual freedom and faith in God and man could emerge from education accompanied 'hand in hand' with knowledge of religious values and beliefs. In such a crucible of debate that was religion and politics in the 19<sup>th</sup> century emerged the structure of the education system that persists to this very day.

#### **2.4.2. Instrument of Ethos**

Many Church of England schools have historically adopted a 'generic' Statement of Ethos, one that makes explicit their religious character:

Recognising its historic foundation, the school will preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in partnership with the church at parish and diocesan level.

The school aims to serve its community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers to its pupils (Elbourne, 2009, p.5).

This Instrument of Ethos statement places the church school in the heart of a community, comprising its pupils within the local community, the church at local level and diocesan level and the tenets of the Church of England on a national level. It makes explicit that church and school are expected to work in partnership with one another, a key aspect at the heart of the Dearing Report (2001). The statement also contains within it the notion of service and that that service is the provision of a high quality education. Furthermore, that education should be provided within the context of Christian belief and it should be within the context of Anglican principles and practice. It does not require anything of anyone such as its pupils or 'consumers' (Worsley, 2006, p.6) but uses the verbs 'encourage' and 'promote', rather than adherence, belonging or evangelism.

Waddington (1984) and Chadwick (1997) concur that the church school must walk a fine line and balance the interests of the different stakeholders and partners concerned with education in a 'Christian context' (Instrument of Ethos quoted above), namely those of the local and national church, the diocese, parents and professionals within the local community. In this way then Church of England schools are part of a 'community of practice' (Wenger, 1998) where all partners involved in the shared endeavour of 'education within a Christian context' are joined by different degrees and types of relationship. This then is a 'spiritual' community of practice. All the members involved share a common commitment and shared aspects of practice through rites and rituals based upon shared beliefs and practices rooted in the tenets and practices of the Church of England. The underlying characteristics and dimensions of Wenger's theory of communities of practice will be outlined later in this chapter (2.6.) and utilised in respect of a 'spiritual community of practice' in Chapter 7.

### **2.4.3. Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled schools**

The Education Act of 1944 (commonly known as the Butler Education Act) was central to a change in the dual system and the creation of 'Voluntary Aided' (VA) and 'Voluntary Controlled' (VC) Church of England schools. Chadwick argues that it may have been influenced to some degree by attitudes attributable to the British response to the threat of Nazism in the Second World War and a subconscious linking of freedoms for which Britain fought with the tenets of Christianity (1997, p.26).

Essentially, the Butler Education Act resolved long standing issues, conflict and 'jockeying for position' (between Anglican and Roman Catholic schools) in respect of funding arrangements and the upkeep of buildings but crucially preserved, albeit with caveats, the teaching of Religious Education within Anglican schools and denominational teaching (Chadwick, 1997; McKinney, 2008). All schools had to be identifiable by their adherence to the Christian religion and this went beyond the fundamental stipulation in the Butler 1944 Education Act that every school, whatever the type of school, had to conduct a daily act of collective worship. This provision enabled Church of England schools and Roman Catholic schools to teach religious education and values according to their denominational beliefs rather than Christian and moral values. In this way it could be argued that the position and centrality of Church of England schools to education, including that of religious, spiritual and moral education was strengthened (The National Society, 1970). Although the Durham Report recommended that Church of England schools should desist from denominational teaching and concentrate on the education for all children (The National Society, 1970), the position of church schools and the right to include denominational teaching was kept within the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA). The purpose of church schools or 'education in a Christian context' is still with us today in the debates about what is meant by the 'general' and the 'domestic' (The National Society, 1970, p.207) and perhaps more clearly defined as 'education in a Christian context' and 'education about Christianity' (Astley, 2002, p.6).

Management of schools went to local authorities but schools which became Voluntary Aided (rather than Voluntary Controlled) were subject to specific provisions regarding finance, ownership and upkeep of buildings (see Dearing, 2001, pp. 83-84 for a helpful comparative summary).

Over the decades between 1944 to today successive governments have raised the amount of state funding for Voluntary Schools building costs from 50% to 90%, reducing the amount to 10% which the 'governors' (in practice, the Diocese in most instances) are expected to contribute to capital works. Additional differences between Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled were in the areas of (a) the teaching of Religious Education, (b) employer and employee relationships and (c) the composition of the Governing Body and (d) admissions.

In a Voluntary Aided school the governing body is the employer compared to the Local Authority being the employer of staff in a Voluntary Controlled School. The teaching of RE in a Voluntary Controlled school follows the locally agreed syllabus (often written in partnership between RE specialists, teachers and the Diocesan Education Team). In a Voluntary Aided school the RE syllabus is determined by the Governing Body though in practice, they often elect for the school to follow the locally agreed syllabus. The composition of a Governing Body of a Voluntary Aided school is such that Foundation Governors appointed by the Church are always in the majority. In a Governing Body of a Voluntary Controlled school, the Foundation Governors are always in a minority. Regarding admissions, in a Voluntary Aided school, the Governing Body is the Admissions Authority not the Local Authority as in a Voluntary Controlled school. However, in practice, moves to standardise admissions procedures in all maintained schools through Codes of Practice have led to a more consistent policy across all schools in England in recent years.

To bring the historical developments up to date, the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) largely left the position regarding church schools unchanged. There has been additional legislation that created 'Grant Maintained schools'

(Education Act 1993) which no longer exist, 'Foundation' schools which may choose to have a specific religious character or designation (School Standards and Framework Act 1998) and 'free schools' and academies which may choose to have a religious character (Academies Act 2010). However, what runs alongside or underpins a rise in the number of faith schools has been a commitment, perhaps at times a somewhat pragmatic commitment, about the role religious belief and practice might have in social cohesion and creating and sustaining acceptable societal 'norms'. As a result more faith schools have been created since the late 1990s than for many decades. These now include schools of faiths other than the Christian faith in the Anglican and Roman Catholic denominations: Jewish, Muslim, Hindu and Sikh schools (DCSF, 2007b).

An additional layer of strategic activity in respect of Church of England schools is through the Diocesan Boards of Education (DBE) which oversee church schools in every Anglican diocese. The function of these Boards and of their nominated Diocesan Director of Education (DDE) is enshrined in the Diocesan Boards of Education Measure 1991 No.2. Essentially, this Measure defines the legal position and responsibility of Diocesan Boards of Education in respect of educational expectations. It is a link between the Church and state in respect of the dual system. Diocesan Boards of Education appoint a team of staff to manage aspects of church schools from buildings and capital projects (Voluntary Aided schools only), governance, support for school improvement (e.g. a Schools' Officer or Schools' Advisor), advise on Religious Education (e.g. an RE Adviser) and deploy and manage SIAS Inspectors who carry out the 'Section 48' Inspections as required under the Education Act 2005 (NATSOC, 2009a).

Much is written about the church schools as 'distinctive'. This definition is 'enshrined' in the commonly adopted Instrument of Ethos. It is judged in the additional Inspection that accompanies an Ofsted inspection but which focuses on aspects unique to church schools. These are:

1. How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?
2. What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?
3. How effective is the religious education? (Voluntary Aided schools only)?
4. How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a church school?

(NATSOC, 2009a, p.5).

The majority of dioceses produce documents and guidance on how to develop and maintain a distinctiveness that is in line with the core values of Anglican schools and with the school's Instrument of Ethos.

#### **2.4.4. Issues around faith schools and church schools in particular**

The issues surrounding faith schools are several and exercise the minds of academics, politicians, the media, practitioners and parents although not necessarily all at the same time or with the same strength of feeling and intensity. There appear to be six issues of interest debated in the literature:

- Admission and selection and whether this fosters a form of elitism or inequity;
- The appropriateness of state funding for faith schools;
- Whether faith schools cause or foster division and separation;
- Whether faith schools can help societal issues, such as social cohesion in an increasingly diverse and fragmenting society;
- Autonomy and whether schools should be promoting religious beliefs in light of a child's rights;
- The impact of faith, particular church schools on standards and educational outcomes.

It is not the purpose of this study to explore the debates about the purpose of faith schools except in so far as it is directly relevant to the study's core

inquiry, why headteachers leave. It is however, pertinent to comment that the situation at present is that there has been an increase in Church of England schools under the Labour government (1997-2010) and since the Dearing Report in particular which called for more church schools (Dearing, 2001). There is no doubt that faith schools and church schools in particular are part of the politics of education, a means to develop the moral norms and values of a civilised society and to support or engineer greater social cohesion.

#### **2.4.5. The purpose of church schools and theological models of education**

However, there is more to Church of England schools than being part of a dual system of education with their roots in the philanthropy and commitment of 19<sup>th</sup> century Christians who believed in the power of education for the common and the individual good. Church schools are more than an anachronism, a structural system or tool for the teaching of moral values contributing to the moral fabric of the country.

Their purpose has been defined, reviewed and debated by four landmark reports such as 'The Fourth R' known as the Durham Report (The National Society, 1970), 'A Future in Partnership' by Waddington for The National Society (Waddington, 1984), the Dearing Report (2001) and, more recently, the Chadwick Review commissioned by the Church of England Archbishops' Council Education Division and conducted by Dr Priscilla Chadwick (Chadwick, 2012). These have all reviewed the provision and practice of church schools at a given time and made recommendations for the future of church schools. However, there are alternative and more nuanced perceptions regarding the purpose of church schools and how they and their role in the Church's work, or God's mission to the world, can be understood. I turn now to consider models of theology, mission as invitation and models of belonging that lie behind the identity, ethos and work of a church school.

Worsley states that for church schools to understand their own identity and their part in God's mission to the world six aspects are important (2006, p.2-

3). These include (i) the categorisation of a school, i.e. whether it is Voluntary Controlled or Voluntary Aided (see earlier) and (ii) an understanding of the school within its own and the Church of England's history of Anglican schools historically and how the differences of category and the freedoms – and constraints – afforded it in law will affect what and how it does certain things (e.g. RE, admissions, employment, governance, buildings).

An additional three aspects are common to leadership of any school and are about an understanding of context as paramount. For a school to understand itself and its community and how it can meet the needs of that community, a school must understand its local context and identifying features, namely, geography, 'local culture' and social characteristics within the cultural shifts and understandings of people that abound (p.3). For instance, social characteristics may be indicated by social deprivation indices or employment statistics. Physical geography may be understood in terms of the nature of the community, e.g. rural, urban, inner-city, remote etc. The context of the school may also be understood in terms of how society sees individuals, that is, within the 'economic context' of the world today or the economic value society places on people today. Worsley suggests that in today's society people are a 'means of consumption' and consumers of a service or product (2006, p.3) and that this is an aspect which Anglican schools need to understand as they exist within a location and time of social change and focus.

A sixth aspect is important, that of a theological model of Christian education (p.2). Here Worsley joins with Astley (2002) and Francis (1993) in suggesting that the understanding of the church school community and its engagement with the world as part of the Church in joining in God's mission to the world is linked to its understanding of, and decision about, the theology of Christian education.

Three theological models of Christian education exist in the somewhat sparse literature on the subject (Astley, 2002, p.6). These are:

- Education into Christianity
- Education about Christianity
- Education in a Christian manner.

Astley helpfully articulates what these models are and might mean in practice, suggesting that any of the three may be behind the phrase 'Christian education':

- (a) *education into Christianity*, in the sense of Christian 'formation' or 'nurture', sometimes called 'confessional Christian religious education';
- (b) *education about Christianity*, in the sense of a 'non-confessional' religious education whose subject-matter is the Christian tradition and its contemporary expression;
- (c) *education in a Christian manner*, in the sense of a Christian approach to (or 'philosophy of') general education: that is, teaching and learning *Christianly*

(2002, p.6).

As Astley points out, the third theological model, *education in a Christian manner*, is probably the one to which most Anglican schools subscribe. It enables schools to base their distinctiveness on Christian beliefs and values.

The second model, *education about Christianity*, is about the teaching of Religious Education and the decisions that Governing Bodies need to make regarding the RE syllabus and focus (e.g. in a Voluntary Aided school compared to a Voluntary Controlled school as detailed earlier).

The first theological model, *education into Christianity*, is potentially more fraught with difficulty. Francis (1993) concurs with Astley that the concept of nurture is rooted in history of church schools and one of the two initial roles of church school, the 'domestic' goal of 'equipping the children of the church to take their places in the Christian community' (National Society, 1970, p.207). Although Dearing, in 2001, 'sat on the fence' about this issue, not really

defining what it meant, he offered the following aspiration in addition to that of providing high quality teaching and learning experiences for pupils:

Our distinctive purpose and contribution in education is to offer Christ: to embrace the development of the spiritual life and awareness of young people (Dearing, 2001, Paragraph 3.42).

It is this notion of 'spiritual formation' and of a school 'offering Christ' that is often upsetting to many and causes perceptions of indoctrination and the expectation of 'confession', i.e. that pupils are expected to accept Christ and the beliefs of the Christian Church as presented through the course of their formal education. It shows what harm ambiguity can do to the place of church schools within the state education system and how misunderstandings can occur as a result.

Francis (1993) argues that the two-fold understanding of the role of the church in education – and therefore their purpose and *raison d'être* - needs to be thought about from a theological perspective. The theology of nurture is the equivalent of the 'domestic' and the theology of service is the equivalent of the 'general' referred to in the Durham Report (The National Society, 1970). Francis' definition of a theology of nurture is akin to the first theology, that of 'education into Christianity' listed by Astley (2002, p.6):

Nurture is concerned with the nature of Christian upbringing. It is the concern expressed by Christian parents who wish their children to grow and to develop within the overall context of the Christian faith (Francis, 1993, p.59).

In the following statement we see the theology of service defined thus:

Service is concerned with the churches' perceived responsibility for the needs to those who are not members, as much as those who are members (Francis, 1993, p.60).

It is worth saying at this point therefore that the term 'service' is used to define two things: firstly, service in a traditional way when schools say that they seek to 'serve' the needs of their community (with no overt religious connotations) and secondly, as a means to communicate the Christian message to those who are not 'members', i.e. Christians or part of the worshipping body of Christ.

In a theology of service we see specifically the concept of service to the nation, both the nation's children and the nation's moral 'health' but not to the spiritual health of individuals or to their 'spiritual formation', part of Astley's definition of 'education into Christianity'. Although Francis argues that church schools must take care regarding their distinctiveness especially where one school, the church school, is the only provider in perhaps a rural area, he argues that the theology of service is no longer relevant or sustainable for there exists within the theologies of nurture and service a tension not easily resolved in theological or practical ways (1993).

Francis further argues that a third theology of education is pertinent in today's world and is necessary for the church to work in partnership with church schools in mission. This third theology has its roots in the Judeo-Christian tradition of prophecy. Prophecy in both Old and New Testament times was about standing up for something different than the perceived 'norm', questioning and challenging decisions and behaviours even when that challenge brought unpopularity and threatened the prophet's life. Examples of biblical prophets are Daniel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Elijah, Jonah and Moses (Old Testament) and John the Baptist (New Testament). Within this biblical tradition of prophecy is the strand of the 'spiritual' challenging the 'secular'. Francis argues that this tradition should be one which the Church should embrace as a 'theology of prophecy'. He defines it thus:

Prophecy is concerned with testing current social reality against an understanding of God's declared purposes for his creation. The prophetic tradition in theology has always claimed the right to stand outside social practice, to draw attention to the implications and

consequences of certain lines of action and to bring to the surface implicit values and beliefs underlying these lines of action. Today practical theology has a responsibility to scrutinise and to evaluate secular educational theory and practice in the light of the Christian gospel and to do so not only in relationship to church schools but to the whole of the state maintained system (Francis, 1993, p.62).

This is radical and potentially nation changing if the Church were to embrace a theology of prophecy in their engagement with policy makers and educators alike.

So what relevance does Francis' proposed 'theology of 'prophecy' have for church schools or is 'theology' just for theologians, bishops who sit in the House of Lords, parish priests, i.e. 'the Church' or rather the hierarchy of 'the Church'? The implications for a theology of nurture or service are reasonably clear even if it is argued that they are not relevant in today's society.

Elbourne argues that schools (e.g. leaders, school governors and the local church) should debate and come to a position on the theological models of Christian education ('education into Christianity', 'education about Christianity' and 'education in a Christian manner') and the models of mission I will present next (2009, pp.23-24). In the fast paced world of education in which headteachers are afforded greater autonomy and dioceses now need to be more actively engaged in more than support, pastoral care and inspecting aspects peculiar to church schools, church schools have a role in standing up for what they believe to be right not just for their pupils within their context but for what they believe to be right in terms of educational theory and practice. This is within the biblical traditions and very much part of principles for living as portrayed in Old and New Testament examples. Furthermore, it is how a community of faith might live and work out its beliefs and values within the wider world and so engage in the mission of God in the world.

These three theologies of education require consideration and action by three members of the 'spiritual' community of practice if issues of supply and

demand, recruitment and retention of Anglican school headteachers are to be addressed and the picture portrayed in Howson's annual surveys of the Labour market reversed or improved. Chapter 7 will consider aspects of Anglican school headship and how understanding of these theologies of education and mission by members of a 'spiritual community of practice' may play a part in headteacher departure and how actions by members of this community of practice may help reduce the numbers of headteachers leaving headship and encourage them to remain in Anglican school headship.

#### **2.4.6. Mission as 'invitation' and practical theology**

However, church schools are about practical aspects of Christianity and gospel principles. Elbourne suggests that church schools are about something relational and invitational:

Christian education is not simply a matter of passing on information and expertise. It invites people to take their own place in the salvation history of the people of God. Teaching and learning are closely linked in our tradition with worship and action; they flow into each other (Elbourne, 2009, p.12).

The concept of Christian education 'inviting people to take their place in the salvation history of the people of God' raises head on the issue of the purpose of church schools and how theology can be understood in practice. It is an emotive subject amongst Christians and non-Christians alike for it brings with it words such as evangelism and mission, even indoctrination or proselytization for its detractors.

But what lies behind what Elbourne argues for? Before considering the nature of Anglican schools it is perhaps helpful to consider their origins – the Church of England. The Church of England is steeped in education and training, in the notion that being a member of the Christian church is to be a follower of Jesus, a disciple, one who learns and one who is taught. That is the example of Jesus in the New Testament from the early days when he engaged with

learned rabbis in the temple courts and then taught his own followers before being crucified.

Christians and the Christian Church are called to 'go into all the world and make disciples' in the words of Jesus known as the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20). The Resolution of the General Synod in 1998 reported in The Dearing Report is clear but raises some difficult issues:

Church schools stand at the centre of the Church's mission to the nation (Dearing, 2001, p.2).

However, Elbourne (former Diocesan Director of Education for the Diocese of Ely and on the interview panel which appointed me to my first headship) argues that mission is not the work of the Church, but that the Church is called to work in partnership with God in His mission, the Great Commission. Elbourne is not disagreeing with the centrality of 'mission to the nation' but seeking to explore the core concept that mission is actually what *God* is about through the work of his church and those who believe in Him. As Bosch argues the mission is that belonging and originating from God and in which the people of God are invited to participate:

The *mission Dei* is God's activity, which embraces both the church and the world, and in which the church may be privileged to participate (1991, p.391).

The Church in a way is the arm or agent of that mission. The Church seeks to communicate the 'good news' of the gospel *because* God has both invited Christians to do so and commissioned it to do so (Matthew 28: 18-19). Waddington puts it thus:

Faith, which is God's gift, nourishes a vision, a growing apperception of the world seen through the eye of God. It is a vision of the world righted, of evil turned to good, of man's self-aggrandisement transmuted to humility and love, of depressing agonies raised by hope

... At the centre of that vision is the turbulent, blinding, initiating love that is God. He it is who invites man's co-operation in achieving his rightful sovereignty and the first step for man in such collaborative action is 'metanoia', repentance, a willingness to stop in one's track and change direction. Thus the vision provided through God's gift of faith informs newness in individual and corporate action. Through the vision comes rebirth. Theology helps articulate the vision; it authenticates or questions the believing community's vision of it (Waddington, 1993, p.35).

This then gives a different perspective to the notion of mission and 'untangles' some common misconceptions about mission and the role of church schools. It debunks a common myth that church schools are about evangelism for starters.

Dearing is helpful here when he writes that the mission of the Church is

- to proclaim the gospel;
- to nourish Christians in their faith;
- to bring others into the faith and
- to nurture and maintain the dignity of the image of God in human beings through service, speaking out on important issues and to work for social justice as part of that mission

(Dearing, 2001, p.11).

If mission is seen not as the Church evangelising through church schools but that church schools are part of the Church and therefore engaged in mission, then the emphasis shifts from the purely temporal to the spiritual and from a focus on evangelism to the whole person as created in the image of God.

Worsley sees mission as incorporating 'tasks of mission' (2006) similar in concept to the definition of Dearing in the Dearing Report quoted above (Dearing, 2001, p.11). However, Elbourne goes further, suggesting that

church schools 'are part of what the Church *is* and not simply one of its projects or activities the church *does*' (2009, p.20). He is concerned with ways of 'being' more than with 'doing'. This concept that church schools are part of the Church creates something of a problem unless the issue of 'belonging' is addressed. What does 'being part of what the Church is' mean? To what or whom do church schools 'belong'?

At the heart of mission is the call to 'share the good news of the gospel' but in ways that value the individual and free will. Central to the New Testament message is that it is right to 'do your work as unto the Lord' (Colossians 3:23). 'Good works' are an extension of faith and this extends to the Church's engagement with education (Ephesians 2:10). Education was an enabling tool not just of communicating the important beliefs and values of the Christian faith but a tool which supports the development of an individual and provides an opportunity for individuals to engage with ideas of faith in order to make up their own minds about faith – and the gospel message of salvation – for themselves. Why? Because God invites people to be in relationship with him and join in his mission to the world.

This mission goes beyond the doors of a church school to the families and communities which a school 'serves'. The concept of a church school 'serving' its children, families and the wider community is writ large through all the literature and rhetoric about church schools (e.g. Dearing, 2001; Astley, 2002).

And so we are back again at the concept of invitation expressed by Elbourne:

It [Christian education] invites people to take their own place in the salvation history of the people of God (2009, p.12).

If church schools are part of the Church as Elbourne argues, then what is the Church engaged in? What models of belonging exist and what difference do they make to the lives of those within a church school community? How does the Church of England and its many schools see their relationship and what

implications does that have for mission? And, for the purposes of this study, what relevance might such models have to headteachers and their decisions about leaving a post and/or the headship? Chapter 7 will explore answers to these questions as they relate to main research question, 'Why do headteachers leave?'

I have already presented the position that mission is really God's mission, rather than that of the Church. It is God's work, rather than the Church's. However, Christians everywhere and the Church at local, national and worldwide level are called to engage in that mission, in the tasks of that mission. An understanding of this within the framework of the gospel message of salvation is central to understanding the 'offer of Christ' and the concept of Christian education as a 'gift' contained within the Dearing Report (2001). Therefore the mission of the Christian Church is to communicate the gospel message of hope and forgiveness that God offers through the life and death of his Son, Jesus (John 3:16) in all that the Church does and says. This has implications for church schools if church school education does go beyond the theology of education, is invitational and relational as well as theological and relational.

Questions then arise for church schools:

- What is the invitation schools are communicating to its pupils, their families and their communities?
- How is this invitation communicated?

It is this invitation that is the subject of much controversy. This invitation is not so much about overt 'preaching the gospel' but an invitation to become a disciple (one who follows Christ), to know God. This is more than 'becoming a Christian or 'converted'; it offers a relationship with God. So this invitation is more subtle 'nurture' as outlined in the Dearing Report (Dearing, 2001).

Here it is helpful to consider the 'nurture' aspect of church schools. Nurture is not about engaging in evangelism or seeking to convert pupils to Christianity. Rather, it is about providing children with knowledge and understanding of the principal tenets of Christianity (education about Christianity) and an understanding of the values of Christianity that will enable them to make an informed decision about the path of their own life. Decisions about faith, about believing or not believing in the gospel message that God sent Jesus to die for the sins of the world (John 3:16) and about the way to live and engage with society (right, wrong, behaviours etc) are individual.

#### **2.4.7. Models of belonging and models of mission**

I turn now to consider specific models of belonging and mission. These models are only described in remarkably few sources (e.g. Astley, 2002; Boutellier, 1979; Elbourne, 2009; Worsley, 2006), in part perhaps because church schools are an established part of the dual system and in part perhaps because they raise difficult issues with about which the Church of England and schools themselves perhaps do not grapple with sufficiently in their discourse and 'ways of being' and 'ways of knowing'. 'Models of belonging' and 'models of mission' are essentially the same but once again they require interpretation practically at a local level and a national level as well as at a theological level. Within the four main reports about Anglican schools detailed earlier (The National Society (Durham Report), 1970; Waddington, 1984; Dearing Report, 2001; Chadwick Review, 2012) sit a complex underlying, sometimes hidden, set of ideas and metaphors that define how belonging and mission might be conceived in practice. These include the church as a family, tribe or threshold place, ark of salvation or vehicle for salvation and prophetic presence, or partnership. These are variously defined through examples in a number of texts about the role of local church in parish life which often only briefly refer to the relationship between church and school (e.g. Burn, Marks, Pilkington and Thompson; Croft, 2002; Cray, 2004; Davie, 1994; Greenwood, 1996; Smith, 2008).

However, the three principal models of belonging and of mission are 'family', 'tribe' and 'threshold place'.

**(a) Tribe**

In this model of belonging churches and church schools are focused on preservation and the 'nurture' of those of faith. Local churches can see the church school as a means to an end; increasing attendance. Schools may be under pressure to encourage pupils to attend regularly through school services held on Sundays in the local church or through joining the church choir. The motivation behind these activities for a church and a church school are essentially tribal and concerned with survival of 'the church' rather than with service (Elbourne, 2009).

**(b) Family**

It is difficult to determine at what point dioceses began to think and refer to their schools as a 'family' of schools. But this term and its underlying relational concept is the one often used to define the relationships and closeness Diocesan Boards of Education hope their schools will have with each other. A letter from the then Schools Minister, Baroness Blatch, in 1993, to the Archbishop of Canterbury and Cardinal Hume of the Roman Catholic Church and published in the Church Times (30<sup>th</sup> July 1993) is quoted by Chadwick in her discussion of the partnership between church and state (Chadwick, 1997, p.74). In this letter, Blatch writes approvingly of the term and the concept:

Each diocese sees its schools as a family, and rightly so. But a step towards greater independence is a matter for congratulations in any family and achieving self-governing status is just that kind of step – a sign of self-confidence and success .... (Blatch, quoted in Chadwick, 1997, p.74).

Being part of a family means nurture, support and challenge. Dearing (2001) talked of the Church's need to engage with both the concepts of service and of nurture.

This raises the need to also define the Church for the Church is often described as a family (e.g. with relationships described in familial terms: father, brother, sister) and as a 'body of Christ' with expectations that members of that family or body will care for each other. If a church school is part of the Church then what is that Church? How can the Church be defined? It is worth saying at this point that often the word with an initial capital (Church) is often used to describe the Christian Church worldwide or the Anglican Church in England, whereas church with a small c (church) is often used to describe a place of worship, e.g. a parish church. This highlights an important aspect of the debate about church schools. The 'Church' is a community of people, bound together by common beliefs and in particular by the fundamental belief that God sent Jesus so that all men might be saved and have eternal life (John 3:16). Therefore, this community of people is actually a community of faith.

However, this raises the question of whether church schools are only for those who believe in the gospel message. A third model of belonging and mission, that of 'threshold place', is helpful in addressing this question.

### ***(c) Threshold place***

If the church school *is* invitational and part of God's mission to the world through the work of the Church, then who is invited and how do you gain entry to the 'party'? I turn now to consider another metaphor or model of belonging, and one that in its name defines belonging as a half-way house and a model of mission as invitational.

Church of England schools do not exist for the children of the 'faithful', they are for all, irrespective of whether people subscribe to the beliefs of the Christian Church or not. If parents and children subscribe to the Christian faith, pupils do not have to be of the Anglican tradition to attend a Church of England school.

Implicit in the Dearing Report (2001) is the concept of the church school as a 'safe place' and a 'stepping stone', two of the ten characteristics of church

schools as defined by Waddington (1993, pp.48-49). Waddington defines them thus:

- *A safe place* where there is no ideological pressure and yet Christian inferences are built into the ethos and teaching as signals for children to detect;
- *Stepping stones to and from the community*, for children, staff, parents and local interests. The school learns to be part of a local community, to share its concerns and to be open to those who seek help, support and resources.

This concept of a half-way house (Astley, 2002, p.10) is akin to the image of a

... foster home of enduring values and relationships in which the selfless care and unlimited love of the Suffering Servant [Jesus] is a model for the life of the community (Waddington, 1993, p.49).

This then is the imagery of the 'threshold place', a place of transition, a place which may be crossed over many times 'to and fro' in the journey of exploration, uncertainty and indecision that often accompany engagement with the Church and issues of faith (Boutellier, 1979). The term 'threshold place' originates from a short article which a French Catholic writer, Jean Boutellier, presented at a Catholic symposium (Reedy, 1993) and appears to either have influenced or be similar to the 'safe place' and 'stepping stone' to and from the community of faith of which Waddington and Astley write. It is a model both of belonging and of mission which enables church schools to engage in service to the community through the provision of a high quality education.

Boutellier challenges the notion of 'there or not there" believing or not believing' and the polarisation of positions (Boutellier, 1979). The church school (whether Catholic or Anglican) can be a place where people engage with the ideas of faith and values behind the Christian faith. Although writing

about Roman Catholic churches, Boutellier powerfully describes the engagement of many with issues of religion and faith, something perhaps seen traditionally in England in our relationship at three key points of human existence, birth (christening), marriage and death (funerals):

...visited, frequented, questioned, explored, loved, criticized by a crowd of people who call themselves more or less Christians ... Many encamped at the church's doors are willing to be recognized as being of the church and to be linked to it, but they are very hesitant about being recognized as being integrally within the church (1979, p.25).

This understanding of people being associated with the Church and with Christianity but not necessarily believing helps shed some light on the ambiguity of the Dearing Report (2001) and the purpose of church schools.

## **2.5. Headteacher departure**

This chapter will now consider the empirical literature on headteacher departure and the reasons which are known to contribute to, influence or cause headteachers to leave a post and/or headship.

### **2.5.1. A haemorrhage of expertise and experience?**

Headteachers leaving a post or the profession are thought to be predominantly either those making a career move (e.g. larger headship) or those who are retiring at or approaching retirement age. These are the two main reasons for the advertisement of a post (e.g. Howson, 2007b).

For the period September 2006 to March 2007 Howson reported 18% (N=683) of primary posts were advertised as a result of a headteacher being appointed to a subsequent headship. 25% (N=683) were retiring at 60 or older and 31% (N=683) were retiring before the age of 60 but not retiring on grounds of ill-health (Howson, 2007b, p.10). This would suggest that a wealth of experience is being lost to the profession.

Other reasons for the advertisement of a post include move to a deputy headship, move to another post in education, move to a post outside education, stepping down to classroom teaching, maternity/paternity leave, new post and other (Howson, 2007b, p.10).

The percentages of headteachers leaving a post for reasons other than a subsequent headship or retirement for the period September 2006 to March 2007 was 26% (N=683). The percentages of headteachers leaving a post for a subsequent headship or retirement remained reasonably consistent over the years prior to the commencement of this study. Figures for heads leaving to take up a subsequent headship post are reported below. The table is compiled from data reported from a number of surveys by Howson. The trend for heads leaving to take up a subsequent headship of another school is between 18% and 22%.

Retirement can mean different things for different people (Carnell and Lodge, 2009). Are headteachers retiring at national pension age (NPA), 60 for teachers under previous pension arrangements? Or is it retirement for reasons of ill-health? Is it early retirement through some stepping down provision or leaving completely before 60? Is early retirement a euphemism for 'I've had enough and I'm old enough to leave without embarrassment?' of having reached the end of one's 'shelf life' (Earley and Weindling, 2007)? What prompts the timing of retirement?

A number of questions then arise about the definitions of 'leaving'. Are headteachers leaving headship but taking up other roles within the education sector such as advisory or inspectorate work? Are they leaving to work in some related education field (e.g. in Higher Education)? Are they leaving for good? Or are they leaving temporarily e.g. for a career break perhaps to raise children or care for an elderly relative? Are they for good with plans never to return to headship?

A number of questions also arise related the reasons which lie behind the decisions of headteachers, both in terms of their decisions of 'what next?' and also 'why now? What are the triggers or motivations for decisions made?

### **2.5.2. Premature departure**

Kruger, van Eck and Vermeulen define premature leaving as being 'always against the will of the principal' (2005, p. 242). In their exploration of issues that can lead to the departure of a principal, they found that four factors or characteristics were influential to a principal's decision and which influenced the timing and the nature of the departure in particular. The common aspects were characteristics of the organisation, characteristics of the working environment, characteristics of the selection procedure and the personal characteristics of the individual.

Premature departure is often associated with conflict between the principal and others, e.g. governors, parents and staff (Kruger, van Eck and Vermeulen, 2001). Similarly, ongoing conflict was found to be factor in a ten year longitudinal study of departure from rural schools in New Zealand (Whittall, 2002). In addition, Whittall found that accountability and line management pressures played a part as did increased workload and desire to focus on teaching. Evaluating the position of the school and deciding that fresh leadership was needed and the needs of family were two of the many factors that influenced headteachers.

Studies that focus on the reasons headteachers stay in post for substantial periods of time are rare. However, an American study (Boris-Schacter and Langer, 2002; Boris-Schacter and Merrifield, 2000) found that key to sustained successful leadership of the same school was a self confidence rooted in a style of leadership through modelling lifelong learning, heads who remained

... lifelong learners unafraid to publicly model intellectual curiosity (Boris-Schacter and Langer, 2002, p.85).

This notion of being a lead learner who is confident in modelling that intellectual curiosity and commitment to self learning as well as modelling a commitment to the learning of others as they lead a learning centred community (Dimmock, 2000) is reminiscent of the sentiments of Hall and Southworth (1997) and Bennis and Nanus (1985) quoted earlier. It would be wrong to infer too much from one study but it does suggest perhaps that attitude to oneself as the 'lead learner' and the perspective an individual has on the purpose of the role may have a bearing on longevity or an individual's ability to sustain effective headship.

### **2.5.3. Teachers leaving – adding to the picture of departure**

Studies into why teachers leave teaching may have some relevance to understanding why headteachers leave (Smethem, 2007; Smithers and Robinson, 2003; Tye and O'Brien, 2002). Increased accountability, workload, tensions in relationships and within schools, student and parental attitudes all play a part in why teachers leave a post or leave teaching (Smethem, 2007; Tye and O'Brien, 2002). Salary, school context and personal circumstances and desire for a new challenge were reasons cited by teachers in the study by Smithers and Robinson (Smithers and Robinson, 2003).

The study conducted by Smithers and Robinson (2003) raises an interesting aspect regarding school context. Kruger et al. (2005) and Whittal (2002) had found that school context played a part to some degree in headteacher departure. Kruger and Vermeulen found that the characteristics of the school had influenced premature departure and Whittal that a heads' assessment of their school needing new leadership and a fresh perspective had played a part. An American study of teacher attrition found that teachers were twice as likely to leave poorer schools as leave wealthier schools (Shockley, Guglielmino, and Watlington, 2006).

School context is therefore important in departure both for headteachers electing to leave as well as perhaps those who may be leaving 'prematurely' 'against their will' as Kruger et al. suggest (Kruger et al., 2005).

#### **2.5.4. Career advancement: another headship**

Whether headteachers leave their post as a result of a proactive decision or as a result of being 'pushed' and whether they leave at retirement or before retirement is of pertinence to my own research interest. Several possibilities occur in the literature that may help ineffective, exhausted or disenchanted headteachers 're-energise and renew, enabling them to regain past effectiveness or remain in the profession: a new challenge such as a new educational reform or initiative, a new headship (Fidler, MacBurnie, Makori and Bopari, 2006), a substantial period of sabbatical for headteachers to 'recharge the batteries' (Clayton, 2001; Oplakta, Bargal, 2001; Webber, 2007), funded and legitimised professional development entitlement (Flintham, 2004), and new opportunities resulting from school reorganisation and succession planning initiatives (Webber, 2007). New pension arrangements in England are also having an effect on teachers and headteachers' decision to stay or leave the profession (Peters, Hutchings, Edwards, Minty, Seeds and Smart, 2008).

Central to this question is an understanding of the career stages of headship. Some research suggests that many years in the same job can lead to both ineffective leadership and dissatisfaction for the postholder (Brighouse and Woods, 1999; Earley and Weindling, 2007; Fidler and Atton, 2004; Flintham, 2003a, 2003b; Mercer, 1997). On this subject there is some considerable debate as to the causes of ineffectualness and dissatisfaction and whether there are three, four or seven stages through which headteachers progress, which can be defined in periods of years. Brighouse and Woods (1999) suggest the notion of three phrases: (i) initiation, (ii) development and (iii) decline and withdrawal in which the withdrawal period is one in which the headteacher loses control, influence and ceases to plan effectively for the future. This notion of three phases would appear to resonate with the experiences of headteachers in the study of work-related stress conducted by Phillips, Sen and McNamee (2007). Reaching the sixth and 'plateau' stage as defined by Earley (2007) after approximately eight years of headship in one school can signal feelings of disenchantment or the need for a change or new sense of purpose, the stage Day describes as the fourth stage after a period

of autonomy (Day and Bakioglu, 1996). Earley likens the reaching of this plateau stage as reaching the end of one's 'shelf life' and calls for limited tenure and fixed term contracts to be reconsidered in order that headteachers might remain motivated and 'enchanted' (2007).

Oplatka (2001) found that women headteachers given sabbatical of a year at the seven year point of their principalship, returned renewed with energy, a greater understanding of themselves as a result of reflection and decisions about their leadership styles and the way forward for themselves, their staff and their schools. Short sabbatical periods are having a positive effect on Anglican headteachers in Bradford (Webber, 2007). Woods (2002) in her study of eight headteachers of at least fifteen years' service in one school, found that these headteachers were characterised by a verbally expressed pride in their schools, close relationships with their pupils, effective relationships with staff and a commitment to teaching and learning. Length of service need not therefore be equated with obsolescence.

New opportunities now exist for talented school leaders as the landscape of education changes (Fidler and Atton, 2004). System leadership (Hopkins and Higham, 2007) involving headteachers who think outside of their own school and have the skills and vision to support other schools, schools in challenging circumstances, failing schools (Harris et al., 2006), work in collaborative networks to the benefit of others (Jackson, 2006; O'Leary and Craig, 2007) is part of the Level 5 range of roles defined by the National College of School Leadership. Similarly, the roles of executive head (Barnes, 2006; Barnes, Coleman, Creasy and Paterson, 2006; Nightingale, 2006) and consultant leader (Fullan 2005) fit within the concept of a career stage in which headteachers reinvent themselves through career advancement (Pascal and Ribbins, 1998) and so challenge the notion of a job for life (Gini, 2000; Sennett, 1998) as they become portfolio heads (Flintham, 2004).

### **2.5.5. Personal response to incidents**

Central to headteacher decisions about leaving a post can be an individual's response to specific incidents that occur in their professional sphere. These can be 'one off' events which are significant to an individual and for whom they become critical and significant after the event contributing to times and decisions of change (e.g. Sikes, Measor and Woods, 1985).

In the world of education, seemingly quite ordinary but unfortunate incidents can be defined as 'critical' by virtue of the significance accredited to them after the event, particularly if something untoward, unpleasant or unforeseen results (e.g. fall in a PE lesson leading to a fracture and ultimately a visit to hospital and a plaster cast). Consequences of unusual events can lead to change.

However, much of the literature referring to critical incidents use the term in the context of teaching and the development of reflective practice with the identified incidents offering opportunities for individual and collective learning within an educational setting (e.g. Angelides, 2001; Francis, 1997; Tripp, 1993; Woods, 1993). The term 'critical incident' can therefore be used to refer to, and interpret, events with a number of different characteristics.

Incidents that bring learning and/or change individually or collectively within a school community may be considered 'critical' by virtue of not just the interpretation of the events as a result of its interpretation at or soon afterwards but also by virtue of the context of that event. Incidents that may be viewed as critical by newly appointed headteachers in terms of prompting learning or perceived as presenting immense challenge may, if repeated in a similar way at a future date, not be interpreted to be 'critical' in the same way.

The role of headteacher brings with it a myriad of responsibilities and accountabilities and a range of dilemmas to be faced and responded to (Murphy, 2007). The nature of events that are sometimes referred to as 'critical incidents' can be community tragedies on a school setting, local, national or international scale, dealing with the personal problems of children

or staff and organisational crises (Flintham, 2003b; 2009). Although examining how deputy headteachers dealt with a range of critical incidents during the headteacher's absence, Kerry found that school leadership required the leader to take a number of different roles including diplomat, go-between, co-ordinator, disciplinarian, administrator, trouble-shooter or executive officer (Kerry, 2005) in addition to supporting the emotional journey and/or learning of those involved in incidents which could be regarded as critical.

Some critical incidents are faced on a regular (daily or weekly) basis such as repeated challenging behaviour of pupils, some faced on an infrequent basis (e.g. personnel or staffing challenges) to ones that 'come from left field' out of nowhere (e.g. death of a serving member of staff etc).

These events that occur in the professional 'sphere' are in addition to any personal incidents that may present challenge, adaptation, acceptance or change in an individual's life such as the birth of a child or the illness or death of a family member.

Whatever the incident – whether it is experienced in professional or personal 'spheres' of our lives or overlaps both spheres (Mander, 2008) - a range of feelings and emotions can occur that can precipitate actions and moods (Crawford, 2009; Denzin, 2007) in addition to stress and stress related ill-health (Phillips, Sen and McNamee (2007).

In a short practitioner report (Flintham, 2003a) examining the experiences of fifteen headteachers from all phases of education who had or who were leaving headship early and the relationships of their 'leaving' to the notion of sustainable or depleted 'reservoirs of hope', Flintham suggested that the response of headteachers to critical incidents and the 'state' of their emotional and spiritual reservoirs are influential in headteachers leaving headship. This small scale study of fifteen leaving headteachers categorised headteachers in three ways: 'striders', 'strollers' and 'stumblers' and that although the steps between being a strider, stroller or stumbler head could be few it was how

individual headteachers responded to 'critical incidents' which to some extent led to their decisions to leave headship. It is part of a wider body of work by Flintham into faith, hope and spirituality in school leadership in which the focus is on how headteachers (150 headteachers across two countries, Australia and England) sustain their moral and spiritual leadership (Flintham, 2009).

'Stroller' heads (Flintham, 2003a) are those who manage a critical incident or experience in which they are severely tested in such a way as to enable them to maintain a sense of control while recognising the depletion of their own emotional reservoir. The subsequent departure is planned and managed and heads with perhaps the emotional aspects of the incident and how it has affected them compartmentalized. This is a 'critical incident' successfully managed. Flintham defines 'stumbler' heads as being headteachers who find the role increasingly burdensome, either in physical or emotional ways. It drains them and saps their energy, vision and commitment. They recognise the risks the job poses to their physical and emotional well-being and choose to walk away. 'Strider' heads are those who having been successful in their professional field are proactive about their departure, perhaps planning it as part of a career plan. Self-recognition and the ability to make a decision at the most judicious moment therefore appear key to headteacher departure.

To these three categories suggested in this 2003 practitioner report for the National College of School Leadership (Flintham, 2003a) has subsequently been added a fourth category in his unpublished doctoral thesis (Flintham, 2009), that of the 'sprinter' headteacher. 'Sprinters' are those heads who 'adopt a time-limited post-modernist portfolio approach to headship, matching their perceived skill set to the short-term needs of the school, and then moving on elsewhere, not necessarily within headship' (Flintham, 2009, p.223).

Headteacher departure would appear therefore to be influenced, in the lives of some headteachers, by personal responses to events that occur in the personal and professional lives of headteachers.

### **2.5.6. Snakes and ladders?**

Does headship prove either too much or not 'all it was cracked up to be'? Do headteachers having climbed the ladder become a snake and 'descend' down the career ladder as if playing the famous board game?

Although some larger schools have non-teaching senior roles (e.g. Swalecliffe Primary School, Margate) this is unusual as the majority of primary schools are Group 1 or Group 2 size. Is it possible that headteachers decide headship is not for them and decide to 'return' to deputy headship or a teaching role without significant senior leader responsibilities?

Data from the surveys by Howson of the situation in England and Wales indicates that this is unusual. The figure for heads whose posts were advertised between September 2006 and March 2007 who were taking this course of action was less than 1% (Howson, 2007b). In contrast with this low figure, findings from a study into retention in New South Wales, Australia, found that 36% of headteachers had left headship for a less responsible post (Whittall, 2002). This suggests that headteacher departure influenced not so much by career ambitions for a larger school (moving up the ladder on the board) but by the particular issues faced by small school headteachers: lack of staff, small budgets, class teaching commitment (Southworth, 2004).

### **2.5.7. Self and sanity or self-sacrifice?**

Stress and work-load are recognised factors affecting the well-being of teachers and headteachers (Bristow et al., 2007; Chaplain, 2001; French and Daniels, 2007; Mulford, 2003; Phillips, Sen, and McNamee, 2007; PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2001). The role of headteacher is one requiring tremendous energy and stamina (Bristow et al., 2007; Coleman, 2007; Gronn, 2003). It requires and tests an individual's capacity to deal with continual change, crises, and critical incidents in ways that are exemplary and a model of behaviour and integrity.

The role of a school leader requires a 'moral-ness' as the leader of learning within a community. As such it demands a personal integrity and commitment that places an individual's sense of self at the heart of their life and work. The role brings headteachers into situations where decisions have to be made that affect individuals, the school and the broader community. The futures of children and young people are at stake in the way that headteachers act and lead their schools. All of this tests the individual and requires the replenishing of inner spiritual and moral reserves (Flintham, 2003).

The pressures of headship have been variously defined. Bristow et al. define them as 'relentless' (Bristow et al., 2007). This sums up the sense of 'perpetual-ness' of headship, something Cranston calls 'occupational servitude' (Cranston, 2005) which is reflected in the studies by Earley et al., (2002) and Whitaker (1996). The definition of 'occupational servitude' appears quite negative. Ron, the headteacher of Southworth's ethnographic case study (1995) described headship as being something that takes a headteacher's life and this description is somehow more 'neutral' than the term 'occupational servitude' conjures up:

"It's [headship] extremely demanding, totally consuming of the person ... it's time consuming ... it's a way of life ... It looks like someone really not doing anything other than the things pertaining to headship. It's a hobby, everything. You get up in the morning and go to work and you think about it all day and you come home, perhaps for supper and you're still thinking about it. You try and shed it a little bit before you go to bed and then you get up and start the whole day again and that goes on and you just don't shed it" (Southworth 199, 135).

It is a way of life in which, although 'you become a headteacher ... [.] headteaching becomes you' (Clegg and Billington, 1997, p.44) as personal and professional identities fuse (Southworth, 1995).

Workload is a factor in the stress of headteachers. Bristow et al. found that 15% of headteachers found it difficult to maintain a healthy work-life balance

(2007). Phillips et al. (2007) found that gender and the type of school that a headteacher led affected levels of self-reported stress among headteachers in West Sussex. Female headteachers were significantly more stressed than male respondents. Among the factors Chaplain (2001) found to cause stress was the quality of interpersonal relationships with parents and staff.

Workload appears to be an issue that needs attention. School leaders need to be able to deal with the daily demands of the role and manage change and initiatives at a national level. Hand in hand with national initiatives and structural and organisational change goes the core task and responsibility for leading learning and engaging all stakeholders in the process of learning. Vision and confidence must be created, generated and sustained. Headteachers must lead by example in the process of leading learning.

Some studies have argued that while continual change and improvement is now an accepted aspect of school leadership, school leaders and policy makers must find ways in which leaders are helped and enabled to manage those change processes, to manage the seeming never-ending initiatives and innovations that emerge from Whitehall (Boris-Schacter and Langer, 2006; Earley, Baker, and Weindling, 1990). If the government of the day, individual schools and their leaders are unsuccessful in managing change successfully then leaders become disincentivised and de-motivated. A sense of autonomy is important to school leaders in being able to take decisions in the best interests of others. Time and space are needed for strategic thinking and appropriate response to initiatives so that initiatives are implemented in ways that best suit the needs of the community a school serves.

#### **2.5.8. The changing role of the headteacher**

The nature of headship has changed over the past three decades and the role and nature of headship is continually being re-evaluated and redefined. Literature in this area details both the historical changes to the role of headteacher but also the responses of headteachers to the evolving nature of the job as a result of legislation and policy agendas that have followed from

the Education Reform Act of 1988 in England and similar legislative changes in other countries (Bush, 1999; Day, 2000; Earley et al., 1990; Earley and Weindling, 2007; Jones, 1999; Vulliamy and Webb, 1995; Weindling, 1992; Whitaker, 1998). As already noted in the previous section that the climate of continual change may be a disincentive to aspirant headteachers but continual change may be part of the complex reasons headteachers leave headship. Interestingly, data from Howson's annual surveys indicate there was a huge 'spike' and rise in headteacher advertisements in 1997, a spike attributed to changes to pension rules (Howson, 2010a; Peters et al., 2008) and coincidentally with the election to power of 'new Labour' and their plans for education reform after 18 years of successive Conservative governments.

The main role changes can be defined as a response to the development of a performativity and accountability culture (Howson, 2003a; Louden and Wildy, 1999), increase of power and involvement of the local community (parents, governing bodies, business), local or site based financial management of schools and the increase in bureaucracy and administration while asking headteachers to actively engage with, influence teaching and learning and be responsible and accountable for pupil outcomes. These stem in large part in the England from the ideological position of both Conservative and Labour governments that place the child at the heart of many initiatives (e.g. Every Child Matters, the school within the community it serves (e.g. Extended Schools, SureStart) and a decentralised education system with local or site based management (Local Financial Management, free schools, academies) in paradoxical conflict with the centralised National Curriculum and emphasis on testing and educational outcomes as exemplified through school League Tables. As Brundrett and Rhodes comment,

It is ironic that increased accountability in education has been mirrored by significantly increased autonomy for schools (Brundrett and Rhodes, 2011, p.22).

These two central shifts in policy since the late 1980s and early 1990s have been responsible for many of the changes to headteachers' working lives,

providing both impetus for change and a sense that headteachers have to negotiate the changing role and the myriad of relationships with many different stakeholders that are central to the world of education.

Headteachers have needed to adjust to the shifting of power and influence in recent years. Governing Bodies have increasingly been tasked with school leadership and are held to account more rigorously by Ofsted for the strategic decisions made, the use of public funds and the impact of provision and policies in terms of pupil outcomes (Creese and Earley, 1999; Fidler and Atton, 2004; Petersen and Warren, 1994). Governors have had to take on more responsibility as schools are reorganised on a national basis as part of the Academy Programme begun under Labour to improve failing schools through closure and reopening but which the Coalition Government has continued apace, extending the policy to the majority of schools since election in 2011. Working in partnership with governors is demanding and calls for careful negotiation, often unspoken, of the roles of headteacher as lead professional and employee as heads manage the operational and strategic aspects of their role while governors manage the strategic monitoring and accountability responsibilities of governance (Green, 2000; Sallis, 2001). The issues around governance are complex and are set to become more so as academy boards respond to their increasingly demanding role within uncertain and fast changing parameters.

Engagement with parents is crucial to the success of a school (Harris, Andrew-Power, and Goodall, 2009) as well as the success of its pupils. Engagement with pupils and their families is fundamental to raising aspiration and raising achievement. Parents are encouraged to rate schools on the Ofsted website. Schools are expected to make concerted efforts to improve poor attendance, work with families who need support, broker solutions in consultation with health and social care services and intervene when appropriate in respect to safeguarding issues and ensure that the needs of all including vulnerable groups are met.

Pupil or student voice has become increasingly important (Brighouse and Woods, 2008; Burke and Grosvenor, 2003; Riley, 1998). School councils are now the norm and young people engaged in contributing to the change of practices, policies and the culture of their schools.

The changing role of the headteacher over the last three decades has resulted in a number of tensions or 'poles' being created: instructional leadership and management tasks, personal and professional lives, negotiating community expectations and personal definitions of leadership (Boris-Schacter and Langer, 2006). How headteachers respond to those tensions is paramount to both the survival of themselves as leaders and individuals (e.g. Flintham, 2003a; Flintham, 2009), and their schools (Flintham, 2004; Leithwood et al., 2006).

## **2.6. Communities of practice as a theoretical lens for the study**

### **2.6.1. Rationale for using Communities of Practice**

At the heart of this study is an interest in the lives and decisions of individuals, headteachers. Yet headteachers do not exist on their own in isolation; they are part of a number of communities of practice (Wenger, 1998).

When a headteacher myself, I did not exist in isolation; I was part of several 'networks' and 'clusters' of schools and headteachers. Some of these groups were formal partnerships created in response to the possibility of new monies from government for specific improvement activities (e.g. related to developing ICT in schools or addressing deprivation within similar communities). Some were informal but based upon a shared commitment. For instance, as headteacher of a junior school I worked closely with the headteacher of the feeder infant school. Some wider collaborations and partnerships were geographically based or were for schools of similar size or phase (e.g. junior school network). As headteacher of a Church of England

school in my first headship, I was part of the family of schools within the Anglican Diocese of Ely. I belonged to a group of heads supporting others when Branch Secretary of the local branch of the National Association of Headteachers.

Membership of these networks and clusters was important to me professionally and personally during those headship years but the term and outward expression in practice of a 'network' or 'cluster' often lacked something which, at the time, I couldn't define. At times, the networks were about support or about belonging to the most relevant group to reduce a sense of professional isolation. Even though learning is a social process without boundaries and learning takes place individually and collectively irrespective of age, gender, experience, seniority, role and so on through the course of shared endeavour (Wenger, 1998), the concept of a network or cluster of schools was at times lacking in focus and depth both professionally or personally.

Although interested in whether there were headteachers leaving church schools and/or headship who might be somehow 'hidden' in the official statistics and extant empirical research and to what extent this might be the case, I was passionately interested in the relationships between individuals and systems, between headteachers as individuals who were 'in relationship with' other people, e.g. staff colleagues, pupils, parents and governors, those defined both geographically and non-geographically. Furthermore, because of my long standing interest in church schools and the Church of England in education both historically and in practice through the work of the 43 dioceses in England (Church of England, 2010), I was interested in how headteachers of church schools saw their relationships with others in their immediate and less immediate 'circles'.

To some extent, my interest in relationships between headteachers and others had its beginnings both in my own headship experience but even before that, when studying for a Masters' Degree, I had come into contact with the ideas of Stephen Covey and 'circles of influence' (Covey, 1992; Covey

and Merrill, 1994). The phrase 'to live, to love, to learn, to live a legacy' (Covey and Merrill, 1994) has been a powerful and influential thought provoking concept throughout my life ever since. Conversations with the Diocesan Director of Education, Canon Tim Elbourne (Diocese of Ely) on my appointment as headteacher and during his visits to my school were far reaching in their impact on my own learning, identity and understanding of leadership of an Anglican school.

As I have engaged with the ideas of social learning and the theories of 'Communities of Practice' (Wenger, 1998), I was able to draw some understanding not just of a theoretical lens with which I could understand and interpret the findings of this study. This also enabled me to understand how, in some small measure, my thinking had moved on from the days of studying for a masters' degree (completed during the years of my first headship of that Anglican school) in how I thought about individual and collaborative learning and the impact on individuals and their identity formation that being part of a 'community of practice' might have. In this way, communities of practice as a theoretical lens also enabled me to reflect on my own learning across the years of my own personal and professional journeys.

The concept of 'communities of practice' provides a means of understanding both learning through social interaction and engagement with others in shared endeavour, that is, social participation. The concept of individuals 'being active participants in the *practices* of social communities' (Wenger, 1998, p.4) and how individuals construct their own identities in relation to those communities of practice intrigued me. I began to ponder over many months the notion of 'active participation' and the 'practices' of communities and how this theory could be a helpful construct to understand the lived experiences and departure of headteachers.

The theory of 'communities of practice' emerged as a contribution to theories of social learning. Wenger defines his theories of social practice and theories of identity thus:

Theories of *social practice* address the production and reproduction of specific ways of engaging with the world. They are concerned with everyday activity and real-life settings but with an emphasis on the social systems of shared resources by which groups organize and coordinate their activities, mutual relationships, and interpretations of the world (1998, p.13).

It was my interest in how headteachers 'interpret their world' and how their engagement in communities of practice and the relationships with and within various communities of practice may have influenced their decisions regarding leaving that has led to the utilisation of the theory of communities of practice for the interpretation of the findings and the conceptualisation of those ideas in this thesis.

Therefore the theory of communities of practice is an appropriate 'theoretical lens' through which to present and interpret the data and findings of this study. As Wenger states

We all have our own theories and ways of understanding the world, and our communities of practice are places where we develop, negotiate and share them (p.48).

Before defining the characteristics and dimensions of communities of practice I first outline what is meant by 'practice' to set the context for using this theoretical lens for this study.

### **2.6.2. Practice and meaning**

Practice is 'a process by which we can experience the world and our engagement with it as meaningful' (Wenger, 1998, p.51). Through everyday experiences, we find meaning through negotiation of meaning, an active process of 'living meaningfully' in which there occurs a process of 'continuous interaction, of gradual achievement, and of give and take' (p.53). This occurs as a person goes about the activities and interactions of daily life alone, in

relationship to others and in shared endeavour with others. In short, meaning results from the 'dynamic relation of living in the world' (p.54). It is this concept of practice as meaning that provides the underlying principle to Wenger's theory of 'community of practice'. Within the notion of practice as meaning, three concepts are intertwined: negotiation of meaning, participation and reification.

This negotiation of meaning involves two principles, participation and reification. Wenger argues that participation in any community of practice involves the 'action and connection' (1998, p.56) of members and between members of a community of practice. The potential of mutual recognition, of seeing something of ourselves in others and our interactions with others is a characteristic of participation (p.56). The individual and collective learning that results can be transformative for both the individual and the community of practice (pp.56-57). The experience of being a member of a community of practice is not something that is defined by the hands on a clock as our identity is not a 'skin' we shed at 'home time'. Being an active participant and being transformed by the meaning we negotiate internally and express through words and actions in relationships are part of who we are wherever and whatever we do in personal and professional contexts.

Through the process of reification 'we project our meanings into the world and then we perceive them as existing in the world, as having a reality of their own' (p.58). Reification, while part of the way in which we participate and engage with the world, can 'convey[s] a sense of useful illusion' (p.62). An example related to this study might be the way in which the Instrument of Ethos (see 2.4.2.), often displayed in school entrance halls and prospectuses, is used to try capture and articulate commitment to the tenets of the Anglican tradition, gospel values and aspiration for all members of the (church) school community. In some ways the Instrument of Ethos statement is a reification of the sometimes elusive 'X factor' of church schools, their 'ethos' or 'Christian distinctiveness'.

### **2.6.3. Communities of practice**

A community of practice has three core characteristics: domain, community and practice (Wenger, 1998). Integral to these characteristics are three dimensions: mutual engagement, a joint enterprise and a shared repertoire (p.73). These are portrayed in Figure 1.

It is these three characteristics and their dimensions of mutual engagement, joint enterprise and a shared repertoire (pp.72-73) that form a powerful conceptual framework used in the interpretation of the data generated during this mixed method study. Wenger helpfully portrays the three dimensions in diagrammatic form to which have been added the three characteristic labels, domain, community and practice to illustrate the inter-relatedness of the characteristics and dimensions for the purposes of this thesis (Figure 1). The characteristics and dimensions of community enable the negotiation of meaning, participation and reification of practice (see 2.6.2.) and lead to practice as meaning and meaningful.

#### **Figure 1: Characteristics and dimensions of practice**

Adapted from Wenger (1998, p.73, Figure 2.1)

Wenger argues that communities of practice are all around us and we are part of a number, some of which we may or may not be aware of (1998, p.6). For

instance, membership of a family is not the result of choice; membership comes through birth, adoption or marriage. Membership of a community of practice as a result of employment may occur in the realm of close physical or geographical proximity; equally it may be non-geographically based and cross many organisations, spheres and boundaries. Membership of a community of practice can also be of a group in which members share enthusiasm and interest in a particular hobby.

I turn now to outline the key characteristics and dimensions of communities of practice.

***(a) Domain and mutual engagement***

A community of practice has a shared domain of interest, that is, an interest or concern for something which all members are engaged in formally or informally, either in an area of personal or professional interest. Wenger argues that a community of practice is further characterised by a commitment of members to the domain of interest. This mutual engagement is a process in which members 'are engaged in actions whose meanings they negotiate with each other' (Wenger, 1998, p.73). This mutual engagement involves the competence of its members and results in individual and collective learning. This commitment can include different types of engagement to the community of practice which may reflect the nature of the relationships within the community of practice. Central to any community of practice is a shared competence that is not shared by others outside the community of practice.

Amongst the members of each community there is a mutual engagement that, although relationships vary in quality, regularity and depth over time. Those involved in a community of practice have a shared domain of interest.

***(b) Community and joint enterprise***

Communities of practice are characterized by a range of activities and/or engagement that furthers their interest in the community and learn both personally and in pursuit of their competence as a member of the community of practice. Members may engage in formal or informal activities together,

discussing issues related to the nature of their learning and relationships with members of the domain. Members not only help and support each other through collaborative activities and discussions but enable each other to learn from each other.

A commitment to joint enterprise is sometimes fraught with difficulty despite the efforts of members of a community of practice and the learning and impact of that learning that can result. Those engaged, explicitly or implicitly, in negotiating the joint enterprise - whatever that is - own their own learning and work (pp.77-78). A strong commitment to the joint enterprise of those the community results in shared accountability as an on-going 'product' of the mutual engagement and joint enterprise (pp.77-78). Wenger argues that it is in a community's negotiated response to external events that shapes, formulates and ultimately dictates its practice rather than the external factors themselves (p.80).

### ***(c) Practice and a shared repertoire***

Central to Wenger's theory of community of practice is the notion that all members within the community of practice are practitioners who develop a shared practice over time. The development of practice through participation and reification both uses and produces a shared repertoire of resources. The dimensions of mutual engagement, joint enterprise and a shared repertoire of practice run through the three characteristics of domain, community and practice. These aspects will be illustrated in terms of their relationship and relevance to this study in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

The development of a shared repertoire is the third crucial characteristic of practice as a source of coherence for the community of practice (p.82). Wenger helpfully defines what a shared repertoire may consist of:

The repertoire of a community of practice includes routines, words, tools, ways of doing things, stories, gestures, symbols, genres, actions, or concepts that the community has produced or adopted in the course of its existence, and which have become part of its practice. The

repertoire combines reificative and participative aspects. It includes the discourse by which members create meaningful statements about the world, as well as the styles by which they express their forms of membership and their identities as members (1998, p.83).

#### **2.6.4. Constellations of practice**

A number of communities of practice may form a 'constellation of practice' characterised by the aspects of community of practice depicted in Figure 1 above (p.128) which may be characterized by issues of distance (not necessarily just geographical), diversity and discontinuity of practice. Wenger argues that

Communities of practice define themselves in part by the way in which they negotiate their place within the various constellations they are involved in ... (p.128).

Some of the characteristics of constellations of practice that build on the three characteristics and dimensions of a community of practice (domain and mutual engagement, community and joint enterprise and practice and a shared repertoire) are of particular relevance to the spiritual community of practice which will be discussed in Chapter 7. These are:

- 1) sharing historical roots
- 2) having related enterprises
- 3) serving a cause or belonging to an institution
- 4) facing similar circumstances
- 5) having members in common
- 6) sharing artifacts
- 7) having geographical relations of proximity or interaction
- 8) having overlapping styles of discourses
- 9) competing for the same resources

(Wenger, 1998, p.127).

I return in particular to the notion of a constellation of practice in Chapter 7 when discussing aspects of community and practice as particularly pertinent to headship of Anglican schools.

### **2.6.5. Communities of practice and identity**

Wenger draws parallels between practice and identity, for 'the formation of practice is also the negotiation of identities' (1998, p.149). Identity is continually being constructed and formed in the context of personal and professional lived experience and is the product of an individual's engagement with various communities of practice of which they are a member.

Wenger argues that

Our identity includes our ability and our inability to shape the meanings that define our communities and our forms of belonging ...Building an identity consists of negotiating the meanings of our experience of membership in social communities (1998, p.145).

Referring to an example of one of the core participants in his study, Ariel, a claims processor, he expands on the formation of individual identity within the notion of identification with and participation within a community of practice:

How Ariel experiences her job, how she interprets her position, what she understands about what she does, what she knows, doesn't know, and doesn't try to know – all of these are neither simply individual choices nor simply the result of belonging to the social category "claims processor." Instead, they are negotiated in the course of doing the job and interacting with others. It is shaped by belonging to a community but with a unique identity. It depends on engaging in practice, but with a unique experience (1998, p.146).

So it is with the members of the four communities of practice discussed in later chapters of this thesis and in particular, the lived experience of the headteachers who are the focus of this study.

Membership of a community of practice and an individual's contribution to the on-going formation of a community of practice enables us to 'deal with the profound issue of how to be a human being' (Wenger, 1998, p.149) because identity is fluid and its formation is a life-long process of negotiation. It is influenced and affected by our relationships with and the practice of the various communities of practice to which we belong. Wenger sums this up thus:

... the experience of identity in practice is a way of being in the world (1998, p.151).

Identity is the product of lived experience and this experience is social and fundamental to the formation and negotiation of identity.

An identity, then, is a layering of events or participation and reification by which our experience and its social interpretation inform each other. As we encounter our effects on the world and develop our relations with others, these layers build upon each other to produce our identity as a very complex interweaving of participative experience and reificative projections. Bringing the two together through the negotiation of meaning, we construct who we are. In the same way that meaning exists in its negotiation, identity exists – not as an object in and of itself – but in the constant work of negotiating the self. It is in this cascading interplay of participation and reification that our experience of life becomes one of identity, and indeed of human existence and consciousness (1998, p.151).

Members of a community of practice may experience membership in different forms with varying degrees of engagement. Categories of membership can be core, occasional, peripheral and transactional depending on the extent to

which members participate and their commitment to the domain of interest and work and formation of the community of practice (Wenger, 2013).

Membership for individuals is experienced as marginal or peripheral, and although membership may be related specifically to the types of membership listed above or to whether they are on an inbound, outbound, insider, boundary or peripheral trajectory (Wenger, 1998, p.151-155), it is not necessarily so.

Participation and reification enable participants to work and learn within a 'regime of competence' which Wenger defines as being 'a set of criteria and expectations by which they [participants] recognize membership' (2011, p.2). This regime of competence therefore incorporates the following aspects:

- Understanding what matters, what the enterprise of the community is, and how it gives rise to a perspective on the world
- Being able (and allowed) to engage productively with others in the community
- Using appropriately the repertoire of resources that the community has accumulated through its history of learning

(Wenger, 2011, p.2).

It is through our engagement, our use of imagination in our relationships with member of the community and its domain of interest and the degree of our alignment to the domain of shared interest, mutuality and accountability to the shared enterprise that we experience degrees of participation and non-participation that may or may not be central to an individual's identity and indicate the degree to which we experience a sense of belong and identification with the community of practice (1998, p.191). The sources of participation and non-participation can be understood in terms of attitudes, actions and responses. These are:

- How we locate ourselves in a social landscape
- What we care about and what we neglect
- What we attempt to know and understand and what we choose to ignore
- With whom we seek connections and who we avoid
- How we engage and direct our energies
- How we attempt to steer our trajectories

(Wenger, 1998, pp.167-168).

### **2.6.5. Relevance of 'Communities of Practice'**

The use of Wenger's theory of social learning enables me to explore two areas of interest in respect of headteacher departure in this thesis:

- (i) explore connections of headteachers as active participants in the practices of four relevant communities of practice;
- (ii) how being part of a number of communities of practice might play a part in headteacher decisions whether to stay in or leave a headship.

As such, utilisation of this theoretical lens will illuminate how headteachers' participation in communities of practice might 'shape[s] what we do, but also who we are and how we interpret what we do' (Wenger, 1998, p.4).

Whoever we are, Wenger argues that we are all part of communities of practice, as communities of practice are 'pervasive' and 'integral' to all our lives (p. 6) and as such that 'social participation [is] a process of learning and of knowing' (p. 5-6). As such, this thesis argues that membership of four communities of practice are influential in headteacher departure. I have labelled these communities of practice as follows and these will be used to present and interpret the data and findings of this study as to 'why headteachers leave':

- Professional (Chapter 6)
- Nurture (Chapter 6)
- Family (Chapter 6)
- Spiritual (Chapter 7).

Although, this thesis draws on only a few of the concepts in Wenger's theory about learning, meaning and identity (1998, p.5-6), it is a social theory of learning that is both academic and practical (pp. 9-11):

While it [a social theory of learning] can indeed inform our academic investigations, it is also relevant to our daily actions, our policies, and the technical, organizational, and educational systems we design. A new conceptual framework for thinking about learning is thus of value not only to theorists but to all of us – teachers, students, parents, youths, spouses, health practitioners, patients, managers, workers, policy makers, citizens – who in one way or another must take steps to foster learning (our own and that of others) in our relationships, our communities, and our organizations... (Wenger, 1998, p.11).

He argues that because the concept is so 'familiar' (p. 6) it is a useful analytical concept. Furthermore, he argues that communities of practice is useful as a 'thinking tool' (p.7) and that using this concept we might

... push our intuitions: to deepen and expand them, to examine and rethink them. The perspective that results is not foreign, yet it can shed new light on our world... (1998, p.7).

This theoretical lens is utilised in order to 'shed new light' (p.7) on headteacher departure from Anglican primary schools. It is therefore an appropriate and useful conceptual tool through which the lived experiences and headteacher departure will be interpreted, understood and conceptualised in the later chapters of this thesis (Chapters 6 and 7).

Furthermore, it is the flexibility of interpretation of communities of practice and constellations of practice and the assertion by Wenger that 'the concept of constellations can remain fairly broad in its application' (p.128) that makes communities of practice particularly useful for this study and this thesis.

As already outlined earlier in this chapter, Church of England schools are the 'product' of a number of historical 'moves' and actions taken by individuals such as Joshua Watson and organisations such as the National Society for the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church in 1811 as an expression of the Church of England's commitment to serve the nation through the 'general; and the 'domestic' (The National Society, 1970, p.207) and pragmatic decisions taken by Members of Parliament such as William Forster (see Chapter 2.4.1.) seeking industrial and national prosperity in the late nineteenth century. This history is part of the social and professional context headteachers live and work within. As such, their practice and lived experiences are part of the 'historical and social context that gives structure and meaning to what we do' (Wenger, 1998, p.47). Chapter 7 in particular considers aspects of Anglican school headship in which there is

... both the explicit and the tacit. It includes what is said and what is left unsaid; what is represented and what is assumed. It includes the language, tools, documents, images, symbols, well-defined roles, specified criteria, codified procedures, regulations, and contracts that various practice make explicit for a variety of purposes. But it also includes all the implicit relations, tacit conventions, subtle cues, untold rules of thumb, recognizable intuitions, specific perceptions, well-tuned sensitivities, embodied understandings, underlying assumptions, and shared world views. Most of these may never be articulated, yet they are unmistakable signs of membership in communities of practice and are crucial to the success of their enterprises (p.47).

## **2.7. Chapter summary**

This chapter has set out the background to the study, identifying the perceived problem of headteacher supply through the two principal contributory factors in the extant literature: a demographic 'time-bomb' and a lack of aspirant headteachers. I have summarised some of the national and local policy initiatives related to 'solving' the problem of supply.

This chapter has also provided contextual background to the focus of this study, namely Church of England primary schools in England. Aspects of the history of the Anglican schools have been outlined as it relates to their formation and purpose and the creation of the 'dual system'. It has detailed the need for research into headteacher departure from Church of England primary schools in particular. Several models of theology and models of belonging and mission have been presented in order to set the scene for the focus of this study on the lives and lived experiences of Anglican school headteachers.

This chapter has reviewed the extant literature in terms of the influences and factors that play a part in headteachers' decisions to leave a post and/or headship focusing on key themes emerging from a review of the literature. These included career stages, premature departure linked to local contextual factors, personal response to incidents, the changing role of headteacher and the impact of stress and workload, self and sanity or self-sacrifice.

Finally, this chapter has introduced the theoretical lens through which the data will be interpreted and headteacher departure from Anglican primary schools conceptualised, providing the rationale and outlining the relevant characteristics and dimensions of the theory before justifying the choice of Communities of Practice for this particular study.



# **CHAPTER 3**

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1. Introduction**

This chapter will detail the mixed methods approach taken to investigate and understand the extent and nature of headteacher departure amongst Anglican primary headteachers who left a school during the academic year 2008-2009.

This chapter will first provide details of the population being studied and of the decision regarding the sampling strategy. It will then give some background to the development of mixed methods research (MMR) before detailing key characteristics of mixed methods research.

Mixed method research is characterised by four indicators that drive research design, decisions and actions 'en route' and the final report(s) disseminating findings. These characteristics are generally accepted to be implementation, priority, integration and theoretical perspective (Creswell, 2003; Greene, 2007; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). Therefore, in order to provide a 'map' of the chapter for the reader and provide sufficient detail for auditability and inference quality purposes (Greene, 2007; Morse, 2010; Onwuegbuzie and Johnson, 2006; Scott, 1990; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2006) the structure of this chapter will follow the key stages of the research process while clearly delineating the integration and mixing at each stage.

I will detail the implementation and priority before detailing how the study was conducted, what was mixed, how and at what stage. Integration is central to mixed methods research so can occur at various points within the research process: design, data collection, data analysis, interpretation and dissemination of findings. Decisions, and research in general are often portrayed as linear and simple (Bell, 1987; Denscombe, 2010; Opie, 2004) but in practice they are complex, overlap and may be influenced by many factors

ranging from philosophical position, experience, progress in the early stages of the project and 'situational contingencies' such as funding, time, expertise and level of participant engagement (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner, 2007).

After outlining the design using visual notation I will detail the various stages of the project making clear the reasons for decisions taken and articulating what was mixed and how this was done in the relevant stages.

Finally, I will provide the rationale for the decisions taken regarding the 'writing up' of the 'story' contained within this thesis that illustrates the 'mixing' of the findings in this final stage of reporting and disseminating the research findings.

### **3.2. Population and Sampling**

The study focused on headteachers of Anglican primary schools in England for the reasons outlined earlier in Chapters 1 and 2. Of the twenty-three thousand primary schools in England, 4,470 (25.3%) of these are Church of England schools (Church of England, 2007).

Tashakkori and Teddlie (2009) identify the need to define a population from which a sample can be drawn and for which the 'sampling unit' is defined. Random samples are considered superior to non-random samples. Selecting a random sample through probability sampling is advocated for its central advantage, namely that, as a sample will then be representative (assuming response from all those in the sample), generalisations are therefore possible and these might then be made with some degree of validity and reliability (Collins, 2010; Creswell, 2003; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007; Denscombe, 1998; Field, 2005; Opie, 2004; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009).

Tashakkori and Teddlie helpfully clarify that in random samples 'each sampling unit in a clearly defined population has an equal chance of being included in the sample' (2009, p.171). In this study, the population was all Anglican headteachers who were leaving during the academic year 2008-2009 and the principal sampling unit was an individual headteacher. The indicator of 'leaving' was an advert for their successor placed in the Times Educational Supplement (TES).

Although the possibility of using a sampling frame to establish a clear random sample from the identified population of Anglican primary heads leaving a post during 2008-2009 was considered (Denscombe, 2010, p. 23) this option was disregarded for three principal reasons: (i) practical considerations; (ii) knowledge of recruitment patterns and trends (advertisements in the national press) and (iii) tentative ideas about the nature of statistical analysis in respect of potential groupings of 'leavers' that might emerge.

Firstly, the only practical means of identifying 'leaving' or 'just left' headteachers was through the advertisement placed by Governing Bodies for a new headteacher for their school. Although a sample could have been identified from this population, the entirety of the population could not be known at the start of the period of data collection that was most suited to the length of this doctoral study (September 2008). To have logged all those leaving over a set period and then defined a sample from that population would have taken more time than the time available. There was a reasonable chance that such an approach would have led to complications in contacting headteachers who may have already left a post once they had been identified through a sampling process, irrespective of whether a probability or a non-probability sampling frame was used.

Surveying the whole population of leaving Anglican primary headteachers during a year would also remove potential researcher bias in the selection of a sample (Denscombe, 2010).

Secondly, it was reasonable to assume that a significant number of headteachers would leave their post and that those posts would be advertised based upon annual data and the trends of preceding years. Annual surveys of the patterns of recruitment and retention of senior leaders conducted since 1989 (e.g. Howson, 2002, 2005, 2007a, 2007b) had found that the number of primary headteacher posts advertised had hovered around 2000 (1,898 – 2,147, excluding re-advertisements) since the year 2000 (Howson, 2007b). Figures preceding 2000 had hovered around between 1533 and 1954 in the years 1989 to 1999 with the exception of a 'spike' of 2,534 (1997) around the time of significant changes to Teachers Pension Scheme and the election of a Labour government after many years of Conservative rule. The majority of posts are advertised in the first three months of the calendar year (January to March), this often amounting to nearly half of all posts advertised between September and April (e.g. Howson, 2007a, 2007b).

Although there was no way of knowing how many Anglican schools would place an advert for a substantive headteacher within a specific time period a certain number of assumptions could reasonably be made: (i) if the figures for 2008-2009 (all primary schools) could be reasonably assumed to be similar to the trend of the previous years or perhaps increase due to expected retirements of heads who had begun their teaching careers in the 1970s then around 2,000 adverts for primary heads could be expected in a one year period; (ii) if church schools (Anglican and Roman Catholic) continued to find it hard to recruit as identified through trend data and re-advertisement rates for Anglican schools also remain similar to the trend of previous years at 40-43% (Howson, 2007a) or worsened as reported for 2006-2007 (Howson, 2008a) then it could reasonably be assumed that the proportion of Anglican schools advertising for a substantive headteacher might remain similar; (iii) the proportion of primary schools that are of an Anglican religious designation is 25.3% (Church of England, 2007) and therefore the number of adverts might reasonably assumed to be a significant proportion number of all the adverts expected during an academic year.

In addition, personal experience of 'reading' adverts in the TES over many years as a teacher and headteacher myself and 'reading' the patterns of recruitment through the first doctoral year (2007-2008) had alerted me to the possibility of 'losing' heads once 'leavers' had been identified if a significant time delay occurred between identification of 'leavers' and the start of the data collection or generation process.

Although the advertising patterns and 'peaks' did not 'tie' neatly with the data collection part of the planned research cycle, the trends indicated that conducting a survey of all the heads leaving throughout one academic year would, on the above reasonable assumptions, lead to a large number of headteachers leaving, a proportion of whom would be from Anglican schools. It was these headteachers this study was interested in.

A third consideration in decisions regarding the population and sampling were tentative ideas about potential groupings of 'leavers' that might emerge from survey data and the resultant potential statistical tests. Cohen, Manion and Morrison suggest that an understanding of possible response rates from the planned sample is necessary for appropriate inferential statistics tests to be conducted and that the identification of possible groupings will also influence the desired population and sample size (2000, p.93).

Although a 'sample' of at least 30 is acceptable for inferential statistical purposes (Cohen et al., 2000, p.93), this would not potentially give me a sufficiently large sample from which to consider making generalisations about headteachers in any groups that might become apparent through the data analysis. Surveying a representative and relatively large sample of a population had two distinct advantages:

- all aspects of relevance to the research question will have been covered and included in the findings;

- there will be some balance between the proportions within the sample and the proportions which occur in the overall population being investigated' (Denscombe, 2010, p.41).

It was hoped that by surveying the whole population of Anglican primary headteachers leaving a school during one academic year that response rates would be sufficient to understand something of the extent and the nature of headteacher departure from Anglican primary schools. To have selected a sample using probability or non-probability techniques from a population whose size was unknown at the start of the academic year would have limited the possibilities of generating new knowledge about headteacher departure and in particular, headteacher departure from Anglican schools.

In addition, analytical processes applicable to random samples could be utilized as the population surveyed could be treated as a random sample. Surveying all leaving headteachers whose posts were advertised during one year meant that the study would meet the definition for a random sample: that every headteacher within the defined population had an 'equal chance of being included in the sample' (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009, p.171). Such an approach would provide some options regarding analysis and the possibility of generalisations depending on response rate achieved.

### **3.3. Personal motivations**

The 'once in a lifetime' opportunity to undertake doctoral study into something that fascinates me, how and why people 'do what they do' throughout their professional lives was seductive. It is fair to say that limited experience of small-scale research to date (a variety of postgraduate courses and a Masters degree) did not deter me from being bold and committing substantial financial sums to the project.

It is up to the readers of this thesis to determine whether, in my decision to survey the whole of the defined population instead of a sample of that population, I showed the 'good judgement' that Hoinville and Jowell encourage researchers to exercise (1985, p.73).

### **3.4. Less 'close and personal': an additional perspective**

Although the focus of this study is primarily the perspectives and experiences of headteachers, Chairs of Governors (CGB) of the same schools were also surveyed on the same selection principle as the headteachers. The primary aim of surveying Chairs of Governors was to collect data on the extent of headteacher departure, 'who is leaving?' and 'what are the characteristics of those leaving and of their schools?' However, Chairs of Governors were also asked about their perceptions as to the reasons why their headteacher was leaving. This additional perspective on headteacher departure not only enables the study to contribute to the existing literature regarding the extent of headteacher departure but also provides an additional perspective from those engaged in the recruitment of headteachers.

Reference will be made to the CGB data and findings as and only if relevant to the headteacher 'story' presented in this thesis. For clarity regarding the stages of the study, the procedures undertaken with the headteacher participants and resulting data were also used in respect of the CGB participants. For ease of reading the remainder of the chapter will detail stages in respect of headteachers. The procedures were the same for CGBs unless otherwise stated.

Participation was the result of self-selection indicated by the returning of a completed questionnaire.

### **3.5. A mixed methods approach**

A mixed methods approach that is driven by the research question rather than by positivist or post-positivist beliefs about the nature of knowledge is powerful in its ability to explore, explain and understand the reality of human experience and the part that context and 'lived experience' play in human meaning making and decision making.

Although social science researchers have been utilizing mixed methods approaches for several decades, it is only in the last decade or so that interest in defining and articulating the purpose and nature of integrating different approaches and methods has escalated. Educational researchers' adoption of qualitative approaches in the last 30 years or so has been considered by some to be a reaction to a quantitative positivist approach. However, it could be considered that this may have occurred partly as a response to the changing dynamics of education, practitioners wanting to understand how pupils learn and policy makers and practitioners wanting to understand the tools of effectiveness leadership and management for school improvement and the raising of standards.

The world of education was much influenced by business in the mid to late 1980s and 1990s and a focus on how organisations work and how individuals within those organisations operate, lead and manage effectively has been a central concern of practitioners and policy makers throughout the last three decades (Bottery, 1992; Green, 2000; Leithwood et al., 2006; West-Burnham, 1992). Focus has shifted from focus on management and administrative functions of the role of a headteacher post the introduction of Local Financial Management (LFM) or Local Management of Schools (LMS) in the late 1990s to a focus on leadership. Writers in the field of educational leadership have clearly delineated differences between management and leadership and increased understanding of leadership as enabling change through participation and shared models of leadership has spawned many a book on leadership styles (e.g. transactional, transformational, strategic, ethical,

servant, moral and so on to now include entrepreneurial and poetic and political leadership) by such as Fullan, Starratt, Davies, Spillane and Hargreaves to name but a few. Much of this work has centred on the need to act with moral purpose in leadership by empowering others in pursuit of a common vision (e.g. Fullan, 2003; Starratt, 1993, 1994, 1995). Such work has led to the increasing use of qualitative and mixed method research.

Since this study was conceived (2007) much has been written that has encapsulated some of the challenges of using a mixed methods approach faced during this project. Since its inception in 2007, the Journal of Mixed Methods Research has published articles debating the definitions and practice of mixed methods research in various disciplines (e.g. education, nursing etc). The 'jury is still out' on many issues, not least what constitutes a mixed methods approach and, in particular, how researchers utilising mixed methods approaches can ensure that their studies are truly 'mixed methods' as opposed to multi-method - what is mixed or integrated, how and when. Furthermore, the standards and tests against which mixed methods studies should be judged remain under debate. So too are the manner, structure and format of 'how' researchers report and publish their findings in ways that are considered acceptable by audiences of researchers of both qualitative and quantitative, positivist and post-positivist persuasions and experience (Bryman, 2007; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007; Dahlberg, Wittink, and Gallo, 2010; Greene, 2007; Johnson et al., 2007; Onwuegbuzie and Johnson, 2006; Scott, 1990; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2006; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009).

### **3.5.1. Defining a mixed method approach and reasons for use**

So what is a mixed methods approach and why was such an approach selected to investigate why headteachers leave?

Essentially, mixed methods research (MMR) uses ideas and methods from both quantitative and qualitative viewpoints and as such is a 'synthesis' of the ideas and methods associated with both traditional paradigmatic positions (Johnson et al., 2007, p.113). As the third paradigm (Creswell and Plano

Clark, 2007; Johnson et al., 2007; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003) it 'sits' *between* the sometimes polarized views about the nature of 'knowing' and the 'best ways' to investigate social phenomena (Greene, 2007). However, it is also an approach that *encompasses* and utilizes the 'best of both worlds' in pursuit of answers to the research question which is at the heart of such an approach.

What then are the reasons for using a mixed methods approach? A number of justifications have been put forward in recent years that have ranged from triangulation as a means of enhancing validity to a desire to explore and understand the world, social phenomena and the experiences of the identified population and participant group(s). The purposes of mixed methods research therefore are many and the interest in defining the nature and characteristics of a mixed methods approach are too numerous to discuss at length here (Johnson et al., 2007). However, in broad terms the principal purposes given for the adoption of a mixed method approach consist of:

- triangulation
- reduction of bias
- minimise the effect of weakness of a particular method
- to guide sampling decisions
- to understand at a deep level and use data in a complementary manner
- create potential for new ways of thinking.

Mixed methods research originated from a drive to enhance validity through triangulation of findings by the use of more than one method within a single paradigmatic approach thereby reducing the risk of bias that could occur as a result of using a single methodological approach (Campbell and Fiske, 1959). However, emerging from its infancy in which mixed method studies were often multiple method (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998) mixed methods research soon established its identity as a means of triangulation between-methods rather than within-methods. It also provided a means of deep engagement

with data and the phenomenon or issue being researched (Denzin, 1978). Mixed methods have enabled researchers to gain broad and deep understanding of issues with which school educators and policy makers alike are concerned, e.g. the longitudinal EPPE project into pre-school provision in England (Siraj-Blatchford, Sammons, Sylva, Melhuish, and Taggart, 2006) and projects into school effectiveness such as the VITAE project (Day, Sammons, and Gu, 2008; Sammons, Day, Kington, Gu, Stobart and Smees, 2007).

Mixing methods can lead to sampling decisions where quantitative findings are used to guide decisions about the sample for a second, perhaps qualitative, stage of data collection (Morse, 1991). A mixed methods approach can but does not necessarily include the findings of a first stage driving instrument design of a subsequent stage, for instance, in a concurrent design strategy.

The use of qualitative data leads to the generation of 'thick, rich data' (Bassegy, 1999; Jick, 1979; Rossman and Wilson, 1985). Such data can corroborate, clarify, explain, illuminate, enhance - the verbs describing the benefits are many. Suffice to say, the use of qualitative data in a mixed methods study is to explore in order to understand more deeply.

Mixed methods research can lead to new ways of thinking as researchers grapple with the unexpected and are forced to make decisions in response to situational contingencies and the themes, theories and learning that occurs (Greene, 2007; Johnson et al., 2007; Rossman and Wilson, 1985; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009).

The use of either a quantitative or a qualitative approach and methods from only one of those traditions would have only given a partial picture into why headteachers leave. Employing a mixed method approach enabled me to explore

- the extent of headteacher departure and aspects of that departure (who is leaving, what are the characteristics of those leaving and of their schools) through the collection of quantitative data;
- the nature of the influences that prompted individual headteacher decisions through 'thick, rich' qualitative description and
- the significance of those influences (e.g. quantitative data from rankings on a Likert scale).

A mixed method approach would enable the study to examine the same research question through different methods (Johnson et al., 2007; Yin, 2006), *why* headteachers leave. In the case of this study, Likert scale questions in the survey provided opportunity for respondents to indicate the significance of a range of influences or factors and to rank the most significant for them personally. Open responses and semi-structured interviews provided headteachers with the opportunity to explain, expand and 'colour' their responses in ways that illuminated and illustrated their professional lives. The combination of the two methods and the inclusion of open response questions in the survey enabled headteachers to engage in some, albeit limited, dialogue about their decisions and stories.

### **3.5.2. Definitions and the importance of integration**

This study was driven primarily by the fifth and sixth purposes listed above: using a mixed methods approach to understand the extent of the problem nationally and to understand deeply what might lie behind headteacher departure from the chief participants' perspectives (i.e. the headteachers) with the potential of creating new ways of thinking about headteacher departure.

The heart of mixed methods lie in the concept that mixed methods enables enhanced understanding of the problem or phenomenon. That is, that a single methodological approach or one method of data collection may be insufficient to investigate fully the subject of interest.

A study of beliefs about the nature of mixed methods held by 36 leading researchers in this area (Johnson et al., 2007) examined 19 definitions which could be grouped into five areas of practice: what is mixed, when or where mixing takes place, the breadth of mixing, the purpose of mixing and the orientation of the mixing (i.e. whether the mixed methods approach occurs as a result of the research question or from an interest in the experiences of groups considered marginalized). These questions about integration lie at the heart of mixed methods and are at the heart of this chapter's focus.

Greene's definition, one of the 19 definitions in Johnson et al.'s study of mixed methods approaches, is most helpful here:

Mixed method inquiry is an approach to investigating the social world that ideally involves more than one methodological tradition and thus more than one way of knowing, along with more than one technique for gathering, analysing, and presenting human phenomena, all of the purpose of better understanding (Johnson et al., 2007, p.119).

Of the five purposes of using mixed method approach that Greene, Caracelli and Graham explore in their seminal article (1989), it is the one of *complementarity* that this study draws upon as a basis for this study. A study with the core purpose of complementarity 'seeks elaboration, enhancement, illustration [and] clarification of the results from one method with the results from the other method' (Greene et al., 1989, p.259).

With complementarity the core purpose, areas of convergence, divergence and discrepancy could be explored and contradictions and inconsistencies understood without a focus on triangulation (Denzin, 1978), in an interpretative process and presentation O'Cathain et al. call 'crystallization' (O'Cathain, Murphy, and Nicholl, 2007, p.157). The merits of this approach combined with my own reluctance to become 'trapped' by a paradigmatic perspective or approach became clear throughout the study as analysis of qualitative interview data led to discoveries about practice and identity that

influence headteachers' decisions but which could not be fully understood from the survey data alone.

Denscombe sums up key aspects of what might be integrated during the research process to provide a comprehensive understanding of the problem being researched:

A mixed method approach can provide a fuller description and/or explanation of the phenomenon being studied by providing more than one perspective on it. By encouraging the use of qualitative and quantitative methods and facilitating a blend of exploratory and explanatory research, the findings are likely to address a wider range of questions relating to 'how', 'why', 'what', 'who', 'when' and 'how many' (Denscombe, 2010, p.150).

It is this 'comprehensiveness' which seeks an in-depth exploration of an issue (Morse, 1991; O'Cathain et al., 2007) which is so pertinent to this study in its pursuit of understanding the reasons and influences prompting headteachers to leave a post.

Although an interest in the stories of individual headteachers drove the design it was important to establish at the outset of the inquiry the possible extent of headteacher departure as it pertained to Anglican schools in particular. Consequentially, there was a need for a quantitative element to seek answers to the 'how many' (headteachers are leaving) and 'who' (the characteristics) referred to by Denscombe (2010, p.150). Identifying the ages and career points at which headteachers leave would answer the question of 'when' (headteachers leave). In addition, a quantitative element would also establish an answer to 'where': where are heads going to. A substantial qualitative element would seek answers to the central question at the heart of this study: 'why' headteachers leave.

Results gained from data generated in different ways would 'serve to elaborate, enhance, deepen, and broaden the overall interpretations and inferences' (Greene, 2007, p.101).

The outcomes of a mixed methods approach are variously described by commentators of the third paradigm. By integrating approaches, data, and results at various stages of an inquiry, a better picture can be obtained, something some researchers call 'additive' but which other go beyond to describe as 'multiplicative'.

A range of metaphors have been used to describe the additive nature of some mixed methods studies where the mixing of a number of separate sections or pieces lead to greater understanding e.g. islands of an archipelago (Lawrenz and Huffman, 2002) or jigsaw pieces (Erzberger and Kelle, 2003).

However, the position that this study takes is that a mixed method approach based upon the notion of complementarity will be 'multiplicative' in that data generated through different methods in a study which integrates at various points will lead to an understanding of both the extent and nature of headteacher departure from Anglican schools that is greater than either or both its parts. The aim of this study – and the challenge of such an approach – was to conduct a piece of research which would be 'mutually illuminating', 'genuinely integrate' (Bryman, 2007, p.8) and be '*gestalt*', something where the 'sum is greater' than its constituent parts (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003). Such an approach can lead to what Fielding calls 'sophisticated analytical conceptualization' (2012, pp.125-126) and 'superior research findings and outcomes' (Johnson et al., 2007, p129).

Understanding of some of the issues pertinent to mixed methods studies has grown during this study. This study positions itself within the debate about what constitutes an acceptable level of rigor and what the tests should be for mixed method studies. Reliability and validity are the criteria most usually applied to quantitative studies. Trustworthiness and authenticity are applied to

qualitative studies, trustworthiness comprising of four criteria – credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Therefore, mixed methods should pass the criteria for both quantitative and qualitative research. However, if mixed methods research is indeed a third paradigm, a different way of considering the quality of a mixed methods study is important, an integrative framework for inference quality (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009, pp.301-302) which assesses aspects of a study from design to conclusion. Similarly, Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2006) advocate a legitimisation approach consisting of nine quality markers for assessing a mixed methods study that remove the need to discuss validity in its traditional meaning.

I will now set out in some detail the steps and processes undertaken in the design: data collection, data analysis and interpretation stages.

### **3.6. Instrument development**

The study was designed to investigate why headteachers (HT) leave a post and/or headship. To fully understand the decisions and actions of individuals take it is necessary to know something of 'them', their lives and experiences, their personal and professional characteristics and, in this case, their school context. Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were selected for their respective strengths and potential to address the key aspect of this inquiry.

Surveys enable a picture of a phenomenon or issue at a specific time to be gained. It enables the situation, views and perspectives of a large group of people to be gathered. Large data sets may result in the potential for generalisation to the wider population. A survey may offer an 'update' on previous surveys so allowing policy makers, education providers etc to identify trends and plan for potential changes resulting from demographic, change, consumer habits, gather health and obesity data, income and social data,

birth and pupil numbers data etc (Bryman, 2004; Denscombe, 1998; Gorard, 2001; Gorard and Taylor, 2004; Opie, 2004). In this way, the photographer referred to at the start of this thesis uses a long distance lens to gain a panoramic view of a large area or vista.

Semi-structured interviews enable the researcher to 'obtain descriptions of the life world of the interview with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena' (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p.124). Interviews also enable interviewees to assess in some small measure whether to trust the interviewer with potentially privileged or sensitive information about themselves, their experiences of their work context (Gillham, 2000a, 2000b; Kvale, 1996; Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009; Rubin and Rubin, 2005). This method and the resulting analysis of transcription are akin to a photographer using a close-up lens, the 'up close and personal' of the thesis title.

### **3.6.1. Headteacher survey**

A quantitative instrument, in the form of a postal survey, was chosen because it would establish the characteristics of headteachers leaving a post or headship (e.g. age, gender, school characteristics etc) and, for the academic year in question, how many are leaving [who and how many?]. It would generate demographic data about the 'leavers' and the schools being 'left' and enable exploration of patterns of departure should the survey generate a sufficiently large number of responses. A survey would also establish the destination and future intentions of departing headteachers [where] and what factors might be influencing decisions to resign from a post [why]. The questionnaire included a range of closed questions including Likert style questions asking headteachers to indicate the significance of various influences on their decision (Appendix 1).

A substantial number of qualitative open response questions were included in the headteacher survey instrument asking about what had influenced or motivated headteachers to resign from their post (Appendix 1).

Survey questions covered the following areas:

- Demographic details
- Career history
- School context
- Working lives
- Destination
- Future intentions and things which might have persuaded headteachers to stay
- Factors influencing their decision to leave.

A matrix showing the relationship between the research questions and the HT survey content is included as Appendix 2.

### **3.6.2. Semi-structured interviews with headteachers**

Influences were then explored in depth with a number of headteachers during qualitative semi-structured interviews [addressing the 'why']. A matrix of planned topics and interview questions as they relate to the research questions is included in Appendix 3. This enabled further exploration of the characteristics of the headteachers, their schools and their working lives and sought to explore whether there is a relationship between these aspects and departure. It also enabled aspects of headship as an Anglican school headteacher to be explored. Interviews also enabled some discussion about what might have persuaded headteachers to remain in post.

### **3.6.3. Chair of Governing Body survey**

Following the process for headteachers, a postal survey was constructed for completion by Chairs of Governors (CGBs) which would add to a national picture of headteacher departure, regarding who is leaving and what the characteristics those leaving and of their schools are (Appendix 4).

#### **3.6.4. Chair of Governing Body interviews**

An interview schedule for interviewing CGBs was drawn up. This focused on perceptions of headteacher departure and the nature of Anglican school headship (Appendix 5). It should be recognised that CGB perceptions of why 'their' headteacher might have left are just that, perceptions. As such, they are a 'second-hand' perspective and should be treated with respect'; however they are not by virtue of the focus of this study (headteachers and their perspectives) accorded the same weight of proportion in the 'story' told in this thesis.

#### **3.6.5. Pilot study**

A pilot study was conducted in order to trial the proposed questionnaire and interview schedules, to test-run the administrative procedures and to explore aspects of the proposed analytical procedures. This ensured that the instruments were as comprehensive as possible as advocated by a large number of researchers and authors on the subject of research design, protocols and ethical considerations (Bell, 2007; Briggs and Coleman, 2007; Bryman, 2004; Creswell, 2003; Fogelman and Comber, 2007; Kvale, 1996; Opie, 2004; Oppenheim, 1992; Sapsford and Jupp, 1996; Wellington, 2000; Youngman, 1994).

It was important to find participants who would not be in the main study as they would be potentially sensitised to the questions (Opie, 2004). Four headteachers and one Chair of Governor participated in the pilot study; they did not take part in the main study, having been selected during the previous academic year.

In addition, I also interviewed a serving Anglican headteacher who had no intention of leaving church school headship. This 'scoping' interview delineated some aspects of headship that were unique to church school headship (e.g. role of diocese, Voluntary Aided (VA) finance and governance issues, SIAS inspection, ethos etc) from aspects which might be considered to be part of any headteacher's working life or experience. Analysis of pilot

study data, administration practicalities and feedback from participants about the process and instruments led to administrative changes and alterations to the questionnaires in respect of content, layout, length and guidance to participants (Whiteoak, 2008).

**3.6.6. Overview of methods**

An overview of the methods in relation to the research questions are summarised in the Table 1 below. It should be noted that the original study design contained plans to survey and interview Diocesan Directors of Education, Human Resources Directors and Headteacher Support Workers but that these participant groups were removed from the study due to the 'situational contingencies' (Johnson et al., 2007).

**Table 1: Overview showing relationship of methods to research questions**

Research questions	Survey		Interviews	
	HT	CGB	HT	CGB
Who is leaving?	■	■		
What are the characteristics of those leaving and of their schools?	■	■	■	■
Where are they 'going to'?	■	■		
What influenced their decision?	■	■	■	■
What would have persuaded them to stay?	■		■	

In summary, it can be said that the primary research question (why do headteachers leave) 'drove' the research design and resulting decisions. In this respect the study was a 'bottom up' conceptualization' along the continuum referred to by Johnson et al. (2007, p.123).

### 3.7. Design: implementation, priority and a visual 'map'

The design type, implementation and priority of the study can be portrayed visually using the commonly accepted notation system advocated by Morse (1991) and Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998). However, the notation symbols for this study have been positioned in a slightly different configuration than is usually used to more accurately portray what was mixed in the data collection stages of this study.

It should be said at this stage that throughout this thesis the term 'data collection' will usually refer to data collected through a quantitative instrument (e.g. survey) whereas 'data generation' will usually refer to data generated through a qualitative method (e.g. open response questions or interviews). However, to some degree the terms are used interchangeably throughout the thesis where it would otherwise reduce the flow of the text to use both.

**Figure 2: Visual Diagram of Sequential Explanatory Mixed Methods Design**

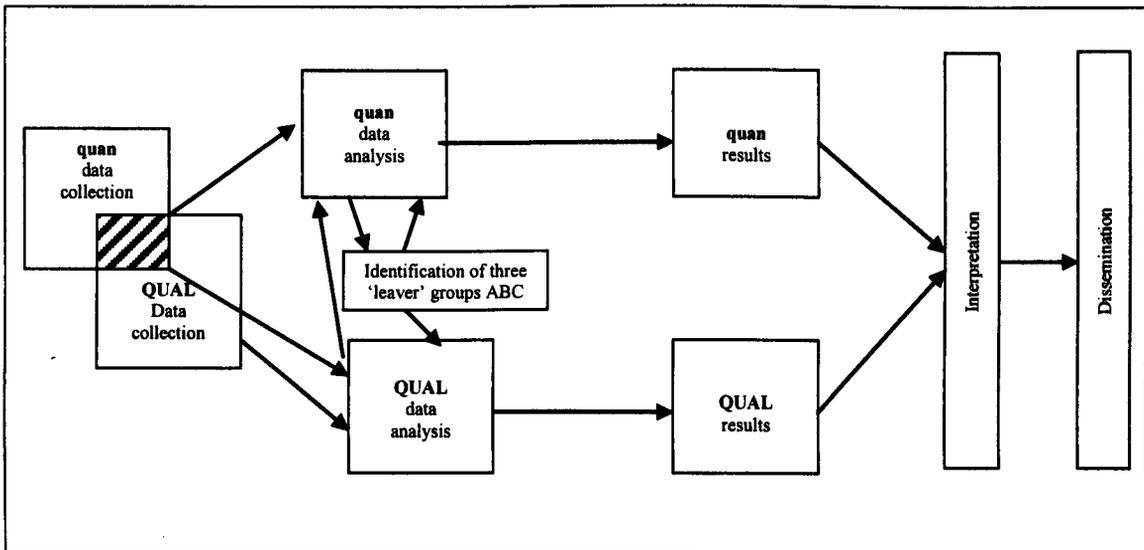


Figure 2 presents the various stages of the study from data collection through data analysis and interpretation to dissemination of findings. It indicates the

implementation and priority of the design. This diagram will be explained in the remainder of this chapter as 'story' of the study and this thesis 'unfolds'.

Of the six generic design types that Creswell considers most mixed methods studies fall into (2003, pp.213-214) this study is most akin to the sequential explanatory design in that the quantitative data were collected sequentially through a survey before qualitative interview data were generated. This can be symbolized by  $\text{quan} \rightarrow \text{QUAL}$ . However, there are two significant differences in the design of this study:

- (i) the implementation, i.e. the timing of data collection or generation;
- (ii) the priority or weighting given to the quantitative and qualitative components.

### 3.7.1. Implementation

Firstly, in respect of the 'implementation' of the design, the sequential nature of the collection of data could be portrayed through the accepted means of an arrow (Creswell, 2003, p.215) using the notation system advocated by Morse (1991) and Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) as in Figure 3:

**Figure 3: Visual Diagram using accepted notation to indicate implementation**

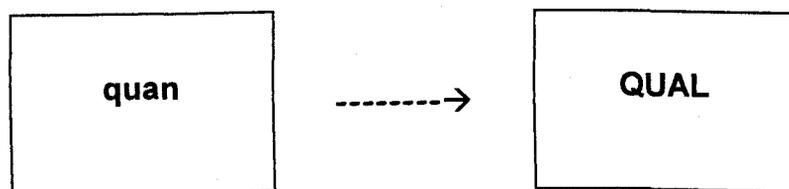


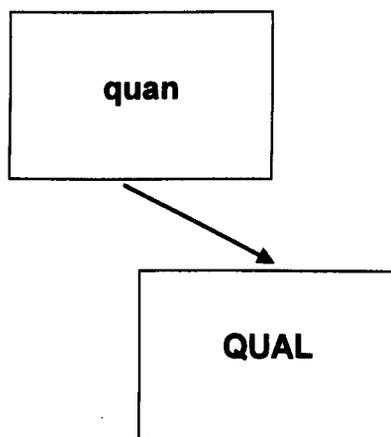
Figure 3 indicates that quantitative data was collected before qualitative data. In simplistic terms and relating this design to that of this study this means that the survey was conducted before interviews. However, to use this visual means to indicate the sequential nature of the data collection in this study is

insufficient to convey the time related elements of this study and constituent parts within the 'quantitative' and 'qualitative' data collection.

Although survey data was collected from participants before interview data was generated as Creswell (2003, p.215) asserts is the most common in sequential explanatory designs, both methods of data collection were conducted over the same period of time (one academic year) and thus the 'data collection' of the two types of data overlapped. In addition, interviewees were drawn from those returning survey questionnaires. Therefore, a possibly more visually accurate means to portray the sequential nature of the design in its fullness might be as in Figure 4 below.

The arrow still indicates the sequential nature of data collection but the offset position of the boxes indicates that data collection was perhaps not the traditional quantitative then qualitative linear data collection perhaps more commonly found in sequential explanatory mixed methods studies or where the types of data collected are collected in quite distinct phases, e.g. quan -> QUAL or QUAL -> quan (Creswell, 2003; Morse, 1991).

**Figure 4: Visual Diagram suggesting an alternative portrayal of sequence**



The arrow still indicates the sequential nature of data collection but the offset position of the boxes indicates that data collection was perhaps not the traditional quantitative then qualitative linear data collection perhaps more

commonly found in sequential explanatory mixed methods studies or where the types of data collected are collected in quite distinct phases, e.g. quan -> QUAL or QUAL -> quan (Creswell, 2003; Morse, 1991).

In this study, the headteacher survey contained a significant number of qualitative open response questions. Therefore, Figure 5 (below) more accurately represents the sequence of data collection and generation than either Figure 3 or 4.

**Figure 5: Visual Diagram to portray integration of quantitative and qualitative aspects at data collection stage**

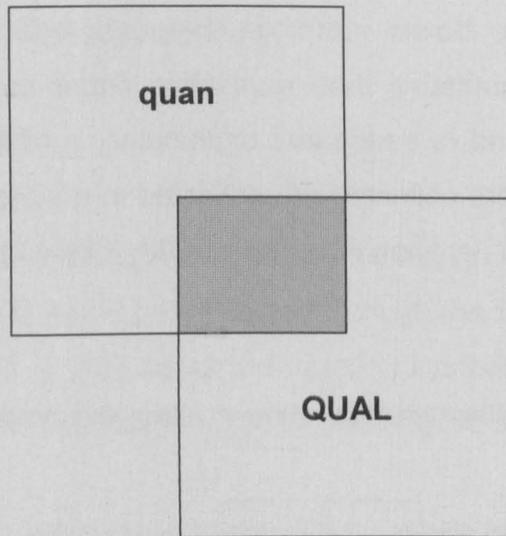


Figure 4 also then indicates to some degree that the 'mixing' of data began during data collection through the combination of open and closed questions in the survey instrument (Creswell, 2003; Johnson et al., 2007). This reflects aspects of the definitions of Preskill and Tashakkori and Teddlie in Johnson et al.'s study of mixed methods definitions who all suggest that integration may occur at the data collection stage through the

'use of data collection *methods that collect both* quantitative and qualitative data' (Preskill) *and*

mixed methods research is a type of research in which QUAL and QUAN approaches are used in *type of questions*, research methods, data collection and analysis procedures, or in inferences (Tashakkori and Teddlie). (Johnson et al., 2007, p.121) (italics mine).

In this diagram (Figure 5), the overlapping of the quan and the QUAL boxes indicates the sequential nature of the data collection of the study (the 'quantitative' instrument in the form of a survey used before the 'qualitative' instrument, the interviews). It also indicates the generation of qualitative data from open ended questions in the surveys. Thus the use of two boxes juxtaposed (rather than one embedded within the other) clearly indicates that the quantitative and qualitative elements are substantial and that there was integration at the design and instrument development stages.

### **3.7.2. Priority**

Secondly, some authors writing and evaluating mixed method studies suggest that sequential explanatory designs would typically place quantitative data as dominant using qualitative data to explain and understand the quantitative findings and in a supporting or supplementary role (Creswell, 2003, p.212 and p.214; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007).

Johnson et al. (2007) helpfully articulate that mixed methods research and its related philosophical foundations occur along a continuum (pp.123-124). This is reproduced as Figure 6 (overleaf) and annotated with an arrow to reflect where on the continuum this study lies.

In this study the main research question is, 'Why do headteachers leave?' The framing of the question in itself articulates the need to understand, the pursuit of which necessitates asking about individual perceptions as well as exploring potential trends emerging from the data. There can be no simple answer to a question beginning with 'why?' The nature of human experience is that context, circumstances, personal 'history' and identity impact on how

individuals see the social world around them and interact with that world (Wenger, 1998).

**Figure 6: Graphic of the Three Major Research Paradigms**

(Reproduced from Johnson et al. (2007, p.124).

Key: → indicates position of this study on the continuum

In the early days of the reading and planning for this study I had thought that the priority of quantitative and qualitative approaches and methods within this study would be that of 'equal status'. That is, both quantitative and qualitative methods and the data generated would address the overarching research question, why headteachers leave.

However, it would be fair to say that over time the project's emphasis and the priority of quantitative and qualitative data shifted in my own mind, an aspect that Teddlie and Tashakkori note can alter as a research project progresses (2009, p.140). This occurred for three reasons: (i) the inclusion of a substantial number of qualitative questions inviting open responses in the headteacher survey discussed earlier; (ii) the number of interviews and the 'richness' of the data that emerged from the experiences generously shared

by interviewees and (iii) the iterative engagement of myself with the data over a sustained period of time through both data collection and various aspects of the data analysis. These three things, some intended, some unintended – led to a mixing and an integration of the data in ways not always anticipated at the design stage.

As the project progressed, the lives and decisions of the individual headteachers that I 'read' in their often full open responses (survey) and the stories they told in interviews took on a seductive and compelling nature. And so I 'read' their stories not as isolated qualitative data or sets of numbers which indicated the significance of certain influences in their decision making process, but as holistically as possible. Therefore, although data were analysed as qualitative or quantitative initially, I also literally 'read' the totality of their responses and experiences as if reading individual biographies. A form of integration occurred and led to new understandings and interpretations.

This led to some insights about headteacher departure, the development of a 'chocolate orange' heuristic (of which more later) and journeying down some blind alleys in terms of understanding headteacher departure overall.

Consequently, as my interest was predominantly in why people act in the way that they do, the study morphed into something less 'equal'. Through reading, iterative engagement with the data over the length of the project, the data generation, data analysis and the integration stages, the study began more clearly to become a qualitative dominant mixed methods study. The use of capitalization of 'quan' and 'QUAL' indicates the priority or weighting given to each of aspects within the study overall in terms of data collection, analytical decisions and the decisions regarding the process of presenting the findings and interpretation – the 'story' - of this thesis.

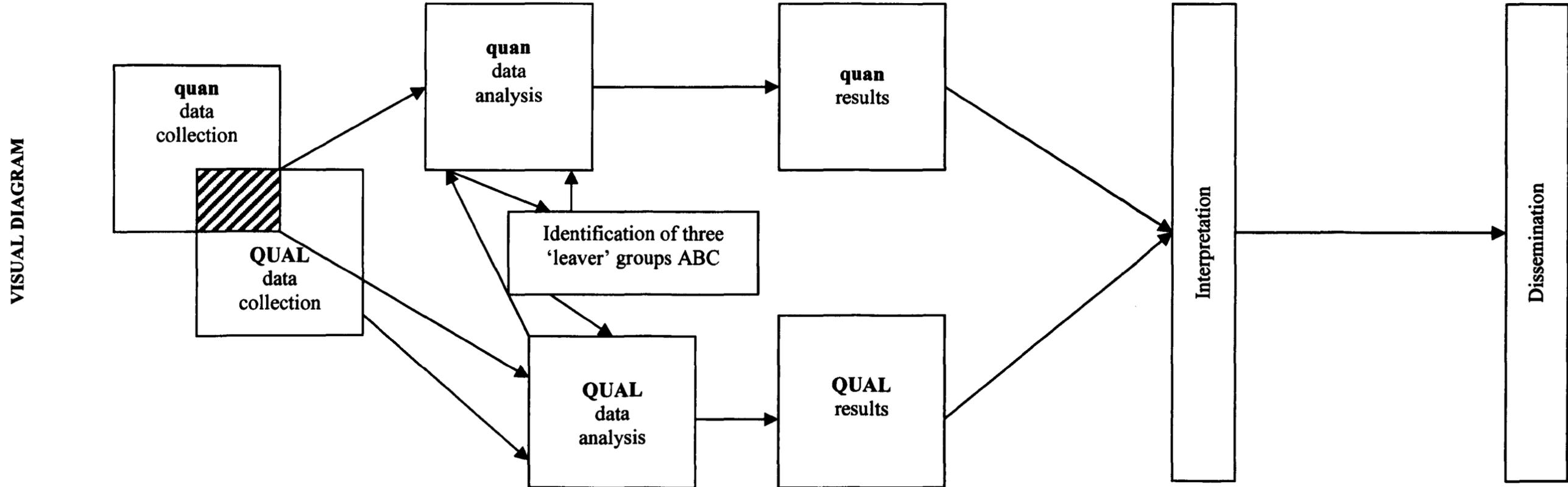
### **3.7.3. The whole study: a visual representation**

The design in full is portrayed visually in Figure 7 (overleaf). This 'map' of the study shows the data collection stage in the context of the later stages of the study: analysis, interpretation and dissemination.

The figure also details the 'procedures' undertaken within each stage and the 'products' that resulted from those procedures. The concept of visually portraying the whole study through identifying the procedures and products is drawn from various examples produced by (Plano Clark and Creswell, 2008) to accompany nine exemplar mixed methods studies conducted by a number of authors in diverse disciplines (e.g. Idler, Hudson, and Leventhal, 1999; Milton, Watkins, Studdard, and Burch, 2008; Richter, 2008; Thogersen-Ntoumani and Fox, 2008; Way, Stauber, Nakkula, and London, 1994).

The diagram of the procedures and products of this study has very much been a 'working document' throughout the project, undergoing several 'incarnations' during the life of the project as decisions taken 'en route' sometimes necessitated some design changes (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009, p.140).

**Figure 7: Amplification of the Sequential Explanatory Mixed Method Design detailing Procedures and Products**



	DATA COLLECTION/ GENERATION	DATA ANALYSIS	RESULTS	INTERPRETATION	DISSEMINATION
<b>PROCEDURES</b>	<p><b>quan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Population: all Anglican primary school HTs leaving 2008-2009 (N=156)</li> <li>Survey (postal)</li> <li>Chairs of Governors of schools (N=142)</li> <li>Survey (postal)</li> </ul> <p><b>QUAL (1): Survey</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open-ended response questions</li> </ul> <p><b>QUAL (2): Interviews</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Semi-structured interviews</li> <li>Selection of HTs of all age groups</li> </ul>	<p><b>quan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coded data entered into SPSS</li> <li>Descriptive statistics</li> <li>Identification of HT groups (ABC)</li> <li>Inferential statistics</li> <li>Some analysis exploring patterns</li> </ul> <p><b>QUAL (1): Survey</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responses typed into Word</li> <li>Thematic analysis (see Chapter 3)</li> </ul> <p><b>QUAL (2): Interviews</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interviews transcribed into Word</li> <li>Thematic analysis (See Chapter 3)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>'Helicopter' over data for overall themes and findings</li> <li>Review data/findings for areas of convergence, divergence, discrepancy</li> <li>Identify differences and similarities between HT groups of interest (ABC)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider findings through theoretical lens (Communities of Practice)</li> </ul>	<p>Integrate findings through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thesis structure</li> <li>Discussion of main findings using quantitative and qualitative data to</li> <li>Tell the story of the data, headteacher departure and the research project</li> </ol>
	<b>PRODUCTS</b>	<p><b>quan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sample: HTs (N=156); CGBS (N=142)</li> <li>Self-selecting participants</li> <li>Numeric data</li> <li>Demographic data</li> </ul> <p><b>QUAL (1): Survey</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sample: HTs (N=156); CGBs (N=142)</li> <li>Open-ended responses</li> </ul> <p><b>QUAL (2): Interviews</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HTs: Sample (N=48); CGBs: Sample (N=18)</li> <li>Audio recordings</li> <li>Transcriptions</li> </ul>	<p><b>quan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Descriptive statistics: (a) means, standard deviation, median, mode for continuous variables (b) frequencies for continuous and categorical variables (c) produced for 'All HTs' and HT Groups</li> <li>Inferential statistics: Comparison of means (ANOVA) (b) Relationships (Pearson chi-square)</li> </ul> <p><b>QUAL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual 'mindmaps'</li> <li>Transcribed text</li> <li>Colour coded text (HT groups)</li> <li>Coded annotated transcripts</li> <li>Individual 'heuristics'</li> <li>Themes defined</li> <li>Themes quantitized (frequencies)</li> </ul>	<p><b>quan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summary of statistically significant results</li> <li>Summary of descriptive statistics</li> <li>Combined dataset</li> </ul> <p><b>QUAL (1): Survey</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summary of coded open-ended responses (frequencies for 'All HTs' &amp; 'HT Groups')</li> <li>Quotations illustrating frequency data</li> </ul> <p><b>QUAL (2): Interviews</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Themes</li> <li>Comparison Grid of themes across HT Groups</li> <li>Quotations illustrative of themes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>'Maps'</li> <li>Grids including Communities of Practice grid</li> <li>Theorising through visual representation</li> </ul>

### **3.7.4. Ethics**

Ethical considerations were addressed initially through the Ethics Application submitted to the University in April 2008. This met the University of Nottingham Ethics Requirements and the principles of the British Educational Research Association (BERA) Guidelines (2004). Throughout the study the processes and safeguards for both participants and myself as researcher were adhered to.

#### ***(a) Harm***

To minimise risk of emotional distress to participants should interviews include the describing of any negative factors that might have influenced a headteachers' decision to resign and, in the most extreme of cases, the possibility of a participant feeling sufficiently distressed after interview to feel depressed or suicidal. I was prepared with prompts of individuals and organisations to which a participant could be directed for support, guidance or counselling (e.g. SIP, GP, the Samaritans, local Employee Assist Scheme/Occupational Health provider). Although considered a possibility during the Ethics application process, no HT or CGB was interviewed whose school or circumstances were in the public domain thus removing some of the potential for interviews to cause extreme distress or place a participant in a difficult position regarding participation in the study and potential future conflict for them or myself regarding confidentiality and anonymity. When approached by a national newspaper for a copy of a conference paper containing preliminary work (Whiteoak, 2009a), I did not acquiesce as this would have been in contravention of the agreement between participants and myself (consent forms and notes to participants sent with survey) and an unacceptable breach of trust. It would also have meant that initial thinking about headteacher departure before the analysis and study was complete could possibly be misinterpreted by those reading a 'partial' story reaching the public domain before it would have been appropriate.

During interviews it became clear that, although participants were not significantly distressed by talking about their experiences, some of the experiences they recounted were recent and fresh, obviously painful and that

describing them brought a mixture of emotions. Sometimes participants remarked how cathartic the interview had been as they had been able to be reflective or 'lance a boil' so to speak and suggested that all HTs should have such an opportunity to reflect on their practice in such a manner.

Consideration of my own physical safety as a lone female researcher preparing initially to conduct face to face interviews was addressed through following advice from the Suzi Lamplugh Trust (2008). Reflection on the experiences of others prompted me to reflect on my own experiences of headship and leaving headship. Care for my own emotional wellbeing during and after interviews and dealing with transcripts and data analysis of open-ended survey responses was addressed through reflective writing and discussion with my family and supervisor about my own headship experiences.

#### ***(b) Consent***

Voluntary informed consent was sought both at the initial survey stage and at the interview stage. Participants were informed of the reasons and impetus for the research, its relevance to current educational leadership and policy debates. Details were given of procedures to ensure protection of data, confidentiality and anonymity of participants. At the beginning of interviews participants were asked if they were still happy to be interviewed (it may have been a few weeks since they returned the interview consent form and the interview date and time booked) and were informed of their right to not answer any questions they did not wish to or to withdraw from the study. Although potential participants were informed of the research rationale and scope in their survey and interview letter, participants were also given the contact details of myself, my supervisor and the University Ethics Co-ordinator should they wish to discuss the research more fully before consenting to participate. To my knowledge, none raised any queries or concerns.

#### ***(c) Confidentiality and anonymity***

Confidentiality of data was ensured through the keeping of electronic data on a computer accessible by only myself in accordance with university ethics

protocols and current Data Protection legislation (Data Protection Act 1998) the storage of questionnaires and transcripts in a room to which only I have access, participant identification codes (ID) and the use of pseudonyms for people, schools and locations. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw their consent at any stage of the research without prejudice or negative consequences (Appendices 1 and 4). Although two headteachers requested clarification regarding some comments they had made at interview and one asked about confidentiality and anonymity during their interview, no participants withdrew their consent at any stage.

I will now detail the data collection, analysis, interpretation stages of the study before considering the challenges and decisions regarding the reporting and discussion of findings. Throughout the remainder of the chapter the issue of integration will be addressed: what was mixed, how and when it was mixed.

### **3.8. Data collection**

#### **3.8.1. Headteacher Survey**

The survey was conducted during the academic year 2008-2009.

During the academic year 2008-2009 (05.09.08-24.07.09) 524 adverts were placed by Anglican schools in England in the Times Educational Supplement (TES) for a substantive headteacher. These included both Voluntary Aided (VA) and Voluntary Controlled (VC) Anglican schools.

Table 2 details the number of questionnaires distributed each month. Appendix 6 reports in more detail (for audit purposes) the number of questionnaires distributed by post each week of the academic year.

Questionnaires were sent to the headteacher of every Anglican primary school that advertised for a substantive headteacher during the academic year. Consequently, the number of surveys sent out during the year were

higher than the 30-250 range that Denscombe suggests is usual for small-scale research projects (2010, pp.45-46) but obviously substantially smaller than the numbers of participants surveyed in such large scale research projects as the Scottish Government's investigation into headteacher recruitment and retention (MacBeath, 2009), surveys of teachers (Hutchings, Smart, James, and Williams, 2006) or surveys into work-life balance conducted for the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) by the Centre for Industrial Relations (French, 2009; French and Daniels, 2007).

**Table 2: Data generation by survey and interviews**

	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Total
<b>Number</b>													
<b>Adverts</b>	97	38	37	8	112	73	49	39	26	39	6	n/a	524
<b>Schools</b>	97	38	37	8	113	74	49	39	26	39	6	n/a	526
<b>HTs surveyed</b>	97	38	37	8	113	74	49	39	26	39	6	n/a	526
<b>HTs interviewed</b>	0	0	0	3	10	8	12	4	0	0	5	6	48
<b>CGBs surveyed</b>	97	38	37	8	113	74	49	39	26	39	6	n/a	526
<b>CGBs interviewed</b>	0	0	0	0	0	16	2	0	0	0	0	0	18

In total, questionnaires were sent to 526 headteachers as the 524 adverts represented 526 schools. Where it was established that an advert was for the headteacher of a newly forming federation and two headteachers were leaving, two adverts were sent out, hence the difference between the number of adverts and number of headteachers. Where adverts were clearly for headteachers of new schools, no questionnaire was sent. A number of sources were used to establish clarity where there was doubt about the religious designation of a school or the appropriateness of inclusion in the sample: the advert itself, school websites, contacting the school directly by telephone, and websites for the National Society for Promoting Religious Education (NATSOC), Ofsted and various school data bases such as 'Find

my school', 'Schoolsnet' and 'Eduweb' for individual school profiles, individual school Ofsted and SIAS Reports and school profiles.

Return prepaid envelopes were included with the instructions for the questionnaire and consent forms and the questionnaires printed on blue paper as mini booklets to prevent separation of papers and being 'lost' in a headteacher's in-tray. Having trialled during the pilot stage how surveys would reach me if sent via the university and found lengthy delays and missing post to be matters of concern and having the potential to 'derail' the research project, a PO box was purchased at my local Royal Mail sorting office and a delivery contract with Royal Mail purchased so that all questionnaires and research related correspondence was sent to the PO Box number and then delivered next day to my home with my personal mail. The box continues to remain in operation to allow future contact by participants should the need arise.

It is recognised that this strategy may have resulted in some leaving headteachers not receiving questionnaires as they may have left their post before their post was advertised or was re-advertised during the academic year 2008-2009, a form of 'non-response stemming from non-contact' (Denscombe, 2010, p.20). For instance, if they had resigned before the 30<sup>th</sup> April 'cut off' date in order to leave their post on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2008 but their jobs not been advertised by their Governing Bodies until the Autumn Term 2008 they may not have received the questionnaire unless their schools had forwarded the questionnaire to them. From returns it is clear that some schools forwarded questionnaires, some respondents apologising for a delay in returning completed questionnaires due to the 'chain' of forwarding of mail and pressure of new jobs. However, it is impossible to determine how many headteachers who had left their post at the point of the advert were missed and whether their departure was influenced therefore by a new post. Similarly, it is impossible to ascertain the number of headteachers who did not receive the questionnaire as a result of being on 'sick leave' – a number of school administrative staff emailed to say that their headteacher was off work and

could not participate in the survey. Conducting the survey over the period of a year minimised the effect of non-response from non-contact.

Although the survey was conducted over a significant period of time (one year) and this did create some delays in analysis, the decision to survey the population over the course of one academic year proved the right decision in terms of obtaining a picture of headteacher departure from headteachers of all ages and with a range of reasons for resigning a particular post. Questionnaires returned in the early weeks of Autumn 2008 were predominantly from headteachers aged 50+, perhaps a reflection of a resignation pattern that anecdotally exists i.e. headteachers retiring sometimes give a year's notice. To have conducted a survey a shorter period of a few months would have made the survey results susceptible to inaccuracy given the fluctuations in headteachers adverts and possible headteacher resignation patterns referred to earlier in this chapter.

### **3.8.2. Headteacher Interviews**

Headteachers were asked in the survey about their willingness to be interviewed. 67.3% of headteachers (N=156) responded positively volunteering to be interviewed. As the questionnaires were distributed throughout the year, returned questionnaires similarly were returned over a considerable period, making decisions regarding interviewees on-going rather than at one particular time which might have led to a more representative and purposive sample of interviewees. However, decisions over which survey respondents to contact were made at several 'intermittent' points rather than as individual surveys were returned. Those 'points' were: mid-December 2008 to mid-January 2009, mid-February to mid-March 2009 and mid-May to mid-June 2009. These periods were broadly the periods when the most questionnaires were returned.

This resulted in the selection of interview participants being somewhat opportunistic and, due to the sporadic nature of returns, somewhat random.

However, age was used a criteria in that potential headteacher interviewees from all age groups were sought.

Potential interviewees were contacted by letter (Appendix 7). Upon receipt of the interview consent form, contact was made by telephone or email to arrange an interview date and these arrangements confirmed in writing (letter or email). Broadly speaking, interviews took place within one to two months of the return of a questionnaire.

In the main headteacher interviews that took place between December 2008 and April 2009 were with headteachers whose post had been advertised between September 2008 and March 2009; similarly, those interviews that were conducted during July and August 2009 were headteachers whose posts had been advertised between March and June 2009.

In total, 53 headteachers were contacted; four did not return consent forms and so no further contact was made; three agreed an interview date and time but then proved 'non-contactable' despite several attempts to rearrange. Three attempts to contact the respondent were made before they were removed from the 'potential interview list'. The final number of teachers interviewed was 48 (Table 2), a number significantly higher than planned for at the design stage or had been anticipated when interview letters were posted but which gave the study a quantum of 'rich' data, multiple perspectives about Anglican headship and 'departure' and a confidence in the robustness of the qualitative data explaining, enhancing and complementing quantitative data (Greene et al., 1989).

Participants were given options regarding the timing of interviews: daytime, evening, weekday or weekend. Times were agreed by telephone, letter or email. The majority of headteacher interviews were conducted by telephone. Three interviews were conducted face to face with headteachers, two at their schools and one at the headteacher's home. Half the headteachers interviewed chose to be interviewed during a telephone call to them at their home rather be telephoned at school (N=48) with some interviews taking

place in the evenings during term time (6) or outside school term time (14). The majority of interviews took place with headteachers before their last day of employment at the school they were leaving. Six interviewees had left their post before interview, three of whom had begun a new headship. For audit purposes Appendix 8 contains a detailed table reporting when and where interviews were conducted and indicating the length of those interviews.

Telephone interviews were conducted from my home rather than from the University of Nottingham for three reasons: (i) to ensure confidentiality of conversation so that conversations would not be overheard; (ii) flexibility of interview time and location of their choice (their home or school) to suit participants and (iii) access to a speakerphone so that audio recordings of the interview could be made that ensured maximum clarity of speech for transcription purposes.

Interview length ranged from 11 minutes to 2 hours 53 minutes. The average length was 73 minutes. Interviews were transcribed and transcripts sent to interviewees for verification.

Interviews were semi-structured and, although an interview schedule was used providing a structure helpful to myself as interviewer, interviews were subject to alteration throughout the course of an individual interview as I responded to what interviewees were saying and what I wondered they might 'not' be saying (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). Where I felt it was appropriate, I indicated understanding of their professional context through brief reference to my own headship experience; this appeared to engender a sense of 'fellow feeling' in some interviews. However, I remained cautious about how and to what extent this was done as interviews are not conversations and an interviewer has to take care not to influence responses or direct the course of the interview (Wellington, 2000).

This enabled the interviews to be much more than conversations, interactions or exchanges of views about subjects of mutual interest in which myself as interviewer might have held the 'upper hand' or power (Kvale and Brinkmann,

2009, p. 2). The semi-structured nature of the interviews enabled me to hear descriptions of the lived experiences of the interviewees and gain an understanding of their world and how they had interpreted their personal and professional experiences to date before making a decision to resign from a particular post. This was possible because of the conditions surrounding the conducting of interviews reported earlier but also because the interviews fulfilled the following 'advice' regarding interviews:

it [the interview] will have a sequence of themes to be covered, as well as some suggested questions. Yet at the same time there is an openness to changes of sequence and forms of questions in order to follow up the specific answers given and the stories told by the subjects (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p.124).

Interviews can lead to the construction and creation of new knowledge, both for the interviewee and the interviewer (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p. 2) and although I am only a 'traveller' to use one of Kvale and Brinkmann's metaphors and only 'meeting' or contact with an interviewee on one occasion, it is possible that even brief encounters may lead to reflection and possible new knowledge or ways of thinking about a situation (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, pp.48-49).

### **3.8.3. Chair of Governing Body survey**

As with the surveys sent to headteachers, surveys were sent to the CGBs of all the schools that advertised for a substantive headteacher during the year 2008-2009 (Table 2 and Appendix 6). Questionnaires to CGBs were sent under separate cover than those to headteachers. Otherwise, the procedures already detailed for the headteacher survey were utilised in respect of the survey for CGBs.

#### **3.8.4. Chair of Governing Body interviews**

Chairs of Governing Bodies were asked in the questionnaire if they would be willing to take part in a follow-up interview. 54.39% (N=142) volunteered. Eighteen Chairs of Governors were selected at random from those questionnaires that had been returned before 30<sup>th</sup> January 2009. Potential interviewees were contacted by letter (Appendix 9). Upon receipt of the interview consent form, contact was made by telephone or email to arrange an interview date. Interviews all took place by telephone during February and March 2009 (Table 2). Interview length ranged from 16 minutes to 2 hours 32 minutes. The average length was 47 minutes with the majority being less than 50 minutes. For audit purposes Appendix 10 contains a detailed table reporting when and where interviews were conducted and indicating the length of those interviews. As with the headteacher interviews all interviews were recorded using the same protocols as for the headteachers detailed above. Transcripts were then sent to interviewees for verification.

#### **3.8.5. Qualitative data from surveys**

Qualitative data from the open response questions in both the headteacher and CGB surveys were typed into word documents for later analysis.

#### **3.8.6. Avoiding researcher bias**

In order to ensure that I remained open-minded about the school and its characteristics and context I made a decision made not to read about the school through any publicly available documents (e.g. Ofsted Inspection report, SIAS Inspection report or School Profile) before interviewing headteachers or Chair of Governors. This meant I was able to listen to what was being said rather than make pre-interview assessment or evaluation about the background or circumstances of a headteacher or school, thus reducing the risk of unwarranted assumptions about a headteacher or a school and their reasons for leaving.

### **3.8.7. Transcription of interview data**

An interview record was kept detailing interviewee identification codes (one for the HT or CGB interviewee and one for the related sound file) and various practical details (e.g. the location and time of the interview) (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Rubin and Rubin, 2005).

Although transcripts were sent to interviewees and a few headteachers entered into a brief email exchange about their concerns for confidentiality and limits on use, none wished to withdraw parts of the interview or asked for amendments to make their meanings and views clearer.

Brief reflective contemporaneous notes were made during the interview and immediately following the interview as appropriate. This was particularly important where there was evident emotion expressed during the interview and/or where the interview content suggested a new idea or theme that prompted further reading or reflection about possible connections between ideas expressed by a number of interviewees. These informed the process of identifying initial themes in conjunction with other analytical processes which will be detailed later.

Some notes were added to two large white boards in my study as particular phrases and ideas developed throughout the course of the nine months during which the interviews took place and became part of a series of grids and mindmaps that were integral to the analysis process and helped establish areas of exploration or make connections with literature, quantitative data and other interviews conducted.

Transcription of some of the early interviews was done by myself, a process during which I learnt much about my own interviewing style and how and when interviews could most usefully be conducted for relaxed and detailed responses of interviewees to be offered (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009).

On the occasions when a professional transcriber was used, confidentiality of data and anonymity of participants was ensured through a number of protocols. These were: (i) use of headteacher identifiers (e.g. HT 13, CGB 24)

rather than names; (ii) no reference to the name of an individual or school made during interview; (iii) use of a secure website for uploading sound files; (iv) detailed discussions; (v) verbal and written instructions given regarding both the confidentiality of sound files and transcripts and (vi) a confidentiality agreement signed by the transcriber. These measures not only ensured the ethical guidelines and protocols for the University of Nottingham and BERA (2004) were followed but that there was a consistency of approach between the transcriber and myself.

The accuracy of transcription by me or the transcriber was checked through listening to recordings and ensuring that inaudible parts were corrected or annotated and that acronyms and abbreviations were correct against a list of commonly used abbreviations which I provided for the transcriber.

Interviews were transcribed verbatim complete with 'ums' and 'errs' indicating hesitation and changing of sense mid-sentence as interviewees rephrased their thoughts as they spoke. Sighs and pauses were not included as such unless of significant duration. Laughs were included. Transcriptions also included interruptions or distractions such as a visitor knocking at the door, my dog barking in the background or pupils visiting a headteacher to show their work in order that any possible interruption could be identified in transcription so reducing possibility of misunderstanding of pause or hesitation in analysis (Poland, 2002).

### **3.8.8. Use of participants' words in the thesis**

Throughout the thesis quotations are included as spoken or written by participants. Where appropriate however, the repetitions of natural speech and 'thinking aloud' in interviews have been removed to aid sense. The source of quotations throughout this thesis is indicated (i.e. survey open response or interview).

## **3.9. Data analysis**

As illustrated previously in Figure 7 data analysis of quantitative data and qualitative data initially took place separately although some integration did occur at this stage. In this section I will detail the procedures and products of the data analysis stage, highlighting where there were elements of integration.

### **3.9.1. Quantitative data analysis (Headteacher survey)**

#### ***(a) The nature and treatment of the sample***

As previously stated, the 'population' being studied was Anglican primary headteachers. This was defined further by the date of leaving as reasonably being indicated by their school's advert in the TES during the academic year 2008-2009. No sample had been drawn from the population as I had defined it so the sample which had been surveyed and which was in fact the entire population could be considered 'random'.

The nature of the sample, that is, whether it is a random or a non-random sample, dictates decisions about analytical procedures and in particular the use of parametric or non-parametric tests.

In the absence of textbook guidance on the use of parametric or non-parametric tests in this study's case when the 'whole population' of Anglican primary headteachers leaving in a defined period was being surveyed, the definition of Teddlie and Tashakkori of a random sample quoted earlier proved helpful:

... each sampling unit in a clearly defined population has an equal chance of being included in the sample (2009, p.171).

The logic I applied therefore in respect of 'random-ness' to my quantitative data was that

- the 'sampling units' in this case were the individual headteachers
- all of the 526 headteachers sent a questionnaire had an 'equal chance' of being included: all were surveyed.

As a result I determined that my 'sample' fulfilled the criteria of a random sample as defined by Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009). This enabled a subsequent decision to be made to use parametric tests for variables unless there was no appropriate non-parametric test (e.g. no alternative to Pearson chi-square).

### ***(b) Preparation of data and coding***

A pre-coding frame was used to code responses to quantitative closed questions in the headteacher survey. Codes were contained within a comprehensive physical red 'codebook' rather than indicated on participants' questionnaires. This 'codebook' which was an amalgamation of the pre-coding frame and coding schedule recommended by Bryman (2004) served as an on-going aide-memoir of codes, 'rules' for coding decisions and new variables created; this proved invaluable given the lengthy time over which questionnaires were returned and items coded.

A consistent set of codes was used (Field, 2005; Fielding and Gilbert, 2006; Kinnear and Gray, 2010; Norusis, 2008a; Pallant, 2010; Stern, 2010). These included no response (666), unclear response (777), not applicable (e.g. 99 for questions where the previous answer of a filter question indicated that there should be no response to a particular question) and 888 for responses to 'other' categories or open responses that would need thematic coding after return of all questionnaires.

A thorough data 'cleaning' process was undertaken to ensure that data 'sets' for each variable were complete and ready for analysis (Norusis, 2008b). This process ensured that anomalies in responses identified throughout the year and any inputting errors that had occurred while data were being entered into

SPSS were dealt with consistently and according to the 'rules' in my 'red codebook' (Bryman, 2004).

***(c) Descriptive statistics***

Basic frequencies were calculated for all variables. Measures of central tendency were calculated for continuous variables and measures of variability and position were examined. The 'normality' of distribution of scores examined. This initial analysis gave an overview of the characteristics of the participants and showed in particular how many respondents gave the same response (Appendix 11).

***(d) Grouping decisions for inferential analysis***

Descriptive analysis indicated a number of categories which might warrant more detailed examination through the use of inferential statistical tests.

These were:

- Gender
- Age
- School's religious designation (VA, VC)
- Geographical and 'structural' categories: Diocese, Local Authority and Government Region
- 'Onward destination' or type of leaver.

Although some exploratory analysis was conducted in respect of gender, age, school religious designation and geographical categories these were not of particular interest to me. Early indications were that these categories did not warrant detailed examination when taken in the context of the main research question, why headteachers leave.

The evaluation or 'worth' of pursuing these categories was also informed by the following considerations:

- Gender: a large amount of research already exists in respect of gendered leadership (styles and identity), e.g. that by Coleman (1996, 2002, 2003, 2007), Hall (1993, 1996, 1999) and Reay and Ball (2000);
- Age and career stages: a large amount of research already exists in respect of age and in particular the ages at which headteachers move posts in particular the career stage literature and more recently, research into the nature of headship and departure (Day and Bakiglu, 1996; Earley and Weindling, 2007; Fidler et al., 2006; Flintham, 2003a, 2003b, 2004; Reeves, Mahoney and Moos, 1997; Woods, 2002);
- School's religious destination: this had some merit but needed more specific instrument design if the nuances of leadership and governance were to be understood between VA and VA schools;
- Diocese, LA and Government Region: analysis by these categories showed that there were insufficient numbers of headteachers from each diocese, LA or Government Region to make generalizable claims by any of these location criteria.

However, one category drew my attention, that of the 'onward destination' of headteachers, where they were 'going' and what they were going to do next. Descriptive analysis of Q32 from the HT survey (Appendix 1) indicated three clear categories of headteachers, Q32 of the HT survey (Appendix 11). The items within this question (Appendix 11) were grouped into three categories: (a) 'substantive headship' (b) leaving substantive headship and/or the profession and (c) retiring and the respondents to each of the items was therefore categorised according to the following three groupings:

- Group A: HTs leaving to take up a subsequent substantive headship
- Group B: HTs leaving substantive headship and/or the profession
- Group C: HTs retiring.

Such 'grouping' by 'destination' fulfilled the study's aims in that it provided three groups of 'leavers' from amongst the population of Anglican primary headteachers. Conducting analysis of the three groups would enable me to explore similarities and differences and explore the characteristics and motivations of a group, including headteachers like myself who have left substantive headship (Group B). These groupings were influenced but not dictated by themes in the literature about career stages and headteacher departure, e.g. Earley and Weindling (2007), Fidler and Atton (2004); Flintham (2003a), Thomson, (2009) and Woods (2002).

Three additional practical considerations influenced my decision to use three groups for analytical purposes. Firstly, utilizing three groups would facilitate inferential statistical tests as the numbers in each group would be reasonably sufficient. To have had a greater number of groups (with therefore fewer respondents in each group) for a smallish number of responses this study achieved (HTs N=156; CGBs N=142) would have jeopardised the analytical process and it would have called into question some of the meaningfulness of the results. Secondly, such groupings could be used for the CGB survey as well as the HT survey and perhaps enable a combined 'schools' dataset to be constructed for further analysis. Indeed, this proved to be possible adding to knowledge about the extent of headteacher departure and the 'onward destinations' of 'leaving heads' (N=243). Thirdly, Howson reports the reasons schools advertise a post using 12 categories (e.g. Howson, 2008b, p.8). Although this study is not investigating recruitment data as Howson's annual surveys do, nevertheless, adverts are a 'proxy' measure used by policy makers in respect of the labour market in England; from these and pension figures, assumptions are made about the reasons headteachers leave. All the categories used by Howson can be assimilated into the three HT groupings used by this study. As a result a comparison could be made about the extent and nature of departure from Anglican schools compared to all primary schools in England and Wales.

This thesis then will explore and report the analysis and understanding of the similarities and differences of the three headteacher groups based upon

'destination' or 'type of leaver' which were identified as of most interest to me personally and the results of which could contribute to the existing body of knowledge about 'who' is leaving and 'why' they leave.

***(e) Comparing groups – inferential statistics (HT)***

***(i) Categorical variables***

Cross-tabulations were run for categorical variables, the objective being to compare the number of headteachers in each group (A, B or C) giving the same response.

Frequencies were compared (Appendix 12) and the Pearson chi-square test for independence was used to test for statistical differences between the three headteacher groups. The use of this non-parametric test requires that the underlying assumptions for non-parametric tests are met: that the sample is random (already addressed earlier in this chapter) and that data are independent (i.e. a participant can only be counted once and appear in only one group (Pallant, 2010).

Use of Pearson chi-square enabled exploration of questions related to statistical significance, proportion and association such as:

- Is the proportion of HTs in each group leaving VA or VC schools similar or different, i.e. statistically significant or not statistically significant?
- Does there appear to be an association between school size and departure?
- Are heads in a particular group more likely to be influenced by a particular aspect, e.g. impact of the job on personal and family life?
- Is the proportion of heads in each group who say that there are particular pressures in being head of a church school similar or different, i.e. statistically significant?
- Are heads in a particular group more likely to be influenced by measures of accountability and performance?

The additional assumptions for use of Pearson chi-square for independence in particular were checked before exploring similarities and differences between the three headteacher groups and relationships between two categorical variables. The cell counts were examined to ensure a key underlying assumption of Pearson chi-square for independence test was met, that the lowest expected frequency in any cell should be 5 or more in at least 80% of cells. For variables where this was found not to be the case, I applied the 'rule of thumb' that Pearson chi-square was still applicable if the sample size was of sufficient size, i.e. 'total sample size be at least four or five times the number of cells' (Wilkins, 1989). Cramer's V was used to assess the effect size as the resulting contingency tables were always larger than 2 x 2.

To ensure that examination of the variables using the Pearson chi-square test was robust, I devised a comprehensive checklist for interpretation and reporting (Appendix 13) using several standard texts (Field, 2005; Fielding and Gilbert, 2006; Kinnear and Gray, 2010; Norusis, 2008a, 2008b) and texts for researchers 'who *think* they hate statistics' (Salkind, 2010) such as Norusis (2008b); Pallant (2010), Salkind (2010), Stern (2010) and Wilkins (1989). This was completed for all relevant variables.

Statistical significance was assessed as being less or equal to .05 which would indicate that there was a 5% probability or less of a result occurring randomly in the population. Statistics which are statistically significant were identified for further analysis and 'mixing' at the subsequent interpretation stage.

Pearson chi-square statistics are reported in full including degrees of freedom, number of valid cases, chi-square statistic, *p* value (Asympt.Sig) indicating statistical significance and *Phi* indicating the effect size in Appendix 14 (e.g.  $\chi^2 = (2, n = 156) = 6.755, p = .034, \phi = .208$ ), with statistically significant items highlighted. Where the text of this thesis refers to a chi-square statistic (in Chapters 4 to 7) this will be reported in an abbreviated form (e.g. Pearson chi-square, sig. = .034).

(ii) Continuous variables

Four assumptions underpin the use of parametric tests for continuous variables:

- Random-ness of sample
- Data are independent
- Scores are normally distributed
- Variability of scores in each group being examined is similar.

In addition to the assumption that the sample is random discussed earlier, the second assumption is that data are independent of each other, i.e. not influenced by any other form of measurement or 'contaminated' e.g. by being generated within a group setting for instance (Pallant, 2010, pp.206-207). I believe that it is reasonable to assume that headteachers and Chairs of Governors completed questionnaires independently of each other or of any other potential participant.

Mindful of warnings that scores needed to be normally distributed for the use of parametric tests to be considered robust and justifiable and that this is not often the case I assessed normality of distribution, creating a specific checklist to assess the normality of distribution and applying it to every continuous variable. The scores for 26 variables were normally distributed; the scores for 38 items were not (Headteacher Survey).

This initially indicated that some variables should be subject to parametric tests and others to non-parametric tests: one way ANOVA could be run for variables whose scores were normally distributed whereas a Kruskal-Wallis test would be an option for variables with non-normal distributions. However, Pallant suggests that where there is a sample size of 30 or more this is considered to be sufficiently large enough for this assumption not to be violated and therefore a certain degree of confidence possible in the outcome (Pallant, 2010, pp.206-207). In this study, 156 headteachers returned

questionnaires so the 30+ requirement was met. 142 CGBs returned questionnaires so again, this 30+ requirement was met.

In addition, review of all continuous variables showed that the majority of variables had high response rates with between 135 and 156 responses, only one variable having a smaller number of responses, 60 headteachers responding to the item. On balance therefore, I was content that the data were sufficiently robust to ensure that the assumption of normal distribution would not be violated.

The fourth assumption concerning homogeneity of variance requires that the 'variability of scores for each of the groups is similar' (Pallant, 2010, pp.206-207). This was not the case for the variables computed in this study. However, this is not a problem if the size of the groups being examined 'are approximately equal' (Stevens, 1992, p.239).

Stevens suggests that the difference in group size for groups being examined (in this case Headteacher Groups A, B and C) from largest to smallest groups should be less than 1.5 times (Stevens, 1992, pp.240-241). The largest of the three groups is Group C (72 headteachers), the smallest Group B (39 headteachers). This means that Group C is 1.84 times the size of Group B, a greater difference than the 1.5 times Stevens suggests is reasonable.

However, aware that my results for some items will appear 'skewed' due to the nature of the groups (e.g. Group C are heads who are retiring so some continuous variables regarding age and career history etc would be expected to differ from heads in Group A for instance) and in the absence of a justification for the 1.5 figure in Stevens or any standard statistics textbook that I could locate, I decided that the assumption of homogeneity of variance would not be sufficiently violated to cause a major problem.

As a result of this assessment I determined that the underlying assumptions of parametric statistical tests had been sufficiently met for parametric tests to be conducted on continuous variables. In practice, this meant that one way

ANOVA could be carried out to compare scores and means between the three headteacher groups. Appendix 15 reports the results of one way ANOVA tests conducted on attitudinal data (e.g. Likert scale items).

For clarity throughout the thesis statistically significant one way ANOVA figures will be reported as ANOVA.

### **3.9.2. Qualitative headteacher data analytical procedures and processes**

Qualitative data were generated through open response questions in the headteacher survey and through semi-structured interviews. An inductive thematic analytical approach allowed a focus on the experiences and perspectives of headteachers. This is consistent with the main aim of the study, to understand why headteachers leave.

The same thematic approach derived from a three stage approach advocated by Boyatzis (1998) was used for the analysis of qualitative data whatever its source. This was extended for interview data by use of additional steps advocated by Rubin and Rubin (2005). The purpose in using the same core approach for data generated from questionnaires and interviews was to ensure a consistent approach to qualitative data, to aid coherence throughout the study and provide some methodological rigor for auditability purposes (Boyatzis, 1998).

For the purposes of the analysis, two acronyms were invented: THOR (THematic analysis of Open Responses) and TAIT (Thematic Analysis of InTerviews). This 'shorthand' will be used throughout the remainder of this chapter where appropriate. This was done for reasons of scale and to indicate for audit purposes where the central process was utilized differently for survey open responses and interview data. Both the headteacher and CGB surveys generated a large number of returns (to be reported in Chapter 4) whereas interviews were conducted with a sample of participants selected from the two participant groups. The nature of interview data and my decisions regarding my interaction with the data were instrumental in alterations to Boyatzis' three

stage process. Although essentially advocated by Boyatzis as a data-driven approach for the development of themes and codes from interview data, I felt that the process, suitably adapted, was equally applicable to data from open responses generated through a survey. Analysis of each open response question was recorded in its own THOR booklet to facilitate integration of key themes and findings with those emerging from the TAIT interview analysis process.

The three stages are:

**Stage 1:**

- Deciding on sampling and design issues
- Selecting subsamples

**Stage 2:**

- Reducing the raw data
- Identifying themes within subsamples
- Comparing themes across subsamples
- Creating a code
- Determining the reliability

**Stage 3:**

- Applying the code to the remaining raw information
- Determining validity of the code statistically or qualitatively
- Interpreting results

(Boyatzis, 1998, p.44 and p.50).

I will detail the process in respect of the headteacher data from the survey instrument (open response questions) first before addressing key pertinent differences in my approach in respect of data generated from interviews.

As data collection took place over the period of a year, data analysis was conducted through a number of stages and interactions with the data. This process for open responses is included as Appendix 16.

The process facilitates an inductive development of a set of codes that when applied to all participants' responses enables 'valid differences' to emerge. Fundamental to this approach is the development of themes and codes through use of subsamples that enable 'potentially differentiating' themes to be developed (p.44). This structured approach facilitates subsequent interpretation and theory building (Boyatzis, 1998, p.30).

***(a) Open response questions (survey)***

***Stage 1: Sampling and subsample decisions***

The first stage was to gain a 'sense' of the data relating to each question through mind maps. These were attempts to gain an overview of what the data might suggest in its entirety, to sense the 'codable moment' (Boyatzis, 1998, p.11). Mindmaps were drawn after a reading of all the responses to a particular item (Appendix 17).

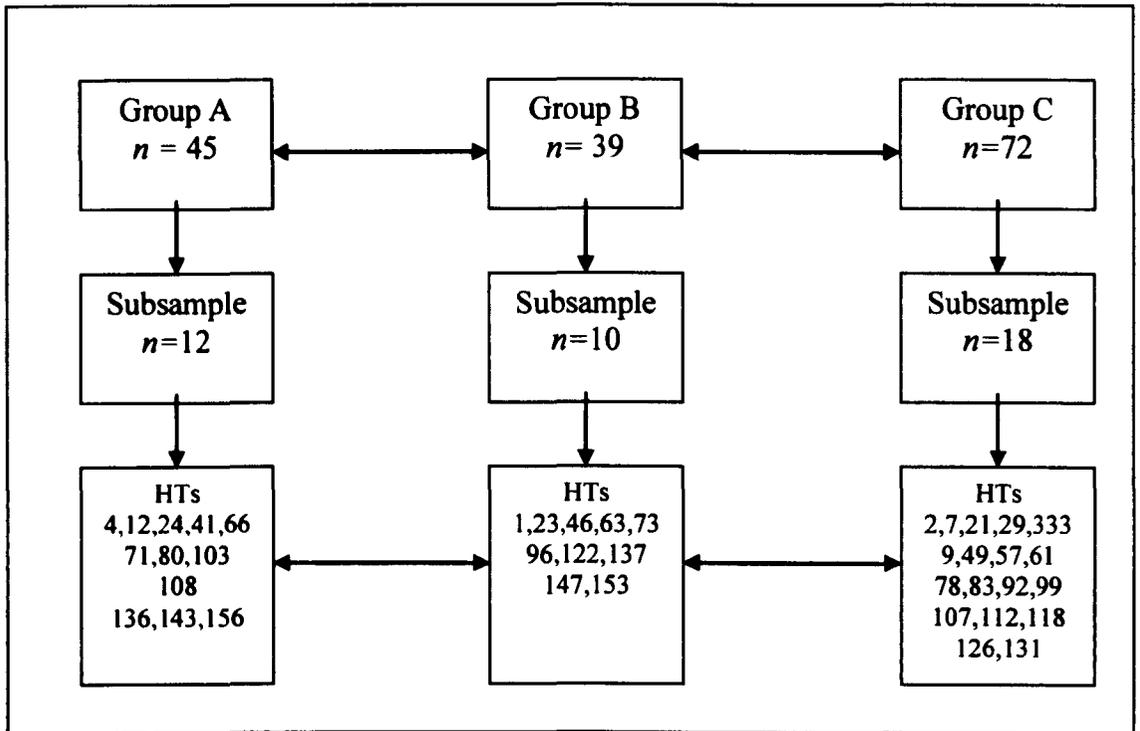
However, once descriptive analysis using SPSS had indicated that headteacher respondents could be grouped into three distinct groups based on the criterion of 'onward destination'/type of 'leaver' (A, B, C) and the decision made (described earlier) to examine similarities and differences between these groups as the chief focus for analysis these groupings were used to identify subsamples so that a process of inductive thematic analysis could be conducted on the open responses. The three headteacher groups identified during descriptive analysis of the SPSS dataset were of sufficient size to be able to gain an understanding of similarity and difference. To have defined the criterion for thematic analysis as age or location would have potentially reduced the size of the groups for comparison.

Given that there were different numbers of responses to various open response questions (ranging from four to 156) a 'rule of thumb' was created. The method of identifying themes and codes through the use of the subsample approach was only used for questions where there were sufficiently high numbers of responses (e.g. see Appendix 11, Q43b). 25% of each group was identified for inclusion in the subsamples selected by a systematic process of selecting every fourth HT identification number (HT ID)

from my database of survey respondents. This process created a 'subset' of headteachers (Figure 8) who would always be used in any subsample analysis for any open response question.

**Figure 8: Stages in developing inductive themes (HT example)**

(Adapted from Boyatzis, 1998, p.44)



The survey contained a large number of open response questions (ORs). These took three forms: (a) filter questions where additional details could be given if a respondent had answered 'Yes' to a question; (b) open response questions to which respondents were invited to respond but which contained no filter option and (c) questions giving an additional or 'other' option after a list of possible options. Table 3 below summarises which questions fell into each category.

**Table 3: Open response questions for thematic analysis**

Type of OR	HT survey: question numbers (see Appendix 1)
Filter questions	14, 16, 24, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 59, 64
Open responses	38, 39, 40, 42, 34a, 34b, 58,
'Other'	3, 10, 30, 32, 33

For audit purposes Appendix 16 contains two tables reporting the number of respondents who gave written responses to open response questions and filter questions. These tables indicate the questions where theme development was initially conducted through the use of the identified subsample group of heads. The use of the subsample approach enabled themes to be developed where there were sufficient numbers.

However, the approach had to be adapted where there were low numbers of headteachers writing responses to open questions. Initially a 'threshold' of 2/3<sup>rd</sup>s of all responses (N=156) was used but this proved to be too high a threshold and impractical. This led to a revised decision to use the subsample approach on all questions to which at least 30% of all headteachers (N=156) had written responses (47 heads). The 'collapsed' form of thematic analysis was used where the number of responses totalled less than 30%.

When analysing the subsample responses to generate themes and codes, additional headteachers were not used if particular headteachers in the subsample had not given written a response.

Where an adapted THOR was used this is indicated in Appendix 16 as for instance, where the majority of responses to an open response question were of single or few words. In such instances, all of the responses were included in the development of themes and codes and themes developed based upon the frequencies.

Responses to 'other' are reported as appropriate in Appendices 10 and 11. The THOR process was made into booklets which were completed for every relevant question to ensure a consistency of approach. For audit purposes, extracts from the THOR process for one question (Q43b) are included in Appendices 18-22 and will be referred in the detailing of the remainder of the thematic process. The same process was used for all questions listed in Table 3.

## **Stage 2: Developing themes and a code**

### **Step 1: Reducing the raw data**

The responses of the subsample headteachers were then 'reduced', that is, the key ideas within a responses were captured in short summaries, key words or phrases. Pithy phrases used by participants were noted, e.g. 'stolen my life'. The nature of the responses in terms of emotion or emphasis were captured (e.g. tired, preoccupied) where appropriate. An example of the reduction of raw data at the subsample stage is included in Appendix 18. Notes were made as appropriate of key ideas that seemed to be important to participants as for example in Figure 9.

**Figure 9: Example of annotation in THOR booklet (Q43b)**

*Clear link/CHAIN REACTION between:*

- *Impact on x (what)*
- *Impact on y (whom)*
- *Caused by Z (factors)*

*Or could think of it as:*

- *Impact on family*
- *Impact on others*
- *Impact on mind (personal)*
- *Impact on lifestyle (personal)*

### Step 2: Identification themes within subsamples

Potentially differentiating themes were then identified, an example of which is included in Appendix 19 and consideration given to whether there were any relationships between the emerging themes or whether the themes suggested any broader categories or potentially 'over-arching' themes in the subsample.

### Step 3: Comparing themes across subsamples

Responses of subsample heads were then reviewed in light of the potentially differentiating themes (Appendix 19) and the original 'sensing the data' mindmap reviewed, and the question, 'what might have been left out?' considered.

At this point a decision was made whether to proceed with development of codes from the themes as they appeared to be at this stage, undertake a revision or 'collapse' the THOR process if there were insufficient numbers of headteachers in the subsample group who had provided detailed written responses.

### Step 4: Creating and applying a code

Detailed themes that enable insight and understanding of qualitative data have five characteristics which lead to 'a code that is usable and has maximum probability of producing higher interrater reliability and validity':

- A label (i.e. a name)
- A definition of what the theme concerns (i.e. the characteristic or issue constituting the theme)
- A description of how to know when the theme occurs (i.e. how to "flag" the theme)
- A description of any qualifications or exclusions to the identification of the theme
- Examples, both positive and negative, to eliminate possible confusion when looking for the theme (Boyatzis, 1998, p.98).

An example of themes emerging from this process for the 'case study' question Q43b is included in Appendix 20. An example of one theme from those developed for Q43(b) using the characteristics detailed above is produced in Figure 10 below.

**Figure 10: Example theme from Q43b thematic analysis**

<b><i>THEME 1</i></b>	
<b><i>Label:</i></b>	<i>Impact on family members</i>
<b><i>Definition:</i></b>	<p><i>The person describes how their job and its requirements affect those in their immediate and extended family.</i></p> <p><i>(i) Job has an impact on other family members, sometimes to the extent that they become involved in the life of the school as unpaid volunteers.</i></p> <p><i>(ii) The demands of the job have a negative impact on family life, with other family members having to do more at home.</i></p> <p><i>(iii) There is reduced time to spend with the one's own young children.</i></p> <p><i>(iv) There is less time to see/support grandchildren.</i></p>
<b><i>Differentiation:</i></b>	<i>HTs 24, 156, 12, 66, 103, 143 and 4 showed this theme (Group A). HTs in Group B and C only refer to (iii) and (iv).</i>

In the majority of cases, the number of themes and resulting codes for an open ended question were between 3 and 7.

Although the aim of such thematic development was to identify 'potentially differentiating' themes, i.e. themes that may occur in one or several of the groups being examined but not in all groups to enable similarities and differences to be identified there were some questions about which there appeared to be a real sense of 'angst' or concern amongst participants, e.g. impact of headship on personal and family life that was apparent in all three groups.

In such instances, I decided to proceed with thematic development and to review *after* coding all responses irrespective of whether the themes that emerged had some 'nuanced' differentiation, i.e. was the theme present in all three headteacher groups but was experienced or was manifest in different ways. For instance, did age, professional career history, gender, school context affect the experiencing of a theme or aspect? In this sense departure from the steps Boyatzis advocates occurred because of a 'sense' of the responses overall or because of an awareness of themes that were present in the literature about headteacher departure (e.g. stress, workload in French, 2009; French and Daniels, 2007; MacBeath, Gronn, Opfer, Lowden, Forde and Cowie, 2009a and 2009b; Phillips et al., 2007; Thomson, 2009).

### Step 5: Reliability

Boyatzis recommends a fifth step to ensure reliability of the codes by using a second coder and then determining the degree to which the code is applied to the data by both coders. Obviously, this study was conducted by myself as the sole researcher, therefore removing the possibility of interrater reliability.

However, to address the issue of reliability, the process was consistently applied over a period of time, with some variables being reworked on a subsequent occasion as part of the iterative process. In addition, themes for each open response question were integrated with themes from interviews and statistically significant items from the quantitative data in the interpretation phase. This interpretation at a later stage reduced the risk of relying on a small set of questions in interpreting the data as a whole and in 'seeing' the story through a theoretical lens in the writing and dissemination of the 'story'.

### ***Stage 3: Validating the code***

The codes were then applied to the responses of all headteachers of in the three headteacher groups A, B and C and the number of headteachers who mentioned each theme recorded. These are reported in Appendix 12.

### **(b) Interview data**

Analysis of interviews followed the principle espoused by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) who state that

'The analysis of an interview is interspersed between the initial story told by the interviewee to the researcher and the final story told by the researcher to an audience. To analyse means to separate something into parts or elements' (2009, p.193).

I regarded my role as one who would interpret the story of both individuals and might interpret key themes common to groups of headteachers. Unencumbered by being in post as a substantive headteacher but having a 'former life' as a headteacher, I hoped that I would bring both an objectivity and an understanding of the role in the way that I engaged with headteacher participants and the stories they shared in print and in the verbal 'telling'.

The thematic interview process followed four of the 'six steps on a continuum from description to interpretation and action' outlined by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, pp. 195-196), the first three steps of which had taken place before the stages of thematic analysis outlined for open responses. The analytical process for interview data also drew heavily on protocols described by Rubin and Rubin (2005).

During the first step of the Kvale and Brinkmann's continuum, headteachers were asked to

*describe* their life world during the interview. They spontaneously tell what they experience, feel and do in relation to a topic. There is little interpretation or explanation from either the interviewees or the interviewer (2009, pp.195-196).

The interview schedule is reported in Appendix 3.

As individual interviews progressed, it became clear that some interviewees appeared to develop a deeper sense of themselves and their response to their situation or the motivation for their decision as they reflected and articulated their 'journey' or experiences that had led them to a decision to resign from their position. This would appear to be in line with the second step identified by Kvale and Brinkmann in which

*the subjects themselves discover new relationships during the interview, new meanings in what they experience and do on the basis of their spontaneous descriptions, free of interpretations by the interviewer (2009, pp.195-196).*

Even though I had read about the unburdening and apparent willingness to 'open up' to unknown researchers on the part of participants this was a humbling experience. I had not expected interviewees to share with the depth that the majority did and that I, an 'unknown' would be trusted with not just the facts of certain events and experiences but with the 'processing' and the deeper understanding about themselves and events that appeared to take place through 'talking aloud to a stranger'.

In some interviews the thoughts and events described by an interviewee followed the third step identified by Kvale and Brinkmann:

*the interviewer, during the interview, condenses and interprets the meaning of what the interviewee describes, and "sends" the meaning back. The interviewee then has the opportunity to reply, for example, "I did not mean that" or "That was precisely what I was trying to say" or "No, that was not quite what I felt. It was more like ...." This process ideally continues till there is only one possible interpretation left, or it is established that the subject has multiple, and possibly contradictory, understandings of the theme. This form of interviewing implies an ongoing "on-the-line interpretation" with the possibility of an "on-the-spot" confirmation or disconfirmation of the interviewer's*

interpretations. The final product can then be a “self-correcting” interview (2009, pp.195-196).

Although not perhaps as rigorous as if I had conducted member validation after some of the analytical steps outlined, nevertheless, this ‘exchange’ process enabled me to understand. Rough ‘jottings’ were made during the interviews and immediately post interview. In this way I journeyed with those interviewed as a fellow traveller to use Kvale and Brinkmann’s metaphor (2009) on just one stage of their journey as they processed what it meant to leave the community they had led as headteacher and perhaps leave a way of ‘being’ (Clegg and Billington, 1997; Southworth, 1995).

#### **(i) Initial engagement with interview data**

Initial engagement subsequent to interview was in the form of reading the transcripts, listening to audio recordings and producing a mindmap for individual headteachers. An example is included in Appendix 22.

#### **(ii) Analysis process**

The analysis process thereafter followed the same three stage process to identify themes through the subsample approach as has already been described in respect of qualitative data generated by the survey until the coding of all the interview transcripts was undertaken. A number of subsample interviewees were identified through the 25% selection rule determined for analytical process of open responses survey questions. This led to thirteen headteachers whose transcripts were used consistently for the development of themes: Group A (4), Group B (4) and Group C (5 headteachers). Outlines were written for each of the subsample heads; these closely followed the interview schedule questions but where additional subject material had been initiated by the interviewee this was included in case the interview schedule had missed key aspects in preparation. An example of a subsample outline is included in Appendix 21.

Potentially differentiating themes were identified through the physical cutting and pasting of parts of the summary onto large sheets of A3 paper in the form

of mindmaps. Several reviews and 'reflections' of these over time enabled me to understand what the emerging themes might be as the themes both reduced and captured the short phases and then 'expanded' in order to clarify understanding and potential 'codable' characteristics.

Emerging themes were then compared across the three headteacher groups, with particular account being taken of the similarities and differences. Similarities and differences were summarised and highlighted on a matrix, an example of which is included in Appendix 22. A log of potential themes was then logged on a spreadsheet in a similar way as for the open ended responses (Appendix 19).

Outlines and transcripts were then reviewed for confirmation of potential themes to ensure that themes had not been missed in the reduction of the raw data at the outline stage or been misunderstood. Reviews of original transcripts at this stage also clarified thinking about differences between headteacher groups, confirming or raising questions about possible differentiating themes and ideas with initial ideas that had emerged earlier in the process of mindmaps, transcript annotations, writing summaries, or the participant's characteristics or circumstances.

The themes and codes applied at this stage were:

- Playing a part
- Calling
- Completion
- Church school headship
- Upbringing and self
- Site specific
- Contemporary headship
- Other (phrases of interest for later consideration).

It appeared at this stage that some themes were 'potentially differentiating' (Boyatzis, 1998) but that others appeared across all three headteacher

subsample groups. For instance, aspects of 'Site specific' and 'Contemporary headship' were common across all three headteacher groups with potential differences being *how* headteachers conceived their work and their identity, whether they chose or were able to create two identities and played or acted a 'part', one of work and one that preserved a sense of self amidst the demands of headship.

This raised the question of whether to apply codes for the themes that were not 'potentially 'differentiating'. Therefore these codes needed breaking down into smaller units and being understood and applied differently, through questions such as the nature of the experience, who, what, where etc. In the event, I decided that the themes across all three groups were equally valid given an understanding of the literature about the nature of headship and that particularly concerned with headteacher departure (Chapters 1 and 2) that they warranted application. The 'site specific' code was broken down into two local relational themes:

- Conflict with parents
- Conflict with governors.

The 'contemporary headship was broken down into

- Performance and accountability
- Work-load issues
- The impact of the job on personal and family lives.

In summary then, the codes were written as per the five criteria Boyatzis defines as a 'good code' (Boyatzis, 1998, p.53.). An example of these codes is presented in Appendix 23.

The codes generated through the inductive process were applied to all the transcripts through the use of mini-coloured post-its and the transcripts additionally annotated with thoughts, comments and questions as appropriate.

After all transcripts had been coded, photocopies of all transcripts were 'dissected'. That is to say, all the sections of text or 'data units' that referred to a particular theme were cut and labelled with the HT participant identification number. The 'data units' varied from lengthy paragraphs of description to pithy phrases that described an emotion or concept, e.g. 'exhausted, 'we always knew she was a bird of passage', 'it was the straw that broke the camel back' etc. Units of data from each interview were then checked again against the code descriptors to explore how the code might be interpreted differently by headteachers in different groups. This was particularly so for themes which, as already alluded to, appeared to be present in all headteacher groups. Summaries were written for each code. Comparisons were made across the groups.

Coded transcripts were reviewed and a heuristic device used throughout the analytical process amended and adapted. Individual heuristics were a powerful reminder of the variability and multiplicity of influences which informed individual decisions to leave a post. This heuristic was based upon some months of reflective thinking which ran alongside the 'reading' of individual stories and was inspired by too much chocolate eaten one Christmas and New Year. Segments of a chocolate orange represented the many and various influences that headteachers cited as important or influential in their decision making. Roughly speaking, the segments were initially grouped into four areas. Examples of four heuristics are included as Appendix 24.

This labour intensive and time consuming process as described by Rubin and Rubin (2005) layered on top of the main components of Boyatzis' three stage model enabled me to understand the data in ways that would not have been possible through the use of a software programme such as NVivo (Bazeley, 2007) (considered, tried and rejected at the pilot stage). Iterative engagement was essentially full immersion as I grappled with what the new sights and insights the data might hold as I journeyed with the data (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, pp.48-49).

### **3.10. Interpretation**

A plethora of data and results had been generated and some initial ideas about the extent and nature of departure from Anglican primary schools were beginning to take shape, but its 'form' was somewhat elusive! The photographer's lens was out of focus and I was too close to the ground. I could not see the wood for the trees.

At this stage, the salient findings were highlighted from the various summary documents created and sorted into overall themes. The statistically significant results were highlighted (Pearson chi-square and one way ANOVA). Huge sheets of paper covered with data results resulted and were physically moved round the walls over many weeks and months. A new brand of 'wallpaper' was created. A number of themes emerged from the mass of data analysis:

- Who is leaving: how many?
- Who is leaving: characteristics of headteachers and their schools
- Destination – where next?
- Why headteachers leave.

'Why headteachers leave' appeared to have six themes emerging:

- Career stages;
- The nature of headship as experienced through performance and accountability measures imposed at a national level;
- The nature of headship as experienced through relationships at local or 'site specific' level;
- The impact of work on personal and family life;
- Expectations around the nature of Anglican headship in particular;
- Personal faith.

Results were reviewed for areas of convergence, divergence and discrepancy, i.e. between headteacher and CGB survey data, between qualitative and quantitative data generated from both survey and interviews.

The variability and multiplicity of factors had shown me that there was no one single thing that was common to all headteachers. Rather it was often the coming together of a constellation of influences or factors which resulted in their decision. To use the chocolate orange heuristic concept, one or other of a set of influences caused the orange to spilt open. Decisions were intensely personal to them, their families and their professional context. How then might headteacher departure be understood and what, if any, contribution might this study have to the policy agenda?

Initially the apparent lack of convergence was troubling even though the design was one of complementarity (Greene et al., 1989, p.259) and I was occasionally sucked into the 'black hole' of if things didn't make a 'nice neat' 'whole' then the study was not enabling new ways of thinking or leading to new knowledge (Rossman and Wilson, 1985).

That is until I began to 'helicopter over the data' looking for broad themes and for connections between themes. As I did so, seeds of an answer to the question, 'how can these findings be understood?' began to take hold only to be blown away as if a sycamore 'helicopter like seed' on a gusty November day. The seed kept returning and returning until finally the concepts of 'Communities of Practice' (Wenger, 1998) gave me a way to understand the overall study.

The use of this particular theoretical lens as a means to integrate the data findings at the interpretation stage enabled me to make some sense of the 'whole' and to believe that there was some '*gestalt*' (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003).

Flying high above the spires of parish churches littering England's 'green and pleasant land' in my metaphorical helicopter, I reflected upon the nature of

'community', relationship and mission, faith and service from the early beginnings of 'church schools', often nestling in the lee of 'their' Anglican church, to their place in today's society. I thought of the changing role of headteachers and Governors in a fragmenting and increasingly autonomous world of budgets, performance and academies. And so I adjusted the focal length of my photographer's lens, long distance to close, close to mid, mid to long distance and so on. Evaluating the findings of each constituent part, making connections, exploring whether an emerging theory held true across the data and reading and re-reading the lives of the participants individually enabled me to engage with the data time and time again on different levels with my lens at different focal lengths.

At times I was angry on headteachers' behalf, frustrated for them, even wistful over some of the career opportunities described, sometimes about a life described but which I had chosen to leave. But mostly I was humbled by their commitment and dedication, courage, tenacity, their capacity for hope and faith even in the storms they were buffeted by. I had to put aside my feelings and memories of a 'former life', not allow my response to what they said or wrote to cloud my judgement or influence my analysis. And yet, as researcher, I brought to the study my passion and my personal and professional history. My position as a researcher was enabled and facilitated by the very fact that I had been a headteacher myself and led a church school. While trying to remain faithful to the data and to the stories of the participants this thesis is nevertheless an interpretation of their lives and decisions. It is the product of my own 'filter' as if on a cloudy day or through the haze of a rainbow arching away in the distance.

The resulting chapters are the result of the 'helicoptering' over the data in an attempt to answer 'how can headteacher departure be understood?' A summary of this thinking is presented as a table in Chapter 6.

### 3.11. Dissemination

This study positions itself within the debate about how to present mixed methods studies in the context of developing views about how a researcher can write for a variety of audiences, namely those of different persuasions.

Conducting an MMR study in an integrated and methodologically rigorous manner had been an aspiration from the early days of this study. It also presented me with both a challenge and an opportunity – to write this thesis in such a way was to meet the requirements and expectations of audiences from both traditional paradigms and audiences and successfully present this study in an integrated and coherent way.

Although exemplars exist in the form of large scale studies (Plano Clark and Creswell, 2008; Sammons, 2010), little mention is made in the literature on MMR about relatively small scale mixed methods research studies. This was summed up by one respondent in Bryman's study of MMR integration practices amongst 20 researchers (2007):

...I think probably there's lots of good examples of people collecting good diverse datasets [sic], I suspect there's less examples of people writing them up in a genuinely integrated way (Bryman, 2007, p.19).

Challenges or barriers discussed in the literature centre around the difficulties of writing MMR perhaps for commissioning bodies who have certain expectations or for the specific requirements of a journal article and a publisher.

However, one interviewee in Bryman's study of MMR integration practices amongst 20 researchers (2007) had commented on the challenges for PhD supervisors in trying to encourage doctoral students to think and write about their work in an integrated way:

I think that there is a [sic] lot of reports of the outcomes of these different methods separately, rather than trying to integrate them. So, you know, the standard PhD thesis says in chapter 5, I'll do the interviews, in chapter 6 I'll report the survey. And as a supervisor I'm always saying but how do you put them together? And there's a – there's a silence if people aren't sure how to do that integration (Bryman, 2007, p.11).

Bryman (2007, p.21) highlights the key characteristic of mixed method research in the 'final stage' (i.e. the dissemination stage) that integration leads to 'an overall or negotiated account'. It is worth quoting in full:

In genuinely integrated studies, the quantitative and qualitative will be mutually informative. They will talk to each other, much like a conversation or debate, and the idea is then to construct a negotiated account of what they mean together. The metaphor of triangulation has sometimes hindered this process by concentrating on the degree to which findings are mutually reinforcing or irreconcilable. Mixed methods research is not necessarily just an exercise in testing findings against each other. Instead, it is about forging an overall or negotiated account of the findings that brings together both components of the conversation or debate. The challenge is to find ways of fashioning such accounts when we do not have established templates or even rules of thumb for doing so (Bryman, 2007, p.21).

Aware therefore that integration of data and results is rarely done in an integrated manner due to the nature of doctoral studies or journal article requirements (Bryman, 2007; Greene et al., 1989) this project took seriously the challenge within the literature about dissemination and so details at some length the how, what, why and when data was integrated. Throughout the study, from the design to the writing and presenting of the findings, I have sought to integrate at the various stages along the 'journey' of the study. I have reported the various stages in this chapter and sought to highlight the nature and points of integration throughout the study.

As a result, this thesis has so far followed the conventional Phd thesis structure (introduction, literature review, methodology as first three chapters). It now departs from the often used format of presenting results and then discussion chapters and attempts to 'forge a negotiated account' as Bryman describes. Therefore, Chapter 4 will report the results to the questions:

- Who is leaving? *and*
- What are the characteristics of those leaving and of their schools?

Beginning with reporting of the 'response rates' it will by virtue of its content address the usually presented 'Description of the sample', thereby answering the question of 'Who is leaving?' and exploring the extent and scale of departure from Anglican schools. It will also present data that answer the third research question, 'where are headteachers going to'.

Chapter 5 will address the third research question, 'where are headteachers 'going to'?' with an analytical exploration of how the findings of this study map onto existing literature regarding career stages and development in the extant literature. Through examining the data through the literature about career stages, the chapter also begins to answer the fourth research question, 'why do headteachers leave?'

Chapters 6 and 7 will then present the main findings of the study to answer the fourth research question, 'why do headteachers leave?' integrating both qualitative and quantitative data in a complementary manner in an attempt to 'forge a negotiated account' (Bryman, 2007, p.21). Chapters 5 and 6 will follow a similar pattern, using quantitative data that was found to be statistically significant to introduce findings. Qualitative data from the survey and the interview will be used to 'expand' and illuminate' the quantitative data (Greene, 2007, p.259). The words of headteachers will be used to amplify and expand an understanding of headteacher departure. Chapter 7 will utilise predominantly qualitative data to illustrate the nature of church school headship and its relationship to headteacher departure.

In presenting the findings in answer to the question, 'why do headteachers leave?' I will also address the fifth question, 'what might have persuaded them to stay?' A 'theoretical lens' in the form of Communities of Practice (Wenger, 1998) will be used to explore how the findings presented in Chapters 6 and 7 can be understood and theorised. These chapters both illustrate how the integration of all the data through the theoretical lens occurred and finally came to fruition in the interpretation of the data generated. A diagram (Figure 11) will be presented which provides a summary of key aspects of Wenger's theory of community of practice as they relate to the analysis and interpretation of the data. This diagram will highlight and summarise in tabular form how the findings from the study map onto existing research using community of practice perspectives in terms of 'Professional', 'Nurture', 'Family' and 'Spiritual' communities of practice.

### **3.12. Chapter summary**

This chapter has detailed the mixed methods approach taken through the explication of a visual map (Figure 7). It has provided some background to mixed methods research and an overview of the research design, implementation, priority, integration and theoretical perspective used. The chapter detailed how various elements of the study were mixed and integrated within the design process, data collection, data analysis processes and procedures. Drawing on literature regarding mixed methods approaches taken by doctoral students (Bryman, 2007) I outlined the approach which will be taken in presenting the data and findings of the study through a 'negotiated account' (p.21).



# **CHAPTER 4**

## **WHO IS LEAVING?**

### **4.1. Introduction**

This chapter will address the questions regarding the extent of headteacher departure from Anglican primary schools during 2008-2009 and where or what headteachers are 'going to' or leaving 'to do' next. It will therefore answer the first three research questions:

- Who is leaving?
- What are the characteristics of those leaving and of their schools?
- Where are headteachers 'going to'?

The first section will report the response rates for the two surveys conducted, and the number of schools that the survey responses represent. I will show that headteachers leaving a post can be categorised as (a) taking up a subsequent substantive headship; (b) leaving headship or (c) retiring and that not all headteachers leaving a post are moving to another school or retiring which tends to be the general premise underlying national and local policy initiatives to address perceived supply and recruitment problems (Chapter 2).

The results of the two surveys will be integrated to establish a picture of the extent of headteacher departure from Anglican primary schools. The results of this study in respect of the scale of headteacher departure from Anglican primary schools in England will be compared with a survey by Howson covering a comparable period (Howson, 2009). On this basis I argue that there is 'silent' group of headteachers leaving the profession who are not recognised in the extant literature on headteacher departure and that the study's findings relating to Anglican schools suggest that these schools with

their unique religious character may be experiencing attrition higher than is experienced for all primary schools.

The second section will provide some context to the question, 'Who is leaving?' I will detail the demographic characteristics of headteachers leaving a post and report the salient characteristics of their careers, school context and working lives. In addition, I will detail characteristics of headteachers who were interviewed.

The third section will address the question, 'Where do headteachers 'go to'?' and provide some additional findings related to 'onward destination'. I will detail (a) the types of schools to which Group A heads are moving; (b) the nature of employment opportunities Group B heads are taking up and/or the life style choices they are making and (c) the nature of 'retirement' for Group C headteachers.

This chapter focuses on the extent of headteacher departure from Anglican primary schools in England in order to set the scene for Chapter 5, 6 and 7, later chapters in which I explore why headteachers leave, the motivations for their decisions, the nature and timing of those decisions.

This study seeks to see through a range of lenses of different focal length as if an experienced photographer. So, in the respect of this chapter in first looking at the response rates and findings as they relate to Anglican schools compared to all primary schools for a comparable period, the lens is a long distance lens. In reducing the focal length to 'mid-distance', the chapter then focuses on the characteristics of the headteachers and their schools in each of the three headteacher groups, Group A, B and C as defined in Chapter 3. These will be reported in the order: headteacher survey data, CGB survey data, then combined dataset. Then in a final 'sharpening' of the focus still further I provide some detail about where heads are 'going to' and report some findings for 'sub-groupings' of each of the three HT groups.

A traditional thesis might describe the sample and report the findings in 'Chapter 4: Results'. This thesis departs a little from this established format. The reasons for this alternative approach to the traditional fourth chapter of this thesis are three-fold.

Firstly, the chief participants are the headteachers themselves. On occasion findings are reported as headteacher survey, CGB survey then combined dataset findings. However, where possible this chapter attempts to present data, findings and interpretation of the findings in as integrated a manner in response to the challenge and opportunity for dissemination of a mixed methods study discussed in Chapter 3.

Secondly, the data collected through the HT survey is that experienced and 'known' by the headteachers, the 'truth' as they perceive it and the 'truth' to the extent they wish to share it by participating in this study. Although the knowledge of Chairs of Governors is invaluable particular in gaining an understanding of the extent of headteacher departure nationally, data collected through the CGB survey in respect of who is leaving, the characteristics of headteachers (e.g. age) and what headteachers' future plans are is 'one step removed', possibly 'second-hand', reported by CGBs 'to the best of their knowledge' to coin a phrase.

Thirdly, it is important for the integrity of this study to report clearly what is 'known' and what is 'perceived'. To some extent it could be argued that all research, especially that which is predominantly qualitative in nature is a partial understanding and reporting truths, those of interpretations made by the researcher in the course of the analytical process. As detailed in Chapter 3 the design of this study is a qualitative dominant mixed methods study. That notwithstanding, for clarity as well as integrity of reporting, the results of the individual surveys are presented separately before the results of the combined 'all schools' dataset.

Questionnaires were sent under separate cover to headteachers and CGBs. It was not a prerequisite for HTs and CGBs to discuss what CGBs might write in

their survey responses or to know if the other was planning to complete and return theirs. Furthermore, CGBs can only know what headteachers tell them, headteachers may be selective what and how much to tell their CGB about their reasons for leaving. 'Truth' may therefore be partially communicated by headteachers to CGBs and so the information shared by CGBs in their responses may be 'as if through a glass darkly'.

Recognising the limitations, however, does not diminish the power of this study to contribute to the empirical knowledge about headteacher departure.

## 4.2. Response rates

Surveys were sent to headteachers of Anglican primary schools in England whose posts were advertised during the academic year 2008-2009. Surveys enabled the study to explore the nature and extent of headteacher departure in one academic year of Anglican primary schools in England. The response rates are summarised in Table 4.

**Table 4: Survey response rates**

<b>Survey response rates</b>	<b>Number returned</b>	<b>Percent (N=526)</b>
Headteacher	156	29.66%
Chair of Governors	142	27.00%
Both HT and CGB	55	10.46%
Number of schools represented (surveys returned from either or both HT and CGB of same school)	243	46.20%

29.66% of headteachers returned survey questionnaires (N=526). 27% of Chairs of Governors returned questionnaires (N=526). When the datasets from both the surveys are combined and integrated to answer the question, 'Who is leaving?' and 'How many are leaving?' the study received and examined responses from 46.20% of all Anglican schools where a head teacher was leaving (N=526). For these 243 schools, survey responses were received from either or both headteachers and Chair of Governors. Both the

headteacher and the Chair of the Governing Body from the same school returned the survey in 10.46% of schools surveyed.

Although the response rates for either the headteacher survey (26.99%, N=156) and Chairs of Governors survey (27%, N=142) did not achieve the 'barely acceptable' 50% to enable sufficient robustness to consider generalisations (Mangione, 1995, pp. 60-61) the integration of data from both surveys in a 'combined dataset' of 243 schools represents a reasonable number and percentage of responses from which to draw some tentative conclusions about the scale of headteacher departure from Anglican schools.

For audit purposes Table 5 indicates the data triangulation for all schools represented in the study (N=243).

**Table 5: Data triangulation by school**

HT survey	HT interviews	CGB survey	CGB interviews	Schools responding (N=243)	
				Number	%
■				156	64.20%
■	■			48	19.75%
		■		142	58.44%
		■	■	18	7.41%
■		■		55	22.63%
■	■	■		23	9.47%
■	■	■	■	5	2.06%

Generalisations may be possible when a sample is representative of a population and inferences about the entire population can be drawn. Although the study surveyed the entire population of Anglican headteachers leaving in 2008-2009 and their Chairs of Governors so reducing the risk of a biased sample, the numbers in this study are insufficient for generalisations to be made.

However, response rates are comparable to the response rates reported by the annual surveys of the state of the labour market by Howson over several years (Howson, 2007b, 2008b). For 2006 – 2007, response rates were 29%

(N=2,957) for all schools (primary, secondary and special) (Howson, 2007b, p.3) of which 683 responses were from primary schools which had advertised for a headteacher between September 2006 and March 2007 (Howson, 2007b, p.6). That recent survey received responses from 179 Church of England primary schools. Howson reports this as giving an 'Anglican' response rate of 28% (N=683) (Howson, 2007b, p.7).

For 2007-2008, Howson surveyed 2,605 primary schools which advertised for a new headteacher during the period September 2007 and May 2008 (Howson, 2008b, pp.5-6). The response rate for this year was 33% (N=2,605), 847 schools responding. Of these 847, 228 were Church of England schools. Howson reports the percentage of questionnaires returned by control of school as being 28% from Church of England primary schools (Howson, 2008b, p.6).

This study reports the 'onward destinations' of headteachers of 243 schools whose headteachers and Chairs of Governors returned questionnaires. These 243 schools represent 46.20% (N=526) of Anglican schools which advertised for a substantive headteacher during the year 2008-2009. Therefore, this study represents the position in respect of a significant proportion of Anglican schools over one academic year.

### **4.3. Comparison of Anglican schools with all primary schools**

This study complements the annual survey conducted by Howson for the same academic year (Howson, 2009). His study of the labour market (headteachers, deputy and assistant headteachers) and the supply issues related to senior leadership positions as defined by patterns of advertisement and re-advertisement generated a response rate from primary schools of 32% (N=2,385) from schools advertising a post during a nine month period from September 2007 to May 2008. Primary schools traditionally make up some 80-82% of respondents in his annual surveys.

Comparison of the number of forms sent out in Howson's survey and the number of schools surveyed in this study (Table 6 below), shows that this study surveyed 20.17% (N=2,385) of all primary schools that advertised in the same period (Howson, 2009, p. xviii). Howson sent questionnaires to all schools which placed an advert, some 2,385 primary schools. This study sent questionnaires to the heads and CGBs of all Anglican primary schools which placed an advert for a headteacher, some 526 schools. 481 of these were sent out in the same period as the Howson survey, September 2008 to May 2009. Even allowing for the fact that this study did not include Wales in its database of schools, it can therefore be concluded that between the comparable period September 2008 and May 2009, Anglican primary schools accounted for 20.17% of all primary schools which advertised a post. The scale of this study enables it to make a contribution to that which is known about headteacher departure and supply in England.

An additional 45 questionnaires were sent out as part of this study but outside of the period for which a comparative examination will be made in this section of the thesis.

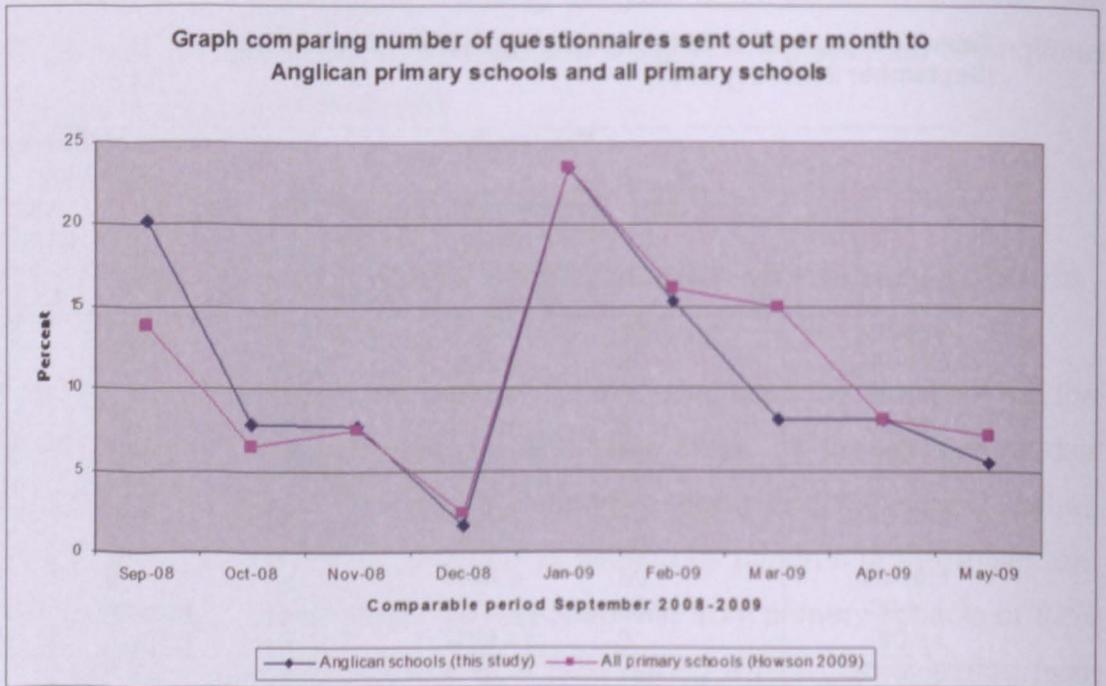
**Table 6: Comparative table showing number of adverts per month (September 2008-May 2009)**

	This study			Howson Survey 2008-2009	
	Sent out	Proportion of CE Primary schools N=526	Proportion for comparable period N=481	Sent out* N=2385	Proportion of all primary schools N=2385
Sep-08	97	18.44%	20.17%	329	13.79%
Oct-08	38	7.22%	7.90%	153	6.42%
Nov-08	37	7.03%	7.69%	179	7.51%
Dec-08	8	1.52%	1.66%	57	2.39%
Jan-09	113	21.48%	23.49%	561	23.52%
Feb-09	74	14.07%	15.38%	384	16.10%
Mar-09	49	9.32%	8.11%	358	15.01%
Apr-09	39	7.41%	8.11%	195	8.18%
May-09	26	4.94%	5.41%	169	7.09%
Jun-09	39	7.41%	N/A	no data	no data
Jul-09	6	11.42%	N/A	no data	no data
Sept - May	481			2385	
Sept - July	526			N/A	

\*Figures for this column are taken from *The State of the Labour Market 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Report* (Howson, 2009, p. xviii).

Graph 1 displays a comparison of the scale of this study with the data for the Howson survey (Howson, 2009, p.xviii) showing that the proportion of Anglican schools compared to all schools advertised per month is broadly similar. The main differences are that for the year 2008-2009, Anglican schools advertised proportionally more posts in September 2008 but less in March 2009 when compared to all primary schools. The two sets of data remain aligned through the period October 2008 to February 2009 and in April to May 2009. It is unclear from any source why these two 'reversed' spikes occurred. Unlike trend data indicating a spike of retirements such as occurred around the time of changes to the Teachers' Pension Scheme in 1997 (a larger than average number of posts were advertised, some 2,534 in the primary sector) (Howson, 2010a) the changes to the Teachers' Pension Scheme as of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007 do not appear to have caused a similar spike. Although the SIAS Framework changed in 2009 there is no evidence that that could be contributory influence on a single month's spike.

**Graph 1: Comparison of the number of adverts: Anglican school study with all primary schools for comparable period**



Furthermore, Howson reports that 201 Church of England schools returned questionnaires, 162 being voluntary schools and 39 foundation schools. He reports 28% of 'questionnaires returned by control of school' as being from Church of England primary schools (Howson, 2009, p.6). 201 schools out of the reported 767 returned questionnaires from primary schools is 26% so it may be that the 28% figure Howson reports means that 28% of all Church of England forms sent out were returned. It is therefore not possible to draw any further conclusions about the patterns of supply, demand and recruitment or be certain of the sample size to which the 28% figure in Howson's report refers.

Although the scale of this study is considerably smaller than Howson's 2008-2009 survey, it focuses on an important 'subset' of primary schools, those with a Christian character, the nature of which is defined as the 'Anglican' tradition. It therefore has the potential to contribute to existing knowledge about headteacher departure and the state of 'play' regarding Anglican schools in particular.

#### **4.4. Scale of departure from Anglican schools: the evidence**

As described in Chapter 3 three main categories of 'leaver' were identified: those leaving to take up substantive headship of another school (Group A), headteachers leaving headship (Group B) and headteachers retiring (Group C). These categories were used for analysis of quantitative and qualitative data generated by both the headteacher survey and CGB survey.

Headteacher and CGB data sets in respect of 'where next' or 'what next' were examined and then applicable items integrated. From this integration and the substantial number of interviews that were conducted, it is possible to establish a picture of the extent of headteacher departure from Anglican primary schools nationally during 2008-2009. As reported in Table 4 HTs and

or CGBS from 46.20% of schools (N=526) returned their respective questionnaires.

Table 7 below reports the numbers of headteachers leaving for a subsequent headship, retiring or leaving for another 'destination'. In the three cases where 'onward destination' reported by a CGB was different to that reported by the headteacher, the HT's response was used.

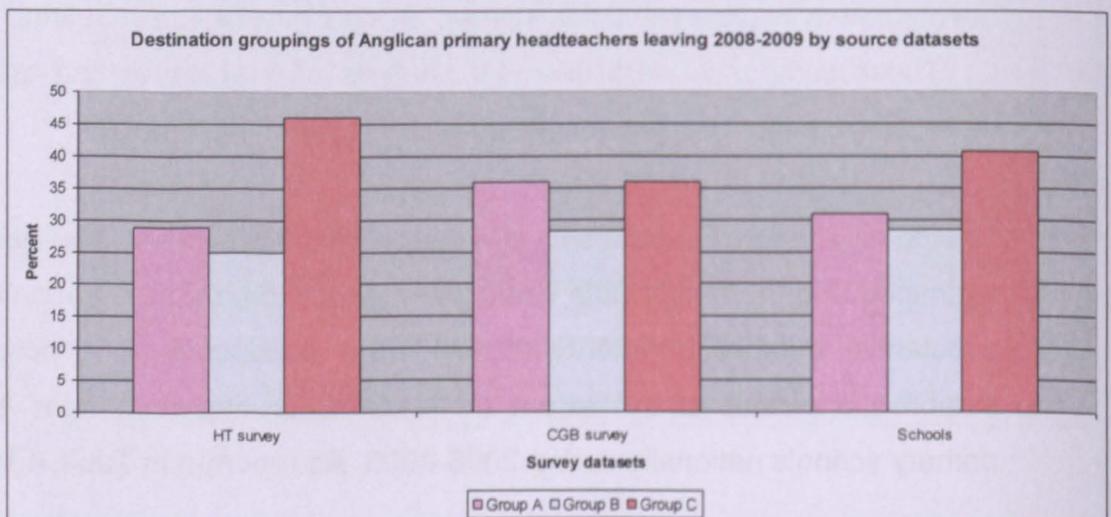
**Table 7: Percentages of headteachers leaving in each HT group**

		A	B	C
		HTs leaving for another headship	HTs leaving headship	HTs retiring
HT survey	N=156	28.85%	25.00%	46.15%
CGB survey	N=142	35.92%	28.17%	35.92%
Schools (combined dataset)	N=243	30.86%	28.40%	40.74%

The results for the headteacher and CGB surveys are displayed in Graphs 2 and 3. These graphs also show the results for all schools in this study (N=243).

Graph 2 displays the results by the source of the data: HT survey, CGB survey and the combined dataset.

**Graph 2: Destination groupings by survey datasets**



Results from the headteacher survey show that 28.85% (N=156) of heads are leaving to take up a substantive subsequent headship of another school (Group A) while the CGB survey found a higher percentage, 35.92% (N=142). The combined dataset for all 243 schools from which HT and or CGB responded showed that 30.86% (N=243) of heads were leaving for another headship.

Figures from all three datasets (Table 7) are several percent higher than the 22% reported by Howson as the percentage of all primary schools which were placing an advert because a headteacher was leaving to take up a headship elsewhere (N=767) (Howson, 2009, p.8). This would appear to suggest that proportionally more headteachers are leaving Anglican schools for a subsequent headship than the corresponding figure for primary schools.

Obviously both the Howson survey and this study are to some extent at the mercy of the self-selecting nature of postal surveys. Figures for the various 'reasons for advertising a headship' (Howson, 2009, p. 8) are not broken down by religious designation or 'control'. In addition, the period for the Howson study is 2 months shorter than that of this study, with returns later than May being incorporated into subsequent editions of this report or reports of later annual surveys. However, this comparative examination of results from both studies does suggest that the leaving patterns of headteachers from Anglican schools need further research.

Graph 2 illustrates that the data profile for this study of those not leaving a post to take up a subsequent headship or retiring (Group B) was similar across the three datasets. 25% (N=156) of headteachers completing the HT survey reported that they were leaving but not taking up another headship or retiring, compared to a slightly higher percentage of CGBs (28.17%, N=142). A similar percentage of leavers in this category is seen in the combined 'all schools' dataset (28.40%, N=243).

A large proportion (32%, N=2,385) of respondents to the Howson survey were from primary schools (Howson, 2009, p.3). Of these 767 primary schools,

28% were from Church of England primary schools (Howson, 2009, p.6). Reasons for advertising a post for reasons included headteachers leaving to move to deputy headship (<1%), move to another post in education (7%), move outside education (1%), maternity/paternity leave (<1%), stepping down to classroom teaching (<1%) and 'other' (6%) (2009, p.8).

Excluding an additional 1% of advertisements for new posts (Howson, 2009, p.8), this total of 15% of heads (N=217) not moving to take up a headship and not retiring is substantially less than the figures that this study's headteacher survey and CGB survey found. The HT survey results for Group B were 25% and the CGB survey 28.17%. These results of this doctoral study are strikingly higher when compared to the 15% reported by Howson.

This is puzzling. As with Group A results, is there something different about the results for Anglican schools compared to either other categories of school (e.g. RC, community schools) or all primary schools? If results for Anglican schools are indeed proportionally higher than for all schools does this mean that primary schools of other or no religious character or 'control' neutralise or cancel out in some way what is happening with Anglican schools?

The numbers leaving for retirement (Group C) varied the most between the HT dataset, the CGB dataset and the schools dataset. 46.15% (N=156) of headteachers reported that they were retiring compared to 35.92% (N=142) of Chairs of Governors who reported that their headteacher was retiring. The figure for the 243 schools was mid-way between the HT and CGB surveys at 40.74% (N=243). In this, the 'profile' of the HT survey for Group C heads is similar to that of the results for Group A (HT survey, smallest percentage, CGB survey largest percentage and all schools mid-way between the two).

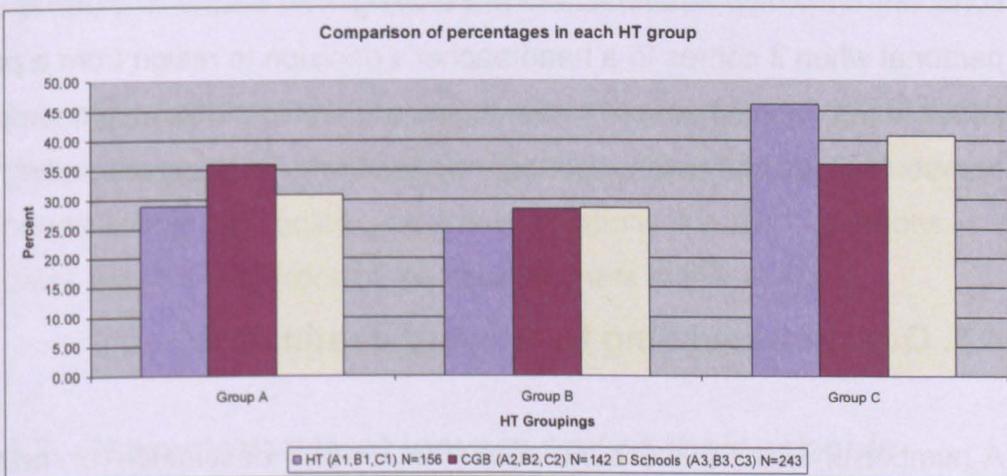
Comparing the results and the profile with that of the Howson study, it is clear that Howson reported 62% taking retirement (at 60 or earlier or for reasons of ill-health). This is substantially higher than the figures found in either the HT or CGB survey this study undertook.

## 4.5. Questions of validity, 'truth' and perception

Graph 3 overleaf illustrates the results by the HT groupings A, B and C. It shows that the results for the HT and CGB surveys in respect of 'how many are leaving?' are broadly in line with each other. The main difference is that the HT survey results found a larger proportion of headteachers retiring than the CGB survey. The similarity of results encourages confidence that the study has generated results through collection of data from two participant groups, headteachers and Chairs of Governors that are reasonably consistent with each other and might therefore give a reliably accurate picture of headteacher departure.

The results of the combined dataset (All schools, N=243) show that a greater number of headteachers are leaving for retirement than for any other 'destination' or reason. This would be expected against all predictors based on the age profile of teachers and headteachers already referred to in Chapter 1 and expectations of a demographic 'time-bomb' prompting a deluge of retirements within a two-three period.

**Graph 3: Destination by HT Groupings**



However, the apparent discrepancy between results of this study compared with that by Howson (2009) for the comparable period raise thought provoking

questions regarding the nature of postal questionnaires, small datasets (i.e. <1,000) and how to maximise returns.

The results also raise questions regarding the nature of 'truth' and the 'owner' of that truth. For instance, Howson's surveys include the opportunity for schools to make written comments on the issues of advertising, recruitment, retention, salaries etc. Although Howson writes in his introduction to the 2009 report (Howson, 2009, p. 1) that comments had been 'received from schools reflecting issues that the head completing the form felt most strongly about', it is conceivable that the forms were completed by others such as a successor (e.g. Acting Headteacher or substantive successor) after a HT has left (if the advert was placed after their 'departure'), by a school administrative assistant (e.g. School Business Manager) or perhaps by the Chair of Governors. Certainly a few of the comments from those selected for inclusion by Howson are phrased in such a way as to suggest this is the case; the writers appear to be writing 'about' another person (e.g. Primary Heads 1063835, 1064942 and 10662534 in Howson, 2009, Appendix 1, p. vi-ix).

I have already referred to the fact that this chapter attempts to integrate the data regarding who is leaving, how many and the characteristics of the schools from which headteachers are leaving. The nature of 'truth' is that it is personal when it comes to a headteacher's decision to resign from a post. It is possible that the disparity in percentages and profile of this study compared to Howson's study of the same period may lie in '*who*' is doing the 'telling'.

#### **4.6. Questions relating to 'onward destination'**

A number of specific questions about the 'onward destination' or 'next steps' arise from the results presented.

For Group A, the question becomes, what is the nature of the schools these headteachers are moving to? Are they taking up headship of another Church of England school? Is there something akin to a 'church-school career'?

For Group B, the question then becomes, where are these headteachers going? What are they going to do next? Are they leaving headship for promotion or jobs in education on a broader scale and a different remit but not as headteachers leading schools? Are they leaving headship to 'return to the classroom'? Or are they leaving the education profession completely? Where they 'go' or 'go to' will be reported later in the chapter.

For Group C, the question then arises as to what 'type' of retirement are they taking? Retirement at Normal Pensionable Age (NPA) of 60 (until 2007)? 'Early' retirement? Ill-health retirement? And what prompts the decision regarding the timing of that decision? Is any headteacher leaving before the age of 60 'retiring' or is it related to age or what they are planning to do next? Do others think and/or report resignation as the reason for departure because of assumptions of age? Do headteachers in a certain age bracket (e.g. 50s) report resignation because it is 'easier' to do so? Do headteachers leaving in their 50s report 'other' in this study compared to reporting early retirement to others, such as the Chair of Governors or the annual Howson survey?

Accepting that there may be no clear answer to some of these questions this study attempts to shed some light 'up close and personal' on where headteachers are going and the motivations for their decisions. I will now detail the characteristics of the headteachers in this study.

#### **4.7. Characteristics of leavers and of their schools**

The characteristics of those headteachers leaving and of their schools will be described. Details of the headteacher sample (N=156) will be described first before that of the CGB sample (N=142). Details as they pertain to all the schools represented by this study (N=243) will be described last.

By virtue of the focus on the headteacher perspective and voice of this study, the description of the headteacher is more detailed than that of the CGB sample. The construction of an combined and integrated dataset was only possible for certain of the aspects reported for the headteacher survey.

Where there were statistically significant differences between the three headteacher groups A, B and C these will be articulated; in all other instances differences between groups were not statistically significant so only descriptive statistics are reported in the text to give a 'flavour' of the sample. However, for audit purposes inferential statistics are reported in Appendix 12.

#### **4.7.1. Headteacher survey**

##### ***a) Demographic data***

Demographic data obtained from the headteacher survey (26.99%, N=156) can be summarised as follows:

##### Gender:

- More women returned the survey than men (Female: 60.9%; Male: 39.1%, N=156).
- Although not statistically significant, there were slightly more women in Group B than men (1.8 times) compared to the gender balance in Groups A and C (both 1.5 times women to men).

##### Age:

- More headteachers in the 55-59 age group (42.9%, N=156) returned the questionnaire than in any other age group (all headteachers).
- Three fifths of Group A headteachers leaving to take up a subsequent substantive headship at another school were in their forties (60%, N=45);
- Three fifths of Group B heads (61.5%, N=39) leaving were in their fifties.
- A third of Group B heads (35.9%, N=39) were aged under 50 with a spread from 30 to 49.

- Two thirds of heads in Group C were retiring aged 55-59 (65.3%, N=72); one third were 60 and above (33.3%, N=72).

**Marital status:**

- The majority of headteachers were married or living with a partner (78.2%, N=156).
- The proportion of heads in each group was statistically significant (Pearson chi-square, sig. =.004). The percentage of Group B heads married or living with a partner was slightly lower than Groups A or C. The proportion of heads in Group B who are widowed is higher than in either Group A or C. Groups B and C contain a higher proportion than Group A of heads who are single.

**Religion:**

- The majority of headteachers selected 'Christian' as their religion (91.7%, N=156).
- Although not statistically significant, the proportion of heads in Group B who selected 'Christian' from the set of possible responses was less than in Groups A or C: 84.6% (N=39) of Group B heads compared to 97.8% (N=45) of Group A heads and 91.7% (N=72) of Group C heads.
- Although the numbers were very small, a higher proportion of Group B heads selected 'Of no faith' (10.3%, N=39) compared to Groups A or C.

**Qualifications:**

- Approximately a fifth of respondents were educated to Masters' degree level (19.2%, N=156).
- Almost two-thirds of all heads had been awarded NPQH (39.1%, N=156).
- The proportion of heads educated to Masters' degree level in each group was statistically significant across the headteacher groups (Pearson chi-square, sig. = .000). Group A are more likely to have a Masters than Groups B or C. Group B heads are least likely to have a higher degree than either Group A or C heads.

The results of each aspect of the relevant questions are reported in full in Appendices 11 and 12.

### ***b) Careers of headteachers leaving***

As to be expected from a sample of headteachers of different ages, length of service as a teacher and length of service as a headteacher vary hugely. This is evident particularly as a result of the grouping criterion used for analysis. Length of headships and career length overall will be discussed in Chapter 5, the first of the three empirical chapters discussing those aspects of their personal and professional lives which influence headteachers' decisions.

### ***c) School context/characteristics***

Survey findings revealed geographic and contextual characteristics of the schools headteachers were leaving. Findings from the head teacher questionnaire were supplemented by school and location data available from the publicly available sources detailed in Chapter 3. Where comparative data is available from the Howson study of the same period, this will be discussed.

Although none of the following aspects was found to statistically significant when examining the data in respect of the three headteacher groups, it is worth noting the following contextual data for the headteacher sample overall.

A similar percentage of head teacher respondents were from Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled schools (49.4% and 50.6% respectively, N=156, Pearson chi-square, sig. =.336).

The majority of headteachers were from primary schools (87.8%, N=156) with small but similar percentages being from infant, junior or first schools, 4.5%, 3.8% and 3.8% respectively (Pearson chi-square, sig. = .400). This is higher than the phase profile reported in the Howson study; 77% of all primary school respondents were primary schools (N=767) (Howson, 2009, p. 5).

The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals (FSM) averaged 10.27% (N=149) but percentages ranged widely from zero (7 headteachers, 4.7%) to 50% (1 head teacher, 0.7%) with the one way ANOVA showing no statistical significance (ANOVA, sig. = .082).

The number on roll (NOR) of the majority of schools was less than 200 (105 schools, 67.4%) and the average NOR 173. The most common NOR was 210 (5 school, 3.2%) but the NOR varied hugely from 652 (one school with NOR of 18 pupils to one schools with 670 on roll (ANOVA, sig. = .082). Comparison of means using one way ANOVA indicates that that there is no statistically significant difference in means across the three groups. However, comparison of the means of the HT groups indicate that Group A heads are leaving smaller schools (mostly Group 1 size) than Groups B and C and that Group C are leaving larger schools.

Therefore, the largest number of headteachers are leaving Group 1 size schools (48.7%, N=156) with 38.7% leaving Group 2 size schools. A small proportion of heads are leaving Group 3 schools (11.5%, N=156). Very few heads are leaving Group 4 or 5 schools, only one headteacher leaving from a school of such a size (0.6%, N=156).

The trend reported in annual Howson surveys for the numbers of all primary schools advertising for a head is that more heads are leaving Group 2 schools (48%-52% over the years 2000 to 2009, (Howson, 2009, p.5). For the comparable year, 2008-2009, Howson reports returns of 48% of Group 1 schools and 31% of Group 1 schools (N=767). These figures are substantially different to those of the headteacher respondents in this study; this study had a greater proportion of 'small school' heads return questionnaires with less from Group 2. The 'size' is both different and 'reversed'. For Group 3 size schools this study reports fewer heads of this school size leaving. Figures are similar between the two studies for numbers of Group 4 and 5 size schools leaving.

#### ***d) Geographical characteristics of schools***

The location of head teacher respondent schools were analysed by diocese, Local Authority and Government Region to explore whether any patterns were present in terms of head teacher departure that might be related to geographical and local or national structural organisational aspects.

Geographical data were collected from diocesan websites, NATSOC, SIAS Inspection Reports, LA websites and Government Region lists.

Of the 43 Anglican Dioceses in England, head teacher questionnaires were returned from all bar 2 Dioceses (Newcastle and Sodor and Man). The greatest number of head teacher questionnaires was received from headteachers in the Diocese of Oxford (8 headteachers, 5.1%, N=156).

Of the 152 Local Authorities (LA), headteacher questionnaires were received from schools in 64 Local Authorities, 42.1% of LAs. Five of the seven Government Regions had similar numbers of head teacher respondents (between 12.8% and 17.3% but very few headteachers from the London Government Region returned questionnaires (2.6%, N=156). No questionnaires were returned from schools in the North East Government Region.

It is not possible to compare this geographical profile of responses of schools with the Howson study of the same academic year (Howson, 2009) as Howson included schools in Wales and this study did not. In addition, the number of responses from primary schools is reported as being 767 (Howson, 2009, p. 5) and the figures for the primary responses by Local Authority and Government Region reported in Appendix V of Howson's 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Report 2008-2009 (2009, pp.xxx-xxxiii) total 1384 schools. This apparent discrepancy within the Howson report means that comparison of this study's returns with those of Howson by Local Authority and Government Region are not possible.

### ***e) The quality of schools by external measures***

#### ***(i) Ofsted***

None of the data from the survey or the documentary evidence in the form of Ofsted and SIAS reports suggest that the headteachers who returned questionnaires were leaving for reasons of competence or capability.

The most recent Ofsted Inspection Reports for all but two schools were downloaded from the Ofsted website and the grades compared. The two

unobtainable reports were for schools which had closed or merged with another school. Where the Ofsted report listed a different head teacher, the next Ofsted Report was used; usually this was within a few months of the head teacher returning the questionnaire.

The percentage of headteachers who had graded their schools 'Good' (51.3%, N=151) was identical to the data gathered from the Ofsted Reports (51.3%, N=154). However, there was a discrepancy between the number of headteachers who graded their school as Outstanding (31.1%, N=151) and Ofsted's judgements (16.2%, N=154). Similarly, the number of headteachers who graded their school as Satisfactory was 15.4% (N=151) compared to Ofsted's judgement of 32.5% (N=154).

The grades for all areas of the Ofsted Framework were examined. Comparison of means using ANOVA was conducted for grades in all areas of the Ofsted Framework and were found to be similar (See Appendix 15). Means indicated that the majority of schools that the headteacher were leaving had been judged by Ofsted as Good or Outstanding in most categories. There were no statistically significant findings related to HT groups for any of the criteria schools are judged against in the Ofsted Framework. The only criteria for which there was a 'nearly' statistically significant finding was in the Quality of Teaching and Learning (ANOVA, sig. = .054). The mean for Groups A, B and C indicate that schools of Group B heads had slightly lower grades for this criterion (Group A 2.09, Group B 2.05 and Group C 2.33). No school amongst the schools of the headteacher respondents was judged inadequate in any category.

There is not necessarily a link between an Ofsted judgement and a particular headteacher as, although most inspection reports could be linked to the headteacher in the study, this was not always the case, particularly where it was clear a head had been appointed just prior to the school's latest inspection. This may be related to the time difference between a previous Ofsted judgement and the date of a headteacher completing the survey. The survey did not generate the necessary data to determine whether the

discrepancy identified is related to time factors or differences of opinion and judgement regarding the school.

(ii) SIAS grades

SIAS grades were examined on a similar basis to the Ofsted grades. Comparison of means using one way ANOVA indicates that there was no statistical significant difference between the grades awarded to schools of Group A, B or C heads. The majority of schools had been awarded grades of Good or Outstanding for the elements of Distinctiveness (sig. =.258), Collective Worship (sig. = .178), Effectiveness of Leadership and Management (sig. = .855) and for RE in VA schools (sig. = .178). Only one school had been awarded an inadequate judgement, for one of the four criteria.

Headteachers were self-selecting by virtue of their decision to complete and return a questionnaire. It may be that there were headteachers leaving from schools with poorer Ofsted and SIAS grades but this cannot be said of the schools whose headteachers participated in the survey.

***f) Schools supporting other or accepting training and support***

Although data was examined in respect of the range of support schools had received or the support they had given to other schools, there were no statistically significant findings.

Few schools had been Beacon Schools (12 schools, 8.5%, N=142) and only one (0.7%) was designated a National Support School (NSS). Almost a third of headteachers (32.1%, N=156) were involved in supporting other schools.

A number of schools had been involved in national programmes aimed at supporting schools raise achievement or develop the capacity for leadership in their schools. For instance, 15.8% (N=146) were or had been in the Intensifying Support Programme (ISP) but very few schools had taken part in the Behaviour Intervention Programme (BIP) (6 schools, 4.2%, N=144).

45.9% had taken part in the Primary Leadership Programme (PLP) programme (N=146).

A small minority of schools had been categorised as being a SFCC or At Risk by their Local Authority (SFCC: 3.5%, N=144; 'At Risk': 8.3%, N=145). However, a similar number and proportion of schools had received intensive support from their Local Authorities in the previous three years (17.3%, N=150) as had taken part in the ISP. When considering schools categorised by their LAs as 'At Risk', in receipt of during the year of the study (2008-09) or recent intensive LA support, 20% (N=150) of schools fell into this new overall category. Although not statistically significant (Pearson chi-square, sig. = .543) a greater proportion of schools led by a Group A head (25.6%) had received support compared to Group B (18.9%) or Group C (17.1%). This study did not seek to generate data to address whether there was a relationship between individual headteachers and a school needing support.

#### ***g) Working lives***

The questionnaire gathered data about a number of aspects of headteachers' working lives: nature of any teaching commitment, dedicated headship time, average working hours per week, average number of hours per week spent in meetings about individual pupils (e.g. CAF meetings) and whether the school had a deputy head teacher.

#### ***(i) Teaching commitment and dedicated headship time***

A third of headteachers have a class teaching responsibility each week (36.5%, N=156). The proportion heads teach ranges from less than 0.1 to 0.9. One way ANOVA was used to compare the means for the three headteacher groups. This indicates that there is a statistically significant difference in means (sig. = .014). Group A heads have less teaching commitment per week than either heads in Group B or Group C with Group C heads teaching on average around half the week (A = 0.36, B = 0.46 and C = 0.52 per week). This may be related to the size of the school as earlier reported, as many Group A heads are heads of Group 1 size schools and smaller schools tend

to have teaching headships. Half of these heads have dedicated headship time (49.1%, N=57).

Of those heads who do not have a class teaching responsibility (63.5%, N=156), over half teach regularly (54.5%, N=99). The vast majority of these heads each for 0.3 or less per week (77.2%, N=99). Comparison of means indicates that there is not a statistically significant difference between the proportion heads in each three groups teach (ANOVA, sig. = .490). However, descriptive statistics indicate that Group B heads teach for the largest proportion of all the three headteacher groups.

#### (ii) Hours worked

Data regarding the average number of hours worked was analysed. Although not statistically significant it is worth noting that headteachers in all groups work similar hours on average per week. Comparison of means using one way ANOVA indicates that the mean working hours was between 55.65 and 55.82 hours per week (sig. = .995). However, the range of hours worked is wide, from 35 hours (one headteacher, 0.7%) to 75 hours (one headteacher, 0.7%). The most common number of hours reported was 50 hours (37 headteachers, 24.5%, N=151).

#### (iii) Time in meetings about pupils

Comparison of means by one way ANOVA indicates that the average amount of time per week that heads spend in meetings about individual pupils was not appreciably different or statistically significant (sig. = .422). Heads in Group A spend slightly more time in meetings (4.2 hours per week) than heads in Group B or C do (3.9 hours and 3.3 hours respectively).

#### (iv) Deputy Headteachers

59.4% (N=155) of heads lead a school which has a deputy headteacher in post. The proportion of schools of Group A, B and C heads do not differ greatly ranging from 54.1% to 64.1% (N=155). The proportion of schools led by Group B heads is slightly higher, but not statistically significant, at 64.1%.

#### **4.7.2. Survey of Chairs of Governors**

I turn now to the characteristics of the headteachers and their schools as reported by Chairs of Governors. Surveys were returned by 27% of Chairs of Governing Bodies (N=142). The survey asked CGBs to detail characteristics of their schools and certain known facts about the head teacher leaving, in so far as they were able (e.g. gender, age, career details) and to offer some suggestions as to why headteachers leave. I will now detail the findings of the CGB survey as regards the question 'Who is leaving?' The same broad categories will be used as have been used above to detail the sample characteristics and findings from the headteacher survey.

##### ***a) Demographic data***

Data about the headteachers leaving obtained from the CGB survey can be summarised as follows:

##### **Gender:**

- Similar percentages of male and female heads are leaving as found in the headteacher survey. More women returned the survey than men (Female: 59.2%; Male: 40.8%, N=142).
- However, although the figures for the headteacher survey were not statistically significant, the proportion of female compared to males in the three headteacher groups was found to be statistically significant (Pearson chi-square, sig. =.000).

##### **Age:**

How accurately can Chairs of Governors be expected to know the age of their school's headteacher? Age can be a sensitive subject. It might be possible for CGBs to be certain when a headteacher airs their age as a badge of honour, upon retiring at 60 perhaps or if a CGB has been aware of a special milestone birthday (e.g. 40, 50). As CGBs may not be aware of the true age of the headteacher leaving, the following results are reported as 'less close and personal' and should be taken with a degree of caution:

- CGBs reported a higher percentage of headteachers leaving in the 55-59 age group (33.1%, N=142) than the headteacher survey found.
- Half of Group A headteachers leaving to take up a subsequent substantive headship at another school were in their forties (51%, N=51).
- Three fifths of Group B heads (62.5%, N=40) leaving were in their fifties, a similar figure to the headteacher survey.
- A third of Group B heads (32.5%, N=40) were aged under 50 with a spread from 30 to 49, a slightly lower figure than the headteacher survey figure.
- Two thirds of heads in Group C were retiring aged 55-59 (56.9%, N=51); just over one third are 60 and above (37.3%, N=51), broadly similar figures to those of the headteacher survey.

### ***b) Careers of headteachers leaving***

The CGB survey found that more headteachers had been at their schools as heads for 3 to 5 years (57.5%, N=142) than for any other length of time. Very few headteachers had led their schools for more than 20 years (4.9%, N=142). However, as results regarding the age of the headteacher leaving, these figures should be read with a degree of caution.

16.3% of CGBs reported that their leaving headteacher had been Acting HT at the school before appointment as their substantive head (N=135). A similar proportion of CGBs reported that their headteacher had been their school's deputy head before appointment (14.6%, N=137).

70% reported that they believed their school had been their headteacher's first headship post (N=140). 22.1% believed that the school had been their headteacher's second headship. Small numbers reported their headteacher was leaving a third or fourth headship (3.6% and 0.7% respectively). Although the proportions of heads in Groups A, B and C was not statistically significant, it is interesting to note that percentages of heads in Groups A and B were

much higher than in Group C: 82.4% in Group, 70% in Group B and 57.1% in Group C (N=140).

Length of headships and career length overall will be discussed in Chapter 5, the first of the empirical chapters discussing the reasons headteachers leave a post or headship.

### ***c) School context and characteristics***

As for schools from which headteachers returned questionnaires, with schools findings from the CGB questionnaire were supplemented by school and location data available from the publicly available sources detailed in Chapter 3.

Although none of the following aspects was found to statistically significant when examining the data in respect of the three headteacher groups, it is worth noting the following for the sample overall.

Responses from CGBs show that a similar percentage of head teaches were leaving Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled schools (slightly smaller percentage at 45.8% of VA schools and slightly higher percentage of VC schools at 54.2%, N=142, Pearson chi-square, sig. = .165).

Similar figures were found regarding the phase of school heads were leaving as were found by the headteacher survey. The majority of headteachers were from primary schools (87.3%, N=142) with small but similar percentages being from infant, junior, first or middle deemed primary schools, 3.5%, 4.2%, 4.2% and 0.7% respectively (Pearson chi-square, sig. = .403).

The number on roll (NOR) of the majority of schools was less than 200 (105 schools, 70.4%) and the average NOR 162. The NOR varied hugely from one school with just 18 pupils to one school with 499 on roll. Comparison of means using one way ANOVA indicates that there is a statistically significant difference in means across the three groups (ANOVA, sig. = .013). However,

comparison of the means of the groups indicate that Group A heads are leaving smaller schools (mostly Group 1 size) than Groups B and C and that Group C are leaving the larger size schools, as perhaps would be expected from younger heads perhaps leaving their first headship compared to heads with a longer headship career and retiring.

#### ***d) Geographical characteristics of schools***

Analysis of characteristics of CGB schools by diocese, Local Authority and Government Region was supported by geographical data were collected from diocesan websites, NATSOC, SIAS Inspection Reports, LA websites and Government Region lists.

Of the 43 Anglican Dioceses in England, questionnaires were received from CGBs in from all bar 4 Dioceses (Durham, Sheffield, Truro and Sodor and Man). The greatest number of questionnaires was received from CGBs in the Diocese of Salisbury (9 CGBs, 6.3%, N=142).

Of the 152 LEAs, CGB questionnaires were received from schools in 51 Local Authorities, 33.6% of LEAs. Unlike the headteacher survey where similar percentages of headteachers in five of the seven Government Regions from which questionnaires were returned (between 12.8% and 17.3%, N=156), the CGB survey responses were highest from schools in the South East and South West (22.5% and 19.7%, respectively, N=142) and lowest from schools in the North East (1.4%, N=156) and the Yorkshire and Humber Region (5.6%, N=156).

As with the headteacher survey, very few CGBs from the London Government Region returned questionnaires (1.4%, N=142). Only two CGBs returned surveys from schools in the North East Government Region (1.4%, N=142).

#### ***f) Working lives***

The questionnaire gathered data about a number of aspects of headteachers' working lives as known to Chairs of Governors.

**(i) Teaching commitment and dedicated headship time**

Chairs of Governors report that just over a third of headteachers leaving have a class teaching responsibility each week (38%, N=142). The proportion that heads teach ranges from 0.1 to 0.9. The majority of these 54 CGBs reported headteacher teaching commitments of between half a day a week (9.3% to almost the whole week (0.6%). However the proportion of the week heads spend teaching was most frequently reported as being 0.5 (22.2%). Slightly lower percentages of CGBs reported 1 day a week (18.5%), 2 days a week (16.7%) (N=54). As the CGB survey found that only 54 heads had a class teaching responsibility, it is not possible to conduct a one way ANOVA to compare means and establish statistical significance.

The majority of heads with a teaching commitment have dedicated headship time (87%, N=54).

A similar percentage was found in the CGB survey as in the headteacher survey in respect of the proportion of headteachers who have a class teaching responsibility and for those who do not, the proportion who teach regularly but do not have a class responsibility. Of those heads who do not have a class teaching responsibility (62%, N=142), CGBs reported that about half teach regularly (52.3%, N=88). The proportion of headteachers who teach regularly is not statistically different across the headteacher groups A, C and C.

The vast majority of these heads teach for half a day per week (58.7%, N=46) or less. As this question was a filter question and not relevant to all CGBs and their schools, 46 responses were analysed; consequently it is not possible to conduct a one way ANOVA to compare means and establish statistical significance.

**(ii) Deputy Headteachers**

The CGB survey found that a similar percentage of schools have a deputy head in post (61.3%, N=142 compared to 59.4%, N=156 found in the headteacher survey. The proportion of schools of Group A, B and C heads do

not differ greatly ranging from 51% to 68.6% (N=142) and is not statistically significant (Pearson chi-square, sig. = .353).

#### **4.7.3. Combined dataset: schools**

The returned surveys from headteachers and Chairs of Governors came from 46.20% of those schools which had advertised for a substantive headteacher during the academic year 2008-2009. Table 5 (earlier) reported the data triangulation in terms of the numbers and percentages of these 243 Anglican primary schools from which two or more sources of data contributed to the study's findings.

In the main, the combined dataset did not 'throw up' any results that were different to the results of the headteacher and CGB surveys except in terms of some of the proportions being slightly higher or lower than those of an individual survey or any headteacher or school characteristics where there was a statistically significant difference between the headteacher groups. However, the combined dataset produced a statistically significant result for gender: this is reported below.

##### ***a) Demographic data***

Results from the combined survey dataset survey can be summarised as follows:

##### **Gender:**

- More women returned the survey than men (Female: 62.1%; Male: 37.9%, N=243).
- Although the Pearson chi-square was not statistically significant for the headteacher sample, it was for the CGB sample. For the combined schools dataset, Pearson chi-square shows that the proportion of males to females in the Groups A, B and C is significantly different (Pearson chi-square, .018). Although the proportion of males and females is similar in Group A (50.7% and 49.3% respectively, N=75), it is vastly different in Groups B and C. In Group B, 29% of males (N=69)

are leaving a headship compared to a much larger percentage of women, 71% (N=69). In Group C 34.3% are men and 65.7% are women (N=99).

Age:

- More CGBs reported that their headteacher was in the 55-59 age group (38.4%, N=242).
- Nearly three fifths of Group A headteachers leaving to take up a subsequent substantive headship at another school were in their forties (56%, N=75).
- Three fifths of Group B heads (64.7%, N=68) leaving were in their fifties.
- About a third of Group B heads (30.9%, N=68) were aged under 50 with a spread from 30 to 49.
- Within the age bands under 50 the proportion of heads in Group B was highest amongst the band 45-49 years (13.2%, N=68).
- Just under two thirds of heads in Group C were retiring aged 55-59 (61.6%, N=99); just over one third were 60 and above (34.4%, N=99).

**b) Careers of headteachers**

The combined dataset shows results for 238 schools, some CGBs not able to report how many headships their headteacher had completed. The majority of headteachers leaving a first headship was 71.8% (N=238) and a fifth were leaving their second headship (21.4%, N=238). Only 5% were leaving their third headship and a minority of heads were leaving a fourth headship (1.7%) (N=238). Pearson chi-square was not significant but it is interesting nevertheless to note that for the schools where data was available from either survey that the majority of Group A heads were leaving a first headship (85.1%, N=74) compared to 70.1% of Group B heads (N=67) and 62.9% of Group C heads (N=97).

**c) School context and characteristics**

A similar percentage of head teacher respondents were from Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled schools (48.6% and 51.4% respectively, N=156).

As could be expected from the similarity of results for the headteacher and CGB survey, the majority of headteachers were from primary schools (88.5%, N=243) with small but similar percentages being from infant, junior or first schools, 4.1%, 3.3% and 4.1% respectively. This is higher than the phase profile reported in the Howson study; 77% of all primary school respondents were primary schools (N=767) (Howson, 2009, p. 5).

The number on roll (NOR) of the majority of schools was less than 200, the average being NOR 169. As with the results of the headteacher survey, the most common NOR was 210 (7 schools, 2.9%) but varied hugely from 670 (one school) to one schools with 670 on roll.

The largest number of headteachers are leaving Group 1 size schools (51%, N=243) with 37.39% leaving Group 2 size schools. A small proportion of heads are leaving Group 3 schools (9.9%, N=243). Very few heads are leaving Group 4 or 5 schools, only one headteacher leaving from a school of such a size (0.8% and 0.4% respectively, N=243).

The trend reported in annual Howson surveys for the numbers of all primary schools advertising for a head is that more heads are leaving Group 2 schools (48%-52% over the years 2000 to 2009, (Howson, 2009, p. 5). For the comparable year, 2008-2009, Howson reports returns of 31% of Group 1 schools and 48% of Group 2 schools (N=767). These figures are different to those of all Anglican schools represented in this study; this study had a greater proportion of 'small school' heads return questionnaires with less from Group 2. The 'size' is both different and 'reversed'. For Group 3 size schools this study reports fewer heads of this school size leaving. Figures are similar between the two studies for numbers of Group 4 and 5 size schools leaving.

#### ***d) Geographical characteristics of schools***

Of the 43 Anglican Dioceses in England, questionnaires were returned by either or both headteacher and Chair of Governors from all Dioceses except for Sodor and Man. The diocese represented by the greatest number of schools in the sample was the Diocese of Oxford with 5.3% responses

(N=243), a similar percentage as found by the headteacher survey although containing five more responses (13 compared to 5). The next largest percentage of returns was received from schools within the dioceses of Bath and Wells and Chichester (4.5% and 4.1% respectively, N=243).

Combining the datasets indicates that responses were received from schools in 72 Local Authorities, 47.37% of LAs, with Hampshire and Lancashire being represented by two schools each (4.1%, N=243). All nine Government Regions are represented by returns. The higher proportion of returns from either headteacher or Chair of Governors were received from schools in the South East and South West (20.2% and 17.7% respectively, N=243).

## **4.8. Chapter summary**

This chapter has addressed the first three research questions:

- Who is leaving?
- What are the characteristics of those leaving and of their schools?
- Where are headteachers 'going to'?

This chapter has argued that there is a group of headteachers not recognised to date in the survey and empirical literature, namely headteachers not retiring and not leaving for the influences detailed in the review of the literature in Chapter 2 (2.5.). This chapter has compared the results of this study conducted during the academic year 2008-2009 of headteachers leaving Church of England primary schools in England with the survey data for all primary schools in England for the same academic year (Howson, 2009). This comparison has shown that compared to all primary schools, there appears to be greater numbers of headteachers leaving Anglican schools compared to the numbers from all schools.

The chapter therefore has provided evidence of the extent of headteacher departure from Anglican schools and provided answers to the third research question, 'where do headteachers go to?'

I turn now to present and discuss the data that answer the fourth and fifth research questions:

- Why do headteachers leave?
- What might have persuaded them to stay?

# **INTERLUDE**

## **WHY DO HEADTEACHERS LEAVE?**

I turn now in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 to present and discuss the data that address the fourth research question directly, 'why do headteachers leave?' and to suggest some answers to the fifth research question, 'what might have persuaded them to stay?'

Firstly, in Chapter 5, I will focus in on the three headteacher groups (A, B and C), examining where headteachers are 'going', 'going to' or going 'to do' after leaving their post. This directly addresses the third research question, 'where are headteachers going to?' but also provides one part of the answer to the fourth research question, 'why do headteachers leave?' This chapter will compare the results for this study of Anglican primary headteachers with all primary headteachers in Howson's annual survey of the same academic year (2008-2009) where comparable data is available (Howson, 2009). The photographer's lens is now at mid-distance.

Headteachers leave a headship post as part of their professional development on a career pathway and as part of their own personal development. In this chapter I will consider how headteacher departure can be understood in terms of an overall career through reference to extant theories of career and development phases. The three headteacher groups will be dealt with in turn.

Secondly, Chapters 6 and 7 will present, examine and suggest a means of understanding headteacher departure through the utilisation of the concept of 'Communities of Practice' (Wenger, 1998) as introduced and outlined in Chapter 2 (2.6.).

At the beginning of Chapter 6 I present a diagram of four communities of practice through which the lived experiences and decisions of individual

headteachers in all three groups (A, B and C) might be understood (Figure 11, p.225):

- Professional
- Nurture
- Family
- Spiritual

In Chapter 6 I focus on three communities of practice: (i) Professional; (ii) Nurture and (iii) Family, presenting and examining the themes that emerged from the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data.

In Chapter 7, I focus on a fourth community of practice, a 'Spiritual Community of Practice'. Chapter 7 will use predominantly qualitative data from survey and interview responses focusing on the lived experiences of headteachers in Groups A and B. In this third chapter examining, interpreting and conceptualising the findings of the study to address the fourth research question, 'why do headteachers leave?' the photographer's lens can be said to be a close-up lens. This chapter of the thesis identifies differences between expectation and reality in the experiences of individual headteachers.

The concept of communities of practice will therefore be used as a 'leitmotif' in Chapters 6 and 7, a recurring theme which will not go away. This will be explored through a series of motifs that at times will be crystal clear and at times, part clear and part obscured 'bubbling through' the data presented. So it was with the concept throughout much of the analytical process and the months of reflective thinking that led to the interpretation of the data. In much the same way as the great musical masters of motif such as Mozart (e.g. melodic motifs in his Horn Concerto in E flat) and Beethoven (four note rhythmic motif in his Symphony No. 5) used and developed their melodic and rhythmic themes with infinite variation in their music, so the concepts of communities of practice kept recurring for me.

In the great musical architecture of concertos, symphonies, canons and fugues, motif as a device used by Mozart, Beethoven and even the great Johann Sebastian Bach (e.g. in his monumental fugues) appear in many forms - inverted, reversed, slightly altered to fit a harmonic shift or modulation perhaps foreshadowing a change of mood to a darker key. Thus in the interpretation of the study's findings throughout Chapters 6 and 7 will be found the core characteristics and dimensions of communities of practice: the domain and mutual engagement, community and joint enterprise, practice and a shared repertoire as portrayed in Figure 11 articulated in the four communities of practice discussed.

Through utilising these aspects in an integration of the data addressing the fourth research question, 'why do headteachers leave', I will argue that headteachers might be persuaded to stay (the fifth research question) if aspects of dis-identification with the members of the communities of practice discussed and the practice of those communities can be a source of learning rather than dissonance that leads to departure. As identities are formed and

... produced ... through the practices we engage in [and] we also define ourselves through practices we do not engage in [...] our identities are constituted not only by what we are but also by what we are not (Wenger, 1998, p.164).

Chapters 6 and 7 will examine the tensions and dilemmas of the relationality of membership of different communities of practice and the practices of those communities. In this way, individual perceptions of feeling 'at home' within a community of practice will be examined through levels of participation and/or non-participation, modes of belonging (engagement, imagination and alignment) and how identity formation and production is as result of an on-going professions of identification and negotiability.

A final Chapter (Chapter 8) draws the thesis together, summarising the original contribution that the study makes and offering some thoughts for members of the communities in respect of what might be done to limit the

haemorrhage of headteachers from Anglican schools and some thoughts about the identity work of multimembership of communities. The thesis concludes with a reflective account of my own learning about research.

# CHAPTER 5

## CAREER STAGES: BIRDS ON THE WING?

### 5.1. Introduction

My survey and literatures suggest that headteachers leave for reasons of career and professional development. This chapter presents the data related to career stages and development phases. I turn now to present the data in respect of Groups A, B and C. I begin by discussing the characteristics of the groupings developed from the survey data.

### 5.2. Birds of passage: Group A

28.8% (N=156) of headteachers in this study are moving to take up substantive headship of another school. Group A are headteachers going to another headship. Some are going to schools of different religious designations (Table 8).

**Table 8: Religious designation of next school**

	Count	% of respondents
Community Maintained	21	46.7
Voluntary Aided (VA)	14	31.1
Voluntary Controlled (VC)	7	15.6
Other	3	6.7

*N=45*

Results show that nearly half of these headteachers are going to another Anglican school (46.7%, N=45), while the same proportion are taking up headship of a community maintained, non-church school (46.7%, N=45). Three headteachers (6.7%, N=45) are taking up headships of other schools, an independent school, a Catholic school and a foundation school.

### 5.2.1. Teaching and headship career lengths

A third of this group of heads (33.3%, N=45) have been teaching for between 15 and 19 years (.000, ANOVA) and 80% are leaving their first headship (.043, ANOVA). 13.3% are leaving a second headship and 6.7% are leaving their third headship (N=45). No headteacher moving to a substantive headship has had more than three headships. All headteachers leaving a first headship have been heads for less than ten years with the average length of first headship being 5.48 years and the length of second headship being slightly less at 4.44 years. There is a significant difference in headship length compared to heads in Groups B and C (.000, ANOVA). This is to be expected given the length of teaching careers, age profile of the headteachers and that the defining characteristic of the three groups includes Group C, headteachers who are retiring.

Table 9 below indicates differences in mean following comparison of means using a one way ANOVA to determine statistical differences. There are statistically significant differences in length of headship between the three groups but interestingly, the average length of Group A heads is broadly similar, irrespective of whether they are leaving a first, second, third or fourth headship: between 4.44 years and 5.48 years. This is in line with stages of headship and leaving a post after 4-8 years as 'benchmarked' by Day and Bakioglu (1996). Their model suggests that these heads are leaving after the consolidation and extension parts of the Development Phase. This finding is also in line with the fifth stage (Consolidation) of professional development (Weindling, 1999) and 'reaching the summit' between four and ten years (Reeves et al., 1997).

**Table 9: Length of headships by HT group**

	A	B	C	Sig.
	Mean	Mean	Mean	
Q10a Length of first headship	5.48	8.13	10.86	.000*
Q10b Length of second headship	4.44	8.07	10.78	.017*
Q10c Length of third headship	5.00	8.83	7.78	.517
Q10d Length of fourth headship	n/a	5.00	7.00	.580

Headteachers moving to a subsequent headship have progressed through the initiation and development phases of headship (Day and Bakioglu, 1996) and a combination of success, effectiveness and self confidence in their abilities prompts decision about career choice: staying or moving to another school. It may be that heads have entered a period of relative stability in which they had secured the majority of change they wanted (Day and Bakioglu, 1996; Earley and Weindling, 2004; Hart and Weindling, 1996; Parkay and Hall, 1992) and have decided it was 'time for a change' to another headship where they could begin the process of diagnosis and change management often associated with the early days of a new headship: creating a shared vision embedded in the beliefs and values of the headteacher (Day et al., 2011; Starratt, 1995) and/or the schools' institutional foundations as in the case of church schools. 'Time for change' is often characterised by the stages of Consolidation and Extension (Day and Bakioglu, 1996) which have similarities with those of Refinement, Consolidation and Plateau in Earley and Weindling's eight stage developmental model (2004). It may also be that they felt they had 'reached the summit', a phase Reeves et al. define as including a sense of satisfaction and confidence in themselves and their staff as teachers they have worked with 'come into their own' (1997, p. 47).

### **5.2.2. Spreading their wings: influencing others as natural professional progression**

Although no statistically significant differences in mean were found upon comparison using one way ANOVA, the Ofsted grades of these headteachers were almost universally 'good' or 'outstanding' as reported in Chapter 4. The mean of the 'Quality of Teaching and Learning' grades where there was a nearly statistically significant difference in means (.054) determined by one way ANOVA is a potential and somewhat tenuous indication that some headteachers may be moving schools or jobs as a result of reaching the summit and feeling in need a change (Reeves et al., 1997, p.47).

Leaving and moving schools then might be part of the 'natural' progression through the phases of professional development as schools leaders use the

skills acquired in supporting practice in other settings or their colleagues own professional development. Do the findings of this study support this possibility?

A greater proportion of headteachers in Group A are involved in supporting others in their role than heads in Groups B or C (Pearson chi-square, sig. =.036) suggesting that they are heads who are effective in their own leadership practice; that their own practice is of a sufficiently high standard for their skills and expertise to be called upon and shared with colleagues. Almost half (44.4%) of Group A heads are involved in supporting other schools compared to 35.9% in Group B and 22.2% of Group C heads. Thematic analysis of questionnaire open responses from fifty heads across the three groups indicated that Group A heads are more likely to be involved in supporting other schools with aspects of leadership through mentoring, often of newly appointed heads (45%, N=20) than Group B (28.6%) and slightly more than Group C heads (43.9%), but are less likely to be involved in supporting good practice. So for instance, in aspects of curriculum and pedagogy, only 25% of Group A heads share good practice compared to 35.7% of Group B heads and 56.3% of Group C heads. For all those heads engaged in supporting others with their practice it is perhaps indicative of the 'at the summit' phase in the model of Reeves et al. as this phase is characterised by 'high external visibility, [and] increasing involvement with the external world' (1997, p.47).

### **5.2.3. Career advancement, school size and higher salary**

One way ANOVA was used to compare means for relevant Likert statements which asked headteachers to indicate the significance of a factor or influence on a five point Likert scale. The closer the mean is to 5 the more likely the headteachers in that group were influenced by this aspect. As detailed in Table 10, it is clear that, with the 'indicators' of moving to a larger school and higher salary, career advancement is statistically significant at <.05 and a key driver in headteacher departure for Group A headteachers.

**Table 10: Comparison of means by headteacher groups**

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Mean</b>	
Career advancement	4.22	2.00	1.08	.000*
Moving to a larger school	4.18	1.17	1.00	.000*
Higher salary	3.02	1.50	1.00	.000*

The table indicates that the difference in means between the groups is statistically significant at  $<.05$  with the mean of Group A being 4.22.

When the significance ratings were 'collapsed', 91.1% of Group A heads rated career advancement as significant, very significant or extremely significant (.000, ANOVA) in their decision to resign their position compared to Group B or C heads.

Moving to a larger school and the resulting higher salary are often synonymous with career advancement and this would appear to be the case for Group A heads. Comparison of the means between groups indicates that moving to a larger school and a higher salary were drivers in heads' decision to resign their headships and move to a subsequent substantive headship. It is possible that other aspects and opportunities of the leadership of larger schools are behind the higher mean of 4.18 compared to 3.02 for higher salary.

Statistically significant differences between heads of the different groups were determined by comparing the means of the number on roll (NOR) of the schools that heads are leaving using one way ANOVA. The table below shows that heads in Group A are leaving smaller schools than heads in Group B or C but this is not statistically significant between the groups.

**Table 11: NOR of school being left: comparison of means**

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Mean</b>	
School being left	144.5	165.9	194.6	.082

The NOR of schools that heads are moving to is greater in 95.6% of cases though in two cases the NOR is only marginally greater. One head is moving to a smaller school but this is atypical. Numbers on roll range from 51 to 725. However, the previous table indicates that moving to a larger school was a significant factor in headteacher decisions (.000); the mean is close to 5 at 4.18.

The questionnaire also asked heads to give details about the issue of how salary may have influenced their decision. Group A heads were more likely to be influenced by salary consideration to leave their headship with (56.8%) compared to Group B heads (26.3%) or Group C heads (14.1%) (Pearson chi-square, sig = .004, N=153).

Thematic analysis of the open responses given by Group A heads indicate that issues related to financial constraints were top of the list. Twenty-five Group A heads gave details along with 10 heads from both Groups B and C. Group A heads were influenced by the constraints of their school's budgets (40%) that impacted on the Governors' ability to adjust the Individual Salary Range (ISR) (36%) which capped their salary at the highest point of the ISR. Heads drew a direct link between the school's budget and the ISR; heads did not appear to equate the size of the school with the ISR but referred to having 'hit the ISR ceiling' and Governors' reluctance to increase their salary due to budget constraints. This is despite a school's ISR being a direct result of the school's size and NOR, which then triggers funding under various local formulae. The following comments are indicative of Group A headteachers' feelings and assessment of their situation:

Top of ISR and school cannot afford to give me another rise (HT 120).

I am now on L11. L12 is the top of the pay scale in my current position. I will be starting on L18 in my new post. I need to think about final salary for the future (HT 140).

Due to low budgets I have refrained from asking for [an] annual pay rise. The scale I am on peaks at Point 12; I am on Point 10 with potentially 20 years' career ahead (HT 136).

In short, it is clear that school size is a factor which affects individual financial considerations for in these comments we not only see issues of school size and number of roll being personalised in the minds of headteachers but also heads referring to the need to be strategic in thinking about their future career in headship and possibly pension or retirement considerations.

However, comparisons were also made by heads between the portfolio and multiplicity of roles and responsibilities of headship in different size schools:

I would get a significantly greater salary in a large school and yet my workload will be more manageable as I'll [have] more staff to deploy my roles to. I have to do the same (if not more!) work as a head of a small school for less money.

The challenge for small school heads will be considered in Chapter 6 but it is worth noting at this point that although the majority of survey headteachers in Group A taught less than those in Groups B or C, on average headteachers taught for 0.36 per week (see Chapter 4).

It is clear that salary and school size with perceived changes to workload are drivers for career advancement and that career advancement is a key driver in individual decisions about departure for many headteachers as they navigate both their personal and professional lives.

#### **5.2.4. Birds of passage**

Headteachers leaving for a subsequent headship (Group A headteachers) can therefore be considered to be 'birds of passage'. Church schools are often small schools with little capacity for pupil numbers to increase and as a result of the ceilings on pay that result from being headteacher of a 'small

school' (e.g. Group 1 school in particular), heads move after a few years to a school of a higher group size (i.e. more pupils on roll) with a larger salary. This movement might also be expected as part of a career trajectory that reflects the development stages identified in the extant literature.

### **5.2.5. Leaving but not retiring: Group B heads**

25% (N=156) of headteachers returning questionnaires are not leaving a post to take up a subsequent substantive headship or retiring. Where are these 39 heads going to or going to do next? Does it mean leaving substantive headship or leaving headship *and* leaving the education profession? What can be learnt about the nature of departure from the destinations of the heads in this group or the length of their headships?

Examination of Group B data (N=39) reveals that 'onward destinations' can be categorised into four sub-groups: (i) working in education but not as substantive headteacher; (ii) self-employment; (iii) leaving education completely or have no plans; and (iv) other.

#### **5.3.1. Eagles wings: leaving headship but influencing others**

38.46% (N=39) are going to work for a LA, a Diocese, the DCSF or in Higher Education (HE); they will continue to work in education but not as substantive headteacher. Eight heads are going to work for the LA or DCSF and two heads are going to work as interim headteachers employed by the LA as a 'roving' headteacher assigned to different schools for fixed periods of time. Of the two heads going to work for a diocese in an advisory or inspection role, one is going to a full-time post and one a part-time post. Of the three heads going to work in Higher Education one has obtained a full-time post, two are going to be part-time tutors/student mentors.

Metaphorically speaking, perhaps these heads are 'eagles' by virtue of this bird's colossal wing-span and by virtue of the extraordinary sight and reach this king of the air has. An eagle's wingspan can measure as much as 9 feet

(Stellar's Sea Eagle). An eagle's eyesight even at great height and distance is acute. Headteachers working for Local Authorities need understanding of both the detail of a school (data) and the ability to see trends for individual schools and clusters of schools. LA advisers (formerly School Improvement Partners (SIPs), now sometimes called Professional Adviser for Schools (PAfS)) hold schools to account as a result of schools' data. Increasingly, Diocesan advisory teams are grappling with increased expectations on them to hold church schools to account for standards in a more rigorous way than hitherto; support alone and the issue of Christian distinctiveness is no longer the chief role of Diocesan Boards of Education and their staff teams. The nature of work in Higher Education is such that experienced teachers and former headteachers pass on knowledge and hopefully inspire a future generation of educators, potential teachers and headteachers.

The demographic details of these heads and their schools are reported in Table 12 overleaf. The group comprises of equal numbers of men and women whose age ranges between 30 and 59. All but one are leaving a first headship. What is striking, albeit in such a small subset of heads, is that the lengths of headship are either quite short (2 to 7 years) or at least twice that length (e.g. 15 – 18 years) for those going to work for a LA or the DCSF. Similarly, the headship lengths for the two headteachers taking up posts as an interim head for a LA are 4 years and 20 years respectively. This suggests that headteachers, if they 'make it past' the seven year point, will stay in headship for relatively long period of time, at least 15 years.

Consequently, the departure from substantive headship for these heads can be understood in terms of the fifth stage of the leadership development framework (National College for School Leadership, 2004) a stage called 'Consultant Leadership' or Level 5. Heads are regarded as being sufficiently able to share expertise and knowledge with others, perhaps in a mentoring or training capacity. Level 5 posts or roles within education offer the opportunity to 'put something back into the profession' by taking on a wider remit than a single school or supporting others whilst continuing with their own headship (NCSL, 2004). As mentioned earlier when examining findings for Group A,

Group B heads do support others in their practice; most often this is through sharing aspects of good practice related to curriculum and pedagogy rather than in aspects of leadership.

Of the three headteachers leaving to work in Higher Education, only one is taking up a full-time post, the other two are planning to work part-time or do supply in the HE sector. Of the two headteachers leaving to take up advisory and or inspection roles with dioceses, one will be working part-time, the other full-time. Both these heads have had long teaching careers.

### **5.3.2. Migrating: leaving the teaching profession with no plans**

However, nearly half (46.15%, N=39) of Group B heads have no plans and no job to go to. The demographic characteristics of these heads and their schools are reported in Table 13 overleaf. This is 11.5% (N=156) of the total number of headteachers who returned questionnaires. They can be considered leavers from both headship and the education profession. How might their departure be understood in terms of career progression, phases or stages?

Of these 18 headteachers, five reported that they are leaving teaching and leaving the education profession altogether (12.8%, N=39), the other 13 are leaving with no employment plans (33.3%, N=39). 7.7% (N=39) have plans to become self-employed as education consultants. 7.7% (N=39) responded to the category 'Other'. One head is moving to work overseas in the charity sector but not in headship. Two heads are emigrating.

The five who are leaving the education profession elected to select this option of those in the list offered. Two are aged 35-39, two 40-44 and one 45-49 years. With the exception of one head with headship experience of two years, the other four had been headteachers for five, seven or nine years respectively. Three of the heads were leaving a first headship, one a second headship and one a third headship. It is possible that headteachers of their first school found that 'was not what they thought it would be like' and

**Table 12: Demographic details of Group B heads (1)**

	Headteacher			Career (years/terms)				School		Next steps
	Headteacher (ID)	M/F	Age	Time in Teaching	Time in headship	Length of this headship	Headship number	School	NOR	Details
<b>Taking up a post in education</b>	1	M	30-34	13/1	4/2	2/1	2 <sup>nd</sup>	VC junior	292	LA post (full-time)
	15	M	50-54	20/0	4/0	4/1	1 <sup>st</sup>	VA primary	53	LA post (full-time)
	20	F	45-49	25/1	15/0	15/2	1 <sup>st</sup>	VC primary	115	LA post (full-time)
	55	F	50-54	31/0	18/0	18/0	1 <sup>st</sup>	VA primary	350	Part-time post - LA
	70	M	30-34	12/0	3/0	3/0	1 <sup>st</sup>	VC primary	90	LA post (full-time)
	85	F	35-39	12/2	6/0	6/0	1 <sup>st</sup>	VC primary	82	LA post (full-time)
	128	F	45-49	17/1	7/0	7/1	1 <sup>st</sup>	VC primary	265	LA post (full-time)
	155	M	55-59	37/0	18/0	18/0	1 <sup>st</sup>	VC primary	172	DCSF
	19	F	61+	38/0	25/0	20/0	2 <sup>nd</sup>	VC first	172	Interim headship role for LA
	117	F	40-44	17/1	4/0	4/0	1 <sup>st</sup>	VC primary	130	Interim headship role for LA
	84	F	55-59	33/1	7/0	7/1	1 <sup>st</sup>	VA primary	48	Link tutor for HE students
	122	M	50-54	15/1	8/1	8/1	2 <sup>nd</sup>	VA primary	47	HE Supply teacher and student mentor
	147	F	45-49	12/0	2/0	2/0	1 <sup>st</sup>	VA primary	170	Full-time HE lecturer
	23	M	55-59	35/1	23/0	18/0	2 <sup>nd</sup>	VA primary	281	Part-time advisory and inspection for Diocese
144	F	55-59	30/1	5/0	5/0	2 <sup>nd</sup>	VA primary	201	Full-time advisory role for diocese	
<b>Self-employment</b>	46	F	50-54	19/0	9/0	5/1	3 <sup>rd</sup>	VC primary	439	Become education consultant
	48	F	55-59	34/0	19/0	10/0	3 <sup>rd</sup>	VC primary	173	
	121	M	50-54	33/1	17/0	17/11	1 <sup>st</sup>	VA primary	210	

**Table 13: Demographic details of Group B headteachers (2)**

	Headteacher			Career (years/terms)				School		Next steps
	Headteacher (ID)	M/F	Age	Time in Teaching	Time in headship	Length of this headship	Headship number	School	NOR	Details
No plans/ leave teaching profession	26	F	55-59	36/0	18/0	18/0	1	VC primary	67	No plans
	37	F	55-59	28/1	18/1	4/0	4 <sup>th</sup>	VC primary	342	No plans
	45	M	40-44	12/1	7/1	7/1	2 <sup>nd</sup>	VA primary	75	Leave teaching profession
	54	F	55-59	25/1	13/0	13/0	1 <sup>st</sup>	VA primary	256	No plans
	72	F	55-59	37/0	15/2	15/2	1 <sup>st</sup>	VC primary	192	Not work in paid job but not retiring
	73	M	35-39	14/0	5/0	2/0	3 <sup>rd</sup>	VA primary	100	No plans except travelling
	87	F	50-54	25/1	5/1	5/1	1 <sup>st</sup>	VC primary	86	Leave teaching profession
	96	M	55-59	35/0	20/1	20/0	1 <sup>st</sup>	VA primary	135	No plans
	98	F	55-59	32/2	15/2	15/2	1 <sup>st</sup>	VA primary	96	Not work in paid job but not retiring
	132	M	50-54	15/2	6/2	4/1	2 <sup>nd</sup>	VC primary	210	Not work in paid job but not retiring
	137	M	50-54	28/2	21/1	8/1	3 <sup>rd</sup>	VA primary	304	Leave education
	142	F	55-59	32/0	7/2	7/11	2 <sup>nd</sup>	VC primary	300	No plans
	146	F	55-59	37/0	30/0	17/0	3 <sup>rd</sup>	VC primary	135	No plans
	154	F	35-39	13/2	7/2	7/2	1 <sup>st</sup>	VC primary	104	No plans
	148	M	50-54	25/0	12/0	2/0	2 <sup>nd</sup>	VA primary	72	Leave teaching profession
149	F	45-49	16/0	9/1	9/1	1 <sup>st</sup>	VA primary	102	Leave teaching profession	
150	F	50-54	28/0	4/2	4/2	1 <sup>st</sup>	VC primary	27	No plans	
153	F	40-44	19/0	10/0	10/0	1 <sup>st</sup>	VC primary	107	No plans	
Other	63	F	45-49	14/1	2/1	2/1	1 <sup>st</sup>	VA primary	249	Emigrating
	65	F	55-59	33/0	18/0	17/0	2 <sup>nd</sup>	VA primary	70	Emigrating
	134	F	40-44	22/2	5/1	5/1	1 <sup>st</sup>	VC primary	100	Work overseas

headship is not for them, but this could not surely apply to a headteacher on their second or third school headship.

The three headteachers leaving with plans to become self-employed as education consultants are all in their fifties. All three have been teaching for many years and have been a headteacher for a substantial length of time (9, 17 and 19 years respectively) or been heads of several schools (three headships each in the case of the two headteachers with the greatest years in headship). This suggests significant experience and confidence in themselves and their abilities as well as perhaps a 'reading' of the changing role between schools and the Local Authority in the new world of academies and greater autonomy of headteachers. Of the thirteen headteachers in Group B eight reported that they had no plans, no job and had 'no job but [are] not retiring', two heads in this group are aged 50-54 years, one is 40-44 years and one 35-39 years.

Obviously the headteachers aged 40-44 and 35-39 years would not have been retiring but it is interesting that the two headteachers in the 50-54 age range with 'no plans' and the three headteachers who have plans to become self-employed (two aged 50-54 and one aged 55-59 years) did not select any of the retirement options, e.g. 'retirement at 60' or 'retirement before 60'.

It is possible that they do not perceive themselves as retiring although others might consider that they were taking early retirement as they are between the years of 55-59. Considering oneself retiring may be a mental shift and may be related to whether a headteacher will be in receipt of their Teachers' Pension or not. What is clear is that these headteachers saw themselves clearly as 'leaving' headship not 'retiring' from headship.

While two headteachers who are emigrating with their families can perhaps be considered exceptional cases in terms of 'leaving' it is salutary to note that five of the headteachers leaving the profession altogether and who have no plans are aged between 35 and 49 years.

This analysis suggests that there are headteachers leaving who are leaving headship and/or the education profession whose experience is being lost to the profession at a relatively young age.

#### **5.3.4. Falling off a cliff**

The average length of headship for a Group B head is eight years, irrespective of whether they are leaving their first or second headship. Heads leaving a third headship tend to have been in post slightly longer, on average 8.83 years. The only Group B head leaving a fourth headship had been head for seven years.

Heads in Group B appear to have stayed in teaching and headship until they have served 15-19 years (28.2%, N=39). Two heads in this group (N=39) had been in teaching and headship for (20 and 21 years) but this was unusual. This raises questions about the length of teaching and headship careers as there is a clear 'drop off the cliff' between 12 and 19 years in terms of Group B heads. These data suggest that heads that leave substantive headship are likely to do so after 15-19 years in the teaching profession rather than at any other time. This has implications for follow on research as I will suggest in the conclusion.

It is possible that these heads may have experienced the negative aspects of the third Autonomy stage (Day and Bakioglu, 1996) in which enthusiasm has waned and/or diminished, energy has been sapped by experience and mundanity of repetitive tasks and frustration with new and externally driven initiatives has occurred (Day and Bakioglu, 1996). Perhaps they have gone beyond the third stage and become disenchanted (Day and Bakioglu, 1996). Although this stage is often characterised by thoughts of mortality, life expectancy and hopes of/for retirement, it can also be characterised by stress and declining sense of morale; perhaps this may be related to their perceptions of effectiveness or the 'worth-while-ness' of the job?

It is clear from the sub-groups within Group B detailed above that if there is a 'falling off a cliff' effect between 12 and 19 years it appears to prompt headteachers to either pursue additional challenge and a different relationship with education through a remit wider than one school or to leave headship altogether.

The influences and reasons for departure amongst this group will be explored in comparison with the other two headteacher groups throughout the remainder of the thesis particularly in the subsequent Chapters 6 and 7.

#### 5.3.4. Comparison of Group B headteachers with Howson's study

As this study into headteacher departure from Anglican school in England is an investigation of a 'subset' of all primary schools, it is possible to compare the results and findings of this study with the data collected by Howson in his annual survey of the state of the labour market for 2008-2009. As stated in Chapter 4, Howson's survey collected responses regarding advertisements from all maintained schools in England and Wales, the vast majority of which were primary schools.

**Table 14: Comparison of 'destination': Anglican schools with all primary schools (2008-2009)**

	Anglican schools		All schools Howson (2009, p. 195)
	Number	% (N=156)	% (N=718)
Move to deputy headship	NA*	N/A*	<1%
Move to another post in education	15	9.6%	7%
Move to a post outside education	3	1.9%	1%
Maternity/paternity leave	NA*	N/A*	<1%
Stepping down to classroom teaching	NA*	N/A*	<1%
Other	3	1.9%	6%
Leave profession/no plans	18	11.5%	N/A*

*NA\* : this category was not an option (this study) or not reported (Howson)*

Two factors limit the scope of this comparison, namely the geographical reach of this study (this study investigated schools in England, Howson schools in England and Wales) and slightly different time periods (Howson's published report reported data for the period September 2008 to May 2009; this study reports responses from headteachers of schools whose adverts appeared over a whole academic year and included the distribution of an additional 45 questionnaires). That notwithstanding, Table 14 above compares the percentages for this study compared to the figures reported by Howson for all primary schools (Howson, 2009).

The comparison shows that a slightly higher percentage of Anglican school headteachers are moving to another post inside education compared with figures for all primary schools (9.6%, N=156 compared to 7%, N=718) and to a post outside education (1.9%, N=156 compared to 1%, N=718). Howson reported that 6% of primary school headteacher adverts were the result of headteachers leaving for 'other' reasons. This study found a smaller percentage reporting leaving for 'other' reasons than those presented as options (1.9%, N=156) compared to 6% (N=718). However, Howson does not report figures for headteachers leaving the profession or leaving with no employment plans. It may be that headteachers leaving the profession or with no plans come under 'other'. If this line of reasoning is followed, it suggests that a greater percentage of Anglican primary headteachers are leaving for 'other reasons' than the percentage of all primary headteachers (13.4%, N=156 compared to 6%, N=718).

However tenuous the comparison and conclusions, this comparison does raise questions about the data profile of Anglican headteacher departure compared to all primary schools. Why are figures for 'other' (including leaving the profession and leaving with no plans or job to go to) so much higher than those for all primary schools? Is there something unusual about Anglican headteachers or the nature of Anglican schools and Anglican headship that is behind this apparent difference? Or as suggested in Chapter 4, it may be that surveys returned by schools in studies by Howson are not always completed by the outgoing headteacher. This thesis will consider aspects of church

school headship in Chapter 7 in addressing any salient differences between headteachers of Anglican schools which may be pertinent to their decisions as 'church school' headteachers.

### **5.3.5. Leaving for good**

Is it possible those leaving are intending to return and are only intending to have a period 'out of headship' for whatever reason? Survey responses indicate the answer is emphatically 'no'. 56.4% of Group B heads (N=39) said they did not intend to return to headship with 23.1% being undecided. Thematic analysis of open responses indicates that the reasons for this were the demands of headship (72.7%, N=22), disapproval of various initiatives (22.7%) and having a desire for change in their personal and/or professional life (36.4%). Thematic analysis of the open responses of those who were undecided indicates that the demands of the job are the main reason for uncertainty over a possible return to headship. Although there is similarity in the reasons for indecision (with the exception of age related aspects), comparison with open responses of a greater proportion of Group B heads than Group C heads feel the job too be onerous, the demands great, disapprove of initiatives and have personal aspirations they wish to fulfil.

## **5.4. Sunny uplands: Group C**

46.2% (N=156) of headteacher respondents are retiring. This study found that of the 30.86% (N=156) of headteachers who returned questionnaires that the figures were similar for headteachers retiring at 60 or older (21.2%, N=156) as for headteachers taking early retirement but not retiring on ill-health (24.4%, N=156). These figures are both smaller percentages than those reported by Howson for all primary headteacher respondents for the comparable period. His survey reported 26% (N=718) of all primary heads retiring at 60 and 60+ as being 26% and the percentage of heads taking early retirement (but not ill-health retirement) as being 32% (N=718) (Howson, 2009, p.8).

This study did not provide an option in the destination question (Q.32, Appendix 1; it provided an 'other' option). However, respondents were asked to rank the significance of a set of influences on their decisions to resign on a five point Likert scale; these included 'planned retirement', 'unplanned retirement' and 'ill-health retirement'. Ill-health retirement was ranked as a significant, very significant or extremely significant reason for leaving by 11.5% (N=67) of Group C headteachers. 88.6% (N=70) of headteachers ranked 'planned retirement' as being significant, very significant or extremely significant while 18.3% (N=60) ranked 'unplanned retirement' as significant, very significant or extremely significant. These results would suggest that the majority of headteachers are in control of the timing of their retirement but also that some headteachers perhaps do not feel in control of the timing of their retirement.

Retirement can be deemed to be of one's own choosing and 'planned', 'unplanned' or as a result of ill-health. Comparison of means enabled the statistical significance of these different 'forms' of retirement to be determined using one way ANOVA. The mean for Group C heads for Planned retirement was 4.29 and statistically significant (.000) and this mean is higher than both the mean of 1.63 for 'Unplanned retirement' and 1.39 for ill-health retirement (the nearer the mean is to 5, the more influential this aspect was in heads' decision making). Collapsing of the ratings 'significant', 'very significant' and 'extremely significant' confirmed that planned retirement is the 'norm': 88.5% rated 'planned retirement' as significant, very significant or extremely significant in their decision making, 18.3% of Group C rating 'unplanned retirement' as significant, very significant or extremely significant and 11.7% of heads rating ill-health retirement as significant, very significant or extremely significant.

Group C heads stayed longer in their first and second headship compared to their third and fourth headship as previously reported in Table 9. First and second headships are usually of 10 years, while third and fourth headships average a seven year duration.

This appears to be a phase of 'career wind down and career exit' (Burke, Fessler, Christensen and Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, 1984) is helpful here. Although the fourth phase, 'Disenchantment' identified by Day and Bakioglu (1996) is similar to the fourth stage of the model offered by Burke et al., the disenchantment phase is characterised by feelings and thoughts that are more negative than positive, where personal concerns can take precedence over professional concerns and where impact on self, self-esteem, confidence and effectiveness in the role can be compromised.

Although this is true for some of the heads in this study, heads were overwhelming positive about the new chapter in their lives and many looked back on their headships with a sense of 'a job well done'. Although Earley and Weindling (2004) identified that the final 'developmental stage' of a headship can be a 'plateau' and that long serving headteachers may need help in remaining motivated, many of the heads in this doctoral study felt that they had done a good job and felt validated by Ofsted and SIAS judgements that, in the main, were in line with their own assessment of their school

## **5.5. Chapter summary**

This chapter has presented data in answer to the third research question, 'where do headteachers go to?' and argued that one reason or influence contributing to headteacher departure, the fourth research question, is that headteachers leave at points related to career stages and development phases already known within the extant literature.

However, this chapter has shown that two key findings emerge in respect of departure for headteachers not retiring (Groups A and B):

- (i) Nearly half of all headteachers in Group A (46.7%, N=45) are leaving to take up a subsequent headship and are taking up headship of a non-Anglican school;

- (ii) Nearly half of Group B are leaving headship and the education profession altogether with few or no plans for their future (46.15%, N=39).

### **(i) Group A**

This chapter has shown that headteachers of Anglican primary schools are not always remaining within the 'family of church schools' when they leave a headship to take up a substantive post in another school. Nearly half of all headteachers (46.7%, N=45) are leaving to take up a subsequent headship (Group A) are taking up headship of a non-Anglican school. This presents a significant proportion given the difficulties faced by Anglican primary schools in England in recruiting headteachers as detailed in Chapter 2. I have argued that the reasons for leaving a school may be related to school size, salary and career advancement, career stages and professional development. Chapter 7 will consider other possible influences on headteacher departure from Anglican schools and suggest possible reasons for the selection of a non-Anglican primary school for a subsequent headship.

### **(ii) Group B**

In Chapter 4 I argued there is a group of headteachers who move neither to a subsequent substantive headship or retire (25% of all headteachers in the study, N=156; Group B). In this chapter I have explored this aspect of headteacher departure further and provided evidence that this group is proportionately larger than that of all primary schools nationally for the academic year 2008-2009.

This is a significant finding of the study and although the notion of haemorrhage is present in the extant literature due to the expected demographic 'time-bomb' (see Chapter 2.5.1.) this study suggests that there is a haemorrhaging of headteacher experience and expertise of headteachers who do not fall within the 'demographic time-bomb' group, that is, those commonly expected to be leaving for reasons of retirement. These are the headteachers about whom I wondered before embarking upon this study – the potentially 'hidden' or 'silent' group referred to in Chapter 1 (1.1.).

Furthermore, in this chapter I have shown that although a proportion of these Group B headteachers leaving substantive headship are continuing to work in education in either a full-time or a part-time capacity, nearly half Group B headteachers of these are leaving headship and the education profession altogether (46.15%, N=39). Comparative analysis of this study's data compared with that of Howson (2009) indicates that the proportion of headteachers in this category is higher than that of all primary schools nationally.

I turn now in Chapters 6 and 7 to the influences on headteachers' decisions, adjusting the photographer's lens as I examine what has influenced the departure decisions of the headteachers in this study. I consider the findings for the headteacher survey overall and compare the similarities and differences between the headteacher groups A, B and C. I illuminate the findings with headteachers' words, some written in open ended survey responses, some spoken in interviews.

I draw on the theoretical lens of Wenger's Communities of Practice in interpreting the findings and individual voices 'heard' during the course of this study in an attempt to 'forge' a 'negotiated account' (Bryman, 2007, p.21) from both the convergence and disparity presented here. Such a negotiated account that reflects the complementary design and purpose of this study will 'shine a spotlight' on the words and experiences of headteachers, thus providing a more nuanced understanding of the lives of headteachers and how aspects of their lives relate to individual decisions. This will enable me to theorise as to the influences contributing to the decisions of headteachers in Groups A and B and explore responses to the issues faced by headteachers in their identity work as members of communities can be addressed how these might be understood so that in future the numbers leaving headship might be reduced and headteachers persuaded to stay in headship and in particular, remain as headteachers of Anglican primary schools.



# **CHAPTER 6**

## **SPINNING WHEELS BY CANDLELIGHT**

### **6.1. Introduction**

I turn now to present data from the study which further addresses the fourth research question, 'why do headteachers leave?' using Wenger's Communities of Practice (1998) as a 'theoretical lens' through which to view the themes that emerged during the data analysis (see Chapter 3).

This chapter will argue that headteacher departure can be understood through three communities of practice, those of 'Professional', 'Nurture' and 'Family' listed in the Interlude preceding Chapter 5.

First, I present the core characteristics and dimensions of communities of practice as a diagram in Figure 11. The elements of the diagram (domain, community and practice) will be described in more detail and used as motifs throughout the chapter drawing on the related three dimensions of mutual engagement, joint enterprise and a shared repertoire as outlined in Chapter 2 (2.6.).

Data relating to the professional and personal lives of headteachers are used to illustrate the lived experiences of headteachers as members of a number of communities of practice. Data analysis and interpretation (see Chapter 3) indicates that two of the communities of practice outlined in Figure 11 (Professional and Family) are those which are most supported by the data and therefore consideration of these two communities of practice form the bulk of this chapter.



**Figure 11: How headteacher departure might be understood from a Communities of Practice perspective**

		Communities of Practice			
	Aspects	Professional	Nurture	Family	Spiritual
<b>Members</b>		HT, Staff, SIP/PaFS, Diocesan Schools' Advisors, LA, Specialist staff (e.g. SALTs, Educ. Psychologists etc)	Parents, HTs, teaching and non-teaching staff of schools, specialists/agencies responsible for specific interventions (e.g. social services, health professionals)	Family members: HT, parents, children, brothers, sisters, grandchildren	HT, school staff, local clergy, parents/prayer groups, parishioners, Foundation Governors (VA schools), Diocesan Staff (Education Team), Bishops Visitors, members of HTs' own churches, friends/family who pray, NATSOC, Anglican Church
<b>Domain</b>	Shared domain of interest	Education of children	Nurture and well-being of children	Sustaining on-going relationship; Social interaction, support, the upbringing of children, lifelong commitment to this	Spiritual development of children
	Nature of commitment to the domain	<p><u>On-going:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- those with frequent (i.e. teaching or subject leadership) types of commitment to children's education (academic/non-academic) – skills and knowledge</li> </ul> <p><u>Strategic</u> – LA, Diocese, Government</p> <p><u>Type of engagement:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching</li> <li>• Strategic</li> <li>• Pastoral</li> <li>• Inspectoral</li> </ul>	<p><u>Time:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lifelong (parents)</li> <li>• Sporadic (health care/welfare professionals/agencies)</li> <li>• Fixed period of time of several years</li> </ul> <p><u>Relational:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biological (family (immediate/extended) members)</li> <li>• Non-biological (professionals)</li> </ul> <p><u>Type of engagement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nurture/care/well-being</li> <li>• Teaching</li> </ul>	<p><u>Time:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different if have children at home, below 18</li> <li>• Different if grandparent relationship to parent or child (including grown-up)</li> </ul> <p><u>Relational</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blood, adoption, blended families</li> <li>• Biological, non-biological</li> </ul> <p><u>Type of engagement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal responsibility (young children)</li> <li>• Meet needs of children in their formative years</li> <li>• Support elderly parents</li> <li>• Reciprocal or dependent</li> </ul>	<p><u>On-going:</u> (school staff)</p> <p><u>Intermittent</u> (those who visit school intermittently, e.g. clergy, Bishop's visitors, diocesan team)</p> <p><u>Arm's length/strategic</u> (those who inspect or provide framework for church schools, e.g. SIAS Inspectors, NATSOC, Anglican Church)</p> <p><u>Type of engagement:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching</li> <li>• Strategy/Guidance</li> <li>• Pastoral</li> <li>• Inspectoral</li> </ul>
	Shared competence that distinguishes members from those outside the group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of how children learn (pedagogy)</li> <li>• Knowledge of curriculum (content)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge and understanding of child development gained through experience and/or training</li> <li>• [Commitment to welfare of children as they grow and develop]</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge and understanding of family members</li> <li>• Love, care, support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment to Christian values and beliefs</li> <li>• Commitment to communicating Christian values and beliefs</li> </ul>
<b>Community</b>	Joint activities/discussions members engage in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussions/training re. curriculum and pedagogy (how children learn/should be taught)</li> <li>• Discussions and activities related to pupil progress (achievement) and attainment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modelling</li> <li>• Instruction/teaching</li> <li>• Care/nurture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leisure and upbringing activities</li> <li>• Nurture</li> <li>• Support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worship (CW, Eucharist, special festivals)</li> <li>• Service</li> <li>• Mission (including knowledge sharing)</li> </ul>
	How members of C o P help each other and share information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissemination and discussion about issues of pedagogy, curriculum, how children learn through national initiatives, training etc.</li> <li>• Measures of accountability and performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share in nurture and care aspects</li> <li>• Extended provision</li> <li>• Sharing of knowledge and expertise about nurture (e.g. education and child development) through communication)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Love, care, support</li> <li>• Practical support and provision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through local supportive and dissemination networks (e.g. RE Subject Leader networks at diocesan level), use of websites and organisations such as Stapleford House, Diocesan Teams</li> </ul>
	How relationships are built that enable them to learn from each other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Networked communities of practice (e.g. local clusters of schools)</li> <li>• Sharing of best practice between members of community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School events</li> <li>• Meetings between practitioners and family/carers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over time</li> <li>• Effort</li> <li>• Modelling behaviours etc</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locally</li> <li>• Through dissemination from national to local level</li> <li>• Modelling behaviours and attitudes</li> </ul>
<b>Practice</b>	Members of a C of P are practitioners	Professional educators community of practice	Nurturing community of practice	Family members	Spiritual community of practice/community of belief/believers/faith
	Shared repertoire of resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience</li> <li>• Training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience of children as parents/educators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared history of activities and experiences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rites and rituals of the Christian faith/practice</li> <li>• Values and beliefs of the Christian</li> <li>• Biblical stories; Godly Play</li> <li>• Ways of teaching and providing opportunity for children to learn about the beliefs of the Xian faith (e.g. godly play, CW see above, policies based on Christian principles)</li> <li>• Ways of living faith in practice – worship, prayer, forgiveness</li> </ul>
<b>Links to departure</b>	Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When HTs feel a sense of dis-identification with the Professional C of P (expectations, members of the community of practice or elements of practice) they may leave.</li> <li>• When demands of the role (because of national initiatives or local demands) become onerous or intolerable, this may influence HTs' decisions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When demands of local headship i.e. parents, local needs place too much pressure on HTs, they may leave.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When demands of job 'throw' balance of life out to the extent that it impacts negatively either on the headteacher themselves or their family members headteachers may leave.</li> <li>• If headteachers feel that to stay in a post or headship will be in detrimental to them and their family relationships within a predicted time frame they leave with the hope of restoring that balance once more.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When HTs feel a sense of dis-identification with the Spiritual C of P (expectations, members of the community of practice or elements of practice) they may leave.</li> <li>• When HTs feel called to move out of the context they had felt called to into another context, HTs may leave.</li> </ul>

## **6.2. The 'Professional' community of practice**

I turn first to defining a 'Professional' community of practice as detailed in Figure 11.

### **6.2.1. Domain**

Central to the concept of 'communities of practice' is the notion of domain (Wenger, 1998). This encompasses three aspects: (i) a shared interest; (ii) the nature of commitment of those with the shared interest and (iii) the shared competence(s) that characterises members of the community and which are not shared by those outside the community of practice.

Headteachers relate to many individuals and groups of people in the course of their daily activity who, like headteachers themselves, are professional educators (e.g. on site based teaching and non-teaching staff and specialist staff and outside professionals such as Speech and Language Therapists, Speech Therapists, Educational Psychologist, Visual and Hearing Impairments Service specialists who may visit settings for diagnostic, assessment, monitoring or review purposes). They relate to other headteachers and schools within their cluster of schools or networked learning communities. Headteachers also relate to 'external' professionals who might have a support, advisory and or a challenge role focused on an over-arching agenda of improving provision through improving teaching and learning, leadership and management (e.g. Local Authority (LA), Diocesan Education Officers, School Improvement Partners (SIP) or Professional Advisers for Schools (PAfS), Ofsted and SIAS). Inspectors engage with schools as part of the statutory inspection cycle of schools in England. All these professionals and organisations share a common interest in the 'domain', that of the education of children and young people. Therefore, headteachers are part of a 'professional community of practice'.

Those within this community of practice share knowledge and expertise related to child development and how children learn (pedagogy) and often

extensive knowledge of curriculum content. The focus is on high quality provision leading to attainment, achievement and progress for all children judged against national benchmarks, standards and criteria.

In addition, those with a strategic and inspectoral role or interest are also part of the professional community of practice. Such people and organisations with a strategic role or interest include Governing Bodies, Diocese and Local Authority. Governing Bodies have a responsibility for the strategic development of a school. Dioceses have a responsibility under the Diocesan Boards of Education Measure No. 2 (1991). Local Authorities at the time of the data collection (2008-2009) had more responsibilities than exist now (2012-2013) but nevertheless they still bear legal responsibilities for school organisation planning, infrastructure, vulnerable children and so on. Part of the role of Local Authorities is to ensure that central funding is used appropriately by schools under funding formulae. All these professionals are concerned with the education and well-being of pupils and are therefore members of the professional community of practice.

The nature of this commitment to the domain is seen in the nature of the engagement (time and frequency related) and the types of engagement these individuals and organisations have with each other within the community of practice (teaching, strategic, pastoral and inspectoral).

Headteachers and their staff are engaged in on-going engagement with pupils and with other members of the community of practice. Sometimes the engagement is frequent and daily and defined on occasion by a geographical or locational aspect (learning of different groups of pupils on the same physical site). Sometimes the engagement is on-going but intermittent, e.g. educational psychologist who visits school for specific diagnosis of a pupil's needs and then at key milestones or review times during that pupil's education at that school. Likewise, the engagement of member organisations of the community of practice may be intermittent or occasional as appropriate for a specific period of task that needs doing or policy or plan which needs implementing. For instance, the building of a new school hall or extension

may require the involvement of the Buildings Officer from the local Diocese for a finite period of time (in the case of a Voluntary Aided Anglican school) or the intermittent or sometimes regular visits of the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) for the statutory monitoring of attendance.

Firstly, a community of practice is characterised by a 'shared competence' in teaching and learning that distinguishes members of this 'professional community of practice' from those outside it. For instance, all those educators listed above have specific knowledge of aspects of teaching and learning. Their pedagogical knowledge is harnessed and deployed to ensure that individual pupils, groups and cohorts of pupils make appropriate levels of progress over a specific period of time (e.g. Key Stage 1 or Key Stage 2). Knowledge of a range of subjects is required and an understanding of the broader world in which curriculum knowledge sits. Understanding of how pupils learn and of the development of skills and knowledge is central to the work of all those within this community of practice. Those with specialist knowledge and training such as the Traveller Support Service, Hearing and Visual Impairment Team and Speech and Language Therapists (SALT) are used to work with specific pupils or families in diagnosis and provision (e.g. pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL) and Special Educational Needs (SEN)).

The ability of a headteacher to engage the 'immediate' members of this community (on site based staff) in this task is essential. Leading learning and 'leadership for learning' are paramount (Leithwood et al., 2006; MacBeath and Mortimore, 2001; Southworth, 2009; Swaffield and MacBeath, 2009). But so too are an ability and desire in headteachers to engage with a wide range of 'education professionals' – members of this 'professional community of practice' so that the knowledge, experience and skills of others outside the immediate school staff but still within the professional community of practice can be utilised to the best effect in pursuit of the best education provision for pupils (Anning, Cottrell, Frost, Green and Robinson, 2006; Atkinson, Doherty and Kinder, 2005; Barker, 2009; Cheminais, 2009; Fitzgerald and Kay, 2008;

Frost, 2005; Glenny, 2005; Jones, Holmes and Powell, 2006; Siraj-Blatchford, Clarke and Needham, 2007; Stacey, 2009; Stone and Rixon, 2008).

Within this broader definition of a professional community of practice, headteachers need knowledge and understanding of teaching and learning, leading and managing. They need pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of how children learn. They need curriculum knowledge that enables them to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable pupils to gain the skills needed as twenty-first century adults, able to contribute to society and be part of the globalized economy of which Britain is a part (Bottery, 2004).

It is these pedagogical aspects and curriculum knowledge that are the shared competences that distinguishes members of the professional community from those outside the professional community of practice.

Secondly, members of the community of practice are engaged in strategic activities. Headteachers and Governing Bodies (or Trustees in the case of academies) lead the school community in planning and implementing for the short, medium and long-term, using budgets wisely for the meeting of school improvement priorities. Local Authorities may be involved in plans for school expansion, merger, amalgamation, restructuring (school organisation issues) that will enable the educational needs of pupils to be better met. Similarly, the Diocese may have a strategic role in supporting schools through the federation of two or more schools or in the sponsoring a new academy or a school converting to academy status. A diocese and Local Authority may play a strategic role in the building of new academies that meet the burgeoning needs of a local population and which involve partnerships with other schools (e.g. new primary school on the Carlton estate, Lincoln, a new build project in Lincolnshire with the Diocese of Lincoln).

Government has a strategic role too, for instance with the Building Schools for the Future programme, grant and ring-fenced monies, ensuring taxpayers' contributions are well spent as per consistent financial reporting regulations (CFR) and 'best value' guidelines. Under the Coalition Government's

expansion of the former Labour Government's academy programme, the Department for Education (DfE) is actively engaged in the conversion process and in challenging schools considered to be failing their pupils and communities. Department of Education officials visit local authorities and visit schools accompanied by Local Authority staff discussing local patterns of provision as well as possible solutions to context specific problems or challenges.

Thirdly, members of the professional community of practice are engaged in pastoral aspects of the shared domain of interest, the education of children and young people. All those involved with the education of children and young people have pastoral responsibilities. In the first instance, this falls to headteachers, teaching and non-teaching staff on a day to day basis. However, headteachers and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators, Family Support Workers and staff designated as Child Protection Officers engage with members of Social Services as part of their pastoral care for children and young people. Local Authorities have specific oversight of vulnerable pupils and looked after children. There are 'virtual' headteachers of 'virtual' schools. The role of the Local Safeguarding Board is part of the overall national strategy in England to ensure the well-being of children and young people.

Fourthly, members of the professional community of practice are engaged in inspectorial activities that are directly concerned with the quality of education, the shared domain of interest of the community of practice. Ofsted and SIAS Inspectors regularly inspect schools using criteria set out in their respective inspection frameworks (e.g. Ofsted, 2009; NATSOC, 2009a).

### **6.2.2. Community**

The characteristic of 'community' as defined by Wenger is concerned with three aspects of joint enterprise: (i) joint activities and discussions; (ii) how members of the community of practice help and support each other and (iii) how relationships are built by and between members that enable learning from each other.

The nature of discussions and activities that the members of the community engage in are discussions and training about pedagogy (e.g. reading and synthetic phonics) and aspects related to pupil progress (achievement and attainment). The majority of schools are engaged in training of various kinds through the Local Authority, Diocese, nominated provider (e.g. CfBT) or other independent providers (e.g. Focus, National Association of Headteachers (NAHT) etc). Dissemination occurs often through a cascade process (e.g. Safeguarding and Appraisal courses) through Local Authorities or a headteacher or teacher returning from a course and disseminating key points to staff. Networked clusters of schools or 'networked communities' enable the dissemination of best practice and innovative ideas. The qualifications, education, training, expertise and experience form a repertoire of resources and shared practice within the professional community of practice.

### **6.2.3. Practice**

Having both knowledge of how children learn and of curriculum means that members of the community of practice are practitioners of this community of practice that is focused on the education of children and young people. As such and by virtue of their training, experience and skills, they develop their practice in ways that enable them to work individually and collectively towards providing the best education for children. As part of this practice they themselves develop personally and professionally, during the course of which they develop 'shared resources' such as ways of working, ways of teaching, assessing, communicating key information to each other.

A constantly shifting education 'landscape' of policy and practice at national and local level (e.g. policy and curriculum initiatives, implementation strategies and a range of accountability and performance indicators) requires headteachers to continually adapt. In this chapter I explore how changes in the 'shifting sands' of the education and social landscape in England – in the 'Professional' community of practice - may lead headteachers to reach professional and personal crossroads and 'a bridge too far' in philosophy and practice which may influence decisions about departure from post.

### **6.3. More, more, faster, faster – the numbers game**

I turn now to consider how an education system which relies increasingly on data from which to extrapolate judgements and expressions of 'worth' might influence headteacher departure.

Headteachers are expected to ensure that pupils achieve. Performance of pupils is measured. Schools must meet their floor targets. More (higher) is good, less (lower) is not. All pupils at Key Stage 1 should attain a Level 2 at Key Stage 1 and a Level 4 in English, Maths and Science - or more – at Key Stage 2, making two National Curriculum levels of progress in the four years between statutory assessment at Key Stages 1 and 2. Furthermore, achievement as well as attainment is measured. Each pupil is expected to achieve at least two-thirds of a National Curriculum level in a year – or more. Results are published in League Tables. A school can be seen by its results as 'more or less' successful than other schools locally or nationally. Publicly available data (e.g. Ofsted reports, School Profile, national League Tables) help parents in their decision making over which school to send their child to.

Blackmore and Thomson refer to the performative policy that now exists in England as a 'coercive culture of calibration' (Blackmore and Thomson, 2004, p.303). In their 'postcard' discussion of the educational landscape of Australia and England as portrayed in the Australian and English media representations of headteachers, they comment that the 'calibration' of performance of pupils and schools is 'not necessarily conducive to the desired improvement' (2004, pp.303-304). They go on to say that

Being judged on an hierarchical scale, or against measures which only a few can reach, and seeing those measures made public, is now very much part of the way things are done (2004, p.304).

Bottery (2004) provides a sense of perspective and history regarding the roots of this 'coercive culture of calibration' (Blackmore and Thomson, 2004, p.303)

and argues that successive governments have not trusted the teaching profession and that the teaching profession have not trusted the government of the day. This lack of trust is influential in a breakdown of relationality that is at the heart of the education profession. Defining three foundations of trust: (i) values; (ii) integrity and (iii) competence, Bottery argues that low levels of trust by those in power have resulted in a series of 'low-trust policies' (2004, pp.102-103). New education legislation occurs almost annually and is increasingly enacted in 'double quick time' since the Coalition Government was elected (e.g. Academies Act 2010). Ofsted inspections have increased in frequency from every six years to every three years or less for schools whose data flags up a concern. Notice periods have been reduced from the original six weeks in 1992 to the day before (2012). The remit of successive Ofsted frameworks has ever widened as part of the Every Child Matters agenda (DfES, 2003, 2004a, 2004c). Target setting at every level from individual pupil targets to cohort and whole school targets for different curriculum areas are now embedded in teachers' and headteachers' daily lives (Davies and Ellison, 1999).

Suggesting that he is somewhat cynically defining performativity, Bottery adds this rule to an imaginary set of 'Rules of Good Management, Leadership, and Teaching in an 'Age of Target Setting and Low Trust':

the good teacher/manager/leader is the one who is able to convince external observers that he/she is doing what is externally demanded, while managing to get on with the real job (Bottery, 2004, p.92).

So what performance measures and accountability structures or relationships exist currently in England? For primary schools these are a school's SATs results (English, Maths and Science), average points and Contextual Value Added scores (CVA). These measures are used as benchmarks by Ofsted but not in the Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools (NATSOC, 2009a). School SATs results, average point scores and CVA are published in annual League Tables; this enables parents and other interested parties to see where an

individual school compares in terms of academic results with other schools. Ofsted Inspection judgements (four grades: Outstanding, Good, Satisfactory and Inadequate) are reported online for a wide range of criteria.

### **6.3.1. SAT results**

Pupils are assessed through teacher assessment in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 in Reading, Writing and Maths. At Key Stage 2 they are assessed through Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs) in English, Maths and Science.

### **6.3.2. Contextual Value Added (CVA)**

Contextual Value Added scores (CVA) enable schools (e.g. headteachers, staff, governors) and external stakeholders (e.g. Ofsted, Local Authorities, parents) to evaluate pupils' progress over time compared to prior attainment (e.g. at Key Stage 1), comparable schools and all schools nationally. A Contextual Value Added figure is a statistical progress measure designed to enable comparison of the 'value' a school has added to the progress of its pupils. For primary schools, it measures progress from the end of one key stage to the end of the next, e.g. from the end of Key Stage 1 (when pupils are seven) to the end of Key Stage 2 (when pupils are 11 and the majority leave primary education for secondary education). Pupils are expected to make two levels of progress (e.g. if a pupil at the end of Key Stage 1 is a Level 2b in Reading, then they are expected to achieve a Level 4b in English at the end of Key Stage 2). Anything more is in essence (not allowing for contextual factors) 'value added'; anything less and this means a pupil is not making progress in line with the 'national average'. This progress is calculated on the basis of points awarded to each level within the National Curriculum; different levels are 'worth' a set number of points. These are for Reading, Writing and Mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 and for English, Mathematics and Science at the end of Key Stage 2. These point scores are then averaged to be an indicator of the average point score (APS) for all pupils in a particular subject or for all subjects of individual pupils. These

resulting 'Average Points Scores' enable comparisons between groups of pupils to be made within a school e.g. boys and girls, pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN), pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL) and so on. Average Point Scores also enable comparison of one school against similar schools and against all schools nationally (e.g. how well boys perform compared to boys in similar schools or all schools nationally). CVA scores are designed to take into account a number of factors or characteristics including gender, mobility, ethnicity and eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM). For primary schools the 'magic' number is 100 and the degree to which a school's CVA is near, above or below, the 100 is important. Data submitted annually by schools is 'number crunched' by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF, now the Department for Education) and innumerable charts and tools for headteachers and inspectors alike are available on RAISEonline, an interactive assessment tool introduced in 2007.

### **6.3.3. Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools (SIAS)**

Anglican schools are subject to an additional inspection which is usually conducted within three weeks of an Ofsted Inspection. These Statutory Inspections of Anglican Schools (SIAS) are commonly called 'Section 48s' after the relevant section of the Education Act 2005. These replaced the previous 'Section 23s, the framework in use since 2000. The framework for inspection is usually updated at the same time as the Government updates the Ofsted frameworks (e.g. NATSOC, 2009a) and annual updates are issued by the National Society (e.g. NATSOC, 2008; NATSOC, 2009c). A new framework (pilot) was introduced during the data collection period of this study (2008-2009): therefore some schools were inspected under the 2005 Framework (NATSOC, 2005) and some under the new (pilot) Framework (from 30<sup>th</sup> April 2009) before its widespread use from September 2009 (NATSOC, 2008, 2009a, 2009b). (It should be noted that although the inspections were called 'SIAS' at the time of data collection for this study (2008-2009), these inspections are now called Statutory Inspection of

Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS). They will be referred to as SIAS during the remainder of the thesis.)

Essentially, Section 48 inspections inspect areas related particularly to the Christian character or designation of the school. While there have been changes to the detail and grade descriptors of the framework (e.g. in 2009) there has been little change since 2000 to the four key questions the inspection seeks to answer:

- How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?
- What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?
- How effective is the religious education? (Voluntary Aided schools only)
- How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a church school?

(NATSOC, 2005, pp.17-20).

#### **6.3.4. Headteacher Performance Management**

At school level, headteachers are assessed on their performance against agreed objectives and indicators by a Performance Management Committee comprising of three or four members of their school's Governing Body under statutory Performance Management Regulations introduced in 2006 (DfES, 2006). Objectives would usually be centred on the school's improvement or development plan and include objectives for pupil progress and aspects of leadership and management as standard. The committee may, upon a headteacher meeting their objectives, make a recommendation to the full Governing Body for a pay award of (usually) one point up the leadership pay spine, within the bounds of the Individual School Range (ISR). Once a headteacher reaches the top of the school's six point ISR, their pay is effectively 'capped' and will only increase as the result of national pay awards. These statutory national arrangements and regulations are governed by the

annually updated School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Order, set out in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document published annually (e.g. DCFS, 2008a).

### **6.3.5. Other data**

Schools also submit a variety of data to the government ranging from the numbers of pupil on roll on a given date, number and qualifications of staff as well as data related to pupils such as eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM), exclusions and attendance. Schools must also report expenditure data to the Local Authority and the government under the regulations for Consistent Financial Reporting (CFR). Much of this is done through the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) and is increasingly done through web-based interactive formats. External stakeholders can then compare a school against a range of indices and other schools.

### **6.3.6. Users of data**

All organisations use data to monitor, evaluate and form judgements. Those most heavily concerned with school data are the Office for the Department for Children, Schools and Families (Department for Education since 2010) and its inspection 'arm' Ofsted, the National Audit Office, Local Authorities and, for Church of England schools, Dioceses.

Ofsted is the Government's inspection arm. Although the relationship between schools and their Local Authority is changing as a result of the increasing numbers of schools converting to academy status, at the time of data collection of this study, School Improvement Partners (SIPs) were the 'arm' of the Local Authority. SIPs (now sometimes called Professional Advisors for Schools or PAFS) support schools in the 'New Relationship with Schools' (NRwS) introduced by the Labour Government in 2005 (DfES, 2004d). Its rationale was to bring national and local policy more closely together, reduce bureaucratic demands and develop 'intelligent accountability' as an agent of school improvement through a framework of school self-evaluation. The role

of SIPs was deemed crucial to this era of the 'new relationship' and 'intelligent accountability', challenging headteachers and senior leaders as to the evidence base for their self-evaluation judgements recorded on the school's School Self-Evaluation Form (SEF).

#### **6.4. Performance measures and the 'Professional' community of practice**

Measures of performance and the performative culture that now exists in education is one of the factors which influence headteachers' decisions about staying or leaving headship and about the timing of leaving a post. The Pearson chi-square test indicated that there appears to be an association between measures of performance and headteacher departure (Pearson chi-square, sig. = .001, N=156). At .001, this is statistically significant. Closer examination of the data shows that 35.3% of all headteachers are influenced by aspects of how a school is judged (N=156) and that Group B and C headteachers were more likely to be influenced by measures of performance. 38.5% of Group B headteachers (N=39) and 47.2% (N=72) of Group C heads compared to 13.3% (N=45) of Group A headteachers (six headteachers).

Headteachers answering a Likert scale question ranking the significance of a number of influences characterised by 'increased accountability and performance' as significant. Again this was ranked highly by only Group B and Group C headteachers. 69.4% (N=36) of Group B headteachers ranked it as extremely significant, very significant or significant while a greater proportion of Group C headteachers ranked it extremely significant, very significant or significant (80.9%, N=68).

I now consider the data in respect of the core elements of 'the numbers game' outlined in section 6.3.

#### **6.4.1. Obsession with data**

Group B and C headteachers were more likely to be influenced by a Contextual Value Added (CVA) score of less than 100 (sig = .001, ANOVA) than Group A headteachers. Group B and C percentages were very similar, 29.7% (N=37) and 31.8% (N=66) respectively. Similarly, a decrease or anticipated decrease in their schools' CVA was an influence on the decision of headteachers in Groups B and C (sig. = .017, OWA). Again, similar percentages in Group B and C were similar, 18.91% (N=37) and 24.2% (N=66) respectively.

CVA is an important aspect in respect of contextualising a school's SAT results against those of other schools. HT 142 (B, Interview) described an exchange with the Ofsted Inspector conducting her school's inspection:

For the first four or five years [since her appointment] our CVA went up and it looked very, very good. So we came out with a satisfactory first Ofsted and the Ofsted arrived last January [2008] and our CVA had dropped ... and I felt totally and utterly disillusioned that all she was measuring me on was my CVA and I said, 'Yes, but it's gone up for the last four years'. And it was, 'Yes, but it's dropped a little bit'. But I thought, oh, and I said, 'This school is worth far more than this ...'.

Although she pointed out difficulties with Key Stage 1 SAT results for pupils from the local feeder infant school, a matter of transition they were working on with the feeder infant schools, she felt that the Ofsted Inspector was focussed entirely on the matter of a one year fall in the school's CVA:

... this Ofsted Inspector kept going on and on about CVA and I thought, this is terrible. This is all being measured on one set of SAT scores and I pointed out in that particular year group we had six children who were bereaved, who had all lost a parent. We had three children, one whom was a disabled child, who were working on P scales [sic]. I said, 'I just think it is a totally unfair measure... And she wasn't prepared to make any changes (HT 142, B, Interview).

Here we see a headteacher feeling that the circumstances of a particular cohort are being ignored and that perhaps 'you are only as good as your last' set of results or data.

Thematic analysis of open responses and interviews indicates that the focus on data to judge a school was the primary issue. This is primarily in respect of Ofsted inspections but also occurs as an irritant in relationships between headteachers and their Local Authority.

Yet some headteachers cannot 'equate percentages with success' (HT 119, A, Interview). Headteachers commented on the importance placed on data and on Ofsted Inspectors' reliance on quantitative measures. This was summed up with some exasperation by one retiring headteacher:

At our last Inspection the judgement was that teaching could only be satisfactory because the CVA was at the national expectation (it was 99.9). The observed teaching was good or better in the majority of lessons but the Registered Inspector said he had to base his decisions on the data! I am not the only head to experience this (HT 100, Group C, Survey).

This headteacher appears to feel that the inspector conducting his school's inspection was 'hamstrung' by constraints placed on him as inspector. Such an obsessive 'fixation with data' (HT 144, B, Survey) can lead headteachers to believe that inspectors are not interested in children. Children are numbers not people:

Recent Ofsted (Jan 2009) Early Years Lay Inspector only interested in 4 year old children as a percentage (HT 3, Group C, Survey).

## **6.4.2. Dismissive of context**

### ***(a) Local authority preoccupation***

In a similar way to HT 3, C Survey above, a Group B head (HT 134, B, Interview) feels that preoccupation with data dehumanises the children at the heart of what education is all about. In her experience and perceptions, it was the attitude of the Local Authority as embodied in the person of the School Improvement Partner (SIP) that she found to be repugnant. Using pottery as an analogy she commented:

I'm on my third [SIP] because I won't have them back through the door because all they think about is numbers and nobody looks at these people as children. They are not lumps of clay that come in at one end and all go out as the same mug at the other end. They are children and that does annoy me. That's the red tape stuff that all they see is figures, they don't see that these are children with lives and problems that they have to cope with every day...these are children who've got issues and when the dog dies how the hell do you expect them to do any good in the tests but you know that's all I'm told is that that's an excuse. Well, that might be an excuse but that's a fact of life ... (HT 134, B, Interview).

At the heart of this appears to be a mismatch of priorities. Heads can feel that the Local Authority is working to a different agenda to themselves and what they believe to be best for their school.

Although the power of Local Authorities is on the wane, accountability exists in the form scrutiny for budget decisions and 'carry forward' amounts unspent at the end of a financial year. Ring-fenced monies are a problem for some small school headteachers who feel that their budgets are not sufficient to be able to employ experienced and therefore more expensive teachers. Ring-fenced monies come with just that, ring-fencing, curtailing the flexibility with which headteachers can use additional 'pots of money'. One headteacher described an exchange with the Local Authority regarding the high proportion of her budget spent on staffing and the need to make some posts redundant.

The LA claimed she was spending too high a proportion of her school's budget on staffing (effective experienced teachers and Higher Level Teaching Assistants). She went on to describe a mismatch of priorities regarding overall budgets, a tiny projected deficit and the LA's concerns about some ring-fenced monies rather than helping her maintain effective staff:

And the last letter I got, I was so insulted by, saying 'we see you are going to be £127 in deficit next year and we would like to know that you are going to be able to address this.' And I'm thinking, how pathetic can you get? ... But when you've got to lose quality TAs [teaching assistants] and reduce their hours from 10 to 5 and from 20 to 15 just to make the books balance, then you get these letters saying, there's three people coming here to discuss how you are going to spend your £4,000 grant and you've got to show it's available (HT 146, B, Interview).

This headteacher was expressing the same sort of resentment found by MacBeath et al. in their study of the recruitment and retention of Scottish headteachers (MacBeath et al., 2009a, 2009b). This comprehensive study of the attitudes of 1218 teachers and 1137 headteachers included interviews with 47 headteachers. The study found that headteachers resented 'the "pettiness" of local authority directives and the lack of trust in their experience and professional judgement' (2009a, p.43) and this contributed to headteachers feeling pulled away from what they deemed were their school's priorities.

School Improvement Partners can be a source of challenge and support or a source of extreme frustration. Although there was a universal feeling amongst headteachers that Ofsted is the source of much of the pressure related to measures of performance, HT 101 commented that, for them, some of that pressure comes from the Local Authority:

Even though as an inner-city school with high SEN and FSM and in the top percentage of the deprivation index, we have been in the top 5%

Value Added for three years at Key Stage 2 – and **still** the [Local] Authority want more Level 5s and Level 3s at Year 2. More monitoring, more statistics (HT 101, C, Survey).

One headteacher queried the value of a data driven regime, especially when Local Authority staff were only interested in English and Maths:

Foundation Stage Profile data – complete 117 boxes with evidence but only Literacy/Numeracy being recorded by SIP (this is in conflict with EYFS [Early Years Foundation Stage]) (HT, 146, C, Survey).

Some are considered good in that they managed to address aspects of their role and the agenda of the Local Authority with a hand within 'a velvet glove'. Such an adviser holds schools to account but displays humanity as this example shows:

When you've got a good advisor who is still pushing us and boy we were pushed, at the same time, you knew there was a human side (HT 122, B, Interview).

However, the relationship with a subsequent adviser of HT 122's school was less successful because he felt that she had an agenda that was not in line with the school's priorities for itself. He describes it this:

I wouldn't go so far as to say they didn't care about the school, I think that would be unfair if I labelled it that. I think it was more that their priority was, certain aspects of their job was written down, they could spend this amount of time, they'd got to do this, they had to do that, these are the things we are going to look at when we come and so it was sort of agenda that she followed. There was definitely an agenda that she followed that was very County and Government driven (HT 122, B, Interview).

HT 122 touches on something that runs as a sub-theme through headteachers' comments about 'their' school and feelings that autonomy doesn't really exist even though they are being held to account for standards, budget decisions etc. HT 122 sums it up in respect of the agenda of the Local Authority as different to the plans he had for his school, in much the same terms as HT 146 (B, Interview) did in respect of budgets, ring-fenced monies and staffing decisions discussed earlier. HT 122 describes the tension about what is important to headteachers for their school in their assessment of their school thus and the dilemma about what to say to a SIP and what not to say:

And some of the feedback that you give about SIPS I have given to the SIP. You know the SIP is there, is there anything you want to say about the way I've dealt with this? Well, you're not going to turn around and say, pardon my French, you're crap. You, you haven't listened to what I've been saying. All you are doing is, X, Y and Z and I really want to do A, B and C and then I'll deal with X, Y and Z. You're not going to say that. You're going to bite your tongue and then you are going to go to your sort of cluster Heads meetings and have a right good moan (HT 122, B, Interview).

***(b) Context as an unfair comparator***

Even headteachers whose schools have been awarded several successive Outstanding judgements criticised its means of comparing schools:

Our school has had three Outstanding Ofsted judgements but this does not make us better. It is an unfair comparator against schools working in significant[ly] different environments (HT 57, C, Survey).

One headteacher also felt that the use of League Tables which only reported attainment led to the under-reporting of pupils' achievements, in his case, the achievements of the 85% of pupils who had joined his school with no English.

Furthermore, the perceived reliance on data by Ofsted to indicate the effectiveness of a school was felt particularly harsh by headteachers of small

schools. Small cohorts (e.g. 10-20) can 'swing' or skew the data profile of a school, both in terms of a single year (the number of SEN or EAL pupils in a year group) or a school's trends over time. HT 82 expressed their frustration thus

I am fed up with school's "success" being measured by SATs' outcomes and the inability to recognise the impact of small fluctuations on outcomes for one-form entry schools (HT 82, C, Survey).

Such fluctuations can lead to 'misleading judgements' (e.g. ten pupils, HT 114, C, Survey) which can be reflected in CVA and League Table being published, something the headteacher has to 'defend' (HT 114, C, Survey).

Headteachers' dissatisfaction with a reliance on data by external agencies perhaps belies their own autonomy and responsibility to 'showcase' the achievements of their school and its pupils to Ofsted, Local Authority, Diocese or parents. It is possible that headteachers have not yet utilised means of communication with parents through websites and dissemination of achievements to counterbalance what they perceive as an unfair weighting attached to data driven judgements.

## **6.5. Impact of lack of trust**

At the heart of all these concerns and complaints with Ofsted and the focus on data that these headteachers refer to is perhaps a bubbling resentment at the lack of trust the government has in them (Bottery, 2004). The Ofsted inspections every three years (compared to the original six year cycle in the mid-1990s) and at short notice are a response to governments' lack of belief in education profession's integrity, a belief that professional will not 'say and do the same thing' (Bottery, 2004, p.103). It is possible that these headteachers are reacting to the 'grinding down' of self and collective confidence that results from the absence of feelings and perceptions of trust.

It is 'the way things are done' (Blackmore and Thomson, 2004, p.303) that some of the headteachers in this study seem to object to, that the quality of provision, the quality of daily interactions can be accurately judged on the basis of quantifiable measures and the resulting data.

Perceptions of lack of trust appear to be related to the identity and personal relationship headteachers feel with their schools. They refer to 'my school'. Sometimes the relationship is captured in parental terminology, the school as 'my baby' and with phases related to nurture and growth. By extension, not being trusted to do a 'good' job means a potential internalising of 'if my school is not good enough, if the results are not good enough, that must mean I am not good enough'. The professional aspects of the job are then intricately entwined with sense of self and an individual's perception of their value, validity or worth.

Even being a successful school – as judged by Ofsted – is not a harbinger of peace to some headteachers. A successful Ofsted judgement brings a pressure to maintain your 'position', to have equally successful subsequent Ofsted inspections. This can feel an unrelenting pressure as headteachers are 'continually accountable' (HT 112, C, Survey). Nothing can be taken for granted: 'Even if successful as we are you wonder when you will fail!' (HT 78, C, Survey). HT 2 agreed writing that their school

... had Ofsted in May 2007 and it was Outstanding – the push and pressure to get another Outstanding Ofsted is extreme, any less is a failure (C, Survey).

It may be that this pressure is of the headteacher's own making or the result of a sense of isolation in leadership if Governing Bodies lack understanding (HT 9, A, Survey) or just that a recognition that maintaining standards was a hard task requiring 'energy and enthusiasm' (HT 98, B, Survey).

It would appear then that even effective headteachers live with a permanent sense of unease or stress about the future and external judgements about their school and their effectiveness. HT 44 (C, Survey) sums this up:

Our school has a number of very positive Ofsted, HMI and SIAS inspections over the last ten years. However, even when the school is successful the stress of expectation makes me dread the fateful 'phone call (HT 44, C, Survey).

This level of stress and fear becomes very personal. One headteacher described how external judgements of the school had become very personal in that

I am sick to death of being measured by SATS' results. One year I am personally a brilliant teacher at Year 6 – the next I am a poor teacher and the whole assessment of the school [is] being made on the KS2 data (HT 116, C, Survey).

This personalisation was felt by another head who wrote that as a result of his expectations of a dip in SATs' results for one year that he feared for his job:

I am personally concerned that if they [SATs' results] don't improve before the next Ofsted my job will be at risk. I was also concerned to see the headline in the TES in Feb/Mar about the number of secondary heads who had lost their jobs last year because of unsatisfactory inspections (HT 142, B, Survey).

There appear to be consequences for headteachers who decide to stand up for what they believe is right for their schools and about challenge judgements made purely on data. HT 136 remarked that if you don't 'play that game, you are in trouble' (HT 136, A, Interview). What form can this 'trouble take'? One headteacher described her humiliation at the hands of the Local Authority:

I was even carpeted in the Civic Centre because I dared to stand up and say, 'Well, it's not the "be all and end all"'. I was disciplined because we had very, very low SATs results despite me saying that the particular cohort was never going to do very well academically. I had been saying so for several years and I'd actually been asking for support for the school (HT 128, B, Interview).

Talking about inspections and SATs HT 119 highlighted the weight of responsibility he felt for his school and the outcomes of the inspection process:

I just think whether it's self-imposed or its pressure that you feel is imposed by others, it is there. And I'm not saying we shouldn't be accountable, don't get me wrong. I just don't think that schools should be judged on those alone and to be honest my experience of the inspection process was more positive than I thought it was going to be, but still there is the stress of the build up to it. It's a big stress because you as head are carrying that on your shoulders basically, you bring the rest of the school with you (HT 119, A, Interview).

However, here in the words of HT 119 (A, Interview) we also see an awareness that apprehension creates stress and that perhaps that fear is not always warranted, the process of being 'held to account' is not always as bad as the spectre of accountability or 'ghost of Christmas past' (Dickens – Scrooge) appearing in the midnight terrors and cold sweats that are felt by some headteachers.

The apprehension felt by HT 119 is common across headteachers interviewed and the survey open responses. At its extreme it results in headteachers feeling that their jobs are on the line as in the survey response of HT 142 (B earlier):

I am personally concerned that if they don't improve before the next Ofsted my job will be at risk (HT 142, B, Survey).

However, in HT 119, we see something additional about the source of anxiety or stress. HT 119 was aware that pressure can originate from external sources in this case, Ofsted but also that it can be self-imposed. To use the phrase 'self-imposed' implies that the 'self' has some control over what is felt or how difficult situations can affect a person and this indicates the importance of self-regulation in response to circumstances and pressures.

This self-imposed pressure can be triggered by an external incident or comment which then takes 'root' sapping confidence. As HT 138 (A, Interview) remarked:

Ofsted can kill you, can't they? You know, they only have to come up with a little comment here and there and you're scuppered. Suddenly, you find yourself doubting you own abilities and once you're on that downward path it's very a very slippery slide and you just keep going. (HT 138, A, Interview).

This sense of being personally at risk was summed up by HT 136, A, Interview who reported that he had not expected to feel at risk when he went into headship:

You are in a much more precarious position than I would have thought when I came into headship (HT 136, A, Interview).

This concern over maintaining good or outstanding judgements was something felt particularly by Group C headteachers whose assessment of the difficulties and desire to avoid another Ofsted inspection was influencing the timing of their decision to retire. As two Group C headteachers put it:

It is without doubt the most stressful and unpleasant experience event of my time as head, and I don't think my health could cope with another so I'm going, hopefully before the next one! (HT 113, C, Survey) *and*

**Ofsted – I don't want to go through another Ofsted next year (Otherwise I might have stayed another year) (HT 59, C, Survey).**

**External criteria based upon data as 'all-telling' can influence headteachers in the development of curriculum and lead to a focus on English and Maths to the detriment of other areas of learning, schools responding by 'hot-housing' their Year 6 pupils with 'constant practice tests' (HT 21, C, Survey) and leading to 'compromise' especially in Year 6 (HT 124, C, Survey) to achieve good results. The pressure to achieve 'good results' can lead to feeling compelled to 'regimentally drive these children' (HT 132, A, Interview).**

**This feeling that external pressures on headteachers and their schools was not in the best interests of pupils was also felt by headteachers in Group B as expressed metaphorically by HT 87 and the comment by HT 128 that indicates a perceived mismatch between learning and assessment regimes:**

**it is entirely about jumping through hoops (HT 128, B, Interview)**

*and*

**SATs are increasingly at odds with best teaching and learning styles (HT 87, B, Survey).**

**The validity and accuracy of pupil progress as judged over the four years of Key Stage was called into question by two headteachers. One felt that teachers were under self-imposed pressure to show and evidence pupil progress in Key Stage 2 so perhaps over-inflating Key Stage 1 SATs' results. Another headteacher raised the difficulties of the parity of assessment of levels, that a Level 3c at Key Stage 1 was not the same as a Level 3c at Key Stage 2. This had the potential to causing difficulties for Key Stage colleagues and headteachers further 'down the line'.**

**Gunter argues that the education system in England has moved 'beyond leadership' (Gunter, 2001, p.1 48), and that a headteacher is**

... a middle manager to both implement and be accountable for centrally directed policy. Senior and middle managers, teachers, students, governors, parents and communities exist to deliver and be accountable for statistical learning outcomes and the learning conditions in which this takes place (Gunter, 2001, p.148).

Fundamental appears to a 'dis-identification' (Wenger, 2011, p.3) with the underlying premise of an equation "x = success" and therefore validation of self and school. 'Y' equals lack of success so personal sense of self and sense of professional self are damaged, at risk and in the culture of today, 'disposable'.

It appears that there is a sense of misplaced responsibility at play here. Headteachers appear to believe that it is in them that the full responsibility lies. That may be because of media presentations of heroic headteachers referred to earlier (Blackmore and Thomson, 2004) or because of 'paternalistic' attitudes or outmoded hierarchical models of leadership. It may be that these school leaders do not particularly subscribe to distributed models of leadership which places the notion of 'shared leadership' at the heart of the ethos and daily life of a school (Harris, 2008; MacBeath, 2009; Spillane, 2006). Effective leaders share leadership roles *and* responsibility, holding each other to account for actions (delegation, tasks etc) *and* outcomes (Fink, 2005; Hargreaves and Fink, 2006; Harris, 2008; MacBeath and Dempster, 2009). Furthermore, effective leaders hold each other to account for the 'moral-ness' to actions, those which are consistent with the core vision of the school.

The concerns and frustrations that many headteachers have, with the focus on quantitative measures of performance as the primary source of evidence, is partly related to the low trust environment to which Bottery refers. Headteachers' descriptions are perhaps indicative of their trying to convince 'external managers' (Ofsted, Local Authorities) that they are doing what is 'demanded'. Yet for these headteachers it may be that they are not being successful in also 'getting on with' what *they perceive* to be the 'real job'.

The 'agent' measuring performance is commonly regarded as Ofsted. The tenor of headteachers' comments regarding Ofsted can be seen in the comment of one retiring headteacher:

Ofsted is a nightmare and we are an OUTSTANDING school according to their judgements [sic]. It devastates school morale, interrupts and distracts. It is not a force for good. Even an Outstanding verdict leaves staff exhausted and stressed out (HT 127, C, Survey).

However, as we have seen, headteachers' dissatisfaction is more deeply rooted than an external focus on Ofsted. It is perhaps partly self-imposed as they become 'agents' of their own predicament. Unable to accept not just the measures of performance they rail against the underlying lack of trust from Ofsted, Local Authorities and government.

The data does not support any suggestions of self-disgust or feelings of betraying personal values; such a suggestion would require a study with a different and specific focus. However, it is possible that the feelings and frustrations described by headteachers mask a sense of powerlessness and a sense of disappointment that they are unable to do more to stand up for what they believe is right and succeed in winning that argument for their pupils, their schools and themselves.

However, not all headteachers regard data as 'bad'. Of the six headteachers in Group A who said that measures of accountability and performance were a positive influence in their decision (13.3%, N=45), three of them said it was a positive influence as it helped their career. This sentiment was summed up by one headteacher thus:

Our school has done well so I want to capitalise on that and move to a bigger job (HT 115, A, Survey).

One Group B headteacher leaving her post to become an interim headteacher for a Local Authority expressed a different view to the majority of headteachers:

I sadly love all the data stuff. I am fascinated by looking at children's progress, looking at targets, thinking about how they could improve. Talking to teachers about what they can do to increase children's progress, looking at different reasons why they are not making progress. I love all of that in a very sad geeky way ... (HT 117, B, Interview).

Almost apologetically and certainly in a self-deprecating way, she highlights the importance of relationship with pupils and staff in using data to make a difference. Furthermore, she appears to regard data as a tool for pupil progress not purely as an instrument of judgement as would appear to be the case for many of the headteachers in this study.

What is interesting about the survey open responses is that the focus was entirely on Ofsted. The SIAS Inspection for Church of England schools did not appear on headteachers' radars at all when they wrote or discussed inspections as particularly driven by a 'data agenda'. It is possible this is because of the focus of the SIAS inspection judgements or because SIAS was conducted in a different way. It is perhaps possible that headteachers do not consider SIAS inspections to have the same power or 'teeth' as those of an Ofsted judgement.

Mass media is increasingly the means by which headteachers feel government and policy makers communicate with them. As HT 128 (B, Interview) remarked about one initiative:

...and the other thing that really, really winds me up in terms of responsibility and accountability is hearing on the radio on the way into school the latest initiative that the Government is telling us to do. And nobody has bothered to tell me about it. The first I hear is on the radio

on the way in to school and that I think is the parental bit again then because parents hear that and say, the school's not doing that. Why's [sic] the school not doing that? Because the first thing I've heard about it was on the radio on the way into school. I suppose it's empowerment isn't it? That's what I'm saying, it's about being held to be accountable without the empowerment ... (HT 128, A, Interview).

This headteacher highlights a paradox. The degree to which headteachers and governing bodies have autonomy in determining what is right for their pupils and local community is increasing but the accountabilities are increasing. In the face of the increasing diminution of power and authority of Local Authorities she feels that there are still attempts to control what headteachers do and yet expectations are huge without the financial freedoms to act as she believes is right for her school.

Focus on data was felt to be sometimes irrelevant by headteachers who believe that secondary colleagues take no notice of Year 6 SATs results when pupils transfer to secondary education or when there are known to be issues between Year 2 (KS 1 SATs) and Year 3 criteria, a long standing 'thorny' issue between infant and junior schools and between first schools and middle schools.

It is the dismissal of 'context' by Ofsted and the Local Authority that appears to be felt acutely by headteachers. Fullan (2003) argues that a key aspect of the moral imperative of leadership is to proactively change the context of pupils and their families, to 'help change immediate context' (Fullan, 2003, p.2). This might involve breakfast clubs or after school clubs to providing Omega 3 capsules. It might involve parenting classes, family support workers engaging with families to help them complete welfare benefit claim forms or help source furniture for a family re-housed in their community. It might involve providing support for military families separated by deployments to Afghanistan. The list is endless because every community is different and pupils and parents need different types of support and strategies to schools and communities in similar geographical areas just five miles 'across town' but

whose socio-economic profile is different. What is central to such leadership is a deep knowledge of your pupils, their families and the challenges they face within the community and 'social world' in which they live and which the school 'serves'.

What headteachers often described in their interviews were very practical actions and strategies that demonstrated their attempts to 'help change immediate context'. Their disappointment at the lack of understanding from Ofsted inspectors and Local Authorities was palpable and is reflected in many of the quotations presented above.

## **6.6. The 'Professional' community of practice and headteacher departure**

This data clearly shows that departing headteachers had experienced changes in their professional communities of practice and within their own responses to the on-going formation of both the community of practice and their own identities.

The members of a community of practice utilise the shared repertoire of the professional community of practice, leading learning and raising standards through leadership of others, modelling best practice, making use of the shared and understood language working together to fulfil the espoused aims and aspirations for community, in particular, the children at the heart of the enterprise.

However, this study suggests that headteachers are perceiving that the practice of the professional community of practice is being galvanised by political agendas (e.g. Standards and Every Child Matters) and the focus becoming driven by accountability measures and accountability regime (Ofsted) sometimes to the apparent exclusion of other aspects with the

professional judgements of headteachers being ignored or being pushed to the margins.

Data indicates that it is the inspectoral aspect of the engagement of particular members (e.g. Ofsted, Local Authorities, School Improvement Partners and Government) that cause a sense of frustration and feelings of powerlessness amongst headteachers. This would suggest that the nature of commitment to the domain of interest is not shared in reality and that the type of engagement is not as mutual as it potentially might be.

A sense of 'dis-ease' with the performative requirements of a low trust education system and the articulation of that performative culture through the inspectoral role of a member of the professional community of practice (the government and its agent, Ofsted) and related agents (Local Authorities, SIPs) are influences in the departure decisions of headteachers.

Mutuality of engagement in a community of practice requires alignment or identification with other members and the shared domain of interest of the community. Individual identity is bound up in the collective practice and identity of a community and identity is a complex process of learning and 'becoming' in the social world. When headteachers feel that the nature and focus of the community of practice or influential members of that community have changed and that they no longer feel comfortable or feel a sense of 'belonging and 'fit' within that community, they can experience a sense of 'dis-identification' (Wenger, 2011, p.3).

A significant aspect of this 'dis-ease' and 'dis-identification' is awareness that what headteachers thought was a shared domain of interest and regime of competence is something they no longer share to the degree they either once did or thought they did.

## Communities of practice

... are about knowing, but also about being together, living meaningfully, developing a satisfying identity, and altogether being human (Wenger, 1998, p.134).

Although identity cannot simply be construed as being aligned to a particular ideology, philosophy or way of doing things, being a member of a community of practice is about being part of something that is constantly changing even as we are changing through our participation and non-participation in that community. It is in the process of 'modulation' that we ourselves shape and are shaped by through active engagement with others in the process of 'becoming', becoming fully human through the process of learning and knowing. It is our participation in the regime of competence with its accountability to the shared domain of interest of the community which enables us to 'experience the world and our engagement with it as meaningful' (Wenger, 1998, p.4).

Examination of the data in this chapter, when viewed through the theoretical 'lens' of communities of practice, suggests that headteachers can have different modes of identification which influence how they negotiate meaning for themselves in their daily lives and the trajectory of their lives overall. The competence as narrowly defined by skills and expertise (i.e. a competent headteacher) is not lacking in the headteachers leaving a post and/or the profession as already detailed earlier in the thesis. However, the 'regime of competence' as defined by Wenger (see earlier) includes the experience of a 'mutuality of engagement':

mutuality of engagement – the ability to engage with other members and respond in kind to their actions, and thus the ability to establish relationships in which this mutuality is the basis of an identity of participation

(1998, p.137).

It is this mutuality of engagement that appears to have been lacking to varying degrees in the lived experience of some headteachers, suggesting that their identification with core practices of the community (e.g. measures of performance) and the focus of the community's endeavour shifting to externally quantifiable driven measures (data) has been problematic for them and their sense of self.

This perception of lack of 'fit' within the professional community of practice can result in a reduction or cessation in individual willingness to be involved in the pursuit of the community's espoused aims and aspirations as they relate to the education and well-being of children (the shared domain of interest). It would appear then that some headteachers are not able to imagine or conjure up images of the world (new possibilities and ways of seeing themselves and their identity differently) that would enable them to stay in post (Wenger, 1998, p.185).

This sense of 'dis-identification' creates a sense of 'dis-ease' which appears, at times, to chime almost as an audible sound of dissonance.

Because practice is fluid and ever changing with identity negotiated through participation as a member of a community of practice, this 'dis-ease' that leads to a sense of 'dis-identification' is therefore an influence in headteachers' individual decisions to leave a post and or headship altogether. Headteachers feel that either they or the community of practice has changed sufficiently that they no longer feel a sufficient sense of identification with it, its members and /or shared domain of interest that might encourage them to stay.

## **6.7. The 'Nurture' community of practice**

I turn now to detail the characteristics of a 'nurture' community of practice, presenting and discussing data related to the relationships particularly

between headteachers and parents, those who are the primary carers and nurturers of children.

### **6.7.1. Defining a 'Nurture' Community of practice**

The shared domain of the nurture community of practice is a commitment to the nurture and well-being of children and young people. As can be seen in Figure 11, to some extent the members of this community overlap with the professional community of practice. For instance, headteachers, teaching and non-teaching staff and specialist support staff as listed as members of the professional community of practice are also part of the nurture community of practice. Health and social services professionals in particular are part of this community of practice. However, parents and carers are also key members of this community of practice, concerned with the nurture and well-being of their children as they grow and develop.

The nature of commitment to this domain (nurture and well-being of children) is of three aspects: (i) time; (ii) relational and (iii) types of engagement. In respect of the time aspect, parental commitment to the nurture and well-being of children is life-long, in contrast to the time-limited by a child's involvement with education, health or social services. The nature of commitment from health and social services professionals can be sporadic, intermittent and limited to key points of crisis or particular need in a child's life. The nature of parental relationships is usually biological from immediate and/or extended family members compared to the non-biological relationships between children and education and health care professionals. The types of engagement of all these professionals and family members include nurture, care and concern for the personal development, physical and emotional well-being and although teaching is involved, this is more likely to be related to personal development, supporting a sense of self and acting as an example or role model (e.g. Daly, Byers and Taylor, 2006; Goldschmied, Elfer and Selleck, 2003; DCSF, 2008b; DCSF, 2008c; Eade, 2006; Sylva, Melhuish, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford, Taggart and Elliot, 2003).

The shared competence that members of the community of practice of nurture is primarily knowledge and understanding of child development gained through experience and/or training. For professionals who work with children on a regular, perhaps daily basis, and parents, this is both a generic knowledge of child development but also a specific knowledge and understanding of the needs and well-being of individual children. The community shares information about the nurture, care and well-being of children through clear communication about individual needs, sometimes conducted through meetings such as Team around the Child meetings (TAC) or Common Assessment Framework meetings (CAF). Those professionals from health and social care services may be involved in forms of extended provision, supporting the site based staff, children and their families.

As practitioners members of this community of practice are 'nurturers' and the shared repertoire of resources includes knowledge about children and child development along with a common language about individual children, behaviour strategies and individual education plans (IEPs) related to an individual child.

However, this community of practice is also changing in ways that disturb some headteachers.

### **6.7.2. Apron strings: relationships with parents**

Relational aspects between headteachers and key members of the nurture community of practice can contribute to headteachers' perceptions of their role, their worth and their effectiveness, impacting on their decisions to leave their post. An old-fashioned phrase of 'apron strings' is used to symbolise the relationship between parents and their children that is central to the expectations of parents wanting the best for their children.

Ranking the significance of conflict with staff, governors, parents and pupils as an influence in their decision to resign from their post, 18.5% of headteachers (N=146) ranked this aspect as being 'significant', 'very

significant' or 'extremely significant' (Q41a, Appendix 11). Comparison of means by one way ANOVA indicates that headteachers in Groups A and B are more likely to have been influenced by aspects of conflict than headteachers in Group C (Appendix 15) with Group B having a mean of 1.97, compared to Group A (mean of 1.64) and Group C (mean of 1.42). 27% of Group B heads (N=27) ranked this aspect as 'significant', 'very significant' or 'extremely significant'. Although not statistically significant at sig. = .063, this aspect raised questions about the relationships between headteachers and those within these groups (staff, governors, parents and pupils) irrespective of whether they are part of the professional community of practice (e.g. governors, staff) or the nurture community of practice (e.g. parents).

Data indicated that the need to provide emotional support to others was an influence for some headteachers. Comparison of means indicated that this aspect was nearly statistically significant (sig. = .053). The proportion of headteachers in Groups B and C were similar: Group B 40.54% (N=37) and Group C 41.79% (N=67).

The headteacher questionnaire was not designed to explore in detail these aspects although a Likert style question (Q.41) provided some indicators in respect of relational aspects and open-ended questions did provide some limited opportunities for headteacher comments in respect of pupil behaviour.

Pupil related issues were not present as influences in departure, the Pearson chi-square test indicating that the following aspects were not statistically significant, e.g. pupil mobility (Pearson chi-square, sig. = .390, N=156), meeting the needs of pupils with English as an Additional Language (Pearson chi-square, sig. = .175, N=154) or pupil behaviour (Pearson chi-square, sig. = .146, N=154).

However, analysis of open-ended response that indicated these aspects were not influences, a minor theme emerged, that of parental behaviour. Data are not sufficient to make any claims about the extent or significance of parental behaviour although this maybe an area for future research which may yield

future insights into headteacher departure. Two headteachers summed up this concern as being the

... the attitudes of parents to pupil behaviour. Parental voice is strong – extremes are: (i) parents who will not tolerate other children; (ii) parents of children who behave badly who will not accept this. Parent overpowers professionals now (HT 79, Group C, Survey) *and*

Only to extent that parents are increasingly unsupportive and unwilling to accept that their child's behaviour is a problem (HT 87, B, Survey).

The theme of parental behaviour appeared more strongly in analysis of interviews with headteachers. Central is the increase in parental expectations and attitudes which can feel unreasonable and be an aspect of headteachers' lived experiences that can influence departure.

A headteacher in Group B gave detailed examples of the professionals' voice and professional judgement being ignored and overshadowed by the voice of parents that resulted in the breakdown of working in partnership with parents:

I don't believe what they are saying about my child. My child hasn't said this. When you are trying to discipline a child, [say] my child has said this, so you [the headteacher] are lying. Now I've actually had parents who have actually come up and said this ... and that makes things very, very difficult. Suddenly the whole apparatus of what you are working for, this sort of valuable open communication completely breaks down if somebody just turns round and says, we don't believe you about what's happened (HT 122, B, Interview).

HT 122 also gave examples of parents who would not accept that headteachers needed to take certain actions which might take time or follow certain procedures in certain situations, particularly in respect of accessing additional support for particular children

There were parents wanting specific things done for their children and not understanding, not giving you the chance to go through the channels you have to go through, despite explaining it to parents ...they are wanting it [support] earlier and earlier and philosophically I don't have a problem with trying to get intervention early but despite explaining it and having other professionals coming in and explaining it they still want the thing done tomorrow ... not giving you time. ... There is a lack of patience ... (B, Interview).

Parental pressure was felt in respect of children's relationships with other children and parental pressure to dictate to headteachers what they should do in terms of particular children. For instance, HT 119 (A, Interview) gave examples of how parents were

... very, very precious about their children and very nasty and unpleasant about other children and I had parents coming in with petitions about [other] children and wanting them excluded ..

In summarising the reasons he was leaving headship of that particular school he commented:

Parents being a big factor ...an amalgamation of lots and lots of different things, of which parents were one. Staff issues was another (HT 119, A, Interview).

HT 106 summed this up as follows as contributing to a sense of being 'owned' by parents:

... it's constant criticism, constant criticism through the SATs' results being published every year and ... you have to complete the school profile every year and then parents almost believe that they own you. And the fact that you are then defending staff and you are defending parents against other parents and it is, absolutely the sole ... factor for leaving here (Group A, Interview).

**This sense of being 'owned' is the 'flip-side' of the impact of parental demands and expectations described by HT 122 (B) of**

**Your professionalism is being questioned, frequently from people who don't see what is happening at the chalk face ...then it becomes very difficult ... (B, Interview).**

**After describing a contributing factor to parental pressure (media news and communication of government initiatives) HT 122 (B, Interview) summed up the pressures from parents that headteachers referred to:**

**Parents are much more informed about what goes on in education today. I mean you turn the television on and every other day there's a major item on breakfast TV or News at Ten or whatever the case may be on education. ..they were informed by it also goes back to the old adage that a little information is dangerous and they would come with a bit of information and it would be very difficult then to persuade them, not to persuade them, to explain that areas of what they understood was a situation ...So there was a lot of misunderstanding because of this information. Sometimes they came with better information than we had and that makes it very difficult. So there were all sorts of elements from basic simple problems with school and parents over discipline to parents who were very well informed or misinformed. Parents who want more in a situation where were just could not provide it. All those pressures told (HT 122, B, Interview).**

**This section is titled 'Apron strings' to reflect a theme feeding through the interview transcripts, that of a shifting of responsibility for the nurture, care and well-being of children and young people. Education settings have increased their 'offer', their provision to include 'wrap around care' in the form of breakfast clubs, out of school (after school) clubs and additional activities for children as part of the Extended Schools agenda and the Every Child Matters Green Paper policy in addition to encouraging a range of activities to develop partnership with parents and family learning (e.g. classes in literacy,**

numeracy and ICT for parents (e.g. DCSF, 2005). It is this shift from the parents as sole carers, of children 'tied to the apron strings' of their parents that is at the heart of many government initiatives since the late 1990s and the Labour Government elected in 1997. The nurture, care and well-being are increasingly being provided by adults other than parents and the immediate and extended family unit.

This focus on schools providing aspects related to care and well-being appears to be difficult for some headteachers to reconcile. For instance, HT 122 (B) commented on the difficulties of fulfilling parental expectations in the light of national expectations as often discussed in the media (e.g. wrap around care):

'Why aren't you providing our children with being able to do this, this and this, during after school [clubs]?' I think for a small school, a rural school then that's very difficult because you haven't got the staff, you haven't necessarily got the facilities or the finance to do that. But that's always been a problem so the current shift towards making schools more sort of centres of sort of social care,, is extremely difficult ... (B, Interview).

HT 106 (A, Interview) went further in his assessment of parental expectations on schools:

I think schools are being expected to be more and more and more proactive in running the socio-economic programme in childhood that will lead children through [to becoming] good citizens in the future and I think there is a lot of passing the buck from parents to the school. So, parents now choose the school on the basis of yes, good results, the academic results, but the ECM agenda, and I know that Ofsted are coming in with new criteria and I think schools will be more heavily judged on their ECM agendas that they have within their schools and how they promote it. There can be a sliding scale, an opting out by some parents who almost are, who could believe in passing on the

whole of the ECM agenda, in terms of how they [children] eat, what they eat, how they adopt healthy lifestyles, how they adopt health and safety aspects within their lifestyles. It does get me sometimes, it's almost like parents then have the opportunity to opt because schools will care take of it (HT 106, A, Interview).

HT 128 summed up the changing practice of the Nurture community of practice in the shifting balance of professional and parental responsibilities and the direct influence it had in her decision to leave headship altogether:

It [her decision to leave headship] has been influenced by parent behaviour and attitude. I am jaded by the lack of parental engagement and lack of acknowledgement of their responsibility to their children whilst they are very quick to tell me their rights. I am also jaded by the lack of professional respect afforded to me by parents (B, Survey).

An additional aspect of parental expectation was faced by a headteacher of two schools within a federation who moved between two school sites but felt a tension and struggled with expectations of his 'physical presence to be 'in two places at once':

I think it was lack of information. They didn't understand, a lot of parents didn't care, but I don't think they understood how the school was set up. They still saw it as they went to one school. Well, what isn't the head here? Well, he's down the road. Well, what's he doing down there while he's running the school? If he's running the school he should be here ... (HT 143, A, Interview).

Although this headteacher recognised he placed some pressure on himself because he 'wanted to be everywhere and because I thought that was my duty' he found the tension between parental expectations and his own of himself irreconcilable.

It may be that more effective communication may have resolved some of the issues that headteachers described in terms of parental expectations but there is no doubt that the responsibilities and accountabilities for children's care, guidance and well-being have, from the perspectives of a number of headteachers, increased as a result of national policy initiatives but also as a result of increased information in a media age which drives parental expectations.

### **6.7.3. The 'Nurture' Community of practice and headteacher departure**

It would appear therefore that for some headteachers parental expectations at a local level can be an influence in their decisions to leave a specific headship.

Headteachers expressing concerns about parents 'passing the buck' and 'opting out' indicates that there are tensions between members of the nurture community of practice – headteachers and schools, parents and government. Many changes to policy and practice in terms of responsibilities for children's well-being, care and guidance have occurred as part of the changing landscape of education, social and health care. This was particularly so during the years of the last Labour Government (1997 to 2010) as already outlined earlier in this chapter. Relationships can become strained between members over a mismatch of expectations and interpretations of the role of members whose views differ in respect of the shared domain of interest and the responsibilities of members.

This is particularly so in respect of the relationships between headteachers and parents. The apron strings are extended in terms of responsibility with early years settings and schools taking on increasing responsibilities and accountability for care. This can create a tension in how nurture and care is provided and the extent of the accountability professional 'nurturers' and educators have in practice. This leads to headteachers feeling undermined by the national agenda and by particular expectations of parents in their local context and setting that can result in a breakdown of communication and a

lack of learning that affects the formation of the community of practice as it moves forward in fulfilling its core purposes.

I turn now to present data relating to the impact of headteachers' professional lives and experiences on their family relationships within the 'family' as a community of practice. This third and final section of this sixth chapter will consider issues of workload and stress on headteachers' personal and family lives through three medical metaphors, two associated with 'Accident and Emergency' and one with choices about one's health: 'Code Red', 'Fractured Bones' and 'Elective Surgery'.

## **6.8. Burning the candle at both ends**

### **6.8.1. The 'Family' as a community of practice**

I turn now to consider headteachers' lived experiences and how they impact on them and their families. I consider how the interplay of personal and professional within the family as a community of practice can influence headteachers' decisions to leave a post and/or headship.

### **6.8.2. Defining the Family community of practice**

As detailed in Figure 11, the shared domain of interest for members of families as a community of practice is the desire to sustain on-going relationships through social interaction and providing support and care. This can be as a parent to the upbringing of children, as a grandparent supporting children and grandchildren or a spouse or partner to another. This commitment is lifelong and not limited by geography or physical boundaries. The nature of family members' commitment to this domain of interest is threefold: time, relational and by four types of engagement. For instance, parents with children at home below the age of eighteen can feel frustrated and marginalised by the demands of the job that inhibits them spending time at key points with their children (e.g. bath time, bedtimes, sporting events etc).

An individual is part of the family in which they relate to key people. Relational ties can be by blood, adoption or some form of blended family (e.g. step-families, multi-generational etc) so being biological or non-biological Learning occurs through natural maturation but also through the daily interactions, the hustle and bustle of family life. Within the context of the family as a community of practice, children learn and adults emerge from sometimes painful adolescence. Social norms are learnt, practised and individual and collective identities are formed or 'negotiated' (Wenger, 1998, p.149).

Headteachers in the study engaged in four types of engagement with family members. Parents have legal responsibilities for young children and meet the needs of their children in their formative years. A number of headteachers wrote of their role in supporting elderly parents. Consequently, relationships can be reciprocal or dependent, the engagement being influenced by the age and needs of the family members. The 'shared competence' that distinguishes members of a family as a community of practice from those outside the family community of practice are knowledge and understanding of family members and the love, care and support that is expressed in unique ways within the family.

In terms of Wenger's second characteristic of communities of practice, 'community', family members engage in joint activities that relate to the nurture, love and care of family members as well as leisure and activities that enable family members to learn from and with each other. These joint activities occur irrespective of 'role', that is whether headteachers are parents, grandparents or spouse/partner. Information and support is shared through not just activities but discourse about the nature, activities and relationships within the family. Over time, relationships are built that enable members to learn from each other. Although this may require effort and be both a source of joy and frustration, behaviours are modelled, advice given and memories created. Behaviours, practices, ways of doing things and a shared history of activities and experiences form a shared repertoire of resources that sustain relationships in a family and enable individual and collective learning through 'active participation' and the creation of meaning (Wenger, 1998, p. 4).

### **6.8.3. The headship context**

Headship can be a demanding and stressful job. Headteachers 'burn the candle at both ends'. That is they work long hours with the demands of the job encroaching on early mornings and evenings particularly during term time. Long hours and headship appear to be synonymous with each other. A common theme of numerous studies investigating the lives and work of senior school leaders is that headteachers in particular work long hours and that the job intrudes into their home and personal lives (e.g. Angle, Frean, Elston, Bassett, and McGinival, 2009; Bristow et al., 2007; Cooper and Kelly, 1993; Day, 2000; Earley et al., 2002; French, 2009; French and Daniels, 2007; MacBeath et al., 2009a; Phillips et al., 2007; Tanner, Schnittjer, and Atkins, 1991; Thomson, 2009).

The final section of this chapter will consider the evidence regarding workload and stress for the headteachers of Anglican primary schools in England before exploring the impact that headship can have on personal and family lives, drawing on the concept of the family as a community of practice (Wenger, 1998, p.6).

Firstly I will detail the evidence from the study that headship creates a demanding workload, one which can, though may not necessarily, cause headteachers to experience feelings of stress and can influence leaving decisions. Secondly, I will consider three 'effects' on personal and family lives that can influence the leaving decisions of individual headteachers:

- **Code Red: surgery and convalescence needed**
- **Fractured Bones: relationships at home and away**
- **Elective Surgery: choosing to live a different way.**

Headteachers were asked to indicate the significance of a factor or influence on a five point Likert scale (Q.41, Appendix 1) and the strength of their agreement or disagreement with a set of statements about headship (Q.60, Appendix 1). Statistically significant differences between the groups were

determined by the comparison of means using one way ANOVA (Appendix 15; see also Chapter 3). The closer the mean is to 5 the more likely the headteachers in that group were influenced by that aspect or influence.

Headteachers were also asked for a 'yes' or 'no' as to whether headship had had any influence on their personal and family lives and to give details if they responded in the affirmative (Q.43, Appendix 1). Open responses were then analysed thematically as per the analytical process described in Chapter 3.

This final section of this chapter draws on both quantitative and qualitative data and the overall sense of the impact gained from the 'holistic reading' of headteachers' lives described in Chapter 3. Through presenting the evidence for the theme of long hours and stress and the three resulting 'impact' or 'effect' themes in this section I seek to 'forge a negotiated account' (Bryman, 2007, p.21).

#### **6.8.4. Long hours**

The study found that the hours that headteachers work are often long but ANOVA does not indicate that headteachers in one particular group work significantly longer hours than headteachers in the other groups. At .995, (ANOVA) this is not statistically significant. The average working week as reported in Chapter 4 is 55 hours. The longest working week reported was 75 hours and the shortest 35 hours. The majority of headteachers in Group A report working between 50 and 64 hours per week with the majority of Group B and Group C headteachers reporting a 45-64 hour working week (Appendices 11 and 12). A small number of Group B headteachers report working 65-79 hours on average per week (15.4%, N=38) while 16.2% (N=68) of Group C headteachers report working 65-74 hours per week.

These figures for the average working week show that headteachers of Anglican schools regularly exceed the European Working Time Directive of 48 hours. In this respect the finding of this study is consistent with the findings of other studies (e.g. Angle et al., 2009; Bristow et al., 2007; Brunner, 2000;

French, 2009; French and Daniels, 2007) all of which reported that headteachers were routinely exceeding the maximum hours stipulated by this directive although at times, e.g. in school holidays the workload was reduced or mitigated. It could be argued however that the holidays are meant to be just that so headteachers should not routinely be working during those periods as the norm.

The study by Bristow et al. for the National College of School Leadership (2007) found that 70% (N=34) of headteachers exceeded the European Working Time Directive of 48 hours and that for the two-week period of the study during which headteachers recorded aspects of their work and their hours, the average worked per week was 52.9 hours (2007, p.6).

However, there are two larger scale studies with which direct comparisons can be made in respect of this study's findings: an internet based survey commissioned by the NAHT (French, 2009) and a survey of workload through the submission of diaries kept by teachers and headteachers (Angle et al., 2009). Both these surveys were conducted during the same academic year as the data collection of this study (2008-2009). However, although it should be noted that the study by Angle et al. included teachers' responses and the survey by French was of senior leaders and not just headteachers, there is still a useful comparison to be made.

A large scale internet based study conducted by French (2009) for the NAHT of their members (headteachers, deputy heads and assistant heads) achieved a response rate of 13%. Of the 3213 responses the majority of respondents for the 2009 survey were headteachers (75%, N=3213) who worked in the primary sector (87%, N=3213).

French's study, conducted between September 2008 and January 2009, does not claim to be representative as the respondents were self-selecting and was only conducted with senior leaders who belong to the NAHT, but it is of interest for the following reasons: (a) by virtue of the sample size; (b) the fact that the year of the survey is within the time period during which this study

collected data and (c) by virtue of the analysis undertaken in terms of regulation and policy initiatives such as the Working Time Directive and policy initiatives designed to address issues of workload as part of the government's response to concerns about the hours and morale of teachers and headteachers alike (e.g. Planning, Preparation and Assessment time (PPA) for teachers and Dedicated Headship Time for headteachers with a teaching commitment).

Alarming, French reports that

Only 10% of school leaders work up to 48 hours per week (the legal maximum working week as stipulated by the Working Time Regulations). By contrast, almost half (48%) of all NAHT members reported working between 49 and 59 hours per week during term time and even more worryingly, over one-fifth (42%) work over 60 hours per week (2009, p.7).

The annual survey of teachers' workloads conducted through diaries kept for the period of one week in March 2009 (Angle et al., 2009) reported data from 96 primary schools, 53% of the 180 primary schools surveyed. Angel et al. found that primary headteachers were working a slightly higher working week (55.9 hours) than in the past four years during which similar surveys had been conducted (Angle et al., 2009, pp.6-9). This is part of a rising trend: reported hours have been rising since 2005 when the average headteacher working week was 52.9 even though for the years 2000-2005 the trend between 2000 and 2005 had been falling from its height of 58.9% (Angle et al., 2009, p.6).

This study of headteachers of Anglican primary schools found similarly high average working weeks. 88.7% of headteachers (N=151) reported an average working week of more than the 48 hours per week recommended within European legislation. The average hours worked per week in this study was slightly higher (55 hours) compared to the NCSL study (Bristow et al., 2007) but approximately at the mid-point found for almost half of the senior leaders in the survey conducted by French (2009) of between 49 and 59 hours. The

hours of this study are almost identical to that reported by Angle et al. (55.9 hours).

The distribution of hours worked follows a normal distribution curve and in this respect also the findings of this study are similar to those of Angle et al. (2009, p.27) and MacBeath et al. (2009a, p.33).

Therefore, in respect of both the average hours worked and the distribution of hours, the finding of this study appears to merely confirm what is already known about the workload of headteachers: that they work long hours and are routinely exceeding the Working Time Directive. However, I will now turn to the nature of the work that appears to demand long hours and to how headteachers in this study experience that demand in terms of the impact or effect that it has on headteachers themselves and their families.

#### **6.8.5. Stress and workload**

Headship involves a myriad of relationships, formal and informal, with multiple responsibilities and accountabilities. As the PriceWaterhouseCoopers independent report into school leadership found the role of a headteacher can be categorised into six main areas: accountability, strategic, managing teaching and learning, staffing issues, networking and the day to day operational management of the school (2007, p.10).

Headship requires headteachers to be leaders of learning and leaders of people – staff, pupils and parents. They are both accountable to their school's Governing Body and the lead professional to their school's governing body. For church schools, headteachers are also spiritual or faith leaders, of which more in Chapter 7. Knowledge about learning is needed but so are skills of negotiation, counselling, strategy, financial acuity and so on.

The demands of this web of relationships and accountabilities can draw a headteacher away from their family, trap them and suck the very lifeblood from them. In much the same way as a spider's web laced across a wrought

iron gate with a November morning's early frost looks beautiful and seductive, so is headship. 'Making a difference' is often cited as one of the most important reasons for being in headship and a key contributor to the job being rewarding. 84.5% (N=155) of headteachers in this study reported that making a difference encouraged them to remain in headship, in this respect a similar finding to that of study into the recruitment and retention of headteachers in Scotland (MacBeath et al., 2009a, p. 32).

Of the headteachers in this study, all Group A headteachers (N=45) agreed or agreed strongly with the statement 'making a difference' as did 82.1% of Group B headteachers (N=39) and 77.4% of Group C headteachers (N=45). But still this is not enough for all to remain in substantive headship as this study shows. Comparison of means using one way ANOVA (.000, ANOVA) indicates that Group B headteachers are less likely to agree with this sentiment (Appendix 15).

The hours and demands can increase almost without a headteacher noticing until it is too late, impacting on an individual's decision to remain in headship, change the specifics of headship (i.e. move to headship of another school) or leave headship. The joy of experiences with partner, children and parents are missed. Life is 'stolen'. Gone. The threads of the web hide the perils that await the unwary.

Stress and workload were influences in the decision of many headteachers who returned questionnaires. Asked whether stress and workload played a part in their decision, 63% of headteachers (N=154) responded 'yes'. The Pearson chi-square test indicates that there appears to be an association between stress and workload and headteachers leaving (Pearson chi-square, sig. = .004, N=154) and that there would appear to be statistically significant differences between the three headteacher groups. Group B headteachers are most likely to have been influenced by issues of stress and workload, with Group C headteachers almost as likely to be influenced (76.3%, N=38 and 68.1%, N=72 respectively). Group A headteachers were least likely to have been influenced by stress and workload although it is worth noting that 43.2%

(N=45) of headteachers moving to another headship were still influenced to some extent.

Ranking the significance of stress and workload as an influence in their decision to resign, 65.2% of headteachers (N=147) ranked these aspects as being 'significant, very significant' or 'extremely significant' (Table 15).

**Table 15: Influence of stress and workload on decisions**

	Group A (41)		Group B (38)		Group C (68)	
	Count	Valid Percent	Count	Valid Percent	Count	Valid Percent
Extremely significant	1	2.4	8	21.1	14	20.6
Very significant	10	24.4	17	44.7	13	19.1
Significant	7	17.1	4	10.5	22	32.4
Not very significant	5	12.2	4	10.5	4	5.9
Not at all significant	18	43.9	5	13.2	15	22.1

N=147

Comparison of means by one way ANOVA indicates that headteachers in Group B and C are more likely to have been influenced by aspects of stress and workload than headteachers in Group A (Table 16) with Group B having the highest mean of all three groups (Group B: 3.50).

**Table 16: Comparison of means of the significance of stress and workload**

	A	B	C	Sig.
	Mean	Mean	Mean	
Stress and workload	2.29	3.50	3.10	.000*

The results of the analysis of the open responses to the filter question (Q.50, HT survey, Appendices 11 and 12) indicate a similar finding, namely that Group B headteachers are more influenced by stress and workload issues than headteachers A and C (Table 17 overleaf)

I turn now to examine the aspects of the job that contribute to long hours, a heavy workload and stress.

**Table 17: Issues related to stress and workload**

Thematic analysis of coded responses

	Group A (N=19)		Group B (N=29)		Group C (N=49)	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
People and relationships	2	10.5	6	20.7	3	6.1
Conflict between teaching and management	13	68.4	2	6.9	2	4.1
Accountability and bureaucracy	0	0.0	7	24.1	11	22.4
Workload	7	36.8	6	20.7	15	30.6
All-consuming nature of the job	2	10.5	5	17.2	13	26.5
Gradation of feelings	1	5.3	3	10.3	8	16.3
Health	0	0.0	4	13.8	8	16.3
Other	1	5.3	2	6.9	1	2.0
Unclear response	0	0.0	1	3.4	2	4.1
No response	0	0.0	1.0	3.4	0	0.0

*N=97*

*Respondents were at liberty to write as much or as little as they liked so percentages do not sum to 100.*

### 6.8.6. Contributors to long hours and stress

#### ***(a) Measures of performance and site specific conflict***

I have already argued that national expectations of headteachers related to performance and 'site specific' or local issues can influence headteacher departure, especially in the context of a low trust performative culture and low trust between individuals or stakeholders at the local or school level which can lead to conflict. When these aspects produce excessive workload and stress they can contribute to headteachers' decisions about whether to stay in a post or leave a post.

Aspects of accountability increase head teachers' workload. The number of stakeholders and levels of organisation head teachers and schools are accountable to was often cited as part of the stress felt and the cause of a heavy workload. HT 28 summed up the thoughts of many:

Constant reporting – SEF, SIP, Governors, and LA – generates a lot of data analysis and presentation and doesn't help much. Too many evening meetings – too much paperwork of all varieties (HT 28, C, Survey).

However, the study found that a number of additional issues related to workload influence headteachers. These include

- reinventing the wheel – again: continual change, initiatives and red tape
- conflict between leadership and teaching commitments.

***(b) Reinventing the wheel – again: continual change***

The nature of working in a state maintained school (or academy) is that headteachers 'operate' increasingly within a political sphere, responding to national policy initiatives emanating from ideology and political expediency. Although headteachers are increasingly autonomous as school leaders, nevertheless they are subject to 'dictat' and directives, and all manner of guidance 'advice' from Whitehall and central government for 'education is politics' (Ward and Eden, 2010, p. 1). This is part of successive government's attempts to control from the centre (centralisation) while appearing - at the same time - to distribute 'opportunities', 'freedoms' and autonomy to public sector providers in the regions, e.g. to councils, to schools (decentralisation) (Calveley, 2005). This tension results not just in measures of accountability and performance as previously discussed but in a succession of 'Green' and 'White' Papers, national frameworks and legislation, target setting at every 'layer' of education (Local Authority, areas, clusters, schools, key stages, cohort, pupil) and all manner of new initiatives tightly bound up with ever detailed and now increasingly web-based reporting requirements (Ball, 2008; Chitty, 2004).

Headteachers operate 'politically' in their local context too in response to local needs to their own school community. They also work outside their own immediate community and 'cross community' with other schools. In part this is in response to the national drive to 'encourage' schools to work collaboratively and in 'partnership' as part of the attempt to engage public sector organisations in broader social policy as for example in the Community/Social Cohesion policy of recent years (Bell and Stevenson, 2006). Consequently,

sharing good practice or planning for collaboration and partnership is political too as well as practical. Sometimes initiatives are announced by central government (e.g. recent (2012) partnership options that carried financial incentives as in Lincolnshire) and schools respond only to find some legal impediment makes their work and business plans meaningless. Time is wasted and hopes are dashed when headteachers and governors have spent hours responding as required but to no avail. A financial inducement has been dropped. Another initiative bites the dust.

'Red tape and bureaucracy' and 'initiative and innovation overload' are all part of the picture behind headteacher departure and for Group C headteachers, the timing of retirement. All these aspects related to policy, the centralised-decentralised debate and individual responses for stress and workload generated statistically significant differences when comparison of means was conducted by one way ANOVA (Table 18). Headteachers in Groups B and C are more likely to be influenced by 'red tape and bureaucracy'.

**Table 18: Comparison of means by HT group**

	A	B	C	Sig.
	Mean	Mean	Mean	
Red tape and bureaucracy	1.49	3.13	3.65	.000*
Miss contact with pupils	1.34	1.78	1.98	.011*
Initiative and innovation overload	1.63	3.19	3.64	.000*

Although many initiatives or projects come with ring-fenced monies as we have seen earlier in this chapter, headteachers do not carp about the need for accountability or demands to account for the use of public funds.

Within many headteacher comments was the latent theme that it wasn't that the demands or tasks of the job were difficult or beyond their professional or personal capabilities but that it was the sheer *number* of tasks that needed to be managed and done caused pressure. In short, it is the *multiplicity* of initiatives and need to be accountable to *multiple* stakeholders that appear to 'whittle away' at the stamina and energy of headteachers.

Initiatives are introduced at some pace with expectations of immediate or quick implementation. There is a sense within headteacher comments, especially those who have been in teaching or headship for a number of years or been headteacher of more than one school that they had 'seen it all before', that government is 'reinventing the wheel – again'.

The notions of cyclic repetition being endemic within public sector organisations (education and health to name but two) and a result of changes of government (Ward and Eden, 2010) but also as a means to control public sector employers and employees in the complex centralisation-decentralisation debate in which quality is determined by quantifiable measures (Brundrett and Rhodes, 2011; Calveley, 2005). The picture of a hamster endlessly peddling furiously on a wheel inside a cage springs to mind. But it is more than that, the spinning wheel is moving and maybe there is some 'freedom' or autonomy in school leadership but the wool is still held tight in the hand of the spinner (the government).

However, in the words of HT 37 there is also a sense of futility and frustration over the point of certain tasks, suggesting that there is a mismatch between priorities of headteachers for their schools and government policy. As HT 37 (B) wrote, there is

Constant change – e.g. changes to Literacy and Numeracy Strategies; changes to the EYFS; introducing of APP [Assessing Pupil Progress]; working to FTT [Fischer Family Trust] Type D; responsibility for the control of Legionella; responsibility for being a DEC with absolutely no notice ... I could go on for ever (HT 37, B, Survey).

Like HT 37 who found Legionella checks irksome, HT 112 sums the unavoidable nature of some of these initiatives and tasks due to their basis in law but the impact being negligible on pupils:

I am fortunate not to suffer from stress. The workload is huge. Too much of what I am legally required to do has little or no bearing on the education and well-being of the children (HT 112, C, Survey).

The pace of change and introduction of new initiatives is an issue for headteachers. Immediate response is required even when initiatives are not fully thought through. This can lead to the depletion of energy and the altering of agreed school improvement priorities so that school improvement priorities are dictated by the latest national initiatives. As HT 21 (C) writes

Each year we are expected to react to [the] latest turn following poorly thought out, expensive initiatives. 2007-8 Gifted and Talented Leadership manual recently scrapped and rewritten. 2009 APP – National assessment grids vague and rushed into place (HT 21, C, Survey).

HT 26 (B, Survey) has similar views to HT 112 quoted earlier but goes further by commenting on the political agenda behind some initiatives and the financial consequences:

The wasted resources in many initiatives that are political and not necessary in my view, e.g. Extended Schools, PE Partnerships, Healthy Schools, Travel Plans etc. [sic]. Whilst some of these are important in principle, resources have been wasted [sic] (HT 26, B, Survey).

Consequently, it is clear that frustration at the multiplicity and speed of initiatives is compounded by a sense of mismatch between headteachers' views about the needs of their children and community and the policies of government.

### ***(c) Conflict between leadership and teaching***

Headteachers feel a tension between the demands of leadership and the demands of teaching. Of the 97 headteachers who gave details to the filter

question, 'Have issues of stress or workload influenced your decision to resign from your present post?' (Q50, HT survey), conflict between teaching and management was cited by headteachers in all three groups but most often by Group A headteachers (68.4%, N=19) but hardly at all by headteachers in Groups B and C (6.9%, N=29 and 4.1%, N=49 respectively). This is particular so for headteachers of small schools, e.g. Group 1 size schools.

However, a greater number of headteachers responded to the Likert style question asking them to rank the significance of this aspect on their decision. Of the 145 headteachers who ranked its significance, it was 'significant', 'very significant' or 'extremely significant' for 46.2% (N=145). It was ranked as significant or higher by two-thirds of Group B heads (60.5%, N=38) and by slightly less Group C headteachers (52.2%, N=67). These percentages are much higher than the figure for Group A headteachers (22.5%, N=40).

Comparison of means using one way ANOVA indicates that there are statistically significant differences between the three groups (.001, ANOVA). Groups B and C have almost identical means which are higher than that of Group A.

**Table 19: Conflict of teaching and management**

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Mean</b>	
<b>Conflict between learning and management</b>	1.68	2.66	2.63	<b>.001*</b>

This finding that a large proportion of headteachers find juggling the demands of being a lead learner and ensuring the quality of teaching and learning with the administrative demands of managing the day to day life of a school difficult is consistent with the common thread of 'juggling' found in many studies of the work and life of headteachers (MacBeath et al., 2009a; Pascal and Ribbins, 1998; Southworth, 1995, 2004; Thomson, 2009; Tomlinson, Gunter, and Smith, 1999).

The juggling required appears to be a particular issue particularly so for 'small school heads', i.e. headteachers of schools with less than 100 pupils on roll (Group 1).

As HT 16 (A, Survey) wrote:

As a small school head I have no deputy or even SMT [Senior Management Team] so all initiatives have fallen to me. This creates unmanageable workload (HT 16, A, Survey).

A similar portfolio of responsibilities was held by HT 151, (A, Survey) who wrote of

Trying to balance the teaching commitment with being headteacher, SENCO, Assessment, RE, PSHE CP Co-ordinator (HT 151, A, Survey).

HT 140 (A, Survey) expands, highlighting perhaps something of a confusion regarding promotion from deputy headship to headship in certain contexts:

In some ways being head of a small school is an impossible job. I co-ordinate several subject areas and do everything I did as a deputy for very little extra pay. I have good staff, but everybody is working to full capacity (HT 140, A, Survey).

However, HT 35 (A, Survey) highlights an additional issue, one of the need to be involved in the core 'bread and butter' of teaching that stems from budget considerations and hints at a lack of skill, expertise or experience of colleagues:

I am headteacher of a very small school with limited budget. Not enough "strong" people with whom to share the workload. I was expected to "cover" classes to save money and also do my own job without any extra time (HT 35, A, Survey).

This is despite the vast majority of headteachers consider their staff to be their best asset (89.1%, N=156) with no statistically significant difference between the headteacher groups.

This requires skill in 'balancing the demands of headship and class teacher responsibility' (HT 75, A, Survey) in managing the competing 'poles' and 'tensions' of leadership (Boris-Schacter and Langer, 2006).

The comments and incidences of headteachers in this study are similar to those reported in the PriceWaterhouseCoopers study (2007), the MacBeath study (2009a) and in the narratives of headteachers in qualitative research (e.g. Fidler and Atton, 2004; Pascal and Ribbins, 1998; Thomson, 2009). Headteachers of small schools regularly get involved in practical, sometimes menial tasks. As one headteacher put it, they were an 'expert on Victorian drains'. This is caused by having a small staff or when members of that small staff are on sick leave, the headteacher 'steps into the breach', often putting aspects of their strategic and leadership roles to one side.

As reported in Chapter 4 many headteachers have a class teaching commitment or have a regular teaching commitment that does not involve responsibility for a particular class. It is striking to note that it is Group A headteachers who find that a conflict between teaching and management or leadership responsibilities influences their decision to resign from a post. The reason it is noticeable is because comparison of means using one way ANOVA found that although there was a statistically significant difference in means (sig. = .014), Group A headteachers have, on average, a smaller teaching commitment than headteachers in either Groups B or C (A = .036, B = 0.46 and C = 0.52 per week). It would appear that the root of the issue lies in whether the headteacher has a class responsibility or whether they teach for perhaps the same proportion of the week but on a roving and intermittent basis. Being the class teacher brings with it apparent additional responsibilities e.g. for SATs' results. Some headteachers found this created a 'conflict of interest' (e.g. HT 106, A, Survey) as they were pulled in different

directions and had to juggle multiple responsibilities with very visible public outcomes.

HT 8 (C, Survey) summed up the crux of the matter as it is felt by headteachers of small schools, irrespective of whether they are in their first headship or not:

Too much paperwork in a little school, with too big a teaching commitment with insufficient funds. Something has to give. Feel that you're doing neither job [teaching and leadership/management aspects] well enough (HT 8, C, Survey).

It is clear that a school's size and the related teaching demands that are often part of 'small school headship' are influences in the decisions of headteachers and whether to leave or stay in a particular school or not. This headteacher's comment also hints at something commented on by a number of headteachers with a class responsibility. They feared they were becoming less effective teachers because their priorities were many and sometimes children needed continuity of class teacher which they, often 'job-share' teachers in effect and pulled in different directions by competing priorities and demands, felt they could not provide.

The combination of the effect of long hours, conflict between teaching responsibilities and those of leadership and management along with perhaps an erosion of self-confidence in one's own teaching abilities leads headteachers to desire a reduction in teaching commitment as illustrated in Table 20. This is particularly so for headteachers of small schools who have *class* responsibility rather than a regular teaching commitment that is without a specific class responsibility.

**Table 20: Wish to reduce teaching commitment**

	A	B	C	Sig.
	Mean	Mean	Mean	
Wish to reduce teaching commitment	2.60	1.66	1.52	.000*

The relentless of the job as expressed by many headteachers is closely aligned to the notion of do-ability. The words of HT 21 (C, Survey) sum up the feelings of many:

I feel the workload is not manageable. Even when some things have progressed extremely well there is a feeling that I still haven't tackled c or d (HT 21, C, Survey).

Experience appears not to ease the pressure:

The workload is relentless and even with experience it is hard to reduce demands (HT 30, C, Survey).

Long hours can 'sap energy levels and creativity' (HT 93, C, Survey) and lead headteachers to struggle to maintain hobbies and family activities, particularly during term-time. The eyelids droop and physical and emotional weariness detract from favourite pastimes. One headteacher wrote perhaps with frustration or even irony that he fell asleep almost every evening, '*when* I want to watch football' (HT 39, C, Survey).

I will now consider three effects on personal and family life using the three outcomes of an experience of visiting a hospital 'Accident and Emergency Department': 'Code Red', 'Fractured Bones' and 'Elective Surgery'.

## **6.9. Accident and Emergency, Fractured Bones and Elective Surgery**

The final section of this chapter deals with the nature of the impact of being a headteacher on the personal and family lives of headteachers. The nature of headship is that it can be all-consuming and this can lead to difficulties with maintaining a healthy work-life balance. This can adversely affect an individual's health and well-being and affect the quality of their family life,

sometimes contributing to their decision to headship of a particular post or to leave headship altogether.

The impact of headship is universal in that it affects the lives of headteachers in all three headteacher groups and does not appear to be gender or age specific. Responses to a simple binary, 'yes/no' filter question (Q43, HT survey, Appendix 11) indicate that 88.4% (N=155) reported that headship had had an impact on their family and personal life. The percentages for each group are similar with 86.7% of Group A heads reporting an impact (N=45), 89.7% of Group B heads (N=39) and 88.7% of Group C headteachers (N=72). Consequently, there are no statistically significant differences between the three groups (Pearson chi-square, sig. = .901).

However, although not statistically significant and thematic analysis did not identify 'potentially differentiating themes' (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 44), the issues are so widely reported both in terms of this study and abroad in the literature (e.g. Fidler and Atton, 2004; Southworth, 1998; Thomson, 2009; Woods, 2002) that they are worth exploring for the headteachers in this study.

Responses to a Likert style question (Q41, HT survey) link the impact of the job to headteacher departure but only in so far as it is an influence for headteachers in all groups. 75.9% (N=145) headteachers ranked 'impact of headship on family and personal life' as 'significant', very significant' or 'extremely significant' in response to a five point scale Likert question (Q41, HT survey) (Table 21).

**Table 21: Impact of headship on family and personal life by HT group**

	Group A (40)		Group B (38)		Group C (67)	
	Count	Valid Percent	Count	Valid Percent	Count	Valid Percent
Extremely significant	11	27.5	13	34.2	27	40.3
Very significant	7	17.5	11	28.9	13	19.4
Significant	9	22.5	9	23.7	10	14.9
Not very significant	0	0.0	1	2.6	2	3.0
Not at all significant	13	32.5	4	10.5	15	22.4

N=145

However, comparison of means using one way ANOVA to determine statistical significance for the significance rankings (Q43, HT survey) did not indicate statistical significance (.142, ANOVA). In this way the Likert question and the 'yes/no' filter question produced no statistically significant results by headteacher group.

Thematic analysis of qualitative survey data from 137 headteachers indicates that headteachers across all three groups experienced a range of effects on their personal and family lives. However, headship has a number of different effects and individuals respond in unique ways that enable them to relate to their physical and emotional self and to respond to members of their family, their 'community of practice' in which learning across the generations takes place whatever age a person is.

I now turn to explore the impact of headteachers' lived experiences on their lives and decisions using three outcomes of an 'Accident and Emergency' experience:

- **Code Red:** surgery and convalescence needed
- **Fractured Bones:** relationships at home and away
- **Elective Surgery:** choosing to live a different way.

First, I will explore the physical and emotional impact that being a headteacher can have and how it relates to headteacher departure in a short section titled 'Code Red'. Secondly, I will discuss the impact that headship can have on relationships with the family as a community of practice through use of an analogy of 'Fractured Bones'. Lastly, I will explore the evidence that headteachers are choosing to live a 'different way' and that an influence on headteacher departure, through deciding upon 'Elective Surgery'.

### 6.9.1. Code Red: surgery and convalescence needed

40.37% (N=155) of headteachers report that their health has been adversely affected by the job or consequences of being a headteacher (Q.60, Appendix 12). 31% said that they agreed and 9.7% said that they strongly agreed that their health had been affected by headship. Comparison of means using one way ANOVA (Table 22) indicates that there is a statistically significant difference in the means of the headteacher groups (.025, ANOVA).

**Table 22: Impact on health: comparison of means by HT group**

	A	B	C	Sig.
	Mean	Mean	Mean	
My health has been adversely affected by headship	3.42	2.66	3.08	.025*

Physical well-being and emotional well-being are affected by the all-consuming nature of the job. Whether headteachers feel that this results in stress or not, there is no doubt that many work long hours as has already been reported – they 'burn the candle at both ends'. However, many wrote and spoke about the impact of the long hours, the kinds of decisions they make and the many and heavy responsibilities they shoulder. Headteachers in all three groups are affected physically and emotionally by the leadership role they have.

Although 28.9% (N=45) of headteachers in Group A agreed with the statement 'My health has been adversely affected by headship' and a slightly higher proportion of headteachers from Group C agreed with this statement (37.5%, N=72), it is striking that the figures for Group B headteachers are much higher (Table 23 overleaf). The proportion of headteachers in Group B who agreed with this statement is almost double that of Group A headteachers, 60.5% (N=38) Group B headteachers reporting that they believed headship had had an adverse effect on their health. Headteachers in Group B are twice as likely to report that their health has been adversely affected than Group A headteachers and 1.6 times more likely than Group C

headteachers. In addition, Group B headteachers were more likely to be affected emotionally by aspects of the job

**Table 23: Effect of headship on health**

(Statement: My health has been adversely affected by headship)

	<b>Group A (45)</b>		<b>Group B (38)</b>		<b>Group C (72)</b>	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Strongly agree	0	0.0	6	15.8	9	12.5
Agree	13	28.9	17	44.7	18	25.0
Neither agree nor disagree	11	24.4	3	7.9	16	22.2
Disagree	10	22.2	8	21.1	16	22.2
Strongly disagree	11	24.4	4	10.5	13	18.1

N=155

Analysis of open ended responses to the HT survey indicated that of all the groups, headteachers in Group B (20.5%, N=39) were the most likely to report that headship had affected their emotional health and well-being compared to headteachers in Groups A and C (11.1% N=45 and 15.5%, N=72 respectively).

Almost a quarter of headteachers in Group B (23.1%, N=39) also reported that their physical well-being had been adversely affected by headship, a figure only slightly less than retiring headteachers in Group C (29.6%, N=72), who by virtue of their increased age, might be expected to report some physical impact of long hours.

How then are the effects on physical and emotional well-being felt?

The following statements are typical of the nature of physical and emotional impact on headteachers:

The stress and preoccupation make me irritable and difficult to live with! I needed a period of time on anti-depressants, although I did not take sick leave (HT 46, B, Survey).

Wakeful nights. Preoccupation with school. Panic on waking (HT 51, C, Survey).

Age appears to make a difference to headteachers' perceptions as to the extent with which they cope with the job:

In an inner-city school the pace is relentless. I find I cope less well than I did at 50 (HT 7, C, Survey).

A sense of impending doom is present in the words of some headteachers who have decided to retire or retire early:

Health deteriorating. I want to enjoy some of my retirement. Death of two local heads since taking up post four years ago (HT 36, C).

Doctors' predictions and advice can add to a sense of impending doom but add to the impetus to 'get out now':

I don't want to leave yet. I'm only just 55 but my doctor says if I'm not careful I'll have a stroke within 18 months (HT 101, C, Survey).

Similarly, HT 147 (B, Survey) wrote

Am being treated for stress and depression. I decided that no job was worth that. Workload was undoable (HT 149, B, Survey).

A similar sentiment was expressed in more positive terms by HT 34 (C, Survey) who wrote:

I am so glad that I can retire early and enjoy time relaxing and enjoying my own interests while I am healthy (HT 34, C, Survey).

Stress can be caused by a critical incident (either personal or profession) but equally headteachers can suddenly realise that the impact of the job has led to cumulative effects:

I realise that stress has crept up on me over a very long period of time. Even though the school is a generally happy place to work [sic]. High blood pressure and permanent medication are symptoms of this (HT 44, C, Survey).

The lack of sleep and the effect of workload effect on mood and health issues such as high blood pressure were common themes particularly in headteachers in Groups B and Group C. In this respect, the findings were similar to those of the study by Phillips et al. into self-reported levels of stress (Phillips et al., 2007) and the annual surveys commissioned by the NAHT which repeatedly found that the impact of workload was detrimental to the personal and family lives of headteachers causing a similar range of effects on health and relationships as those experienced by the headteachers of Anglican schools (Daniels and French, 2006; French, 2009; French and Daniels, 2007).

### **6.9.2. Fractured bones: the fragility of relationships**

Headteachers are part of families that cross the generations and family life and relationships are affected by the demands and workload of headteachers and any stress that results.

Thematic analysis of the impact was reported in qualitative responses by 87.8% of headteachers (N=156) (Table 24 overleaf).

The nature of this impact was a 'fracturing' of the ties that are at the heart of how families function and learn together through life. Headteachers who were grandparents (mostly, but not exclusively Group C headteachers) felt frustrated that they could not support their (grown up) children and their children's children (i.e. headteachers' grandchildren) in practical ways

because of the demands of headship and feelings of exhaustion (e.g. HT 4, A, Survey; HT 7, C, Survey) and a lack of flexibility in working hours and the rigidity of term times and 'leave' periods. Grandparents talked regretfully of missing being an active grandparent to a new or young grandchild and of regret at not being able to do more to support their children with their children, perhaps because distance added to the demands of the job meant travel at weekends was not possible if they were to remain on top of their job.

**Table 24: Impact of headship on personal and family lives**  
**Analysis of coded responses**

	Group A (45)		Group B (39)		Group C (71)	
	Count	Valid Percent	Count	Valid Percent	Count	Valid Percent
Impact on family members	1	2.2	0	0.0	3	4.2
Emotional well-being affected	5	11.1	8	20.5	11	15.5
Physical well-being affected	5	11.1	9	23.1	21	29.6
Preoccupation with work	3	6.7	5	12.8	8	11.3
Stolen Life'	7	15.6	5	12.8	19	26.8
Impact on relationships	23	51.1	17	43.6	24	33.8
Home/school boundaries indistinct	12	26.7	13	33.3	27	38.0
Positive aspects of the job	5	11.1	4	10.3	1	1.4
Other	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.4
No details given	7	15.6	5	12.8	11	15.5

*N=137*

*Respondents were at liberty to write as much or as little as they liked so percentages do not sum to 100.*

Those with children at home felt frustrated because of the long hours they worked and felt that they did not have time for their children during the working week (e.g. HT 1, B, Survey). Younger headteachers talked of missing bath times and headteachers of all ages and in all of the three headteacher groups talked with regret over missing important milestones in their child's development (e.g. HT 143, A, HT 132, B and HT 127, B). They felt they had let a member of their family down or when important occasions had been missed such as taking their child to school.

Relationships with partners and spouses suffered especially during term-time. One headteacher commented on the changed person they appeared to become during term time:

My wife tells me I am a different person during term-time. I find it difficult to switch off and have felt very tired. Can be short-tempered and irritable as a result (HT 22, C, Survey).

Long hours and irritability can cause 'friction' at home (HT 119, A, Survey). HT 126 (C, 124, Survey) found that long hours caused similar difficulties at home:

My family have found it difficult to understand my going into work at weekends and working at home in the evenings. In term time this has put a lot of strain on us, particularly at difficult times for the school! (HT 124, C, Survey).

Conversation can become one-sided as 'it can be a struggle to keep up a 'normal' life, i.e. do and talk about things other than school' (HT 26, B, Survey). A common theme in the open responses of headteachers was a sense of never being able to 'leave work behind' (e.g. HT 18, C, Survey) and this could be seen in limited topics of conversation. As one head rather ironically wrote, this does *not* lead to 'Exciting topics of conversation!!' (HT 13, A, Survey).

The preoccupation with the demands of the job and the long hours contribute to a loss of self and sense of who they are within their family unit. Some headteachers struggle to keep in touch with their role and responsibilities as parents, perhaps with young children, and children, albeit grown-up, of parents who are perhaps elderly and need support.

The theme of 'no time for me' (HT 17, C, Survey) is an extension of the 'all-consuming job which never leaves you' (HT 22, C, Survey). For one headteacher being constantly preoccupied with the job meant more than just thinking about it and how to manage the workload. It meant a reduction in capacity and desire to do other things:

Constantly thinking about job and how to manage plethora of tasks. Don't want to go anywhere/do anything outside of school life (HT 38, C, Survey).

Headteachers felt that headship had 'stolen their life' (e.g. HT 2, C, Survey) due to the all-consuming nature of the role and sometimes, their own decision to prioritise work over personal life and family relationships. HT 10 (A, Survey) recognised that they were an agent in their own workload issues when he wrote

Hours spent limits my personal and social time during term time. School is my Priority! (A, Survey).

One headteacher wrote of how other members of their family had been sucked into their professional world:

My whole family have become involved in all I do as support and in a teaching role and are unpaid volunteers as well! (HT 24, A, Survey).

A number of headteachers reported that their job had been a contributory factor in the break-up of a former relationship or marriage (e.g. HT 48, B, Survey; HT 27, C and HT 111, C, Survey). HT 31 commented that the job had placed their marriage under significant strain:

Came very close to break up of marriage – it has survived just! (C, Survey).

Common to the experience of all these headteachers whose relationships 'survived just' or didn't survive was a sense of long working hours and the intrusion of school into their home lives. Universal amongst these responses was a belief that the demands had been a contributory factor in the breakdown of relationships.

Long hours and the need to attend Governing Body meetings and school events in the evenings and at weekends also placed additional demands upon other members of the family. Early morning breakfast meetings were also problematic as early morning and evenings along with generally long days sometimes created childcare complications for younger headteachers who found that childcare was needed from 7.30am to 6pm. Demands and tasks for the family often fell to a headteacher's partner or spouse, with a partner having to 'bear the brunt' of family matters such as cooking the evening meal as the headteacher got home too late (e.g. HT 130, C, Survey). This in turn causes friction and tension 'at home'.

Allowing a school to take priority over family commitments and relationships was a common theme throughout open responses (survey) and interviews. A number of headteachers spoke with a very tangible guilt and sadness about the impact that their role – and their decisions to allow it to dominate their lives – had had on those they loved. The following are typical of the regret felt:

Time devoted to work which *really* belonged to my family (HT 29, C, Survey);

Regret the amount of time I have not spent with my family (HT 84, B, Survey) *and*

My own children missed out on having a stress free mum – school always coming first (HT 37, B, Survey).

However, one headteacher and single parent of three children also recognised the importance of being able to work even though it meant sacrifices for her and her children in terms of the time they could spend together:

My children are virtually orphans but they would be hungry orphans too without my working (HT 53, A, Survey).

Life could become complicated and stressful when a headteachers' partner or spouse also had an equally demanding job or one in which the hours were erratic:

Conflict over time with husband as a vicar and busy most evenings with weekends with church/school (HT 55, B, Survey).

Resentment could occur at the demands of school affecting 'home life' especially when the needs of the school appeared to be of greater importance than those of the family. One head admitted of how school had made it to the top of the family's food shop:

Miss spending time with my new grandson and my husband gets fed up with all the hours I spend at school and on school work at home – even having school needs top of our shopping list at the weekend! (HT 75, A, Survey).

Family members could feel second and less important to pupils at a school and the demands of the job. This was exacerbated by early morning phone calls, for some headteachers as early as 6.30 from staff reporting sickness absence. Telephone calls outside term time were irritants to headteachers and their families alike as building projects in the school holidays required headteachers' decisions or the all year round opening of schools and Children's Centres meant contact during the 'school holidays' something that is increasingly part of headteachers' lives as extended services are part of the core offer of schools as a result of the Children Act 2004 (Ward and Eden, 2010).

HTs 128 (B, Survey) felt that their family's perceptions of their priorities were wrong but appeared powerless to change them, writing

My family consider I am never available for them. Particularly conflict with my personal time is interrupted (e.g. 7am 'phone calls to say staff

not coming in to school and phone calls during holiday period re. building work (HT 128, B, Survey).

Some headteachers recognise that it is not just the demands of their job and their preoccupation with it that has an impact on family relationships, it is also their own ability or lack of ability to 'switch off' and get off the 'treadmill' at least temporarily for a few hours or a day at the weekend. As HT 112 wrote:

It [the job] is totally absorbing during term time and there are many late nights. It is very difficult if not impossible to detach myself from the job. This necessitates marginalising my wife and five children. I am often too tired to be proactive with them (HT 112, C, Survey).

Practical needs were not addressed for either the headteacher or members of their family – no time of flexibility for doctor, dentist or hairdresser appointments (e.g. HT 76, C, Survey).

However, for some the situation was mitigated if their partner was also in education as there was a shared understanding of the demands of working in the education field. As HT 62 wrote

We have bounced ideas off each other, cried on each other's shoulders, celebrated successes and moved on from disappointments and survived 35 years together (HT 62, C, Survey).

It is interesting to note that headteachers in Group B are more likely to be widowed than those in Groups A or C. Headteachers in Groups B and C are more likely to be single than in group A (Pearson chi-square, sig. =.004).

The comment of HT 62 above and the statistic of the proportion of headteachers in Groups B and C suggest that, for some, the effect of headship as a way of life can be minimised by being in a long term relationship, although it is clear that some headteachers feel that the impact

on their families and on their relationships with family members is tested, sometimes to 'breaking point'.

Throughout all the data about workload and stress, a common thread is the lack of distinction between home and school. Headteachers of all ages and in all groups find it difficult to find a work-life balance and then once having found it, to maintain it. The difficulties this causes headteachers themselves and the difficulties it throws up for them in their relationships with members of their families is palpable. These are clearly influences on headteachers' decisions to either a specific school or headship altogether.

However, in a few more isolated incidences, headteachers commented on the positive effect of the job. Group A headteachers recognised the importance of taking advantage of the long summer holiday, one headteacher seeing it as a plus perhaps balancing out the lack of contact with his family during term time, while HT 14 (A, Survey) wrote of their recent cycling exploits cycling from Lands' End to John O'Groats as he 'never takes his school holidays for granted'. Similarly, a headteacher retiring had a different attitude to many headteachers in this study:

I refuse to let it rule my life. It is a job like any other that I rarely 'take home' (HT 28, C, Survey).

The job brought some perks and in one instance, a headteacher commented on how it had made him a better parent:

It has had a beneficial effect in terms of financial security, positions in society and has helped me be a better father (HT 96, B, Survey).

A good salary has helped fund children's university education (e.g. HT 80, A, Survey) and one headteacher commented that they were able to retire early because of the pension, something Peters et al found is contributing to the departure of headteachers in the 'baby boomer' generation (Peters et al., 2008).

### **6.9.3. Elective surgery: choosing a different life**

When headteachers realise the effect that the demands of headship in their particular context or the cumulative impact that it was having on them and their families, some elect to leave. They choose to live another way, to do something different. As HT 63 (B, Survey) summarised

I don't want to do it for a long time (HT 63, B, Survey).

I have already reported the numbers of headteachers retiring (Group C) and the numbers 'leaving' to do something different or to take up a different role in education (Group B) (see Chapter 4).

Is there a sense of 'the grass is greener on the other side' for all of these headteachers? Retirement offers the possibility of a life where the demands of the job do not encroach in the early morning, in evenings, at weekends and throughout the entire year. Leaving at any age offers the potential to do a different job in or outside of education. I reported the 'onward destinations' of Group B headteachers in Chapter 4: a number are going abroad, planning to work for charities or be self-employed. These then perhaps are not 'opting out' but choosing 'a different way of living', possibly pursuing long held passions and interests.

In this sense some are choosing 'elective surgery' to take the medical analogies of the titles in this final section of Chapter 6. 'Code Red' and 'Fractured Bones' may have happened once or more times or been threatened by doctors or family members. These headteachers may therefore be 'strollers' who have 'recognised the continued draining of their emotional reservoir and its potential for eventual failure' and have chosen to 'walk away' (Flintham, 2003, p.3) perhaps before they or members or their family suffer more 'fractured bones'.

More than half of head teachers said that they were unhappy with their work-life balance (59.4%; N=155) with 22.6% selecting 'strongly disagree' from a five point Likert scale of satisfaction (Appendix 12, HT Survey, Q.60). When responses are examined by headteacher group, it is clear that headteachers

in Group B are more likely to be unhappy with their work-life balance (76.9%, N=39) than headteachers in Groups A. However, the proportion of headteachers in Group C who are unhappy with their work-life balance are not far behind at 63.4% (N=71). Although 33.3% of Group A headteachers did not agree with the statement, it is striking to note that 37.8% (N=45) of those headteachers leaving a post but remaining in headship by taking up substantive headship of another school are unhappy with their work-life balance.

A large proportion of headteachers report that their families are unhappy with their work-life balance (67.1%, N=155). The proportion of headteachers in Groups A and C are similar, 57.7% (N=45) and 65.3% (N=72) respectively. However, the headteachers in Group B are more likely to report that their families are unhappy with their work-life balance, some 81.6% (N=38).

It is possible that a combination of personal choice and awareness that families are unhappy with a headteacher's work-life balance and the impact of the role on relationships within the immediate or wider family are influences on headteachers' leaving decisions.

## **6.10. The 'Family' as a community of practice and headteacher departure**

It is clear from analysis of the data that the job of headteacher has an enormous impact on the personal and family lives of headteachers. Such is the importance of health and relationships with family members that headteachers are influenced by these relationships in their decision making. When 'viewed' through the theoretical 'lens' of Wenger's community of practice theory, it can be concluded that when family relationships are strained past a certain point or headteachers want a different form of relationship within the 'family' as a community of practice then headteachers

may decide to take action to preserve 'what they have' or make changes in order to redefine the relationships within that family 'community'.

Headteachers leave because they experience the 'code red' of an emergency situation or the 'fractured bones' of relationships under strain or at breaking point. Some headteachers leave because they fear that to stay as headteacher of a particular school or remain in headship will ultimately result in a 'code red' or 'fracture clinic' situation. Other headteachers choose 'surgery', in the form of a different way of life and a different job or set of priorities.

As members of families, the experiences of the headteachers in this study exemplify the notion of trajectory that Wenger describes as part of the human existence:

As trajectories, our identities incorporate the past and the future in the very process of negotiating the present. They give significance to events in relation to time construed as an extension of the self. They provide a context in which to determine what, among all things that are potentially significant actually becomes significant learning. A sense of trajectory gives us ways of sorting out what matters and what does not, what contributes to our identity and what remains marginal (Wenger, 1998, p.155).

As spouses and partners, sons and daughters, mothers and fathers, grandfathers and grandmothers, we are uniquely tied to the lives of others through biological or adoptive ties. As partners and spouses we have ties of choice that link, bind and unite us to another emotionally. These ties appear to have additional dimensions of experience for headteachers compared to those felt by headteachers as members of the Professional and Nurture communities of practice. What it means to be a member of the family community of practice is negotiated through shared history, the creation and sustaining of family rites and rituals, traditions and practices. It is negotiated through living and learning together, through discussion, agreement and

disagreement, conflict and dissent, joy and disappointment. As has been seen in the comments of headteachers reported in this chapter, what it means to be a child, parent, grandparent or partner is something formed through experience and practice. These things help us define who we are through the way we relate to others within the world and enable us to construct an identity through the way we do things, the way we live and the way in which we 'become' fully human in the context of others (Wenger, 1998, p.149 and p.151).

Such is the importance to headteachers of negotiating meaning for themselves personally in relationship to their family members and the 'practice' of the family, that headteachers may be influenced by the family as a community of practice and their place of 'belonging' and 'becoming' fully human in that context that it influences their decisions about departure.

## **6.11. Chapter summary**

This chapter has argued that the professional and personal lives of headteachers can be understood through the theoretical 'lens' of communities of practice. The relationships of headteachers with the members and practice of three communities of practice (Professional, Nurture and Family) are influential in headteachers' individual decisions regarding departure from the headship of a particular school or headship altogether.

I have argued that headteacher departure is influenced by a sense of 'dis-ease' or 'dis-indentification' with members or the practice of the Professional community of practice. This 'dis-indentification' is the result of a lack of mutuality of engagement, lack of imagination and tensions in alignment of individuals to the shared domain of interest within a community of practice which is constantly changing in its response to external influences and pressures.

Similarly, although to a far less extent, changing relationships within the 'Nurture' community of practice is an influence in headteacher departure. Here it is not national expectations that play a part but parental expectations at a local (setting or school) level. When differences over expectations and interpretations of the role of members within the Nurture community of practice become too great or too onerous, this can influence headteachers' decisions.

Identity is also constructed and formed within the nucleus of the 'Family' as a community of practice. Being part of a family is life-long and therefore lasts longer than a headteacher's membership of a Professional or Nurture community of practice within its locus in one setting. The nature of headteachers' relationships within their immediate and extended family influence decisions about departure. Such is the importance of these relationships that headteachers take actions to protect, safeguard and strengthen these relationships through their decisions about staying or leaving headship of a particular school or headship altogether.

I turn now in Chapter 7 to discuss the fourth community of practice detailed in Figure 11, the 'Spiritual Community of Practice'.



# CHAPTER 7

## HISTORICAL, PUBLIC AND PERSONAL DIMENSIONS OF ANGLICAN SCHOOL HEADSHIP

### 7.1. Introduction

This chapter will argue that three dimensions underpin the lived experiences of headteachers as members of the 'Spiritual' community of practice and that it is the interplay of these dimensions in the form of expectations which influence practice and the construction of identity as headteachers negotiate meaning for themselves. The identity work which results can influence individual decisions to leave a school, Anglican headship or headship altogether.

Quantitative data, predominantly from the headteacher survey results, will be used to illuminate clear differences between headteacher groups. Qualitative data from responses to open ended questions in the survey (N=156) and from the interviews conducted with headteachers (Table 25) will be used to illustrate the range of expectations experienced by headteachers within the interplay of the three dimensions of Anglican school headship presented here. Qualitative data from Group C headteachers are not used in this chapter as it is Group A and B headteachers who appear to be particularly influenced by aspects of Anglican school headship and are leaving Anglican school headship and/or headship altogether (see Chapter 4).

**Table 25: Scale of qualitative responses for Chapter 7**

	Group A (N=45)		Group B (N=39)	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
<b>Survey</b>	18 (40%)	27 (60%)	14 (35.9%)	25 (64.1%)
<b>Interviews</b>	7 (15.6%)	6 (13.3%)	5 (12.8%)	10 (25.6%)

*Percentages shown are for Groups A (N=45) and B (N=39)*

Although the number of interviews conducted with headteachers yielded detailed personal articulations of the experiences of headteachers the experiences of headteachers were very varied and so no generalisations in respect of the findings of this chapter can be drawn. However, the voices of headteachers illustrate the range of experiences of headteachers leaving for a subsequent headship (Group A) and headteachers leaving headship (Group B) and the findings reported indicate that further research into aspects of Anglican school headship is merited.

## **7.2. Scale of departure from Anglican school headship**

Nearly half of all headteachers taking up a subsequent headship (Group A) are moving to a non-Anglican school (46.7%, N=45) while the same proportion (46.7%, N=45) are taking up headship of an Anglican school (see Table 8, Chapter 5). Three headteachers (6.7%, N=45) are taking up headships of other schools, (an independent school, a Catholic school and a foundation school). As reported in Table 7 (Chapter 4), a quarter of headteachers (25%, N=156) are leaving headship altogether (Group B).

This is despite the data showing that personal faith and the characteristics of Anglican schools were motivating factors in many headteachers' decisions to apply for the schools they are now leaving. Thematic analysis of qualitative data found that personal faith had been important to half of the headteachers taking part in the study (54.2%, N=156) as had the characteristics of church schools (53.1%, N=156). A slightly higher proportion of Group B headteachers reported that personal faith had been a particular reason for applying for the school they were now leaving (56.5%, N=23 compared to 48.6%, N=35 of Group A headteachers). A slightly higher proportion of Group A headteachers reported that the particular characteristics of church schools had been an influential reason for applying for their school (62.9%, N=35 compared to 52.2%, N=23 of Group B headteachers).

I turn now to detail the three dimensions of Anglican school headship and provide some background to the spiritual community of practice before presenting findings related specifically to expectations.

### 7.3. Historical, public and personal dimensions

Three dimensions of Anglican school headship emerged from analysis of the data which encapsulate the lived experiences of headteachers and enable an understanding of headteacher departure: (i) historical; (ii) public; and (iii) personal (Figure 12). The dimensions can be defined thus:

- **Historical:** the history and heritage of (i) the Christian faith, (ii) the Church of England; and (iii) of Church of England schools since 1811
- **Public:** public expressions or explorations of faith of individuals and/or a community
- **Personal:** personal beliefs and practice related to the Christian faith.

Figure 12: The three dimensions of Anglican school headship

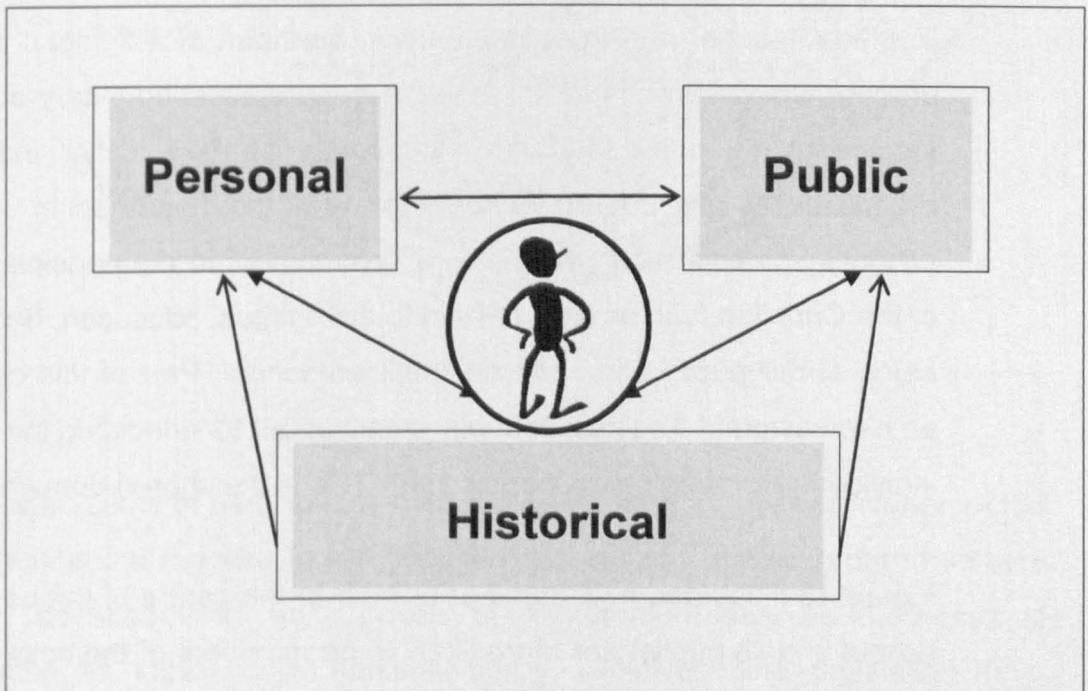


Figure 12 illustrates the interplay of a headteacher's lived experience with the three dimensions which form the basis of much of the discussion in this chapter. The range of expectations of different members of the spiritual community of practice can be grouped into three categories:

- Expectations members of the spiritual community of practice have of headteachers
- Expectations headteachers have of the spiritual community
- Expectations headteachers have of themselves.

This chapter will also explore headteachers' experiences of the Divine (God) through 'calling' or 'callings' which influence their decisions about leaving.

I turn now to defining the spiritual community of practice before exploring how the historical dimension is experienced within a community of practice as existing within a constellation of practices.

#### **7.4. Defining the 'Spiritual' community of practice**

The headteacher and the school are at the heart of a spiritual community of practice which spreads far beyond the geographical boundary of the school's catchment, its pupils and their immediate families. Other individuals and organisations are bound up together with the headteacher and with the school's immediate community by a commitment to the principles and beliefs of the Christian faith as they pertain to the spiritual education, health and well-being of the pupils attending an Anglican school. Part of this commitment is an expression of Anglican schools' commitment to 'educating the masses' and individual liberation (see Chapter 2.4.). This is the shared domain of interest.

Figure 13 illustrates how those at or near to the centre of the community (the school and its pupils) are more likely to be members of the core group whose focus is on the spiritual development of children through the daily life and

work of the community than those members and groups further away from the centre (e.g. Diocesan Team and the ecclesiastical framework of the local and national Church (see Lankshear, 2000, pp.110-115)). Membership can take a number of forms and be characterized by differing degrees of participation as depicted in red in Figure 13.

**Figure 13: Members and levels of participation**  
(Diagram adapted from Wenger, 2013)

Members' levels of participation may vary over time for the boundaries of the community and the four levels depicted outside of the core group members within the school are fluid. Levels of engagement may be the result of response to local need, national policy initiatives and legislation (e.g. government policy on academies). For example, Diocesan Team members

(e.g. Diocesan Director of Education (DDE), School Improvement or Effectiveness Officer) may be occasional or active participants, participating when there is something specific to be discussed or done. The DDE often becomes involved in the appointment process of a school's new headteacher and the Improvement or Effectiveness Officers often support a school with SIAS inspection aspects or 'health checks' mid-way through an inspection cycle. Representatives of the Diocese such as the Bishop's Visitor may have a pastoral and regular or occasional relationship with the headteacher and school (Diocese of Lincoln, 2013).

The Diocesan Education Team will be involved in supporting the school develop its distinctive Christian ethos through training and support and in holding the school to account in terms of additional criteria for church schools (NATSOC, 2009a). The National Society (NATSOC), on behalf of the Anglican Church in England, supports through inspection (NATSOC, 2009a) and training and by providing a national voice in articulating the Church's position in respect of church school education.

Headteachers of other Anglican schools may be peripheral members of a particular school's spiritual community of practice by virtue of the mutual support headteachers often offer each other in 'clusters' and collaboration on projects related to the spiritual education of children. Providers of courses of particular interest to Anglican schools (e.g. on Religious Education) may be transactional participants by providing training and resources to the spiritual community of practice.

Members of the Anglican Church locally may support the school in respect of the spiritual education, health and well-being of pupils through an individual or representative capacity of a formal body, e.g. vicar, curate and Foundation Governors representing the Parochial Church Council (PCC) in a VA school. Schools may have informal relationships with members of the local church(es) through pre-school provision, individuals volunteering in school and working together towards an event, festival or celebration.

Parents may play a part in the spiritual community of practice through supporting the education of their children in choosing an Anglican school and sometimes through prayer groups or networks such as the 'Pray for Schools' network (formerly 'Schools Prayer Network') at local and national level (Pray for Schools, 2013).

Headteachers, staff and the local incumbent(s) may be engaged in activities of an operational nature such as daily acts of collective worship as required by law, the teaching of RE, or organising services for specific festivals within the church year (e.g. Harvest). Some church schools organise a Eucharist service regularly or at Easter (Attfield, 1993) for pupils, staff and parents so providing a focus for the life of the school that provides space for members to communicate and celebrate shared aspects of values and belief within the Anglican tradition that is at the heart of the history of Anglican schools in England (see Chapter 2.4.). Some dioceses organise annual church school festivals for all church schools in their diocese during which children from many schools join together in a range of activities (e.g. Diocese of Lincoln).

Foundation Governors in VA schools (nominated by the PCC) and officers of the Diocesan Education Team may engage with the headteacher on strategic matters (e.g. school improvement) while the Anglican Church works through the officers at the National Society and the Archbishops' Council as peripheral participants, but none the less important, to develop and articulate the position of the Anglican Church 'at large' on issues such as admissions, RE and the role of Diocesan Boards of Education (Archbishops' Council Education Division, 2013).

The nature of engagement may therefore be operational or strategic, related to the spiritual education of pupils (teaching, pedagogy, curricular aspects) or to aspects of organisation and administrative functions such as admissions, governance, personnel, buildings and finance particularly pertinent to VA schools.

Additional parties may be members but less concerned with the shared domain of interest, for example, Local Authorities, government and government agencies such as Ofsted (Johnson, 2003).

Although members of the spiritual community of practice may also be members of the professional community of practice, the shared competence that distinguishes members of the spiritual community of practice from those outside the group is a commitment to Christian values and beliefs and to communicating those values and beliefs to those at the heart of the purpose of Anglican schools, the pupils.

## **7.5. The historical dimension of Anglican headship**

As part of a spiritual community of practice (Figure 13) Anglican schools are also part of a constellation of practices, the multiple communities of practice or 'networks' or 'clusters' referred to in Chapter 2 (2.6.). Spiritual communities of practice are related to other communities by being part of something bigger and broader than a commitment to the spiritual development of pupils (domain of shared interest) of a single school within the state education system in England. Furthermore, the practice and collective identity of spiritual communities of practice are influenced and defined

... in part by the way in which they negotiate their place within the various constellations they are involved in ... (Wenger, 1998, p.128).

I turn now to consider four characteristics of constellations from a list of nine suggested by Wenger in his exposition of identity and practice (see Chapter 2.6.) which are pertinent to the historical dimension of Anglican school headship as experienced by headteachers in this study (Figure 14):

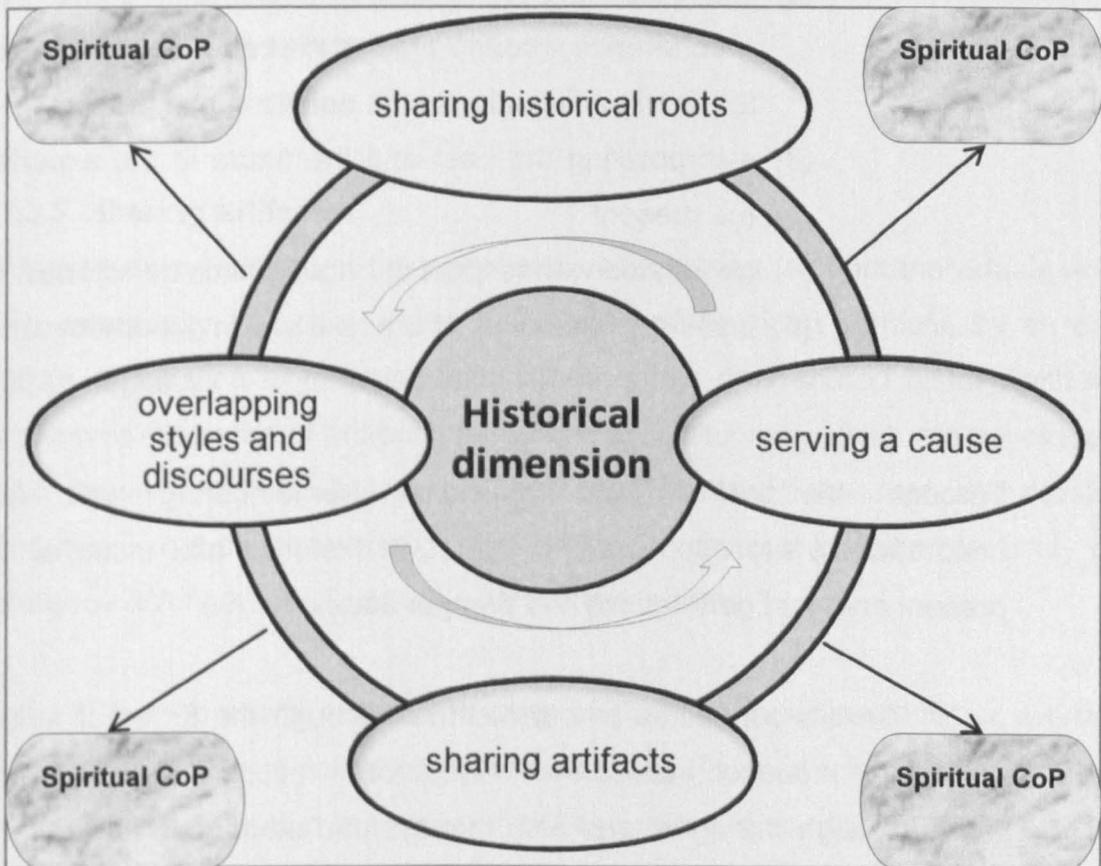
- sharing historical roots
- serving a cause
- sharing artifacts
- having overlapping styles or discourses

(1998, p.127).

### 7.5.1. Sharing historical roots

All schools have their own individual histories and traditions, but Anglican schools have a collective history and identity forged in the beliefs of the Christian faith and the commitment of the Church of England to the 'education of the masses' as part of its mission and service to the nation (see Chapter 2.4.).

Figure 14: Characteristics of constellations as related to spiritual communities



CoP: Community of Practice

Therefore the formation of a spiritual community of practice and their practice within a constellation of practices has been influenced by the past, are experienced in the present through the ties, negotiation and participation of its members and are focused on the future through imagination and aspiration. In this meeting of past, present and future, identity is characterised by a temporality of identity for the individual that can be defined thus:

The past, the present, and the future are not in a simple straight line, but embodied in interlocked trajectories. It is a social form of temporality, where the past and the future interact as the history of a community unfolds across generations. In summary, the temporal notion of trajectory characterizes identity as:

- (1) work in progress
- (2) shaped by efforts – both individual and collective – to create a coherence through time that threads together successive forms of participation in the definition of a person
- (3) incorporating the past and the future in the experiences of the present
- (4) negotiated with respect to paradigmatic trajectories
- (5) invested in histories of practice and in generational politics

(Wenger, 1998, p.158).

Through participation and reification, remembering and forgetting, headteachers are connected to their own histories and those of others of present and past generations. As Wenger states

We are connected to our histories through the forms of artifacts that are produced, preserved, weathered, reappropriated, and modified through the ages, and also through our experience of participation as our identities are formed, inherited, rejected, interlocked, and transformed through mutual engagement in practice from generation to generation (1998, p.89).

The history and heritage of Anglican schools form part of an individual's construction of their own identity as well as being an evolving and changing sense of collective identity.

### **7.5.2. Serving a cause**

As outlined in Chapter 2, Anglican schools were established to meet the 'general' and 'domestic' needs of the nation (The National Society, 1970) and as part of the Church's mission to the nation through offering Christ (Dearing, 2001; Elbourne, 2009). Both the historic foundations of Anglican schools to 'educate the masses' (Chadwick, 1997) and to 'offer Christ' (Dearing, 2001) are examples of how Anglican schools 'serve a cause' (Wenger, 1998, p.129). They are an expression of the Anglican Church's commitment to be God's agent in the divine task of mission, providing children with the 'tools for making sense of a human life' and for 'doing justice to humanity, seeking its liberation and self-awareness' (Williams, 2009).

### **7.5.3. Sharing artifacts**

Practice evolves through the negotiation of meaning for both individuals and the community collectively and in the case of Anglican schools, by an on-going negotiation of meaning within the context of a shared history with its attendant repertoire of artifacts, resources and discourse which are developed and drawn from historical beliefs, perspectives, traditions, rites and rituals. Practice is not constrained by geographical or physical location, proximity or distance (Wenger, 1998, p.130). As Wenger states:

The repertoire of a community of practice includes routines, words, tools, ways of doing things, stories, gestures, symbols, genres, actions, or concepts that the community has produced or adopted in the course of its existence, and which have become part of its practice. The repertoire combines both reificative and participative aspects. It includes the discourse by which members create meaningful statements about their world, as well as the styles by which they

express their forms of membership and their identities as members (1998, p.83).

This repertoire, however historically constructed within the Christian Church over a two thousand year history or by the Church of England since the Reformation and the separation from Rome under Henry VIII is not a fixed repertoire of 'set pieces' and uniformity in the ways of doing things. Rather practice within the spiritual community is subject to degrees of interpretation that encompass both 'its rehearsed character' and provide a rich resource to be utilised 'for further engagement in practice' (Wenger, 1998, p.83).

For instance, the use of christening and communion rites are two examples by which the shared repertoire of the Christian Church and the Church of England can be seen as reified practices that reflect the 'history of mutual engagement' (Wenger, 1998, p.83). Both rites are expressions or reifications of faith and a seeking for God in the life of an individual (child at baptism and throughout life and spiritual life on earth and eternal life for communicants). In a school the local incumbent will often 'perform' a 'christening' on a baby doll to teach children about this Christian rite in a Reception or Infant class as part of the RE curriculum. Christening per se is a centuries' old Christian tradition reflecting Old Testament rituals of bringing a baby for blessing at the temple (e.g. Samuel) and the New Testament ritual of dedicating a new-born child to God or to ask for and receive a blessing from God (e.g. Mary and Joseph bringing infant Jesus to the Temple). In the celebration of the rite of communion, for example at Easter, the service draws on Christian tradition in the form of the Last Supper of Christ sharing bread and wine with his disciples. The sharing of bread and wine is a reification of the symbolism of salvation through Christ's propitiation for the sins of mankind. The liturgy of the communion service is a shared resource in the form of discourse which enables members of the community of practice to draw on shared historical resources, liturgy, language and ritual to understand unique aspects of the Christian faith. It is through such shared artifacts, routines, gestures, symbols and discourse in the form of liturgy that the Church teaches and sustains the faith of its members individually and collectively.

Despite 'well-established interpretations' (Wenger, 1998, p.83) and the well-rehearsed expressions of faith, seeking and worship, these rites and rituals are utilised in the negotiation and production of new meanings in the life and work of the Anglican school, for example in whole school and class acts of collective worship (Dewar, 2003a; 2003b) and in the sharing of the Eucharist on occasion (Ainsworth, 1997; Attfield, 1993; Withers, 2010).

In interpreting the Instrument of Ethos (Elbourne, 2009, p.5) meaning is negotiated both in the context of the historical dimension and in light of the setting's local context (e.g. Bazalgette, Reed, Kehoe and Reed, 2006; French, 2010; Johnson and McCreery, 1999; Worsley, 2006) with the result that a school's 'religious character' is developed 'in accordance with the principles of the Church of England' (Instrument of Ethos in Elbourne, 2009, p.5) through mutual engagement. Because of the history of mutual engagement and the repertoire of shared resources within the Christian faith and the traditions of the Church of England the repertoire of practice can be 'inherently ambiguous' (Wenger, 1998, p.83) thus providing opportunities for the artifacts and expression of faith and the faith journey to be interpreted and re-interpreted or moulded anew.

Approaches to a distinctive Christian ethos, to 'belonging', 'rootedness' and being part of a 'narrative' (Elbourne, 2012; 2013) enable the preservation and development of a school's 'religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England' (Instrument of Ethos in Elbourne, 2005, p.5).

Central to the expression of Christian distinctiveness in light of the Christian gospel heritage of Christianity is the cross. As a symbol it portrays belief but is also a focus for values such as forgiveness that lie at the heart of the Christian message (e.g. Johnson and McCreery, 1999; French, 2010). Schools will often display a cross in the entrance and possibly a Bible as a reminder to members of the school and wider community that the school is a church school and that faith is respected (e.g. Bazalgette et al., 2006; French, 2010).

Food, music and silence can also be artifacts with particular symbolic significance as means of sharing faith and engaging in interpreting the Christian gospel (Dewar, 2003a) in ways that encapsulate the historical dimension of headship within the public and personal dimensions for all members of the spiritual community of practice (Smith, 2008, p.85-86). Education and the life of a school may be 'church-related' (Francis, 1987) in that schools may utilise the local Church building, the Bible, the Lord's Prayer in collective worship and welcome the contribution of local clergy in the life of the school (see also Withers, 2010). Where this is the case and schools utilise the resources of the local church, Francis's study of primary schools in Gloucestershire (both schools with a religious character and those without) found that headteachers were (i) more likely to have a denominational affiliation to the Church of England and (ii) attend church themselves.

#### **7.5.4. Overlapping styles or discourses**

Spiritual communities of practice within a constellation of practices have styles and discourses which are held in common and which cross historical and geographical boundaries. Wenger defines styles and discourses thus:

Styles and discourses are aspects of the repertoire of a practice that are exportable. Elements of style and discourse can be detached from specific enterprises. They can be imported and exported across boundaries, and reinterpreted and adapted in the process of being adopted within various practices (Wenger, 1998, p.129).

The history and heritage of different groups within the spiritual community of practice (e.g. lay and ordained members) are expressed in rites, rituals and language as these are transferred and adapted from different groups within the spiritual community of practice through the interpretation and re-interpretation of what it means to 'belong' (Elbourne, 2012) and 'become fully human' (Wenger, 1998).

Although the term 'threshold place' was first used by Boutellier (1979) in writing about Catholic schools before being taken up by Astley (2002) and

Worsley (2006) who both argued that the concept is relevant to Anglican schools, this metaphor is helpful for considering the historical dimension of Anglican school headship. Members of the spiritual community cross and re-cross the 'threshold' of an Anglican school, entering and leaving both physically, spiritually and emotionally to engage in learning, exploration of faith and the construction of individual identity.

For instance, collective acts of worship in school can mirror forms of church services whether they are services for special events in the church year such as Christmas, Easter and Harvest, celebrating the Eucharist regularly (Ainsworth, 1997; Attfield, 1993; Withers, 2010) or daily acts of collective worship (Dewar, 2003a; Dewar, 2003b) in which reflection, prayer and worship form part of the usual pattern in primary schools. These may reflect the school's own history and practices, the beliefs and styles of various people and groups (e.g. the headteacher, vicar, the local worshipping community) and also reflect the school's context (e.g. multi-faith community, see French, 2010; Johnson and McCreery, 1999). Similarly, discourse about collective worship, the teaching of RE and ethos are part of the professional dialogue within communities of practice across the constellation at 'cluster' events and at training courses run by dioceses. In these ways, boundaries are traversed and practices are brokered as

... elements of discourses travel across boundaries and combine to form broader discourses as people coordinate their enterprises, convince each other, reconcile their perspectives, and form alliances (Wenger, 1998, p.129).

Although ethos can be defined as the 'distinctive habitual character or disposition of an individual, group or race' (Chambers Dictionary, 1998), ethos is an example of the diversity inherent in a constellation of practice for

... shared practice does not entail uniformity, conformity, cooperation, or agreement, but it does entail a kind of diversity in which perspectives

and identities are engaged with one another (Wenger, 1998, p.128-129).

Distinctive ethos may be seen in the re-imagining, re-shaping and redesign of (i) pedagogical approaches to teaching and learning (Cooling, 2013; Cooling and Cooling, 2013); (ii) curriculum used in the journey of personal development, values and wisdom (Brouwer, 2012); (iii) approaches to RE (e.g. Teece, 2001) and (iv) leading acts of collective worship. It may also be seen in the approaches adopted in respect of multi-cultural and multi-faith aspects (e.g. Ball and Troyna, 1993; Cox and Skinner, 1993; Higgins, 1993).

In such ways new meanings of what it is to be an Anglican school are produced as

...people copy, borrow, imitate, import, adapt, and reinterpret ways of behaving in the process of constructing an identity (Wenger, 1998, p.129).

Anglican headteachers operate then within a historical dimension and individual identity is produced and constructed through the relational practices of the spiritual community and the broader constellation. It is against the backdrop of the historical dimension that a range of expectations are layered.

I turn now to present quantitative and qualitative data suggesting that headship of an Anglican school presents particular challenges in the form of expectations and accountabilities that are felt as forms of pressure by headteachers and which influence departure.

## **7.6. Expectations, accountabilities and disillusionment**

### **7.6.1. Pressures of Anglican school headship and departure – the evidence**

Pressures of being a church school headteacher may influence departure. The Pearson chi-square test indicated that there appears to be an association between the pressures of church school headship and headteacher departure and statistically significant (Pearson chi-square, sig. = .034, N=156). 37.8% of all headteachers (N=156) felt that there are particular pressures in being head of an Anglican school but the proportion of heads in each of the three headteacher groups was significantly different. Group A heads were more likely to feel that the role had particular pressures (53.3%, N=45) compared to Group B and C heads (28.2%, (N=39) and 33.3%, (N=72) respectively).

Thematic analysis of open responses indicates that expectations and additional accountabilities are the most frequently reported causes of pressure. Although overall the percentage of heads who mentioned the theme 'Expectations' and 'Additional accountabilities' was similar (Expectations: 50.8%; Additional accountabilities: 47.5%, N=59), further examination of the data indicated that there were differences in the experiences and responses of the three headteacher groups. Group A heads were more likely to refer to expectations (66.7%, N=24) compared to 45.5% of Group B heads (N=11) and 39.1% of Group C heads (N=23). Conversely, a larger proportion of Group B heads referred to additional accountabilities as being a pressure (63.6%, N=11) compared to lower percentages in Group C (47.8%, N=23) and Group A (41.7%, N=24).

Although Group B headteachers were more likely to report issues of accountability as a pressure (see above), closer examination found that accountabilities specific to church schools did not appear to be more than an irritant causing frustrations and additional work. The main accountabilities were: (i) additional inspection (SIAS); (ii) church attendance (perceived as something for which headteachers were accountable) and (iii) financial and

buildings aspects related to Voluntary Aided schools. The majority of comments about aspects regarded as accountabilities by headteachers concerned the additional work required, timing and the purpose of SIAS Inspections, for example

Being accountable to another stakeholder and preparing a diocesan SEF as well as a standard SEF (HT 71 (A, Survey));

Completing the diocesan SEF – why can't 'church school' be a section in the present Ofsted SEF like Sixth Form? It's a duplicate of work (HT 75 (A, Survey); *and*

Preparing and having the pointless Section 48 Inspection (HT 89, A, Survey).

HT 122 (B) summed up the irritation felt:

Additional “nonsense” (in my opinion) of the denominational inspection being carried out like an Ofsted one. We get two inspections within a month. Ridiculous! (Survey).

The accountabilities mentioned were often listed by headteachers as bullet points or very succinct phrases in open-responses to survey questions so few substantial qualitative comments regarding accountabilities are available to present here. Additional accountabilities did not appear as significant or influential in the decisions of the fifteen Group B headteachers interviewed.

However, use of language suggests that some aspects of Anglican headship are perceived as expectations by some and accountabilities by others. For instance, HT 148 wrote that ‘There’s more accountability and commitment needed even than a state school, e.g. Sundays’ (B, Survey). Aspects such as church attendance will be considered within the relevant expectation later in the chapter. Further research might explore why an aspect of headship (e.g.

church attendance) is regarded as an 'expectation' by some headteachers but as an 'accountability' by others.

HT 106 wrote that Anglican school headship had 'Expectations above and beyond 'normal' red tape' (A, Survey). It is the interplay between the historical, public and personal dimensions of these expectations that form the focus of the remainder of this chapter.

### **7.6.2. Expectations and disillusionment**

Headteachers were asked to rank the significance of a set of influences regarding their decision about departure from a post on a five-point Likert scale, two of these aspects referring to the experience of being a 'church school head' (Q41, Appendix 1). Comparison of means between the three groups using one way ANOVA indicates that other people's expectations of church school headteachers and a sense of disillusionment about church school headship were not statistically significant (Expectations: sig. = .646; Disillusionment, sig. = .470).

However, when the five significance rankings of 'extremely significant', 'very significant' and 'significant' were 'collapsed' (i.e. combined to form a 'significant' category), analysis showed that 10.4% of heads ranked 'others' expectations of church school heads' as being an influence on their decision to resign from their post (N=144) and 7.7% ranked a sense of 'disillusionment with being a church school head' (N=144). The majority of those heads ranking either statement rated it 'significant', not 'very' or 'extremely' significant. Analysis by group showed that Groups A and C were more likely to be influenced by the expectations of others (12.9% (N=41) and 11.9% (N=67) respectively) with expectations of others having the least influence on Group B heads (5.5%, N=36). Pearson chi-square on the recoded variable indicated that expectations that other people may have of headteachers was not statistically significant. A greater proportion of Group A heads were also disillusioned with church school headship (11.9%, N=42) with proportions of

Groups B and C being reversed (8.33% (N=36) and 4.54% (N=66) respectively).

If pressures of church school headship are influential in headteacher decisions about departure as the data presented in the previous section indicate (Pearson chi-square, sig. = .034, N=156) but only 10.4% headteachers rank 'expectations of others of church school heads' as significant and Pearson chi-square indicates that the differences between the three headteacher groups are not statistically significant, there would appear to be a discrepancy in the data that needs further exploration.

The Likert scale type significance statement in the headteacher survey instrument (Q41, Appendix 1) only refers to the expectations of others and in light of the data presented in the later stages of this chapter this may have been a limitation of the study's instrument design. Given that there appear to be differences in experiences of headteachers in Groups A and B in particular, it is possible that there is more to the issue of 'expectations' than just expectations *other* people might have of headteachers or those expectations which are explicitly articulated.

Thematic analysis of headteacher interview transcripts indicated that church school headship could be both a positive and negative experience. Aspects of church school headship were an influence on decisions about departure from a post in seven out of thirteen Group A headteachers interviewed. Three out of seven Group A male headteachers regarded aspects of church school headship as negative. Aspects of church school headship were influential in the decisions about departure of four of the seven and in their decisions about their next headship 'destination'. Three out of six Group A female heads interviewed regarded aspects of church school headship as negative and were influenced by this in their decisions to leave their Anglican school headship. Aspects of church school headship were also influential in the choice of next school for one female headteacher.

As Table 26 shows a greater proportion of headteachers taking up a subsequent headship of a community maintained school reported particular pressures associated with being a church school head (28.9%, N=45).

**Table 26: Next headship destination by school religious character**

<b>View</b>	<b>VA</b>	<b>VC</b>	<b>CM</b>	<b>Other</b>
Church school headship has pressures	2.2%	20.0%	28.9%	4.4%
Expectations of others are significant in departure	0.0%	0.0%	6.7%	2.2%

N=45

This suggests that the pressures of Anglican school headship influence not just decisions about leaving but also influence choices and decisions about the religious character of schools in respect of subsequent headship applications. In light of the difficulties Anglican schools have in recruiting headteachers discussed in Chapter 2.2.2. (see also Howson, 2007) this has potentially significant consequences for Anglican schools if this data were representative of larger numbers of headteachers. If headteachers leaving headship of Anglican schools left with positive experiences of Anglican school headship to return in a subsequent (e.g. third) headship then some of the difficulties of supply and demand and haemorrhage from Anglican schools in particular may be reduced.

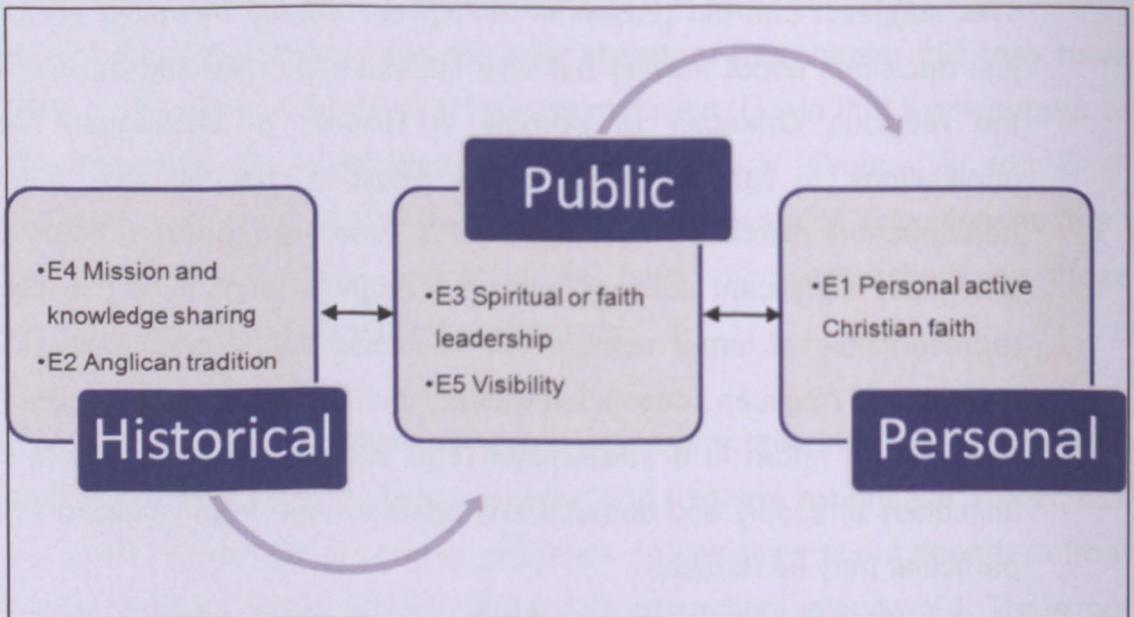
## **7.7. Expectations members of the spiritual community have of headteachers**

A number of expectations are perceived by headteachers in all groups to emanate from other members of the spiritual community and its practice. Concentrating on headteachers in Groups A and B I now explore the five expectations which other members of the community expect headteachers to demonstrate:

- E1:** Personal active Christian faith
- E2:** Adherence to the Anglican tradition
- E3:** Spiritual or faith leadership
- E4:** Engagement in mission and knowledge sharing
- E5:** Visibility.

These expectations can be mapped onto the historical, personal and public dimensions of Anglican school headship as portrayed in Figure 15.

**Figure 15: Expectations other members have of headteachers mapped against the dimensions of Anglican school headship**



### 7.7.1. Expectation 1: Personal active Christian faith

From the beginning of the recruitment and appointment process an expectation is communicated, that the successful applicant will have a personal Christian faith, commitment and practice, or be in sympathy with the aims and principles of Anglican schools. Anglican schools are permitted to make being a Christian a genuine occupational requirement (Lankshear and Hall, 2003, p.50) as enshrined in the Schools Standards and Framework Act

1998. This reflects a central aspect of faith schools and so can be used to help ensure that headteachers appointed to Anglican schools maintain the character of the school as laid out in a school's Trust Deed and Instrument of Ethos (Lankshear and Hall, 2003; Elbourne, 2009, p.5).

The law regarding Voluntary Aided schools is more specific than that applying to Voluntary Controlled schools. Phrases such as being a 'practising Christian', 'communicant member of the Church of England', ability to 'protect and enhance the Anglican ethos of the school' are permissible for Voluntary Aided schools (e.g. Diocese of Truro, 2010, pp.27, 35-36, 40-41 and 43; Diocese of Ely, 2005), such phrases reflecting the wording of the legislation:

...preference may be given, in connection with the appointment, remuneration or promotion of teachers at the school, to persons –

- (i) whose religious opinions are in accordance with tenets of the religion or religious denomination specified in relation to the school under section 69(4), or
- (ii) who attend religious worship in accordance with those tenets, or
- (iii) who give, or are willing to give, religious education at the school in accordance with those tenets

(School Standards and Framework Act, 1998, Section 60, Part V).

In respect of Voluntary Controlled schools, 'regard may be had to that person's ability to preserve and develop the religious character of the school' (School Standards and Framework Act, 1998, Section 60, Part IV). Consequently, phrases such as being a member of 'a church in sympathy with' or being a person 'in sympathy with' the Christian ethos of the school are often contained in adverts, job descriptions and person specifications.

The corpus of 524 adverts used in this study to recruit participants indicates these expectations are commonly expressed in practice by Governing Bodies in their recruitment processes. Governing Bodies are often supported by their

local Diocese with recruitment packs, containing guidance about every step of the appointment process (e.g. Diocese of Truro, 2010).

HT 122's comment about the appointment process in his experience was typical of the comments of headteacher interviewees. The advert to which he responded 'made it quite plain they were looking for a practising Christian' (B, Interview). Headteachers reported that they had been asked about their personal faith at interview, sometimes in carefully constructed questions about their support and 'sympathy' for the Christian ethos of the school but on occasion, in more overt ways that sought to establish the personal beliefs of the candidate. HT 140 articulated both the centrality of both personal faith and the Anglican tradition to governors:

When I was appointed to this post I was, it was made clear that the most important thing as far as the Governors were concerned was that I was a practising Christian and that I was prepared to support the Anglican faith. That was made very clear to me (HT 140, A, Interview).

It is clear that some headteachers do consider the requirements of the role of a church school head on or before appointment and assess their own abilities and commitment to what they understand to be the role and its requirements. HT 152 (A) commented that she had asked herself whether she wanted to be head of a church school before applying as she recognised that, although she was not an active practising Christian, she would have additional 'public' responsibilities as a 'church school head':

I thought, well I'm going to have to be responsible for promoting a Christian ethos, do I believe strongly enough that I can do that? I felt that I did (Interview).

Her doubts centred on the 'personal' dimension and her own beliefs and commitment. This aspect of the personal dimension encounters the 'public' dimension of Anglican school headship in the form of a visible expression of faith:

**I wasn't a strong Christian, I don't go to church every Sunday (HT 152, A, Interview).**

**As the result of her self-reflective assessment she decided to apply for the post. She has now left that post for headship of a community maintained school.**

**This expectation can lead to individual decisions about what to communicate to appointing Governing Bodies at interview. Such is the importance of the expectation of an active personal Christian faith that one headteacher admitted to having lied at interview when asked about his personal beliefs:**

**... when I came to interview, obviously I lied when they said and, 'What do you think about the church?' etc. So I waffled on trying to say the things I hope they wanted to hear not being too worried about being struck dead because I'm an atheist! (HT 136, A, Interview).**

**One head who defined himself as a Christian before he defined himself by denominational belief or practice (in his case, he was a Methodist by tradition and practice) commented on the meaninglessness of the adverts for Anglican heads in cases where Governing Bodies advertised for a 'communicant member of the Church of England': 'basically an atheist can still do that I think' (HT 121, B, Interview). The view of HT 117 (B) appears to bear his view out. She questioned whether Anglican schools could have a distinctive ethos and asserted that her personal ethos and values would 'fit into' a church school ethos well even though she didn't**

**... come from a Christian background ... I am not a practising Christian, I don't even believe in God (B, Interview).**

**HT 119 (A) had found the appointment process extremely negative and biased. When asked by Governors during the interview about the extent of his personal faith commitment he had honestly replied that he did not have a personal, active Christian faith, determined not to 'lie or cover up or embellish**

my answers' (Interview). He had been asked to leave the appointment process at that stage and informed that this was because the Governing Body felt he did not 'fulfil the criteria' (words of HT 119) for the post regarding the requisite personal faith. Although he was recalled two days later after amendment of the person specification criteria, he felt

... that it shouldn't matter, you don't have to be a practising, "*I go to church every Sunday Christian*" to be a good head of a VA school (A, Interview).

He went on to report what he believed to be the subsequent vindication of his views about the irrelevance of a personal faith to being an effective Anglican head:

I mean, we had our church inspection last summer and we were outstanding in every category (A, Interview).

In this regard, HTs 136, 117 and 119 were articulating a little discussed aspect of Anglican school headship, whether personal faith is necessary to be an effective headteacher of an Anglican school. Although two small scale studies (three schools in each study) conducted by French (2010) and Bazalgette et al. (2006) into failing schools found there was not necessarily a causal element between personal faith and effectiveness within an Anglican school context, both studies found that personal faith was an important aspect in motivation, vision and resilience to the headteachers in the study.

Expectations that headteachers have a personal Christian faith also came from members of the spiritual community other than Governing Bodies once a headteacher had been appointed. Over the course of twelve months during which she had been visited on many occasions by two local vicars, HT 142 (B) felt that there was an implicit message or subtext to conversations, a suggestion that those who did not share the Christian faith were regarded as a 'second class citizen'. She summed it up thus:

... it is better to be a Christian... that you are a better person because you believe '*this*'. And I have a problem with that because I don't think I'm a worse person because I'm not a Christian. And that sits uncomfortably with me ... (Interview).

Although a number of staff in her school felt the message changed the atmosphere and Christians became more open about their personal faith 'without being laughed at', she felt that 'it's gone one step further than I personally feel that I am comfortable with' (Interview).

The experience of some of this study's participants appears contrary to the position that Johnson argued:

The Church of England school ... has been open to 'all-comers', both in terms of staff and pupils. At school level, there is no expectation that the headteacher and teaching staff should be practising Anglicans (or even practising Christians) (2003, p.474).

It would appear that this statement, although appearing in an article in 2003, was related to findings that had emerged from a study conducted by Johnson and McCreery in 1998 of thirteen primary headteachers' perceptions of their role in relation to children's spirituality (Johnson and McCreery, 1999; Johnson, McCreery and Castelli, 2000). Seven of the thirteen were Anglican school headteachers. Since the date of the study (1998) the legal framework was set out (School Standards and Framework Act 1998) and the Dearing Review (2001) suggested that 'The Church needs to promote teaching as a vocation of equal status to the priesthood' (Paragraph 6.26) with teachers in Anglican schools being equipped for such a role through their professional training and qualifications (Paragraph 6.29). Part of this call for Anglican schools to fulfil their role 'at the centre' in the 'Church's mission to the nation' (Paragraph 1.1) placed a responsibility on headteachers to maintain the Christian character of an Anglican school.

It is clear that this expectation held by governing bodies (particularly those of Voluntary Aided schools) for a headteacher to have an active personal Christian faith was met with differing degrees of acceptance and equanimity, contempt and disregard by headteachers. Among the 28 headteachers interviewed from Groups A and B a range of opinions were expressed regarding the necessity of personal faith for effective leadership of an Anglican school. Views were quite polarised: heads felt either that a personal active Christian faith was not necessary at all or that it enabled them to fulfil their role in an enhanced way that was consistent with their personal perceptions of themselves and their identity as Christians, a view that will be considered later in this chapter. Views held were not dependant on the expression of possession or absence of a personal Christian faith.

Furthermore, this expectation presented headteachers with the possibility of identification in very personal ways through engagement, imagination and alignment, three 'modes of belonging' (Wenger, 1998, p.174). This is perhaps because of the temporal nature of identity. When newly appointed, headteachers are 'newcomers ... joining the community with the prospect to becoming full participants in its practice' (p.154). They are on an inbound trajectory (p.154) which asks that they understand what is important to some members of the community (in the case of this expectation, that the headteacher has an active personal Christian faith). It asks that they engage with the process and impact that the interplay of the 'personal' in the 'public' arena as a school leader of an Anglican school might have throughout their headship. This mutual process of negotiating meaning through imagining what might be created anew in the fulfilment of their role in the community of practice is defined by Wenger as engagement in

... the creative process of producing new "images" and of generating new relations through time and space that become constitutive of the self (1998, p. 177).

It raises issues for headteachers about investing oneself in the broader picture of Anglican school education and of how individuals on inbound

trajectories can 'shape the meanings that define these communities' (Wenger, 1998, p. 188). It also raises issues of allegiance and compliance and to what extent headteachers participate or choose not to participate in the 'something big' (p.196) throughout their period of headship. This work of identity requires alignment in which 'we become part of something big because we do what it takes to play our part' (p.179)

It is this process of engagement, imagination and alignment that some headteachers appear to find difficult 'up close and personal' within the interplay of the personal and public dimensions as they are rooted in the historical aspects of Anglican schools. This can result in a sense of dis-identification (Wenger, 2011), a sense of lack of 'fit' with the work and practice of the spiritual community.

### **7.7.2. Expectation 2: Adherence to the Anglican tradition**

#### ***(a) Anglicanism defined***

Adherence to the Anglican tradition is an expectation which troubles some headteachers and leads to a sense of dis-identification with the historical, public and personal dimensions of Anglican headship.

Before presenting some of the experiences of headteachers in respect of Anglican tradition, its traditions and expressions of belief, it is necessary to clarify what is meant by the Anglican tradition or Anglicanism. However, this presents some challenges in terms of definitions – those of the 'Church of England', 'Anglican' and 'Anglicanism'. It should be said of course at this point that this is an education doctoral thesis not a theological or historical thesis. However, I offer some thoughts gleaned from reading around the subject in the process of conducting this study..

The notion of an Anglican tradition or Anglicanism and what that means in practice to those within and without the Church of England is the subject of some difference of opinion amongst academics, theologians and Christians as an overview of Anglican identity by Podmore indicates (2005, pp.26-43).

Historically the Church of England was just that, the Church *in* England or the English Church (p.38). However, it is more than an originally geographically located Church. It is the Established Church, the 'Church of England and not simply the Church *in* or *for* England (Cox, 2013, p.57).

According to Bishop Stephen Neill the 'Anglican Church' is the 'Catholic Church in England' and does not differ in its central doctrines or creeds to those of the Catholic Church (Canterbury Convocation (No.622) of 1938 cited in Podmore, 2005, p.38). Some writers and theologians disagree with Neill's assertion that Anglicanism does not exist because it (the Church of England) has no unique theology or doctrine (e.g. Chapman, 2006; Dormor, McDonald and Caddick, 2003; Jenkins, 2005; McAdoo, 1991; Neill, 1958; Nichols, 1993).

However, the terms 'Church of England', 'Anglican Church' and 'Anglicanism' are widely used - sometimes interchangeably - to describe ways of being, ways of behaving and ways of expressing faith. For instance, in their exposition of 'Anglicanism', Dormor et al. refer to 'the Anglican way of being faithful to Christ' (2003, p.5). In this use of the term they draw on the meaning to which McAdoo refers (1991, pp.1-2), that Anglicanism has evolved from the heritage of the Church of England over four centuries and is characterised by something 'constant' which is interpreted *in different ways at different times* (italics mine). In other words, Anglicanism is seen in the ways in which individuals and the Church at large articulate faith through being, action, response and renewal.

Jenkins goes further to suggest that Anglicanism is the 'answer to modernity', the answer to mankind's quest for human flourishing within a framework of order, freedom and justice (2005, p.189-191). As such it is

a facing up of the Christian faith to the failure of religion, and the consequences of taking seriously the continuing project of creating human flourishing (Jenkins, 2005, p.186).

As this chapter explores the expectations that different members of the spiritual community of practice have of Anglican school headteachers who 'preserve and develop its [the Anglican school] religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England' (Elbourne, 2009, p.5) it is essential to present some starting definitions for Anglican tradition and the principles of the Church of England which might underpin the religious character so valued. Therefore, despite the lack of an 'Anglican academy of educational theology or journals or societies (Elbourne, 2013, p.244), the starting point for the purpose of this chapter and understanding of this expectation is that there are traditions that emerge from Anglicanism that are part of the lived experiences of headteachers and which provide some basis for understanding headteacher departure.

Anglicanism has at its heart the Trinitarian beliefs of the Christian Church and the gospel message which offer

'first, charity, or the givenness of God; second, the forgiveness of sins, or the way of God in Christ; and third, hope, or the work of the Spirit (Jenkins, 2003, p.197)

with the expression of those beliefs taking place in worship and in service.

McAdoo (1991) helpfully defines both the 'constant' and the changing nature of Anglicanism from spiritual and theological perspectives:

Basically, what informs and controls the Church at all levels of its proclamation and practice is 'the faith once for all delivered' (Jude, 3), the good news of the living Lord, Jesus Christ who is 'the same yesterday, today and for ever' (Heb. 13.8). But the Church is obviously in time and space, embedded in history, its past affecting its present and its vision for the future. So its experience and interpretation of the unchanging Gospel is necessarily expressed in terms comprehensible to each generation in its geographical location and stage of cultural development. Thus, the faith as received, understood and proclaimed by Anglicanism is propounded in what one might call an idiom which

reflects its historical, and cultural background as well as its present situation (McAdoo, 1991, p.1).

McAdoo's definition provides a framework for understanding the historical dimension of Anglican headship and the locus of some of the identity work of headteachers within the spiritual community of practice. Figure 16 (below) portrays the relationship between the 'constant' of the Christian message and the interpretations of Anglicanism.

**Figure 16: The relationship between Christianity and Anglicanism**

(Diagrammatic representation drawn from McAdoo's description, 1991, p.1)

Although a theological text written without reference to the education profession, Archbishop McAdoo's exploration of Anglicanism provides some clues to understanding the potential complexity facing headteachers of Anglican schools that go beyond professional competence (DfES, 2004e, 2006) and the 'regime of competence' of a community (Wenger, 1998). Negotiating meaning with both the 'constant' or 'unchanging' nature of the gospel message for themselves and their role in the changing 'interpretations'

and re-interpretations of the Christian message and the Church's mission to successive generations in a variety of local contexts, both geographical and cultural, adds a layer of relational identity work for Anglican school headteachers which headteachers of non-Anglican schools do not have to contend with.

McAdoo goes on to explore what might constitute Anglican identity by quoting words of a former Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple (1881-1904):

Our special character and, as we believe, our peculiar contribution to the Universal Church, arises from the fact that, owing to historic circumstances, we have been enabled to combine in our one fellowship the traditional Faith and Order of the Catholic Church with the immediacy of approach to God through Christ to which the Evangelical Churches especially bear witness, and *freedom of intellectual inquiry*, whereby the correlation of the Christian revelation and advancing knowledge is constantly affected (Temple, cited in McAdoo, 1991, p.17; italics as cited).

In discussing the role of church schools and their potential for causing division, Chesters comments on some key aspects that the Church of England 'prides itself on':

... tolerant of many views on faith, liturgical practice and morality, seeks to be inclusive, providing a ministry to all who seek it, and deliberately allows space for all to grow as children of God ... (Chesters, 2001, p.11).

This commitment to both inclusivity and providing the space needed for personal growth is an interpretation of the Anglican Church's commitment to 'freedom of intellectual inquiry' (Temple above) and part of the Church's commitment to 'human flourishing' (Jenkins, 2003, pp.196 and 202) that is liberation in its broadest sense (Williams, 2009). This philosophical belief about providing access to informed choices and freedom is an expression of

the interpretation and re-interpretation of faith that takes place historically and culturally throughout successive generations (McAdoo, 1991, p.1).

Jenkins defines the specificity of the Anglican Church as being two-fold: having a 'territorial embeddedness' and a 'conversational mode' (2005, p.199). It is these modes of belonging and engagement in dialogic ways of interacting inherent in Anglicanism that also aid understanding of Anglican headship in terms of this study and this chapter. If Anglicanism is expressed in territorial embeddedness at parish, diocesan and national levels and includes laity and clergy (e.g. General Synod Board of Education, 1985; Dearing, 2001) then this 'territorial embeddedness' includes the work and worship of the Anglican school within the parish. An Anglican school - through its work and worship in an education context - provides opportunities for God

... to be found embodied in a particular place, locality, people [and] the materials of time and history can show him forth (Jenkins, 2003, p.200).

The Anglican school does this through a form of 'chaplaincy', something Jenkins describes for a member of the clergy as 'being out and about, taking an interest, and 'being used to think with' (2005, p.200) - the 'conversational mode' of Anglicanism. If Anglican schools are (as explored in Chapter 2.4.) central to God's mission and the arm or agent of that mission as part of the Church (Elbourne, 2009) then Anglican schools are part of that chaplaincy – something 'being used to think with' by members of the local (geographical) community and the spiritual community in its widest sense. Anglican schools are then a 'stepping stone' (Waddington, 1993, pp.48-49) or 'half-way house' (Astley, 2002, p.10), the 'threshold place' of which Boutellier writes (1979) discussed earlier in Chapter 2.4. They are the 'safe place' (Waddington, 1993, pp.48-49), the place in which there is *permission* to explore religious and spiritual matters' (a headteacher quoted in Johnson and McCreery, 1999, p.172). It is the offering the 'safe space' and 'safe place' for members of the school community to 'find and explore the brightness of the lit bush in the safety of their school' (Brown, 2013, p.166), to consider or to cast aside

concepts and belief in their quest for understanding and meaning. This is the 'Anglican identity' to which one headteacher in this study referred, the freedom to talk about matters of faith and God's action or involvement in life and this being accepted as part of normal discourse:

You are not scared to mention God did this or that (HT 149, A, Interview).

This 'conversational mode' of Anglicanism at a school level enables both the invitational aspects of which Elbourne writes (2009) and 'human flourishing' (Jenkins, 2003, p.196 and p.202) through 'the freedom of intellectual inquiry' (Temple, cited in McAdoo, 1991, p.17) that is a central aspect of the liberation theology of the Anglican Church (Williams, 2009). It is however, something which Anglican schools do with varying degrees of success for, although they may interpret Anglicanism (McAdoo, 1991) in the context of their local community relatively successfully, Wright argues that they can be less successful at being agents of transformation (2013). This is despite the fact that Anglican schools offer 'encounter as a means to community building' (Terry, 2013, p.128) through their 'territorial embeddedness' and 'conversational mode' (Jenkins, 2005, p.199).

In Anglican schools, it is the commitment to liberation and justice for the individual, community and society at large (Williams, 2009) that is seen in practice as the distinctiveness of a church school, the thing that makes them about 'more than caring and sharing' (Cox, 2011) and the 'Church of England-ness' of which HT 134 (B, Interview) talks. This enables the 'Anglican cherishing of diversity, of individual conscience, and of reasoned questioning' (Terry, 2013, p.122) which stem from the foundations of the Anglican Church of scripture, reason and tradition (see Furlong, 2000; McAdoo, 1991, Podmore, 2005; Terry, 2013; Williams, 2000). Christian values, beliefs and faith in all their expressions of doubt, confusion, half-belief, understanding and meaning for an individual can be explored and articulated without incurring the judgement of others but with acceptance as part of an individual's personal development and journey.

Anglicanism for Church of England schools therefore creates

... a field of possible pasts and of possible futures, which are there for all participants, not only to witness, hear about, and contemplate, but to engage with (Wenger, 1998, p.156).

In this expectation for headteachers to adhere to the Anglican tradition, headteachers are exposed to paradigmatic trajectories which

... embody the history of the community through the very participation and identities of practitioners (Wenger, 1998, p.156).

I turn now to consider how expressions of Anglicanism in local contexts can result, in the experiences of some headteachers, in practical dilemmas and conflicts of the 'personal' and the 'public' dimensions, challenging them in their ongoing work of identity and resulting in differing degrees of participation or non-participation in the practices of the spiritual community.

### ***b) Tensions in the public dimension***

A number of tensions are felt by headteachers in respect of feeling ill-equipped to lead a school with an Anglican character, lead collective worship, engage in particular Anglican traditions and reconcile their own faith traditions, perspectives or lack of religious faith with those of Anglicanism.

HT 140 (A) and HT 108 (A) both commented that Anglican headship could be challenging as a result of the religious character of their schools. HT 140 found it a challenge

... in ensuring that the school is true to Anglican teaching (I am not C of E) [and] in fulfilling parental, diocesan and LA expectations (A, Survey).

HT 108 (A) didn't feel that she had the 'qualifications and training and experience in an Anglican tradition' that she believed she needed to lead the school forward into being something she felt was expected of it as an

Anglican school. She felt the expectations were those of her diocese and local incumbent. In particular she felt 'ill-equipped' but also 'at odds' with aspects of Anglicanism that were liturgical and ritualistic:

... at odds with some of the things that are put forward, particularly Anglicanism, where I think some of the rites and rituals have been very repetitive, and people actually forget what they are saying (A, Interview).

She went on to describe how this expectation created a sense of dis-ease which was hard for her to reconcile:

I found it really difficult to be heading an Anglican school, where there was an expectation of doing these rites and rituals ... be involved in and leading the children in an experience of rites and rituals which didn't sit comfortably with me, because we were a VA school, and that was the expectation, that we would be firmly endorsing the Anglican tradition (HT 108, A, Interview).

Concerns regarding the nature of Christian education and particularly of acts of collective worship also troubled her especially as her perceptions were that the expectations were 'quite, quite challenging'. She reported how she had felt the need to conform and 'fit into' certain beliefs and expectations about expressions of belief in collective worship:

I found it very difficult to fit into a very traditional, rather conservative expectation of delivery ... I think the challenge is that whilst I very much appreciated that the church ethos permeated throughout the school and the community, I also found that the expectation of the delivery of worship, ... quite tiring ... I felt that the local minister, who was very involved with the school ... I felt there was an expectation by a couple of foundation governors and probably the minister that actually I should have been delivering a much more mainstream bible based experience for the children (HT 108, A, Interview).

Here can be seen differences of opinion and lack of shared belief between the headteacher, the local incumbent and the foundation governors over the theological models of education discussed by Astley, e.g. whether Christian education is (i) education into Christianity; (ii) education about Christianity or (iii) education in a Christian manner (2002, p.6).

Although many aspects of headship influenced her decision to move schools, her experience had made her doubt her ability to fulfil what she saw as the role of an Anglican school headteacher. Crucially it contributed to her decision to apply for headship of a community maintained school rather than another Anglican school:

I can't see myself being up to ... I can't see myself being the person that I feel I need to be (HT 108, A, Interview).

This is despite the fact that she had specifically sought a VA school headship because of positive previous experiences of working in church schools and in VA schools in particular where there had been a collective acceptance of an agreed ethos.

The interview extract of HT 108 (above) also reveals tensions from governors and clergy regarding 'bible based experiences', something echoed by HT 142:

At present the Governing Body with the Foundation Governors have become much more active and pushing for a greater 'C of E' influence within the school' (B, Survey).

HT 142 does not elaborate in her survey response as to the nature of what that 'C of E influence' was expected to be or 'look like'. However, other headteachers responded with some possible areas of tension:

Ensuring a balance of Christian ethos with teaching about other faiths (HT 43, A, Survey) *and*

Have to tread carefully around LGBT [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender] issues which I resent (HT 53, A, Survey).

These responses from HTs 108, 142, 43 and 53 suggest that there are possible areas of tension between governors and headteachers not just around worship but also around how values and beliefs are dealt with through assemblies and the curriculum.

One head (HT 122, B) spoke of the elements of the practice of faith which 'grated' with his own interpretations of faith and where there were also disagreements, tensions and conflict with parents over expectations regarding collective expressions of faith. These centred on the rites and rituals of church festivals such as Ash Wednesday:

...there were issues within our Church situation where I don't mind admitting I'm slightly more on the evangelical side of the Church of England whereas the sort of school we were, because it's a rural school it tends to be the case [it] was a bit more conservative and there were elements that grated [sic]. Now generally speaking we sorted those quite well but you got the same pressures within the school family and the parents and the Governors so you've got some people who won't set foot in a Church. You've got some people that want the Church to do a lot more [sic], you've got some people who want their children to have Communion, some who don't. Some parents who don't want you to put – it's Ash Wednesday soon - put ashes on the top of children's head - some do. You know, there are all these sorts of pressures and as a Head of a VA school and to a certain extent a VC school, those are additional pressures to those you would not get in an ordinary County Primary. So there are those elements that are definitely added pressures (B, Interview).

This headteacher felt he had to 'navigate' through the expectations of others in respect of expressions of faith and practice, through the rituals of the Anglican Church as articulated in his local parish and community setting.

On occasion, headteachers can find themselves faced with challenges regarding parental views about aspects of religion and God which threaten to cause division and dis-chord. HT 115 (A) described such an incident in which parents disagreed with the conventions within judo:

The demands of a small number of evangelical parents were threatening to take over everybody's experience in school. For example, we ran a judo club which was a new thing for us as an extended school and completely unbeknown of me – whether I should have seen it coming I don't know – this caused a huge furore because at the beginning of any judo session the children bow to each other. Well, I didn't see that this would be for some evangelical families a huge big deal [as they] literally believe that one shouldn't bow to anyone other than God. And so this went as far as the Bishop and was a big 'to-do'. And I just felt that this was just another agenda item that I didn't really need to be dealing with. It was threatened that a lot of children would not have a judo club ...And so I said, 'Well, they don't have to come anyway, it's after school' (A, Interview).

This incident required the headteacher to negotiate meaning in and through dialogue with other members of the community in terms of expressing the schools' collective identity in ways that articulated the school's position on the matter as a 'church school'.

At times, differences in interpretation about the purpose of Anglican schools as expressed in an admission policy and in expressions of collective worship caused tension between headteachers and the local incumbent. For instance, HT 115 (A) led a school which prided itself on its inclusivity as a 'school for everybody' as an expression of its Anglican character. However, in addition, the headteacher's perception was that the vicar was very evangelical and felt that he could determine what he (the vicar) could do in school:

I felt that he [the vicar] felt that he had the right to come into school and do assemblies which of course he does in a way. But I felt they [assemblies] had to be within what we would normally do and within our ethos and he felt, no, he could say whatever he liked even, if to my mind, it might be quite offensive to some children. So I found that a bit of tension and that took a lot of handling (A, Interview).

### ***c) Tensions in the personal dimension***

Personal aspects of faith and religious experience also influence headteachers' decisions about being an Anglican headteacher. Having a commitment to a Christian tradition which is different to the Anglican expression of faith can create an awareness of the need to understand specific practices within Anglican belief and tradition. As HT 122 wrote, this can require a headteacher to

Need to work with [the] local church which is a completely different tradition to the church I attend (B, Survey).

HT 140 (A) felt a 'dis-connect' between her own faith tradition and beliefs – Roman Catholic – and those of the Anglican tradition of her school. Governors had made it clear on her appointment that it was important to them that she was 'a practising Christian and that I was prepared to support the Anglican faith'. She talked cogently about how she saw her role as encompassing the spiritual development of pupils, leading daily worship in school, leading Church services and being part of the Church community at festivals and attending some PCC meetings. On appointment she had addressed areas of knowledge and her personal concern about leading an Anglican school as a Catholic Christian:

I did feel quite uncomfortable in an Anglican school, leading Church services ... [I] spent quite a lot of time talking to the parish priest and so on to make sure I was getting it right really (A, Interview).

HT 132 (B) was head of a school in a parish with high Anglo-Catholic traditions and this caused him a tension and a sense of 'dis-ease' and discomfort. For him the conflict and tension were more a matter of personal versus public expression of faith rather than navigating through parental expectations and local church traditions as in the case of HT 122 (above). HT 132 described how he felt he had to uphold 'high' Anglo-Catholic traditions of the school and its local Anglican church such as robed clergy and genuflection at the school's Eucharist. These made him feel uncomfortable. The reason for this discomfort was a tension between the personal and the public dimensions of Anglican headship:

... very high Anglo-Catholic whereas I'm very low church, happy, clappy jobs [sic] and unless it's people in guitars and shorts I'm not really that comfortable so full of robes and crossings I find difficult to get into ... There can be a tension when it comes to the activities [of both churches] and also, particularly where I am where the traditions of the Church of the school are very different from the tradition of the Church which I go to (Interview).

***(d) Adherence to the Anglican tradition - four verbs***

Four verbs encapsulate the expectation of adherence to the Anglican tradition as it is experienced by headteachers in this study: to know, to understand, to agree with and to deliver.

Although used by one headteacher referring to expectations of local clergy in her local context (HT 136, A, Survey) I use the verbs to sum up this expectation which has public and personal dimensions *because* of the historical dimension of Anglicanism and the foundations of Anglican school education.

Headteachers' experience is that they are expected to:

- **know** something of the Christian faith and the Anglican tradition in particular;
- **understand** how the Christian faith and Anglican tradition can be interpreted in the generational, geographical and cultural context of the school;
- **agree with**, at least in part, the principles, values and commitment to 'freedom of intellectual inquiry' (Temple cited in McAdoo, 1991, p.17) and social justice (Williams, 2009);
- **deliver** aspects of Christianity through the life and worship of the school community, through rites and rituals, through curriculum and in partnership with the local worshipping community of the parish.

The very nature and interaction of participation and non-participation is seen in the headteachers' experiences described here for

... we know who we *are* by what is familiar and by what we can negotiate and make use of, and that we know who we are *not* by what is unfamiliar, unwieldy, and out of our purview ... We not only produce our identities through the practices we engage in, but we also define ourselves through practices we do not engage in ... (Wenger, 1998, p.164).

For some headteachers a sense of marginality resulted from differing depths of understanding and levels of participation and non-participation (Wenger, 1998, p.166). This is seen primarily in how and to what extent individual headteachers were able to position themselves, their own identity and learning within the historical dimension of Anglicanism as it met with the public dimension they experienced. For those who found engaging with aspects of Anglican tradition difficult as they constructed an image of themselves in relation to the historical dimension, they found that they did not 'fit' in this spiritual community whose practice is influenced by the 'constant' and the generational and contextual 'changing' interpretations of Christianity that is Anglicanism (McAdoo, 1991). They were unable, for whatever reason, to align

themselves with the aspect of adherence to the Anglican tradition emanating from the spiritual community of practice and imagine new possibilities.

It is identification that makes negotiation of meaning in the context of the historical dimension of the Anglican heritage and its re-interpretations possible or difficult. The 'double accountability to the past and the future of the practice' enables headteachers to 'contribute to its [the community] evolution as a full participant' (Wenger, 2013, p.6).

Consequently, for the headteachers in this chapter this expectation to adhere in various ways to Anglican traditions was experienced in a sense of dis-identification (Wenger, 2011, p.3) in the lives and identity of headteachers. Degrees of non-participation restricted their full participation, resulting in a marginality and lack of 'fit'. Thus the practice of the community became 'problematic' not 'enabling' for them as individuals (Wenger, 1998, p.167).

Not only do the mixed messages about the necessity for a personal faith or adherence to the core message make it difficult for heads without a Christian commitment to 'subscribe' to the core message or to 'buy in' as one head put it to identify with aspects of practice within the community (see Expectation 1) but the underlying philosophy within Anglicanism and its many interpretations have the potential to cause dis-identification in headteachers. Anglicanism with its rites and rituals as defined in local, geographical and cultural contexts (McAdoo, 1991, p.1) is an influence in this dis-identification that results from non- or partial participation of headteachers in the community.

This study therefore suggests that headteachers need to be clear not just about the expectations of governors and the Anglican Church as a whole regarding personal faith and the requirements of the role perceived nationally but also of the 'churchmanship' that is required of them as headteachers within their local parish context.

### **7.7.3. Expectation 3: Spiritual or faith leadership**

#### ***(a) Spiritual leadership***

Headteachers are expected to be spiritual or faith leaders. For some headteachers this expectation is a great joy and provides a sense of fulfilment in their professional and personal lives while for others it provides challenges in its public and personal dimensions. To some degree, the type of response and language used by participants depended on individual perspectives about the purpose of church schools, perceptions of church school 'distinctiveness' and understandings of the role of the headteacher as leader. In terms of decisions to leave an Anglican school or Anglican school headship, individual beliefs and understanding about their role as spiritual or faith leaders were central.

Headteachers of any school are required to lead the spiritual development of their pupils in the same way as they are required to have regard for the social, moral and cultural development of their pupils. A number of writers discuss what is meant by spiritual development (e.g. Erricker and Erricker, 2000; Eaude, 2006), faith development (e.g. Fowler, 1981; General Synod Board of Education, 1991; Griffiths, 2009; Palmer, 1985), spirituality (e.g. Adams, 2008; Hilder, 2012; Hyde, 2008; Nye, 2009) and the spiritual lives of children of many faiths (e.g. Coles, 1992; French, 2010). Fowler (1981) developed a series of six stages of faith development as a means of understanding the development of an individual in ways akin to the developmental stage theories of Piaget and Erikson. In Fowler's stages development is a 'generic feature of the human struggle to find and maintain meaning [which] may or may not find religious expression' (p.91).

However, as leaders of Anglican schools expectations of their leadership and their remit goes deeper than this. This means that spiritual or faith leadership is broader than a focus on 'faith development' of the individual and the pupils of their school (e.g. Johnson and McCreery, 1999; Johnson, 2002).

Flowing from the development of the religious character in Anglican schools is a commitment to Christian distinctiveness, Christian values and inclusiveness

(e.g. Blackshaw, 2009; Carey, Hope and Hall, 1998; Chesters, 2001; Cooling, 2013; Cox, 2011; Dioceses of Winchester and Portsmouth and Diocese of St Albans, 2005; Diocese of York, 2009; Everett, 2013; Elbourne, 2013; Stern, 2013). This has been articulated particularly in the decade following the Dearing Report (2001) by such as Chesters (2001), Cooling (2013), Elbourne (2012 and 2013) and Williams (2009). Much material has been created by dioceses to encourage Anglican schools to consider how they are distinctive especially in light of the Dearing Report (2001) and successive SIAS Inspection Frameworks (e.g. Blackshaw, 2009; Dioceses of Winchester and Portsmouth and Diocese of St Albans, 2005; Diocese of York, 2009).

Dearing commented that

Church school headteachers are spiritual and academic leaders of the school. Excellence in headship requires visionary, inspired leadership and management centred on the school as a worshipping community, where educational and academic excellence for all pupils is pursued in a Christian context. Although not formally recognized as such by the Church, it is arguable that since Church school headship involves religious and spiritual leadership, to the Christian it comprises a form of lay ministry, which is complementary to the Church's ordained ministry.  
(2001, Paragraph 8.1).

Central to the role of headteacher in this context is the idea that these 'religious' and 'spiritual' elements need a headteacher whose leadership is that of a servant-leader, transformational and invitational (Dearing, 2001, Paragraph 8.4). The unifying factor of these three concepts is that they are relational to others within the spiritual community of practice (see Figure 13 earlier).

A number of aspects related to the personal and public aspects of faith leadership were listed by school leaders at a National College for School Leadership (NCSL) Leading Practice seminar comprising of school leaders from faith schools (not exclusively Christian schools). These included:

- sustainability comes through articulating a relationship with the transcendent, and hope comes from a deep personal faith that informs leadership
- the role is one of servant leadership – learning through faith, leading through faith and walking the faith

(NCSL, 2006, p.2).

Consensus amongst the faith leaders was that faith schools

- are a way of integrating an authentic expression of faith in a context within which children are growing
- have a distinctive understanding of individuals – distinctiveness but not exclusion
- need to have the confidence to develop a distinctive curriculum for individuals
- need to develop spirituality – to find it and develop it and to take that 'special bit' and run it through the curriculum
- get their hands dirty with the difficult and the marginalised – mission redefines the purpose of education

(NCSL, 2006, p.2).

In this set of bullet points they were expressing the elements of distinctiveness, inclusiveness and Christian values called for by Dearing (2001) and the potential routes to achieving this in practice through the curriculum as argued for by Cooling and Cooling (2013). Furthermore, the characteristic of faith schools as providing 'a way of integrating 'an authentic expression of faith in a context in which children are growing' (NCSL, 2006, p.6) requires understanding of the local socio-economic context, and how individuals are seen within the dominant discourse of the wider 'economic context' (Worsley, 2006, p.3).

Dearing's suggestion that leadership of an Anglican school is a 'form of lay ministry' (2001, Paragraph 8.1) places Anglican schools headteachers as

being more than 'interpreters of faith' (NCSL, 2006, p.2). They – as individual school leaders – as well as the school collectively via the expression of its Anglican identity - are then located firmly in 'chaplaincy – being used to think with' (Jenkins, 2003, p.200) by those in their specific context.

This perhaps then frames the work of Anglican schools in particular as being the expression of the beliefs of the Church of England at local level (Terry, 2013) for the beliefs of the Anglican Church are 'contextually formed and continually locally negotiated' between parish church and Church school (Terry, 2013, pp.121-122). Parish context influences local articulations of Anglicanism of both the local church and the local school (e.g. French, 2009).

Terry sums the diversity of practice thus:

The Church of England is rooted in local practices more than in centralized direction, and such is the binding force of local encounters that there is a high degree of local independence. This means that nationally there is diversity, and agreement can seem elusive ... (2013, p.120).

He extends this argument of diversity rooted in the local context to suggest that Anglican schools can and should be a 'place of encounter in loyalty and adventure' as the Anglican Church both locally and nationally finds new ways of 'being church' (Terry, 2013, p.126).

### ***b) Perspectives and experiences***

Headteachers in this study had no issue with their role as academic leaders of learning or for Anglican schools to provide education for all. In this headteachers show that the theology of service (Francis, 1993, p.60), the twentieth century expression of the historic concern for 'education for the masses' through serving the 'general' described in the Durham Report (The National Society, 1970, p.207) is part of their understanding of the purpose of church schools for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In the main, comments indicate a range of beliefs and understanding about spiritual leadership that relates to children's

development along a continuum from moral development to 'education about Christianity' (in which education is a 'non-confessional' religious education whose subject matter is the Christian tradition and its contemporary expression' (Astley, 2002, p.6).

Spiritual leadership provides headteachers with the 'opportunity to lead children's faith development (HT 16, A, Survey) and 'to lead a Christian community' (HT 25, A, Survey) or 'a faith community' (HT 45, B, Survey). Some headteachers went further by reflecting on the nature of the school setting in 'providing opportunity to educate children in a Christian setting' (HT 38, C) to their leadership role in 'promoting the tenets of Christianity' (HT 46, B, Survey). For some headteachers their personal faith played a part in their understanding of their role as spiritual leaders and of the church school that is distinctive:

... as an active Christian ... to lead a school that had a Christian ethos at its heart (HT 137, B, Survey).

Headteachers recognised their responsibility for making sure the school had a 'faith presence' (HT 149, B, Interview) and that 'within your school there is an acknowledgement and an active engagement with the faith aspect' (HT 149, B, Interview). Headteachers commented on the importance of communicating the distinctiveness of the school and the need for staff to actively engage with the faith aspects through the appointment of new staff so that they (new staff) were 'comfortable and able to contribute to the Church ethos of the school ... so that it can be delivered throughout the school' (HT 149, B, Interview).

In respect of providing or offering opportunities for the exploration and growth of faith, one headteacher (HT 145, A) summed up the perspectives of a number of headteacher interviewees about the distinctiveness of Anglican schools identifying some key differences in opportunity:

I feel actually as a Church of England head that I am there to shape the Christianity of the school and to ensure that it has a Christian

distinctiveness so that the morals we are teaching are actually Christian values. Probably not dissimilar to the values you would find in a normal primary school but they would be very different in terms of the way that they would be associated with the Bible and with the teachings of Jesus and that would be the difference between the two (A, Interview).

HT 120 (A) expressed similar views but placed his role as spiritual leader in the context of partnership with the local church:

... a joint venture between myself and the vicar to be their sort of spiritual leader ... as leader you are the one that people look up to [in order] to take the lead in the ethos and the spiritual guidance of the school (A, Interview).

Here she also identifies the expectations that others had of her to lead in the ways in which the school could be distinctive (its ethos) and provide spiritual guidance.

Unsurprisingly, given the commitment of Anglican schools to inclusive education, the potential third theological model of 'education into Christianity' (2002, p.6) did not feature in headteachers' comments with the exception of occasions described in which headteachers described difficulties over how to discuss matters of Christianity and faith with members of the spiritual community who did not believe in Christianity (e.g. parents and pupils). They had to exercise a sense of carefulness in the execution of their role as faith or spiritual leaders:

I do feel there is only so far you can go when you haven't got a whole congregation of practising Christians with Christianity in the school. I think you've got to be very careful that you are not literally Bible bashing and pushing it down people's throats (HT 145, A, Interview).

However, perhaps surprisingly, given the nature of Anglicanism as presented earlier, there was no reference by any headteachers to anything related to a 'theology of prophecy' (Francis, 1993, p.62) as being part of the role of the headteacher as spiritual or faith leader or the way in which the Anglican school could play its part in the social and cultural life of the nation as a whole.

### ***c) Personal faith and leadership as positive***

For those who wrote or spoke about their own Christian faith, the expectation to be a spiritual or faith leader was, in the main, a motivating and guiding principle. They lived their lives in the light of their faith and sometimes as an extension of their faith. Because faith was a powerful motivator and force in their personal lives, by extension it influenced their professional lives. In this expectation there is then a meeting of the 'public' dimension of headship with the 'personal' dimension similar to that reported by the six headteachers in the studies of Bazalgette et al (2006) and French (2010). Although the notion of the personal life influencing the professional is not new, the findings presented in this chapter of this study of the interplay of the historical, public and personal dimensions offer an original contribution to knowledge in relation to the particulars of Anglican headship.

HT 121 (B) summed up the interplay between the personal and the public in his school through the visible profile he and his behaviour had as it was observed by different members of the community:

**Modelling your faith is very intense experience, can be very powerful (in its effect) and is an enormous responsibility. You either keep it [your head above the parapet] up or you bob up and down all the time. It's there all the time so it is not only the pupils watching you but the staff and the parents ... all those people are watching you and therefore the impression that you give, the power of modelling your faith in action is a very, very intense experience (B, Interview).**

This brought with it a responsibility and accountability. Central to his ability to negotiate meaning for himself as a faith leader were the collective expressions of faith of his immediate community of practice, in the use of collective prayer at regular staff meetings. This form of discourse with the transcendent (NCSL, 2006) became an artifact, part of the repertoire of practice (Wenger, 1998). As a faith leader HT 121 achieved 'legitimacy' (his description) and in this way he became an 'interpreter of faith' (NCSL, 2006) for the school community and the practice of the spiritual community as located geographically in the school as routines and the school's physical space became a witness of faith to visitors. Faith was reified through the prayer of the staff as a worshipping community:

... legitimacy through prayerfully [sic], through all the work the school does forward [sic] so it is great to start off a staff meeting in prayer together. When we have new teachers in or other people visiting the school, we don't not do it. I just explain what we're going to do and you know, 'Don't feel uncomfortable, you won't be asked to pray or anything' ((laughs)) and they [the staff] make so it is a natural part of what we do (B, Interview).

However, being a Christian and an Anglican headteacher brought with it opportunities for servant leadership (Dearing, 2001, Paragraph 8.4) 'to walk the talk' (HT 143, B, Interview). Some participants referred to the opportunity to 'live out faith in practice' (HT 25, A, Survey) as a real positive of church school headship. This could be fulfilling, one headteacher writing that they 'enjoy practice of one's faith/shared vision [sic]' (HT 73, B, Survey), a comment that suggests that being part of collaborative practice or partnership with others was rewarding. Here the headteacher's experience was similar to that of three Christian headteachers charged with transforming failing schools for whom personal faith was a 'vital factor' in the life of their school and which 'gave them the space to live out their beliefs through its organisation' (Reed, Bazalgette, Hutton and Kehoe, 2002)

These headteachers went further than the views sometimes expressed as values based decisions and education such as that offered by HT 144 (B, Interview) who talked about 'going the extra mile', having sympathy and behaving differently rather than having a specific set of values.

In a sense this notion of 'walking the walk' and 'living out faith' are perhaps the same thing. Phrases such as these imply action by the headteacher for which they accept they are accountable. They are about expressing your faith publicly in your actions and opening yourself up to scrutiny before members of the spiritual community of practice on the views you hold. The personal becomes very public.

In discussing living out her personal faith in the execution of her public role about which others had expectations HT 134 (B) expressed the need for caution and wisdom which was incumbent on her in the interplay of the public and personal dimensions. Not fulfilling expectations of others could potentially bring ridicule and disdain. Being aware of the dynamics of the relationship between herself and members of her school community had helped her 'walk the walk' as she has modelled her behaviour and actions not only in the light of her understanding of her role but of other people's expectations. Interestingly, walking this tightrope of expectation had had a beneficial impact on her personal faith:

[it had] deepened my faith – because I've had to so openly live out my faith as a role model to these children and the staff and to everybody ... because I've lived it. We often say about living the faith but I've actually had to live it ... I think you would have to be very careful not to be seen to make the wrong move. Or it could be thrown back at you, 'Oh, look at you, Head of a Church school, and "blah di blah di blah" [sic], you know. But I do believe it's made me walk the walk and that's been quite good (B, Interview).

Her comment highlights an important aspect of headship for a number of headteachers: being seen to be doing the right thing in the right way. Although

she does not articulate the specific nature of those expectations, it is clear from her comment about having 'to be very careful not to be seen to make the wrong move' (Interview) that she had to respond not just to expectations of others in a general sense but specific expectations that appear to be about wrong or right actions or perhaps decisions. It is possible that she feared criticism or disdain.

Similarly, HT 144 (B) found that parents in particular had expectations of a church school, its curriculum and the way a school and its head should respond to incidences of poor behaviour. Headteachers reported that parental expectations often suggested that the core purpose of church schools was misunderstood and as a result needed to be managed and misunderstandings corrected. For instance, expectations of exclusivity and conversion of children to the Christian faith needed to be corrected with a consistent message that

... the core purpose of church schools ... is a place where you offer people the opportunity to explore faith and whatever that faith is and for the community to see that that is happening (B, Interview).

Managing parental expectations about second chances, forgiveness and the opportunity to 'start again' were central to modelling Christian principles in practice. These expectations often came from parents who had notions of how they expected Christians to behave. In paraphrasing a typical response to an incident of poor behaviour HT 144 (B) elucidates the role of her personal faith in guiding her response and the concept of forgiveness and 'beginning again' at the heart of the gospel message:

... also I think the other thing is we're saying, we're doing this, I'm giving you a second chance because I believe it's the right thing to do but it's also what my faith tells me that I should do too, and not 'it doesn't mean you're not going to get punished'. It's not the easy option, but it really does mean that. And I think sometimes dealing with difficult families they do see that, you know, is a way they would expect Christians to behave (B, Interview).

Here we also see her perception and analysis that the parents concerned had expectations of her as a Christian first rather than expectations of her as a headteacher.

These parental expectations were part of a range of expectations from parents and governors in respect of the content, balance and breadth of the curriculum in which expectations were centred on the identity and expression of collective belief and values expressed or taught:

... that they will act/behave in certain ways, e.g. not teach other faiths because we are a church school [sic] (HT 144, B, Interview).

#### ***d) Consensus and the wearing of masks***

However, for some headteachers spiritual leadership was demanding and a matter of disagreement. For instance, the extent to which HT 142's school (B) should be distinctive in terms of its Christian ethos was a matter of dispute between her and the school's Governing Body. Along with the sense of discomfort she felt about the expectation heads of church schools should be Christians (see 7.7.1. Expectation 1) the nature of this disagreement was central to her decision to resign from her post. Her summation of the situation highlights the expectation of the Governing Body that she felt was inconsistent with her understanding of her professional role as a school leader:

... definitely the pressure is from the Governing Body ... [they] feel that the Christian ethos should be much, much stronger in the school and that's where the vision falls apart because that's where I don't agree (B, Interview).

The combination of the perceptions of expectation for spiritual leadership and for headteachers to be 'different' can lead to headteachers feeling the need to wear masks, to pretend they hold beliefs they do not hold and to hide their true feelings or aspects of themselves. The wearing of masks and the hiding of true feelings can result in pressure which becomes intolerable. Masks help

protect the wearer's true self and enable individuals to project images of themselves that engender trust and respect amongst pupils and parents.

In reflecting on the expectation for spiritual leadership, HT 108 (A) described how she not only felt unsupported and untrained in spiritual leadership but the extent of the remit:

... leading, taking on a faith leadership in terms of leading that community in its faith development. Leading the children? Yes, totally within my bounds, but a whole community, which I think is what VA church schools need to be, taking in parents, governors and the diocese, I'm not equipped for that role, and in my heart of hearts, that's where I would get a low grade [in SIAS Inspection] (A, Interview).

It affected her perceptions of how and to what extent she could be effective in her role to such an extent that she felt

... this is the crux of me really, my understanding of me and my capacity ... it's like acting, isn't it? (HT 108, A, Interview).

For her this acting was a strain and, although her professional capabilities were recognised by an Outstanding SIAS Inspection judgement, she felt it was not justified, that the judgement should not have been outstanding because she was 'doing a role where I felt I was getting away with it' (A, Interview). She had hidden her sense of dis-ease for a considerable time, hiding her anxieties and insecurities. It was only when she took the step of confiding in a headteacher colleague that she realised, in the telling of how she felt, that the

... role requirements and what, I, the background that I had to prepare me for that role, just didn't match, and I suddenly realised that this challenge to that was just slightly beyond my comfort zone and beyond what I felt I could achieve properly for the school (A, Interview).

Although she had a background as an RE teacher and RE subject leader, she felt

... the expectations of my leadership role in school and of the expectation of me in terms of leading the faith aspects has been more than I am comfortable to lead, and there has been no training to do that. I don't think that people just go to church, just a regular faith commitment does not necessarily equip you to lead others in developing their faith (A, Interview).

Here we see her articulating an important distinction between the personal beliefs a headteacher might have and the skills and expertise she felt the role of a faith leader required and highlighting the need, in her case, for specific training relevant to leadership of a church school.

However, the roots of some of the tension she felt are perhaps in her own practice as a Christian. She describes her faith as a 'very private faith' that has 'a kind of selfishness to it' in terms of the

... time that I am prepared to give of myself as a part of a Christian community and also the relationships that I am prepared to involve myself with and the commitment that I'll give to a Christian community (HT 108, A, Interview).

She articulates clearly her experience that having a personal faith and being a practising Christian aren't enough on their own to enable an individual to be able to respond positively to the expectations they feel are upon them in their role.

HT 136 (A, Interview) also felt that he too 'played a part' which he was not entirely comfortable with. Leading acts of collective worship had become 'very difficult' by the time he decided to leave his post for headship of a community maintained school. The public 'face' and role of 'spiritual leader' was something he felt he could do not do with honesty as he did not share any of

the religious beliefs central to Christianity. Expectations of conformity in public were an increasing strain to him as he wrestled with the concept that religious beliefs should be part of a state education system at all. He describes the tension he feels between the personal and public thus:

... this inner conflict that I deal with ... I don't mind debating it with people but I would find it more easy to do in a place where I wasn't in a church school [sic] ... (A, Interview).

Commenting on acts of collective worship, his attempts to avoid references to God as a 'being' are clear:

I have to play a role in terms of the church element. I find it very difficult asking children to pray and very often, certainly towards the end of my time here ... I have done it less and less and I may have asked people to "let's think quietly for a minute about ..." and I try to avoid using words like God if I can (A, Interview).

In describing an event at the local church's 'Songs of Praise' one Sunday he describes how his sense of discomfort about his own faith position in relation to expectations he perceived others had of him as a church school head caused him such discomfort that he sought to deflect attention from himself and his personal beliefs, refusing to play the part expected of him. He had been asked, along with other members of the community to select his favourite hymn and explain at the event the reasons for the choice. He describes on his response to the request which he knew he couldn't escape:

... because he [the vicar] asked me, it was on our field and I was the Head of the school, I thought, "Oh God I'm going to have to do it anyway". So I chose, 'When a knight won his spurs' because I could subvert that ... I pretended that it had been my favourite as a child which it hadn't necessarily been and I said I also liked it because of this other version [which I then performed for the congregation [poem version with interjections by an increasingly irate headteacher by Alan

Ahlberg]. So that was the only way I could almost salve my conscience if you like in doing that (HT 136, A, Interview).

Choosing a hymn which satirised and mocked worship and serious intent to some degree enabled him to mischievously avoid playing the part he felt expected of him, the spiritual leader of the school, carrying out the obligations of the role 'with no conviction and a bit of bad grace but trying to put on a front for others' (HT 136, A, Interview). In these two incidences HT 136 describes, it is clear that he felt an inability to be an 'interpreter of faith for the school community' (NCSL, 2006, p.2).

HT 150 (B) described how she had managed to create illusion and belief about personal faith through the 'face' and mask she wore following her appointment and that it had been some time before those she worked with had realised she had been wearing a mask in her professional role:

I'm not a Christian. So the face that I had to show in school was very different from the face I might have presented at home because I took a church school on. When I took it on the lady I took it on from was a Christian but hadn't really stamped the Christian ethos on the school and from the very beginning the Governors made it obvious that was what they wanted. They wanted the school to become more Christian because they felt that was lacking so I had to do that. ...It wasn't actually until the staff came to my husband's funeral that they picked up that I wasn't [a] Christian (B, Interview).

In these experiences then we see the 'personal' and the 'public' expectation to be a spiritual leader presenting some conflicts and difficulties for headteachers.

#### **7.7.4. Expectation 4: Mission and knowledge sharing**

Anglican schools are an expression of the Church's commitment to God's mission to the world and service to local communities through education and

the sharing of gospel values of justice, liberation and salvation as outlined in Chapter 2.4. (e.g. Elbourne, 2009; Williams, 2009; Worsley, 2006). This concept of education emerging from the historical dimension as described earlier in this chapter contains aspects of (a) mission activity and (b) knowledge sharing.

A number of heads in the study regarded the opportunity to engage in mission activity and knowledge sharing as a privilege and wonderful opportunity, this was not always the case. For instance, HT 106 (A) enjoyed the sense of 'freedom' he felt he had as a church school head. In talking about his role he spoke of freedom 'to spread the message and spread the word' but within certain boundaries. His words carry a sense of permission by virtue of his role and position as a church school head but also a sense of boundaries:

I am a Christian and we don't drum and ram Christianity down the throats of children but it is nice to spread the message and spread the word and be allowed to do so and have the freedom of being in a Christian school (A, Interview).

HT 145 (A) found that she – and her Christian faith - was viewed with some scepticism and suspicion on her arrival:

... when I first came here people were a bit dubious as to what I was going to do particularly when they realised I was a Christian headteacher (A, Interview).

She had to overcome doubt and suspicion as well as communicate the vision of her Anglican school. She felt the community lacked knowledge and understanding about the school's history and foundation as a Church of England school.

However, some headteachers became concerned about the extent to which expectations of them as spiritual leaders included mission and knowledge sharing seen in approaches and emphasis which some felt were evangelistic.

For instance, HT 142 (B) had become increasingly uncomfortable and concerned about

... the amount of active Christian work that is actually being done in schools [sic]. It makes me uncomfortable, I don't like the bias, it's too strong for me' (Interview).

Her atheism and the general tenor of spirituality expected of her were at odds with each other.

Headteachers can feel uncomfortable with the message they perceive as coming from their diocese in particular both in terms of their own beliefs and in terms of how they met the needs of their school community. Typical comments included

Diocesan perspectives or agendas were not always appropriate (HT 109, Survey)

*and*

[I] find expectations of the diocese/SIAS do not always fit well with the reality of my school community (HT 87, B, Survey).

This raises issues about diocesan influence and the professional judgement of the headteacher and who has 'say' over the direction of policy and practice when it comes to the spiritual development of pupils and the development of ethos in an Anglican school as interpreted in the local context (Jenkins, 2003; McAdoo, 1991; Wright, 2013).

HT 115 (A) expressed similar views to HT 87 (B). They both felt that their professional judgement and intimate knowledge of their communities were being ignored by diocesan officers and diocesan expectations. HT 115 describes the conflict between diocesan expectations and her professional judgements thus:

Yes – to evangelise (I won't). To use inappropriate language. Our diocese (X) wants us to say "This is God's work" about various aspects of school life... we had a thing from our Diocese saying, I mean it came out of the blue. No consultation, [a] new Diocesan, not a regulation but a guidance note which you are meant to take seriously and a whole big paper written by someone I'd never heard [of] who says that now we are talking to the children, in everyday occurrences about, you know, children having arguments and things, we need to use this phrase 'it's God's work' and make children aware that being forgiven is God's work. And I thought, well this has come from nowhere. Who has asked me if this is right for our children? Who has? This is a big thing to ask staff to say to children and then for children to go home and say to their parents, "Oh Mrs [XXX] said it was God's work." I mean I think this is just opening a can of worms without any regard really for [tape unclear]. These are immense conceptual things to be doing and not necessarily appropriate (A, Interview).

She feels that the language and sentiment of 'it's God's work' is not appropriate and the theological position regarding forgiveness is not necessarily the right one for staff to be engaged in communicating to children and their parents. In 'fending off some of this nonsense from the diocese' (Interview) she has had support from her Governing Body who supported her stance on matters about which she was in conflict with the diocese (e.g. inclusion). She also objects to the manner of the guidance, at arm's length and communicated by people she does not know and does not have regard for. Here we see a sense of disconnect between HT 115 and others within the wider 'spiritual community of practice' - the diocese - over elements of practice within the spiritual community and also a breakdown of trust and respect for those within the diocesan team.

HT 115 felt that she was expected to be an evangelist herself, something she was most uncomfortable with and felt was outside of her role as a headteacher:

...quite a pressure for Church heads particularly to evangelise firstly to their staff and secondly with children which is not something I am comfortable with at all (A, Interview).

For her, this conflict over theology, the purpose of Church schools and her professional judgements as spiritual leader of her school influenced her decision to resign her post and apply for headships of community maintained schools, not Anglican schools.

Similarly, HT 122 (B) felt he was under pressure to promote religious beliefs and attitudes. Although he did not articulate the source of those expectations they created a sense of conflict which

... is to what extent you push forward, and I use that word advisedly, push forward faith and religion within the school. It's very difficult to get that right because even as a VA school our admissions policies or admissions policies in general have to still be very inclusive. With that inclusivity comes problems [sic] (B, Interview).

Pressures also come from vicars and governors in respect of the focus of work within the school as HT 43 had experience of:

Ensuring a balance of Christian ethos with teaching about other faiths. Parents and governors do not like the teaching about other faiths (A, Survey).

Parental expectations caused headteachers difficulties and while not being a specific influence on departure they were part of the 'cocktail' causing a headteacher to begin questioning whether to stay or go. HT 122 (B) found that he was criticised for telling a bible story in collective worship because a parent felt the HT was 'evangelising the children' (Interview). HT 148 (B) described an incidence in which expectations of particular governors caused conflict regarding the ritual of celebrating Mothering Sunday and church attendance of pupils:

They [the Governing Body] were pushing too hard at one time. I think things have improved within the school, parents tend to kick against that kind of thing and if parents were pushed too hard on the religious side they would react by not attending services and things like that. An example was Mothering Sunday last year, not [a service] children usually attend. But one of the Governors who is quite high up in the Church organisation was insisting that the children attended this service and the attendance was appalling. And the Governor sent out a letter to the parents saying, we are very disappointed etc etc [sic]. And you can imagine the reaction of the parents to that was not good (B, Interview).

The experiences of difference and disagreement illustrate a range of perspectives about the purpose of Anglican schools, theological models of education (Astley, 2002) and models of belonging (Astley, 2002; Elbourne, 2009; Worsley, 2009). They also indicate difficulties that members of the spiritual community have in discussing issues related to the shared domain of interest and in achieving consensus about the 'invitational' nature of church school education (Elbourne, 2009, p.12). Occasionally, headteachers expressed perspectives about the invitational nature of Anglican schools as being about recruiting children as potential members of the local church:

There's a level of expectation. Sometimes you can be seen in a Church school as just a way of getting numbers through the door of the Church which I sometimes get a little bit irritated with (HT 132, B, Interview).

These heads were not able to see mission and knowledge sharing as invitational in the way that HT 144 (B) and HT 149 (B) expressed:

... to the core purpose of church schools it [a church school] is a place where you offer people the opportunity to explore faith and whatever that faith is (HT 144, B, Interview) *and*

I so much thought, I think there's part of a mission really and for me, I felt that for the children in my school that we opened a door for them. It's up to them whether they choose to go through that door when they are older I'm talking about really. With children, well, they will believe what you tell them, you have to, you have to understand that and particularly in matters of faith you can brainwash them. Because you know children of primary age aren't thinking things through for themselves, that comes later and, and I felt that our, my job was to open the door to them and show them these possibilities and later on in their life, they will either choose to go through the door or not but I have opened the door for them. A door of faith, yes, a door to the Church really (HT 149, B, Interview).

In so describing the role of the school as playing a part in opening a 'door to faith' HT 149 (B) was articulating something of the concept of the Anglican school being a safe-place and stepping stone (Waddington, 1993, pp.48-49) or the half-way house or foster home (Astley, 2002, p.10) that are reminiscent of the image of the threshold place espoused by Boutellier within the Catholic tradition (1979) discussed as models of belonging in Chapter 2.

In terms of knowledge sharing there were differences in perspective expressed when headteachers were discussing school policies and curriculum provision. Some headteachers believed that an expression of their Anglican schools' identity and collective belief could be seen in how Christianity 'coloured' policy (e.g. behaviour policies), practice and curriculum.

... within your school a lot of your policies and your delivery of things is coloured by that Christian view. So for example when you are teaching the children sort of right from wrong and you've got a behaviour policy, the foundation for that behaviour policy and right and wrong is 'we are Christians here'. This is what Jesus wanted us to do. This is what Jesus wanted, how Jesus wanted us to behave and that does colour the way you teach and the sort of policies of the school. And even simply within our curriculum policies we made sure that we made links with the faith.

So, for example, in History when you were doing the Egyptians you make sure that the children understand that these Egyptians that they are learning about are the same Egyptians that Moses encountered. The same Egyptians that Joseph encountered and that there is a faith lead in this subject. Likewise the Romans, you know, these are the same Romans we are learning about, these are the same Romans that you know crucified Jesus that were occupying Jerusalem at the time. So [in] Geography, you know, this is God's created world. Science, this is God's created world that we are learning about. It sounds a bit like we sort of shove it down their throats [but] we don't. It's more, perhaps a little bit more subtle than that but we give them a sense of a Christian viewpoint on the world I suppose (HT 149, B, Interview).

In this example, this school was re-imagining and re-shaping its curriculum in the light of its Christian distinctiveness through showing children how historical and theological aspects of Christianity 'fits into' other areas of the curriculum rather than the curriculum fitting into the Christian landscape (Cooling and Cooling, 2013).

However, parental and governor expectations can differ regarding the RE curriculum:

... parents are not looking for specific Christian teaching even though as a Church school we are obliged to provide that. And the Governors would expect that of me (HT 148, B, Interview).

As one headteacher summed up:

We are not saying you have to believe it [the Christian faith], but we want to show it in practice (HT 144, B, Interview).

HT 148 (B) described how changes in his personal beliefs and diminution of faith had caused him to adjust the way he led the school in terms of knowledge sharing through the curriculum:

Although I have managed it over ten years but my personal beliefs have changed quite a lot to the point where I'm no longer a Church goer and my sort of personal beliefs about religion and Christianity have gone quite, quite the other way to be honest. But working in a Church school - that can cause a conflict. As a Head Teacher you are the leader of the RE and the community worship and so forth. My views are that children should be given choices within religious education and the governing bodies very often don't believe that and if you are working in a Church of England school very often they want specific Christian teaching on a daily basis and perhaps you might occasionally throw in something about Islam or Hinduism or something. They are quite comfortable if it's Judaism because they [Governing Body] think there is a link between Christianity and Judaism, so they feel quite comfortable with that. But they weren't comfortable when I started promoting multiple choice education within the school (B, Interview).

It is clear from these perspectives and experiences presented in this section that a sense of dis-identification and lack of fit is part of their negotiation of meaning for headteachers personally and professionally.

#### **7.6.5. Expectation 5: Visibility**

Expectations of headteacher visibility were sometimes expressed implicitly or explicitly by members of the spiritual community. Headteachers were expected to be present at various church and parish events at weekends in addition to festivals and special occasions.

For HT 119 the expectations were expressed in comments about the headteacher's absence:

None of them ever said to me, 'We haven't seen you in Church or [at] anything for a while. It was more, it was more implied about the expectation and you know you'd get comments where you kind of knew that what they were saying was, 'Oh, we haven't seen much of you this

term at all. Did you read the Church's Parish magazine last week?' (A, Interview).

Although he relished the 'freedom' he perceived Church schools heads to engage in 'mission' and saw as a privilege, the implicit expectations of visibility coupled with his contempt for what he deemed to be subjective assessments of distinctiveness in the SIAS expectation were influential in his decision to leave a church school. The combination of the two aspects of headship in his local context led him to feel that there was hypocrisy in church schools and he and his staff adopted a game-playing strategy: 'being seen' to be doing things in and around the Church and the local community, being 'highly visible' and 'ticking boxes' to meet everyone's expectations. He summed up his experience of church school headship as having 'been 'once bitten as they say' concluding that

I cannot see myself ever working in a Church school again' (HT 119, A, Interview).

HT 143 (A, Interview) experienced additional expectations of visibility as headteacher of two schools within a federation. Both schools and local communities expected his attendance at their events, leading to his 'double' attendance at both local churches to which the schools were linked. Sometimes he attended four times in one day for special events such as Education Sunday including 8am, 9.30am and 11am services in one morning. When he attended services of Remembrance Sunday for his two school communities on alternate years this caused upset at the wreath laying ceremonies amongst the community at whose service he was not present. Expectations communicated to him were also of church attendance at weekends including Harvest services on Saturdays.

Although always having worked in church schools as the result of a 'conscious decision' as 'I just enjoyed what a church school gave', the expectations from leading two communities changed his perceptions and

commitment to church school education leading him to remark, 'I am put off church schools now, from a leadership point of view' (Interview).

HT 132 believed that the leadership role of a church school shouldn't exceed the Monday to Friday working week and should not include expectations of church attendance on Sundays. In addition, his comments reveal a disappointment at feeling he has to prioritise attending the 'school church' over worshipping at his own church:

I do sometimes find it difficult to have to attend services in Church where my school is when I've missed important services in my own church (B, Interview).

Similarly, HT 11 reported that he was expected to prioritise attending the church to which the school was linked 'so many Sundays a term, instead of attending my own church with my family' creating conflict of the 'personal' with the 'public' elements of his job (A, Survey).

Although sometimes this expectation was expressed by others and led to feelings of disappointment or resentment on the part of some headteachers, it is important to note that some headteachers attended church services because they felt it was important rather than because they thought they 'should' or in response to expectations. For instance, HT 147 (B, Interview) commented that she felt that had to be seen at both the local churches (Methodist and C of E) once a month. However, although other aspects of Anglican school headship were influences in her decision to leave her headship, this expectation to attend two churches each month was not unduly onerous for her.

Although the qualitative evidence in respect of this expectation is small, it indicates that the expectation of visibility at the local church at weekends (not just festivals or special occasions) can be perceived as onerous, leading to resentment. It is not clear from the comments presented here whether the expectation emanated from clergy, parishioners, governors or parents.

However the data suggest that headteachers find the 'public' and the 'personal' dimensions colliding in terms of the boundaries of time and commitment to their professional role.

## **7.8. Expectations headteachers have of the spiritual community**

Headteachers have expectations of support and partnership working with other members of the spiritual community of practice. 78% (N=156) reported that there are particular positive aspects to being head of a church school and there were no differences between the headteacher groups (Group A: 77.3%, N=44; Group B: 79.5%, N=39; Group C: 78%, N=72). Thematic analysis of the related open response question (N=121) found that support from the diocese and local worshipping community and a shared understanding of ethos were positive aspects of Anglican school headship (Diocese: 36.4%; Worshipping Community: 35.5%; Ethos: 38%). A similar proportion of headteachers reported that they felt supported by the diocese (Group A: 29.4%, N=34; Group B: 29%, N=31). Group B headteachers were more likely to feel supported by the local worshipping community than Group A (Group A: 29.4%, N=34; Group B: 41.9%, N=31). Similar figures were the same for the proportion of headteachers who reported that a shared understanding of ethos was a positive aspect of church school headship (Group A: 32.4%, N=34; Group B: 41.9%, N=31).

Data analysis revealed that some members of the spiritual community are not mentioned as being part of the positive aspects of Anglican school headship. Only 10.7% (N=121) mentioned support from clergy: 14.7% of Group B headteachers (N=31) and only one headteacher in Group A (3.2%, N=31). Similarly, Governing Bodies were hardly mentioned. Group C headteachers mentioned Governing Bodies most frequently (15.3%, N=72) compared to just 5.9% (N=34) in Group A and 9.7% (N=31) in Group B.

Although there were limited qualitative responses in the headteacher survey to portray a clear picture behind the quantitative data in respect of the expectations headteachers have of other members within the spiritual community of practice, the experience of HT 132 (B) illustrates expectations of partnership working with clergy and Governors can be unfulfilled. Although HT 132 found that some collaborative activities worked well, others had not. Expanding the number of special services that the school has at the local church has 'been really positive' and the greater involvement of the local incumbent in preparing pupils in advance for the Easter Service and the Leavers' Service to be held at the church led to increased pupil understanding of Easter within the church's calendar, Christian beliefs and the associated rites and rituals. However, he expressed disappointment and frustration that despite all this preparation for the school's involvement in the life of the local church as a worshipping community, nothing changed at the services themselves to reflect the age and understandings of children:

... there's no concession made to the fact that there's potentially 19 or 20 children turn[ing] up on the Sunday; they just sit there, the service goes on as normal and that's been quite frustrating (B, Interview).

He himself had gained 'an understanding of what he [the vicar] practises and how he does it and what the meaning is', but felt that he was a solo voice in moving partnership forward:

We tried to get the PCC involved in working with the school and it didn't really come to anything - nothing really came of it. They all nodded and looked interested but nothing came of it. It was difficult. It didn't really work (B, Interview).

It would appear that while headteachers may have expectations of support from members of the spiritual community which are fulfilled, headteachers have additional expectations such as that of partnership which are unfulfilled and are influencing headteachers' future choice of schools for subsequent headship (e.g. HT 134, A).

This area of expectations surrounding partnership requires detailed research in its own right. Suffice to say, however, that the data appears to show that partnership between headteachers as spiritual leaders and 'interpreters of faith' (NCSL, 2006, p.2), clergy and Governors is not always partnership in practice as called for by Dearing (2001, Paragraphs 1.6 -1.9). Dearing called for the school to be 'at the heart of parish life' (Paragraph 1.8) as well as 'stand[ing] at the centre of the Church's mission to the nation' (Dearing, 2001, Paragraph 1.5). Cox (2011, 2013) commented on the paucity of meaningful partnership between clergy, Governors and schools even if schools make use of their local church building and there is some contact between clergy and pupils as Withers (2010) and Worsley (2010) call for. The need for meaningful partnership goes beyond the notion of Church and school partnership as set out in the 'call to action' for Diocesan Boards of Education (Archbishops' Council Education Division, 2013, p.1). As such the 'synergy' of 'potential collaborative partnerships' between the Anglican school and the wider worshipping community (Terry, 2013) remains untapped.

## **7.9. Expectations headteachers have of themselves**

As headteachers of church schools, a number of headteachers expressed the notion of having higher expectations of themselves because they were headteacher of a church school. Although some felt that 'living out their faith' was a privilege and a joy and an extension of themselves that enabled them to fuse the public and the personal dimensions of Anglican headship (e.g. HTs 134, 143 and 73, all Group B headteachers) some headteachers felt that they should be able to be 'better' headteachers or role models of faith, or believe in the tenets of the Christian faith when they didn't (e.g. HTs 108 and 136 in Group A and HT 150 in Group B). For instance, HT 108 whose experience was presented earlier commented:

I can't see myself being up to ... I can't see myself being the person I feel I need to be (A, Interview).

For a few headteachers, private tragedy such as bereavement and death of a spouse, partner or close friend had caused a crisis in faith with a loss of faith reported (e.g. HT 150, B). Acting with integrity personally was important to them and they could no longer 'live a lie' so felt that leaving Anglican headship presented the most appropriate option for them. In these instances, personal tragedy had an impact on their perceptions of being able to be an effective spiritual or faith leader.

Expectation of self was a minor thread through the data and so would merit further investigation in a future study.

## **7.10. Callings – experiences of the Divine in individual lives**

### **7.10.1. Defining calling and callings**

A sense of being 'called' can influence headteachers' decisions about leaving headship of a school or headship altogether. Although the notion of 'calling' or 'callings' (Elsbernd, 2004) did appear in a minority of written survey responses, this theme emerged predominantly from the interview data as headteachers described their experiences of headship and the various influences in their departure decisions. One Group A headteacher (male) and six of the fifteen Group B headteachers interviewed (four female, two male) discussed a sense of calling as being important in their decision making process and understanding of themselves, their identity and life trajectory or path. Calling is when a headteacher feels that they are being called 'into' or led 'out of' one situation into a new job or situation by God. Analysis showed that calling has four characteristics in the lives of the headteacher participants:

- 1. Calling has a language**
- 2. Calling is relational**
- 3. Callings are located within a journey**
- 4. Callings are unique to individuals.**

First, I offer some definitions and background to vocation or calling before presenting some of the headteachers' experiences related to the four characteristics identified.

Vocation is universally referred to in the vocabulary of its synonym, calling. The terms relate to the Latin root, *vocare*, or the Greek root, *kelein*. 'To hear' a calling or callings suggests that there is both a Caller and a hearer or responder (Elsbernd, 2004; Guinness, 2003; Hahnenberg, 2010; Neafsey, 2004; Richardson, 2004).

Literature on the notion of vocation or calling can be categorized into a number of broad categories: (i) general and non-denominational texts considering the theological understandings (e.g. Badcock, 1998; Guinness, 2003; Haughey, 2004; Hughes, 2012); (ii) texts with a specific focus on Catholic or Protestant understandings (e.g. Catholic: Hahnenberg, 2010 and Jamison, 2013; Protestant: Schuurman, 2004); (iii) books focusing on the vocation of secular work (e.g. Adair, 2002); (iv) books about the Christian life which concentrate on anecdotal explanations of fulfilling your calling or purpose in life (e.g. Babcock, 1998; Barkalow, 2010). Many of such texts offer biblical examples of call (e.g. Guinness, 2003; Hemer, 2013; Richardson, 2004; Williams, 1995).

Calling as a notion (Elsbernd, 2004) has elements of mystery inherent within it (Guinness, 2003, p.51) and when considered in terms of an individual's life's work is sometimes not clear at different stages of our lives. This is true whether or not an individual has a religious faith or not (Adair, 2002).

From a religious or theological perspective, being 'called' can be categorised from the literature considered as being of four types:

1. Being called as the result of the creational activity of God (e.g. Williams, 1995);
2. Being called into relationship with God through a conversion experience of repentance and faith, i.e. becoming a Christian through the acceptance of his offer of salvation as in John 3:16 (e.g. Schuurman, 2004, pp.25-26);
3. Being called into ordained ministry (e.g. Jamison, 2013);
4. Being called into 'particular callings to places of responsibility' that relate to people and responsibility within the secular life (e.g. Schuurman, 2004, pp.26-41).

It is worth noting that callings are multiple (Guinness, 2003, p.31) and all, whatever the terminology, are characterised by relationship. They include a calling to be in relationship with God and with others in community through service, to rites (e.g. baptism), to discipleship as a follower of Christ and to ways of being and living in lay and ordained ministry and secular work (see Richardson, 2004).

In investigating experiences amongst one hundred applicants for a Masters in Divinity (M.Div) ministry training course, Elsbernd found that the notion of calling had five meanings:

1. The call included something beyond themselves and their own control of destiny;
2. One's life work comes from a place other than unchecked self-interest or mechanistic logic;
3. To follow the call to ministry would break social conventions and conventional wisdom about career advancement;
4. An individual's life work is built on personal giftedness from creation and baptism;
5. Call was used to express a kind of divine sanction for applicant's sense of a life work.

(Elsbernd, 2004, pp.200-202).

Dearing argued that teaching as a vocation is equal in status to the priesthood. His report defined the term Christian vocation:

We mean a realization that it is a ministry in, of, and to the body of Christ. For a Christian, a vocation to teach should be the context in which he or she understands himself or herself called to act and speak for God. In that sense, it is something wonderful that stands alongside a vocation to the priesthood.

(2001, Paragraph 6.26).

Here there are similarities to a theology of the laity (General Synod, 1985) and the broader understanding of the term vocation as applicable to lay and ordained alike (Dewar, 1991).

In terms of vocation and teaching generally, Cooling (2010) suggests that teaching is a vocation in which teachers are 'strategically significant members of their [the Church's] mission programme' (p.26) despite a general lack of recognition of this role. In a short booklet he suggests that Christian teachers have a number of callings: to be distinctive, to be inclusive, to be professional and to be leaders (2010). These sit within the calling to mission that is the calling to teach (p.26), Cooling defining and qualifying the calling to mission thus

It is the calling to contextualize the Christian message in a highly secularized environment – British education (Cooling, 2010, p.26).

I turn now to present the experiences of calling of seven headteachers interviewed for whom callings were instrumental in their decisions about leaving a school or headship. The callings described all relate to specific call so are of a particular time and place even as they are part of a life's work or journey in which they will be located for the purposes of this discussion. In this way they are examples of how headteachers experience a 'particular calling[s] to [a] place of responsibility' that relate to people and places (Schuurman, 2004, pp.26-41).

### **7.10.2. Calling has a language**

Experiences of callings are expressed in particular language that encompasses the divine and the means of experiencing a calling.

Firstly, it was striking that headteachers always positioned the word 'God' before any verb or remainder of sentences uttered, e.g. God calling ..., God knowing what he wants from us ..., God leading me ..... indicating the concept of God as person rather than an abstract concept.

Secondly, the language used was strikingly similar with the verbs 'call' and 'lead' were common to every interview of the headteachers presented in detail here. This is consistent with the finding of Elsbernd's study of M.Div. applicants who reported having discerned a 'call' to ministry. Elsbernd's study found that there was a commonality of language in 85% of applications (N=100), including language suggesting individuals felt led, guided or instructed. Headteachers in this study expressed their experiences in the language of being led and guided but not instructed. Two particular metaphors were threaded through all their descriptions: (i) door opening and (ii) being on a journey. These will be drawn out in the examples presented in the remainder of this chapter.

Schuurman sums up the difficulty often experienced in hearing a calling from God but offers a helpful additional metaphor in the form of a 'lens of faith' by which an individual may hear the Caller (God):

God's call is not normally experienced as an audible, miraculous voice or visible sign in the heavens; rather, the lens of faith discerns God's call in and through the duties and opportunities of our varied social locations (Schuurman, 2004, p.xi).

Neafsey, in his essay on hearing the call of God through the inner voice of an individual's psychological experience, comments on the experiences that are more tangible than 'hearing' through the 'lens of faith':

... it should be kept in mind that God can also speak to us through the external events and experiences of our lives. That is, the voice of God can be heard not only through the feelings, thoughts, images, and dreams of our inner world, but also through significant life events, people, and circumstances we encounter (2004, pp.168-169).

### **7.10.3. Calling is relational**

Calling is relational in that it is God who leads or calls an individual to take actions or steps that lead to a change of focus or circumstance (HTs 128, 134, 144 and 147). God takes the initiative, not the individual. A belief in God as initiator (Caller) to whom the individual responds was fundamental to the experience of being called.

Even though the calling might be understood as being related to God's wider mission to the world through work in the education sector (Cooling, 2010; Dearing, 2001) all the headteachers believed that God was calling them to something specific that would enable them to use their previous experiences, skills and expertise in the fulfilment of the new role or task (Group B HTs 128, 134, 144, 147, 121 and 132; Group A HT 151). This will be drawn out in the examples presented below (7.10.4.) in respect of the way in which calling is located in the concept of journeying.

Central to this relationship was that they had to trust God and step out in faith as sometimes the signposts were not always as clear as individuals would have liked. Prayer was therefore fundamental to the sustaining of that relationship and listening to what God wanted of them for the next step of their lives (e.g. HTs 144 and 121). This trust required an individual to being open to 'what next', their lives and decisions being a 'faithful response' to God (HT 121) with God confirming in various ways that their decisions were right and obedient (HTs 121, 134, 144 and 151).

#### **7.10.4. Callings are located within a journey**

Being called out of their current headship into something new was not the first or the only time headteachers in this chapter had experienced a 'calling' or 'being called'. Although unique to each individual, common to the experiences described was the notion of God and the individual in an on-going relationship in which God's initiative could be seen in leading and guiding them into teaching, into headship, into specific posts or new situations.

HT 128 (B) described how she had experienced a series of callings in respect of her professional life and personal life that has seen her study theology alongside headship leading to ordination as a Non-Stipendiary Minister. Commenting on her journey, described how she had sought a deputy headship in a church school and then subsequently only applied for headship of Anglican schools. She had been appointed seven years previously and, as a former pupil and having been married in the local parish church, it had felt 'like coming home'. Leaving headship to return to a previously held role as School Effectiveness Officer for a local council she comments:

... because of the support of the priest in charge, I have actually been ordained ... I have had a sense of journey as well. I'm on the way. And that came partly because of the illness, partly because of things I've been doing in school, partly feeling I wanted to contribute more to people, and I saw my teaching skills I could use in Church and it grew from that ... it [headship she is leaving] was meant for me and I went through that to do something else [School Effectiveness Officer] but I can do more in my ordained ministry. So I very much feel that it's God leading me through this path (Interview).

She ended her reflections in the interview in which she had discussed how sometimes she had felt unfilled in her role as headteacher and had found increasing fulfilment as a minister with a throw away comment about her sense of self: 'it's about being allowed to be me as well as Mrs XXX' (Interview). This suggests that she felt that by responding to the personal and professional opportunities offered by God led to a sense of personal fulfilment

in the context of service to others (Elsbernd, 2004; Hahnenberg, 2010; Schuurman, 2004).

HT 151 (A) summed up his relationship with God when talking about how he felt called into education from the chemical industry through a series of 'bizarre' experiences including being asked to help out a church club for boys aged five to six years even though he had no experience with children and later watching a school play at the invitation of a friend:

I couldn't believe I would be interested in anything like that, but I went and I enjoyed it ...It was that series of things really. It was knowing that actually it was a vocation rather than anything else. I really felt this sort of magical pull out of the chemical industry into something [teaching] where I could be myself more ... (Interview).

Here, it is striking that his understanding of his relationship with God is that being a Christian is part of a partnership with God as he pursues God's plan for his life:

... you can't be real with other people unless you know who you are ... the underpinning is spiritual because we are constantly learning about ourselves and us psychologically ourselves as human beings, which is more and more a delight to me every day ... our failings and our successes.

But underpinning it is this motivation that you are called. God say, 'Hey, I've got you know – we're in a relationship, what are you going to do about it? And these are the things: I'll give you these things to work with, these skills to work with me in this way if you choose to go that way.' And for me it was off with the chemical world into education (Interview).

Here the implication is of God offering a plan which an individual has free will to choose to follow or not. This is consistent with callings being part of a plan

in which individuals are invited to discern and participate in in partnership with God rather than a predestined blueprint (Williams, 1995).

His teaching career prior to headship had contained a number of opportunities, some of which he had sought and some of which had been the result of others identifying his leadership potential. His analysis is that

... everything just seemed to happen, because of school structures and so on, and I'm sure the prayer thing is part of it but everything just fell into place ... There is always a sense of purpose that's beyond you, really. You can always turn your back on it but, you know, you are not driven along but you know that you have a route to follow ... (Interview).

In describing the circumstances leading to him leaving his present school and new appointment to the headship of a community maintained school, he commented on how an application for an inner city Anglican school with considerable challenges had led to rejection even though he believed that he had the skills to make a real difference based on the similarities to the context he had been working in.

At this stage in telling his story and of hearing 'this call again to move' he remarked that he was 'waiting for the still small voice I get' (Interview). This phrase sums up his belief in the communicative nature of God, implied that he had experienced a 'still small voice' before and that the voice could both prompt and confirm inclinations, decisions and actions.

He was then approached by the Local Authority to go and see the school he has now been appointed to, a community maintained school in a predominantly Muslim community. He was somewhat ambivalent and told the Local Authority so:

Then this guy from the county rang - a head-hunter I guess - and said, 'Look, you looked at this other junior school, would you be interested in

looking at the infant school next door?' And I said, Well, no, I'm after Church school and purely Church schools, inner city ... ' He rang me the next week and asked me to have a look again, described the setting and this kept on for about a month and in the end, I said, 'Okay, I'll come and have a look at the school but don't get your hopes up that I'll even be applying.' I went to it and I just got such a lovely welcome and it was such a desperate, desperate situation that I thought, 'These people really need something better. They need some help to move on from where they are' and so I thought, 'Hey, let's put in a speculative application and see what happens'. And just pushing the doors really and knowing it was 99.9% Muslim and knowing the Governors were predominantly Muslim, knowing it was non-Church ... (A, Interview).

He reflected that his exploration of where he might be being called to next after this headship hadn't been what he expected (an inner city Anglican school similar to the one he was head of) but something different but which would use his skills in leading school improvement in quite a deprived socio-economic context. Furthermore, he reflected on conversations he had had with his school's office manager before he had begun to consider moving schools:

I fell in love with it [the school] when I visited it and then it struck me. For about a year 18 months, I've been laughing with my office manager and saying, 'Come on, if you're a real Christian you can get out there in the real world and do the real thing.' I've always had a 'bee in my bonnet' about missionaries being exhausted and they are special people, but we are all special people in our different ways. We can all do our bit and if we are doing the bit that we are called to, how special is that? And so I said, 'Well, if you are a real Christian you've got to get out of your comfort zone and get off your bottom and you are going to go and do something hard.' And when I got this interview she reminded me of what I'd said and I just laughed and thought, 'Yeah, You've said these things and now you are being called to them' (A, Interview).

Where headteachers had acted on their callings they found that subsequent events confirmed their understanding of God's calling. For instance, HT 134 (B) described how she and her husband had felt called to emigrate to Canada to teach First Nations people. She described how she had been amazed that despite the depressed housing market their house had sold and that their buyers had allowed them to remain living in the house beyond the sale completion date until their flight date. Furthermore, the buyers had moved their furniture in as hers had been packed and shipped already and so her family had not only stayed in the house but stayed in it furnished as well. She saw this as God's graciousness to her and her family but also a sign of confirmation that they were doing the right thing:

We're in own house because the people who bought our house have furnished it for us. I know this is God looking after you see. This is God knowing what he wants from us. ... Who else would have sold a ruddy great house in this market? Ours is the only house in the Estate Agents that's got a big sold sign on it, and I should think it's the most expensive house in the Estate Agents as well ... it's sold when, it's just amazing, so I do believe that He thinks it's the right thing to do... and people say, 'Oh, wasn't it good luck.' But it isn't luck at all, it's [um] divine intervention (Interview).

This is an example of calling to which Neafsey refers (2004). This headteacher believed that God was speaking to her and confirming his calling through

... the external events and experiences of our lives ... the voice of God can be heard ... through significant life events, people, and circumstances we encounter (2004, pp.168-169).

Similarly, HT 144 (B) also described how she had felt led by God and how she felt this had been confirmed as a result of her trusting that she was being led. HT 144 had felt called into church school headship specifically following a time in her life in which she tried to discern what God was asking of her for the

next phase. Although she had initially decided not to pursue headship, she had decided to do the NPQH after a term as Acting Head on secondment. At this stage she had felt she should consider whether to stay in teaching or do something different:

I was approaching 45ish. I had to make a decision whether I wanted to stay in teaching or go off on a different path. Part of that decision making was partly connected with religious aspects and whether I wanted to actually do something in the Church line. I actually went to a Church vocation 'stay' and had a quite interesting conversation about possibly thinking about not moving career but maybe working in a Church school and moving in that direction. It was something I hadn't actually considered until that point so I suppose that was the sort of key really to it ... I have to say I hadn't felt it was a calling that was me. I did at possibly lay reader, something like that. But I couldn't afford to give up work to do that ... and it wasn't somewhere that I thought I was really being called to do. So I thought that probably education was the path that I was still, still very passionate about. But maybe it broadened me into thinking about Church schools a bit more (Interview).

Having then entered headship and felt that 'teaching, and the headship and the Christianity are sort of very much linked' (Interview), she had begun to feel that a number of factors were influencing how long she stayed in headship. She had begun to consider about two years before resigning whether she would like to work with Church schools if an opportunity such as a Diocesan Adviser post as her priorities in her personal and professional life were changing.

Having felt that 'the time was right to move' (interview) she commented that

a sort of whole series of events [occurred] and prayed a lot about it, I have to say that the post actually came up and I thought I would apply for it because I wanted to do it and unfortunately the posts don't come up that often (Interview).

As with HT 128, HT 144 experienced a need to trust God as to what she was being called 'to' and being called to 'do' without visibly clear 'markers' beyond a desire or interest in exploring something but that somehow God confirms decisions made if they are 'right' subsequent to the faithful decision or response being made.

In describing her experiences of seeking the 'direction that I feel I am being drawn to' (Interview) she refers to the journey and need for discernment as to the specifics of the journey she is on:

You know again it comes back to my Christian beliefs and my belief that you are on a journey and sometimes along the way the signs aren't marked, you just have to look for them. And that is quite difficult to explain to somebody who is possibly not a Christian, why do you want to do it? Well partly because I think I can do it and do a good job because otherwise I wouldn't be wanting to do it but also I think it's part of this, you know going back to this vocation thing, it's something I'm being called to do as well (Interview).

In addition to using the metaphor of journeying, she also uses that of 'pushing a door' (see 7.9.2.) and of how she explored the calling through prayer and the counsel of other Christians:

Because I'm on the PCC at my own church, I'm also on the Deanery and Diocesan Synod, you have quite a lot of opportunities to talk to people and I [also] talked to the Rural Dean. She just said, 'You know, [interviewee's name], unless you push the door you won't know whether it's going to open or not' and well, that's true. It you don't push the door, you won't know if it's going to open and actually it did (Interview).

In a similar way to HT 128, HT 144 expressed the notion that new things to which a Christian is called are part of a life trajectory in which God prepares

people for new roles, jobs or tasks which will then utilise their previous opportunities and experience in the next role:

And I wouldn't have been able to do this [new] job without being a head anyway ... (HT 144, B, Interview).

In discussing her imminent move to take up a lecturing post at a university, HT 147 (B) commented how her new job would enable her to use her expertise and experience (early years and maths):

I also think God works in mysterious ways too because those are my strongest subjects and all the subjects that I've had experience in when I was a teacher [and] as subject co-ordinator. So I mean, it [the job] was a gift from [tape unclear] ... So it's a perfect job ... I feel that my path is mapped out for me and I've just got to trust that it will be okay, that I will go off and be lecturer and do good works with students ... (Interview).

As seen in the comments of the interview data presented, headteachers see their call to a next step or something new as opportunity to use their accumulated skills, talents, experience that are unique to them and which equips them to undertake and fulfil their new role.

In this way, headteachers conceptualise their experience of calling as being about service to others more than about themselves and which results - through their response to that call from the Caller (God) - in the use of personal gifts and talents (Elsbernd, 2004, pp.200-20; Hahnenberg, 2010). This creates the sixth sense of vocation, a sense of meaning (Gustafson, 1984, cited in Schuurman, 2004, p.52). Headteachers recognise that their past experiences in all their richness and diversity are necessary for them to be able to fulfil their next calling to a 'particular place or responsibility' (Schuurman, 2004, pp.26-41).

**In summary then, the following can be said of all the headteachers considered here:**

**To speak of call is to acknowledge a caller, to see that God's gracious initiative precedes all of our projects and our plans, that our individual journeys have a goal (Hahnenberg, 2010, p.xiv).**

**They all acknowledged a caller, believed that God's initiative preceded their decisions and actions and that these were part of their individual journeys.**

**Callings are unique and personal to each headteacher. In the stories presented here the relationship between individuals and God is evident in the lives and decisions of these seven headteachers. Their identity, sense of self and commitment to others is bound up in their relationship with God and fulfilling his callings throughout their lives. Therefore, it is clear that experiences of the divine in the lives of headteachers is part of the picture of headteacher departure as individuals make decisions consistent with their Christian faith in response to the callings of God.**

## **7.11. The spiritual community and departure**

### **7.11.1. What might have persuaded headteachers to stay?**

**It is clear that headteachers can feel a sense of dis-identification (Wenger, 2011, p.3) with the practice of the spiritual community as seen principally in the five expectations other members have of headteachers (Expectations 1 – 5, see Figure 15).**

**Although headteachers were aware of Expectations 1 and 3 to varying degrees at the time of their appointment, the sense of dis-identification increased and became more pronounced over time as they realised there were additional expectations associated with Anglican headship (Expectations 2, 4 and 5). This resulted in varying degrees of alignment, imagination and**

engagement of headteachers with core elements of the shared domain of interest. Feelings of being peripheral and marginal to the central vision of Anglican school education became difficult to address, sometimes resulting in mask wearing strategies to hide feelings of lack of alignment in the 'public' and visible aspects of their role. The personal and public dimensions of headship that are so rooted in the historical dimension of Anglican headship influence identity and thus contribute to decisions about leaving.

The influence of expectations pertaining to Anglican school leadership on headteacher departure cannot be underestimated in light of the data presented in this chapter.

I turn now to present some observations about what could have been done to limit the haemorrhage of headteachers from Anglican schools that occurred in 2008-2009.

### **Expectations 1 and 2 (Personal faith and adherence to the Anglican tradition)**

Headteachers may not have been so influenced had Expectations 1 and 2 been more clearly articulated at the application or appointment stages by the appointing Governing Bodies. Departure from Anglican schools stems initially from a poorly planned and executed recruitment strategy on the part of appointing Governing Bodies with insufficient communication of the school's religious character through from advertisement to interview stages. It was noticeable in doing one particular stage of this research (Research Question 2 and the characteristics of the schools' headteachers were leaving) that many of the schools whose headteachers and Chairs of Governors returned questionnaires had websites that did not indicate their religious designation and no links to SIAS reports were provided. All Governing Bodies of Anglican schools need to take communication of their religious character and Anglican identity seriously at every stage of the recruitment and appointment process. The expectation of the Governing Body in respect of the legislation applicable to Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled needs to be clearly

communicated and explained. Furthermore, it may be helpful to applicants to gain an understanding of the 'churchmanship' needed for the parish context to which they are applying (e.g. evangelical, high church etc). These actions on the part of Governing Bodies may reduce the dis-identification that ultimately influences headteacher departure and which, in the case of this study, contributed to the decisions of nearly half of all headteachers leaving for a subsequent headship to leave for a non-Anglican school (46.7%, N=45).

### **Expectations 3 and 4 (Spiritual leadership, mission and knowledge sharing)**

Similarly, greater dialogue and training may have helped headteachers on their inbound trajectory in the early days of their headship to understand the shared domain of interest more clearly (Wenger, 1998), understand their role as spiritual leaders in mission and knowledge sharing, and understand the concept and practice of distinctiveness in Anglican schools (Expectations 3 and 4). Training for aspirant headteachers and continuing professional development for headteachers in post needs to clearly differentiate the characteristics of Anglican school headship (not just leadership of faith schools).

Consideration needs to be given to what Anglicanism is and how Anglican schools are part of God's mission to the world. Similarly, consideration needs to be given by Governing Bodies and dioceses as to their respective collective understanding of the part that Anglican schools and local worshipping congregations play in God's mission to the world (Astley, 2002; Francis, 1993, p.62) and whether their theology of education is education into Christianity, education about Christianity or education in a Christian manner (Astley, 2006).

As part of this discussion, Governing Bodies and core members of the spiritual community could consider what their school's 'model of belonging' is from the metaphors and images discussed in Chapter 2.4. of which Astley (2002), Boutellier (1979), Elbourne (2009), Waddington (1993, pp.48-49) and Worsley (2006) write:

- Tribe
- Family
- Threshold place
- Half-way house
- Safe place and/or stepping stone to and from the community.

Similarly, discussion of the concepts of rootedness, belonging and narrative recently proposed by Elbourne (2013) would be a way forward for headteachers, Governing Bodies and staff in Anglican schools.

As part of this consideration about the purpose of Anglican schools, headteachers, Governing Bodies and clergy could usefully consider what role they have in partnership in the concept of 'chaplaincy – being used to think with' (Jenkins, 2003, p.200). The 'conversational mode' of 'being used to think with' (p.200) is then part of what Elbourne calls for when he argues that schools need to be invitational, that is, inviting 'people to take their own place in the salvation history of the people of God' (2009, p.12).

Furthermore, all those involved in the spiritual community of practice could consider the theology of prophecy (Francis, 1993, p.62) and the relevance this concept may have in interpretations of the Christian faith in generational, geographical and cultural contexts (McAdoo, 1991).

Such a concept as 'chaplaincy' has powerful potential for transformative education in every sense for local communities if an Anglican school - through its work and worship in an education context - provides opportunities for God

... to be found embodied in a particular place, locality, people [and] the materials of time and history can show him forth (Jenkins, 2003, p.200).

If spiritual communities - and in particular headteachers, clergy, the local worshipping congregation and Governing Bodies - engaged with these

concepts, and suggestions there exist significant challenges for all and opportunities. If headteachers in this study had been part of discussions about such concepts then it is possible they might not have experienced the sense of dis-identification described in this chapter. New interpretations would have been created through imagining and mutual engagement (Wenger, 1998).

### **Expectation 5 (Visibility)**

Clearer boundaries and a consensus between headteacher and Governing Bodies regarding the extent of headteacher 'visibility' that is appropriate and necessary at community events and particularly at church services in the parish may have reduced frustration, resentment and sense of dis-identification for some headteachers in this study.

### **Partnership and Expectations headteachers have of themselves**

Discussions about vision, distinctiveness and partnership in practice (with clergy, Governors and local churches) would have helped reduce some of the frustrations headteachers expressed. It is probably not possible or preferable to reduce individual's expectations of themselves although possibly some form of 'clinical supervision' or 'spiritual direction' approach with an external adviser might have placed expectations of self in greater perspective.

### **Callings**

In terms of the influence of callings experienced by individual headteachers on leaving decisions, there is nothing that can be done or should be in this aspect of the 'personal' dimension of headship that would limit the haemorrhage of headteachers from Anglican schools. A decision to follow an Abrahamic calling from God to go to 'somewhere or something else' is obviously deeply personal and must be respected by all those who seek policy solutions at national or diocesan level to the difficulties of headteacher supply.

## 7.12. Chapter summary

This chapter has argued that there are three dimensions of Anglican school headship which influence the lives and decisions of headteachers and that it is the interplay of these within the practice and relationships of the spiritual community of practice that give rise to a range of expectations. These expectations, predominantly those which the community and its members have of headteachers, can influence headteachers' departure decisions as the result of feelings of 'dis-ease or dis-identification with members and/or the practice of the community experienced in the course of their individual identity work. It is the historical dimension of Anglican school headship which can have a significant influence on headteachers' experience and on their decisions. The chapter has also presented headteachers' experience of callings that influence individual decisions of some headteachers. Not only do all these expectations and relational aspects of Anglican headship experienced in the interplay of the historical, public and personal dimensions affect the lives of headteachers, they influence decisions in terms of leaving a particular school or headship altogether (Group B) and influence the future choices of headteachers moving to take up a subsequent headship (Group A).

# **CHAPTER 8**

## **CONCLUSION**

### **8.1. Introduction**

This brief and final chapter summarises the findings of the study and argues that this study makes a contribution to knowledge.

First, I summarise the focus of the study and how it was designed and conducted. Secondly, I summarise the key findings to the five research questions. In respect of the first three research questions I do this through summarising the factual conclusions. In respect of the main focus of the study, why headteachers leave (the fourth research question), I provide some factual conclusions through returning to compare the study's findings with extant literature discussed in Chapter 2 before drawing together the conceptual conclusions about practice and identity discussed in Chapters 6 and 7 as they relate to headship in general and to Anglican school headship in particular. Thirdly, I address the fifth research question, drawing together the implications for dialogue and action which could be considered by members of the communities.

In the final third of this chapter I critique this study using the integrative framework for inference quality (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009) before summarising the original contribution to knowledge of the thesis and identifying three possibilities for future research. Finally, I conclude the thesis with some personal reflections about my own research journey.

### **8.2. Focus of the study**

This study investigated headteacher departure from Church of England primary schools in England during the academic year 2008-2009. Exploring

the scale of headteacher departure through examining 'who is leaving' (Research Question 1), the characteristics of the headteachers leaving and their schools (Research Question 2) and where these headteachers are going, 'going to' or 'going to do' next (Research Question 3). However, the focus of the study was on why headteachers of Anglican primary schools leave a school and/or headship (Research Question 4). The focus on headteachers' experiences of Anglican school headship presented and discussed in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 enables some conclusions to be drawn regarding aspects of headship which influenced their decisions and also explore what might have persuaded them to stay in headship (Research Question 5).

The five research questions were framed thus:

RQ 1: Who is leaving?

RQ 2: What are the characteristics of those leaving and their schools?

RQ 3: Where are headteachers 'going to'?

RQ 4: Why are headteachers leaving?

RQ 5: What might have persuaded headteachers to stay?

### **8.3. How the study was designed and conducted**

The study employed a sequential explanatory qualitative dominant mixed methods design, utilising two surveys and a substantial number of semi-structured interviews with two groups of participants, headteachers and Chairs of Governors. A comprehensive visual map detailing the design, implementation and priority of the study and utilising the concepts of product and process in portraying the study's constituent parts, decisions and resulting data is presented as Figure 7 (Chapter 3).

This study focused on Church of England primary schools, the category of schools with a religious designation or character of 'Church of England', which

comprises 4,470 schools, a quarter (25.3%, N=17,667) of all primary schools in England (Church of England, 2007). This study surveyed the scale and nature of departure in respect of all Anglican schools whose Governing Body advertised a headteacher post during 2008-2009 (N=526). Conducting the study over the course of an academic year 'smoothed out' the effects of the 'highs and lows' of advertising patterns (see Graph 1).

The mixed methods design was influenced by a desire to understand the extent of the problem of headteacher supply facing Anglican schools and a desire to understand deeply - 'up close and personal' – what might lie behind individual decisions to leave a post and/or headship. The complementary nature of the qualitative dominant design employed provided 'elaboration, enhancement, illustration [and] clarification of the results from one method with the results from the other method' (Greene et al., 1989, p.259) and provided opportunities for multiple layers of meaning and understanding (Johnson, 2007, p.119).

The dissemination of the study's findings through the thesis is a continuation of the concept of complementarity (Greene et al., 1989, p.259) as expressed through a structure that 'forge[s] a negotiated account' (Bryman, 2007, p.21). It continues the conceptualisation of departure through a deeper understanding of practice and identity that began in papers presented at conferences (Whiteoak, 2008, 2009a, 2009b) and continued in a research seminar (Whiteoak, 2013).

The main findings in answer to the fourth research question, 'why do headteachers leave?' are presented in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 of this thesis:

- Chapter 5: Career stages: birds on the wing
- Chapter 6: Spinning wheels by candlelight
- Chapter 7: Historical, public and personal dimensions of Anglican school headship.

These chapters only use quantitative and qualitative data generated through the headteacher survey (N=156) and headteacher interviews (N=48). They draw on the extant literature related to:

- career stages (Chapter 5)
- headteachers' lived experiences (Chapters 5, 6 and 7).

I turn now to summarising the key findings of the study by answering the five research questions posed in Chapter 1.3., providing some factual answers to Research Questions 1, 2 and 3 before drawing the conceptual conclusions of Chapters 5, 6 and 7 together in answer to Research Question 4, why headteachers leave. I then consider the final Research Question (5).

## **8.4. Research Findings**

### **8.4.1. Research Question 1: Who is leaving?**

Concern over a predicted 'demographic time-bomb', the result of the numbers of headteachers expected to retire from headship, dominated media stories, national conferences and discourse about headteacher supply in the years preceding this study (e.g. DCSF, 2007a; Earley et al., 2002; Higham et al., 2007; Stevens et al., 2005).

Annual surveys of the state of the labour market as measured by the number of headteacher posts advertised and re-advertised each year (e.g. Howson, 2002, 2003b, 2005, 2007a, 2007b, 2008a, 2008b, 2009, 2010a, 2011) indicate that significant numbers of primary school headteachers in England are leaving headship and that Governing Bodies find it hard to recruit school leaders. These annual surveys record and highlight the difficulties that faith schools in particular have in recruiting headteachers. Twenty two years of annual surveys from 1984 to 2006 (Howson, 2010a) culminated in a rebuke to faith schools and church authorities (particularly Church of England and Roman Catholic) about their lack of action in previous years and a challenge

to address the problem (Howson, 2007a, p.2). It is at this point in the concern about headteacher supply and particularly supply of headteachers for Anglican schools that this study was conceived.

Instead of investigating the success of succession planning and organisation strategies addressing the problems of headteacher supply (Chapter 2), this study was driven by an interest in what was happening to headteachers who were leaving headship and did not appear to feature in any official statistics (Chapter 1.1.). I was interested particularly in how many headteachers are leaving Anglican primary schools, where they are going and what lies behind their individual decisions.

The results of the headteacher survey (N=156) and the Chair of Governing Body survey (N=142) were remarkably consistent (see Chapter 4.4. and Table 7) and overall, the data resulting from the combined schools dataset represents 46.20% of all the Anglican schools who advertised during that year (N=526). As such, this study represents a contribution to knowledge about the extent of headteacher departure from a large number of schools in this category of school which, historically, have a record of attrition and turnover and difficulties in recruitment.

The proportion of Anglican school headteachers in this study who are leaving to take up a substantive headship (Group A) is slightly higher than all primary schools nationally (22%, N=767, Howson, 2009, p.8). The figures from the three datasets were remarkably consistent with the surveys indicating 28.85% (N=156) from the headteacher survey and 30.92% (N=142) from the CGB survey. The combined schools dataset figure was 30.86% (N=243). This would suggest that the scale of Anglican school headteacher supply is being 'masked' by national data and annual surveys relating to all primary schools.

This study found that there is a group of headteachers who are neither moving to a substantive headship nor retiring (Group B). This study finds that a larger proportion of Anglican school headteachers are leaving headship altogether (and not retiring) compared to the figure of 15% (N=217) of

Anglican schools reported by Howson (2009) (see Chapter 4.4.). Results from the headteacher survey (25%, N=156), the CGB survey (28.17%, N=142) and the combined schools dataset (28.40%, N=243) are strikingly higher than those reported by Howson for all primary schools (Howson, 2009). This suggests that attrition from headship is higher from Anglican primary schools than all primary schools.

Comparison of the 'onward destinations' of the headteachers in this study retiring (Group C) indicates that Howson (2009) reported a substantially higher proportion of headteachers taking retirement (62%, N=767). This study reports 46.15% (N=156) from the headteacher survey, 35.92% (N=142) from the CGB survey and 40.74% (N=243) from the combined schools dataset. Although the figures across two surveys and the combined schools dataset have a slightly wider spread than those for Groups A and B, they are within reasonable tolerances. Comparison with Howson's study (2009) suggests that Anglican primary schools are losing fewer headteachers to retirement than all primary schools nationally.

#### **8.4.2. Research Question 2: What are the characteristics of those leaving and their schools?**

In addition to establishing the scale of departure and the broad (three) categories of leavers (Groups A, B, and C), the surveys generated data regarding the characteristics of those leaving and their schools to provide a backdrop against which examination as to why headteachers leave could be understood (Research Question 2). Data relating to the following aspects were examined: (i) demographic data and career data; (ii) contextual data relating to the school context (e.g. geography, religious designation, inspection judgements) and (iii) the working lives of headteachers. The details of these descriptive aspects are reported in Chapter 4. The working lives were examined to enable comparison with existing studies about workload in Chapter 5.

### **8.4.3. Research Question 3: Where are headteachers going 'to'?**

Two findings are striking in terms of where headteachers are 'going to' or 'going to do' on leaving their headship:

- Nearly half of all headteachers in Group A (46.7%, N=45) leaving to take up a subsequent headship are taking up headship of a non-Anglican school (Table 8, Chapter 5);
- Nearly half of Group B headteachers are leaving headship and the education profession altogether with few or no plans for their future (46.15%, N=39), a higher proportion than for all headteachers nationally (Chapter 5.3.2.).

These Group B headteachers are described in Chapter 5 as being either

- (i) 'Eagles' who are leaving headship but continuing to influence others in various education related fields and jobs *and*
- (ii) 'Migrating birds', headteachers who are leaving headship and the education profession altogether. These headteachers are leaving without any plans.

This study confirms that there is a 'hidden' or 'silent' group of headteachers (Group B) about whom I wondered when I left headship and which led to this study (Chapter 1.1.).

### **8.4.4. Research Question 4: Why are headteachers leaving? – factual answers**

The problems of headteacher supply are not solely located in the 'demographic time-bomb' predicted by policy makers or the impact that the numbers of headteachers retiring has on the availability of headteachers for Anglican schools (Chapter 2.2.). Headteacher supply is a concern, quite rightly, for policy makers and training agencies (e.g. NCSL, now NCLT), Governing Bodies and Academy Boards. For those involved in Anglican

schools, namely the Church of England, Diocesan Boards of Education and Governing Bodies, the issues of headteacher supply are particularly difficult.

However, this study argues that it is erroneous to think that the difficulties of supply can be solved solely through succession planning and new forms of school organisation (Chapter 2.3.). It is not by reducing the numbers of schools which need a headteacher (e.g. through school organisation models), by increasing the numbers of aspirant headteachers or by training future leaders better (succession planning) that the numbers of headteachers leaving headship and in particular, Anglican school headship, can be addressed.

This thesis examined the empirical literature on headteacher departure (Chapter 2.5.) conceptualising the reasons known to influence headteacher departure in the following ways: (i) Premature departure linked to contextual factors (2.5.2.); (ii) Influences affecting all teachers (2.5.3.); (iv) Career shifts including advancement (2.5.4.) and retirement (2.5.1.); (v) Personal response to incidents (2.5.5.); (vi) Snakes and ladders (2.5.6.); (vii) The impact of stress and workload resulting in choices for 'self and sanity or self-sacrifice' (2.5.7.) and (viii) The changing role of the headteacher (2.5.8.). Noting that data for the period September 2006 to March 2007 indicated that 31% (N=683, Howson, 2007b) of all primary headteachers were retiring before the age of 60 (2.5.1.) I suggested that this might indicate a haemorrhage of expertise and experience from the profession that merited investigating.

I now return to these categories and metaphors used in Chapter 2 to summarise the factual findings that answer this third research question in respect of the influences on headteachers' decisions before turning to draw some conceptual conclusions about the nature of headteacher departure.

In using the metaphor of 'spinning wheels by candlelight' (Chapter 6) I showed that workload and stress influence individual decisions. This metaphor captures the long hours spent working and 'burning the candle at both ends' (Chapter 6.8.) and the relentless quest for improved pupil

outcomes (Chapter 6.3. and 6.4.) in an era of constant change, lack of trust and 'spinning wheels' that is contemporary headship (Chapter 6.5.).

Premature departure from a school was defined by Kruger et al. as being 'always against the will of the principal' (2005, p.242) with four contextual aspects being particularly influential: the characteristics of the organisation, characteristics of the working environment, characteristics of the selection procedure and the personal characteristics of the individual. Conflict was found to be a common feature of the relationships between the principal, governors, staff and parents (Kruger et al., 2001; Whittal, 2002).

There is no evidence from this study that headteachers leaving a school *and* headship (Group B) are leaving 'against their will' or that similar local contextual factors identified by Kruger et al. played a part in the departure of Anglican headteachers. In contrast, this study finds that it is aspects of headteachers' experience that arise from national policy and systems such as performance measures that are influential rather than local contextual factors. The focus on pupil performance at national level is interpreted at local (school) level as forms of pressure by headteachers and this can result in a sense of powerlessness and disassociation with the philosophy of some aspects of education policy and practice in England. As discussed in Chapter 6, this study found that the prevailing performativity and low trust culture (e.g. Blackmore and Thomson, 2004; Bottery, 2004) can be perceived as onerous leading to the use of unfair comparators as judgements are made on increasing amounts of data – the 'more, more, faster, faster' notion in the middle sections of Chapter 6 (6.3. and 6.4.).

The local element of conflict with parents described in the section titled with the metaphor of 'apron strings' (Chapter 6.7.) is essentially a matter of relationships, communication and the shifting childcare and education agenda of recent years in which parents and pupils have become consumers and there is sometimes unresolved tension over extended school provision and the respective responsibilities of professionals and parents.

Selection and appointment processes can be instrumental in the premature departure of principals in the study (Kruger et al., 2005). This study reports a related finding, namely, that the departure decisions of individual headteachers can be traced back to the roots of misunderstanding and lack of clarity regarding expectations of Governing Bodies as articulated in the recruitment and appointment process. Thus in Chapter 7 I argued that selection procedures for Anglican school headteachers are flawed and can result in a 'lack of fit' between the individual and the school as the central setting for the core members of the spiritual community of practice (see Chapter 7.7.1., 7.7.2. and 7.11.1.).

I used the image of the children's board game, 'Snakes and ladders' (Chapter 2.5.6.) to examine the few studies which suggest that some headteachers decide to leave headship to 'return to the classroom' (e.g. Howson, 2007b; Whittal, 2002). This study does not find evidence that concurs with this notion.

Literature suggests that headteacher departure can be influenced by individuals' responses to a range of critical personal and professional incidents (e.g. Flintham, 2003a, 2009; Thomson, 2009) and that heavy workloads, tensions in relationships and increased accountabilities of teachers at every level of responsibility within the profession can lead to significant degrees of stress (Phillips et al., 2007) and a decision to depart from the profession (e.g. Smethern, 2007, Smithers and Robinson, 2003; Tye and O'Brien, 2002). This study found that headteachers make career decisions based upon their ability to manage emotions (Crawford, 2007; Denzin, 2009; Mander, 2008), mitigating the stress of workload and critical incidents (Phillips et al., 2007) by making decisions that seek to neutralise the impact of workload on the most important relationships in their lives with family members (Chapter 6). In such ways headteachers in this study manage their health and relationships within the context of the changing role of headteacher and their professional and personal identities.

Although stress and workload are part of the picture of departure for some headteachers, and for some headteachers, these have their roots in the focus

on data driven measures of performance, stress and workload do not appear to have impaired headteacher performance or competence. Analysis indicated that respondents are competent headteachers whose schools achieved judgements of 'Good' or 'Outstanding' in their school's most recent Ofsted and SIAS Inspections (see Chapter 4.7.1. and 4.7.2.).

Chapter 5 concluded that Anglican school headteachers leave a post for reasons articulated in the extant career stage literature (e.g. Day and Bakioglu, 1996, Earley and Weindling, 2004; Hart and Weindling, 1996, NCSL, 2004; Parkay and Hall, 1992; Reeves et al., 1997). Career advancement is a significant influence for Group A headteachers with headteachers leaving for larger schools and attendant higher salaries.

However, it is also worth noting that in addition to being 'eagles' whose practice is sufficiently good to be of use in supporting others that they beginning to 'spread their wings' of experience before leaving their headship (Chapter 5.2.2.) the majority of headteachers are also 'birds of passage' (Chapter 5.2.4.), headteachers who are leaving a first headship and whose time in their first headship was relatively short and fleeting.

Therefore, this study would suggest that there *is* a haemorrhaging of experience and expertise of Anglican school headteachers who do not necessarily fall within the 'demographic time-bomb' group of headteachers retiring (Chapter 2.5.1.).

#### **8.4.5. Research Question 4: Why do headteachers leave? – conceptual conclusions about practice and identity**

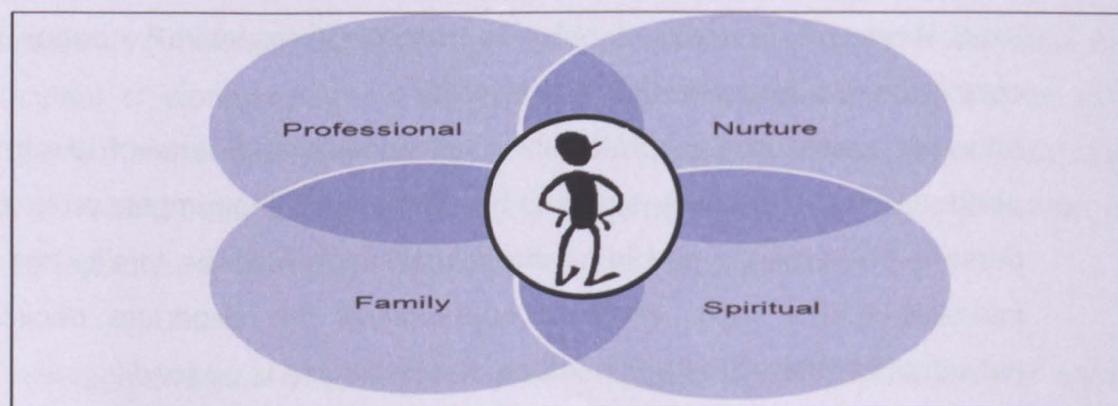
Although career stages, professional advancement, culture of low trust and performativity, long hours, stress and workload and their impact on health and personal lives, play a part in headteachers' decisions, the totality of the data indicates that a more nuanced appraisal of the departure decisions of individual headteachers and headteacher departure is needed.

As the descriptions of professional and personal lives portrayed in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 illustrate, a constellation of experiences, events and perceptions lead to individual decision. This highlights the value of a mixed method design (Figure 7, Chapter 3) which uses the concept of complementarity (Greene et al., 1989) to understand, interpret and create 'gestalt', something where the 'sum is greater' than its constituent parts (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003).

I have understood headteacher departure through the theoretical lens of Wenger's communities of practice and it is to this that I now return. Headteachers understand themselves, their identity and their relationships with others as they negotiate meaning in the context of their personal and professional lives. Throughout this thesis I have argued that headteacher departure can be understood through understanding the practice of four communities (Professional, Nurture, Family and Spiritual) which form the locus of much of the identity work of individual headteachers. Figure 11 (located in Chapter 6.1.) details aspects of each community and its practice and summarises the links between practice and departure.

As members of these communities headteachers face challenges within each community related to different practices, means and expressions of engagement and different forms of accountability (Wenger, 1998, pp.159-160). Thus identity encompasses the 'experience of multimembership' (p.158) in which we find meaning in and through membership of different communities (Figure 17).

**Figure 17: Four communities of practice**



This study shows that headteachers participate in these four communities with varying degrees of engagement, imagination and alignment, participation and non-participation as they 'delineate pieces of a puzzle we put together' (p.159).

As a result headteachers' identity work and understanding of 'who they are' is located in this 'nexus of multimembership' and involves not just negotiation of meaning within each community as discussed in Chapters 6 and 7 but also the 'reconciliation of different forms of membership' (pp.159-160). In arguing that the work of identity and reconciliation is life-long, Wenger helpfully defines reconciliation:

By using the term "reconciliation" to describe this process of identity formation, I want to suggest that proceeding with life – with actions and interactions – entails finding ways to make our various forms of membership coexist, whether the process of reconciliation leads to successful resolutions or is a constant struggle. In other words, by including processes of reconciliation in the very definition of identity, I am suggesting that the maintenance of an identity across boundaries requires work and, moreover, that the work of integrating our various forms of participation is not just a secondary process ... Multimembership and the work of reconciliation are intrinsic to the very concept of identity (1998, pp.160-161).

The negotiation of meaning through practice as identity is formed and crafted therefore requires engagement with the work of reconciling sometimes diverse and conflicting ways of being and acting that characterize the different communities.

#### **8.4.6. Issues related to primary school headship**

In Chapter 6 I argued that the professional and personal lives of headteachers in all three headteacher groups can be understood from the perspective of three of the four communities of practice discussed in this thesis:

Professional, Nurture and Family. Two of these – Professional and Family – form the bulk of Chapter 6. Decisions about departure are influenced by:

- A sense of 'dis-ease' or 'dis-identification' with members and/or the practice of the Professional community.
  - This dis-identification is the result of a lack of mutuality of engagement, lack of imagination and tensions in alignment of various members to the shared domain of interest within a community which is constantly changing in its response to external influences and pressures.
- Changing relationships and dynamics within the Nurture community of practice.
- The nature of individual identity as constructed within the Family as a community of practice.
  - Such is the importance of negotiating meaning for themselves personally in relationship to their family members and the 'practice' of that family that headteachers take action to protect, safeguard and strengthen relationships within their Family community of practice.
  - Using the metaphors of 'Accident and Emergency', this study finds that headteachers take action following 'Code Red' of surgery and convalescence, repairing the 'Fractured Bones' of relationships with close and extended family members or opt for 'Elective Surgery' by choosing to live a different way.

#### **8.4.7. Issues related to Anglican school headship**

This study contributes to knowledge about headteacher departure from Anglican schools and from 'Anglican school headship', so contributing to both

the 'specific' and 'general' of headteacher departure. By this I mean three things.

Firstly, one of the key findings is that headteachers leaving an Anglican school *and* headship are indeed leaving 'headship' (the 'general' of headteacher departure). As summarised in 8.4.1., Group B headteachers are leaving headship (HT survey: 25%, N=156; CGB survey: 28.17%, N=142; combined schools dataset: 28.40%, N=243).

Secondly, and as already noted, Anglican schools form a large category of schools within the primary sector and this study only investigated headteachers leaving a specific Anglican school (the first 'specific' of headteacher departure).

Thirdly, nearly half of all headteachers in Group A (46.7%, N=45) are taking up the substantive headship of a non-Anglican school (Table 8, Chapter, 5.2.). As the comments of headteachers detailed in Chapter 7 indicate, this group includes headteachers who vocalised an intention not to lead an Anglican school in the future (the second 'specific' of headteacher departure).

If the number of Group A headteachers taking up substantive headship of a non-Anglican school (24 headteachers, 53.3%, N=45) as reported in Table 8 are added to the number of Group B headteachers leaving headship (N=39), the total number of headteachers not taking up a headship of an Anglican school on leaving (63) is alarmingly high: 40.38% (N=156).

Therefore, in showing that headteachers in both Groups A and B are electing to leave 'Anglican school headship' (Chapters 4, 5 and 7) this study argues that Anglican school headteachers are leaving in sufficiently large numbers as to be a cause for concern.

Not only is there a haemorrhage of experience and expertise in the expertise of headteachers leaving (see 8.4.4. and Chapters 4 and 5), this study shows

that there is indeed a haemorrhage of headteachers from *Anglican school headship*.

In examining the experiences of headteachers that pertain to the particular context of Anglican schools I have argued that there are substantive issues associated with headship of an Anglican school that influence headteacher departure (Chapter 7). Headship of an Anglican school requires headteachers to engage with three dimensions: historical, public and personal. It is the historical dimension of Anglican school headship that lies at the heart of headteacher departure for Anglican school headteachers. This dimension can be understood through seeing the spiritual community of practice as part of a constellation of practices with four aspects of constellations (Wenger, 1998) being particularly relevant: sharing historical roots, serving a cause, sharing artifacts and overlapping styles and discourses.

Five expectations result from the interplay of the historical, public and personal dimensions. The majority of these are held and expressed, implicitly or explicitly, by other members of the spiritual community. Expectations that members of the spiritual community have of headteachers are:

**E1: Personal active Christian faith**

**E2: Adherence to the Anglican tradition**

**E3: Spiritual or faith leadership**

**E4: Engagement in mission and knowledge sharing**

**E5: Visibility.**

This study concludes that a 'dis-ease' or 'dis-identification' with the practice of the community and negotiation of meaning in the identity work of 'being fully human' (Wenger, 1998, pp.149-151) as experienced in the interplay of the historical, public and personal dimensions contributes to individual decisions to leave a school, Anglican school headship or headship altogether.

Chapter 7 also examined a finding that emerged from the data, that of individual experiences of a 'calling' or 'callings'. In these experiences of the

Divine headteachers believed themselves called by God 'out of' their post and 'into' a new position, situation or context. Their responses to the Caller, God, in their personal and professional lives influenced their decisions to leave their headship.

All those involved in education in Anglican schools need to consider how to retain the headteachers they do have, if not in an individual school or group of schools, but within the Anglican school framework and network of schools. This is not to say that headteachers should only lead schools of a similar designation (e.g. religious designation or non-religious designation). I argue instead that if headteachers leave for headship of a non-Anglican school (e.g. for reasons for career advancement), they need to leave with Anglican headship as a positive experience and not an experience which has led to dis-identification. They might then, in a future career move, not reject the possibility of another Anglican headship but decide to return to Anglican school headship. The haemorrhage of headteachers from Anglican school headship might then be partially assuaged.

#### **8.4.5. Research Question 5: What might have persuaded headteachers to stay?**

Headteachers in this study may have been persuaded to stay in their schools if local circumstances related to school size, salary and workload had been different (Chapter 5) and if headteachers' sense of 'dis-identification' could be addressed (Chapters 6 and 7). A number of aspects considered are issues that relate to all schools, not necessarily Anglican schools (Chapters 5 and 6).

Headteachers in Groups A and B were open to being persuaded to stay if particular aspects could be addressed (Group A: 31.1%, N=45); Group B: 53.8%, N=39) but report few attempts by Governors to explore this issue at any time, pre or post resignation. The most common themes given by Group A headteachers in response to the open response question, 'What might have persuaded you to stay?' (HT survey) were local and site related issues including the desire for higher salaries suppressed by the small size of the

school (see Chapter 5 for details). The common themes running through Group B headteachers' responses were aspects of relationship with individuals, to agents of accountability (e.g. Ofsted), to the national agenda and with their own sense of identity in a professionally 'shifting landscape' (Chapter 6).

However, this study has found that substantive issues which relate to headship of Anglican schools in particular cause dis-identification in the identity work of headteachers. In Chapter 7.11. I offered some observations as to how the dis-identification in Anglican school headship could have been assuaged for headteachers in this study. I now draw out the salient points of implications for members of the Spiritual community of practice. These suggestions for action and dialogue centre on increasing the mutuality of engagement, imagination and alignment thus enabling members of the spiritual community to engage in a greater understanding of the shared domain of interest and explore ways in which fewer headteachers might experience dis-identification. If members of the spiritual community of practice can work towards a greater shared understanding of the expectations that emerge from the historical, public and personal aspects peculiar to Anglican school headship, the haemorrhage of headteachers from Anglican school headship may be reduced in future.

### **Expectations 1 and 2 (Personal faith and adherence to the Anglican tradition)**

- Ensure that recruitment and appointment strategies clearly communicate the legislative framework (VAVC) and the school's religious character and identity.
- Ensure that schools publically display their religious character and identity (e.g. via school websites).
- Ensure that specific interpretations of faith related to the 'churchmanship' are made clear in applicant literature.

*[Governing Bodies]*

### **Expectations 3 and 4 (Spiritual leadership, mission and knowledge sharing)**

- Training for aspirant headteachers and newly appointed headteachers regarding:
  - Role as spiritual or faith leaders and how they might be 'interpreters of faith' (NCSL, 2006).
- Discussion between members of Governing Bodies regarding their vision for their local context of Anglicanism (McAdoo, 1991) and the following:
  - Relationship of Anglican schools to God's mission to the world;
  - Theologies of education (Astley, 2002), service, nurture and prophecy (Francis, 1993);
  - Models of belonging (Astley, 2002; Elbourne, 2009; Waddington, 1993; Worsley, 2009).
- Exploration of what it might mean for schools to be engaged in 'chaplancy - being used to think with' by the local community (Jenkins, 2003, p.200).

*[Dioceses, NCSL, teacher training providers, Governing Bodies]*

### **Expectation 5 (Visibility)**

- Discussion between Governing Bodies, headteachers and the local worshipping community regarding a level of headteacher 'visibility' that is reasonable and appropriate.

*[Governing Bodies, local worshipping community and headteachers]*

### **Partnership**

- Discussion about models of partnership with clergy and the local worshipping community including how clergy, parish community and school might together be 'chaplancy – being used to think with' (Jenkins, 2003, p.200).

*[Governing Bodies, local worshipping community, headteachers]*

## Expectations of self

- Explore possibilities for 'clinical supervision' or use of a 'spiritual director' for headteachers as part of comprehensive mentoring.  
*[Governing Bodies and Dioceses]*

## Callings

- Support through headteacher sabbaticals and use of a spiritual director or mentor.  
*[Dioceses]*

## 8.5. Critique of the study

I now turn to the integrative framework for inference quality advocated by Teddlie and Tashakkori as a means of overcoming the difficulties in applying standards of validity or inference quality usually applied to QUAN or QUAL studies to a mixed methods study (2009, p.300). The framework consists of ten criteria grouped into two principal elements consisting of (i) design quality and (ii) interpretive rigor (p.301):

**Table 27: Integrative framework**

(Summary from Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009, pp.301-302)

<b>Design integrity</b>	<b>Interpretive rigor</b>
Design suitability Design fidelity Within-design consistency Analytic quality	Interpretive consistency Theoretical consistency Interpretive agreement Interpretive distinctiveness Interpretive efficacy Interpretive correspondence

I now provide some reflective and evaluative thoughts about the quality of the design and the quality of the inferences and interpretations presented in this thesis.

### **8.5.1. Design quality**

In critiquing this study, its design suitability and fidelity, I return to my decision to allow the research questions rather than a paradigmatic stance to drive the research design. This led to the creation of a mixed methods design which was qualitative dominant. I believe that the interpretation of headteachers' stories as presented in this thesis would not have been possible if the design had been pure quantitative or mixed methods quantitative dominant (Figure 6, Chapter 3). The use of quantitative elements enabled the study to establish the scale of headteacher departure from a category of schools hitherto little researched. This would not have been possible had the design been pure qualitative. Substantial qualitative elements provided insight into individual lives and allowed a deep understanding of Anglican school headship and headteacher departure to emerge.

The sequential explanatory qualitative dominant mixed methods design was suitable to investigate the research questions posed at the beginning of the study (see Chapter 1.3.). Appropriate implementation (3.7.1.) and priority were identified (3.7.2.) and the data collection methods (survey and semi-structured interviews) were reflective of the commitment to a qualitative dominant study (3.6.), meeting the criteria of 'design fidelity' (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009, p.301). The visual map (Figure 7, Chapter 3) portrays the seamlessness and 'within-design consistency' that should be inherent in all mixed methods studies indicating inferential quality.

Chapter 3 and the related appendices detail the systematic and rigorous approaches which were applied to sampling, data collection procedures and data analysis. Evidence of the analytic quality is provided in Chapter 3 and the examples of the development of thematic codes for qualitative data and inferential statistical techniques for quantitative data are contained within the Appendices.

### **8.5.2. Interpretive rigor**

In critiquing the interpretive rigor of the study, I consider the integration of findings and interpretations and the physical ways in which I studied the multiple 'print outs' and 'products' of various analytical processes (Figure 7, Chapter 3; see also Chapter 3.9. and 3.10). Areas of convergence were explored and found expression in the 'conversation' of quantitative and qualitative data and interpretations (Bryman, 2007, p.21) presented in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. Where analysis indicated areas of discrepancy or divergence prompting me to question, re-analyse, 'scratch my head' and think again about the interpretations, these are highlighted in the thesis (e.g. Chapter 7.6.2.). Where there were small numbers of responses indicating the influence of a particular aspect on headteachers' decisions to leave, this is highlighted and particular attention paid to the relevant inferential tests for quantitative data (e.g. parametric or non-parametric, use of the detailed Appendix 13 'Pearson chi-square checklist for interpreting and reporting'). Where qualitative findings were based on a small number of headteachers' descriptions (e.g. themes emerging from predominantly interview data) the scale of responses is clearly reported (e.g. Table 25, Chapter 3). Findings were described in ways that clearly indicated the small numbers of headteachers describing an aspect of their experience (e.g. calling and callings in Chapter 7.10.). In these ways, the criterion of interpretive consistency has been met.

In reflecting on the theoretical consistency of this study, I reflect on the question Teddlie and Tashakkori use to define this criterion:

Is each inference (explanation for the results or for the relationship) consistent with current theories and empirical findings of other researchers? (2009, p.304).

The findings and interpretations related to extant theories of career stages (Chapter 5) and findings related to the impact of low trust and performativity, workload, stress and the role of the headteacher are all consistent with extant empirical studies (Chapter 6). The use of Wenger's theory of communities is

consistent with the tenor of his work on learning, meaning and identity (1998). Although there is little empirical evidence related to why headteachers of Anglican schools leave with which to compare the findings related particularly to Anglican school headship, this is because of the identified gaps in the literature (see Chapters 1 and 2). In arguing that there are substantive issues related to Anglican school headship which can be understood through the historical, public and personal dimensions presented in this thesis I offer new knowledge and understandings of headteacher departure (Chapter 7). The discussion of these dimensions draws on the literature relating to the four theologies of education and models of belonging presented in Chapter 2.4. The discussion in Chapter 7 also draws on relevant theological literatures relating to Anglicanism that provide some theoretical context in respect of Anglican schools. Therefore, Chapter 7 presents new knowledge about headteacher supply that cannot yet be found consistent with findings of other empirical studies. Until such time as there is a body of literature about Anglican primary schools separately researched from studies conducted into 'all schools' or schools categorised in ways such as by performance measures, the criterion of theoretical consistency will remain only partially evaluated and met.

In respect of the seventh criterion, interpretive agreement, it is impossible to say at this stage of writing this chapter of the thesis, whether this has been fully met. Further dissemination through peer-reviewed journals and the judgement of doctoral examiners will indicate to some extent whether this criterion has been met. Member validation in which participants gave more than assent to the accuracy of the interview transcripts would have partially addressed this criterion. If the analytic process had included further on-going dialogue with participants, perhaps helped by a smaller study with fewer participants or the combined skills of a research team, this would have resulted in a clearer picture of interpretive agreement. Similarly, greater discourse with members of the wider academy beyond that which has occurred (Whiteoak, 2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2013) would have also enabled interpretive agreement to be evaluated more effectively.

In evaluating the extent to which the conclusions drawn fulfil the eighth criterion, interpretive distinctiveness, the weaknesses acknowledged in respect of the seventh criterion apply to the eighth. Had the qualitative component included multiple interviews with each participant to test out the emerging concepts of practice and identity as part of member validation process then interpretive distinctiveness would have been stronger. However, such an approach was not feasible in light of early decisions taken to establish the extent of departure from Anglican schools as a key foundation of the study and its potential contribution.

In integrating the various elements of the design (Figure 7, Chapter 3) this study has been driven by a quest to understand headteacher departure in the words and experiences of headteachers. Integration in this study and negotiated account has included 'comparing, contrasting, building on, or embedding one type of conclusion with the other' (Creswell and Tashakkori, 2007, p.108). The following aspects indicate how the criterion of integrative efficacy – 'the degree to which an MM researcher adequately integrates the findings, conclusions, and policy recommendations gleaned from each of the study's strands' (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009, p.305) – has been met:

- (i) analytical process and products detailed in Chapter 3 (supported by audit documents in the Appendices);
- (ii) the integration of findings presented in the internal structure of Chapters 5, 6 and 7;
- (iii) the negotiated account forged throughout the structure of the thesis overall;
- (iv) meta-inferences drawn through these three elements.

In considering the tenth and final criterion of interpretive correspondence, I reflect on the 'extent to which meta-inferences satisfy the initial purpose for using an MM design' (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009, p.308). This study first established a foundation level of understanding as to the scale of departure and the 'onward destinations' of those leaving (RQs 1-3). The findings and conceptual conclusions in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 address Research Questions 4

and 5. Therefore, as this thesis has addressed the study's 'initial purpose for using an MM design' (p.308), the criterion of interpretive correspondence has been met.

However, the integrative framework advocated by Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) is not without criticism (e.g. Creswell, 2010; Dellinger and Leech, 2007; Onwuegbuzie and Johnson, 2007). During the rise of mixed method studies over recent years since this study was conceived the questions of validity, inference quality and legitimation have continued to be debated (e.g. Journal of Mixed Methods). Emphasis is placed on different elements of evaluating and critiquing a mixed methods study by different authors. Dellinger and Leech (2007) argue that it is important to consider the role of prior knowledge and possible researcher bias in mixed methods studies. The criticisms of Onwuegbuzie and Johnson centre on the emphasis in the integrative framework of inference as product or 'an outcome' of the research and argue that adaption, 'elaboration or extension' of the integrative framework is needed (2006, p.56). Accordingly, they advocate a process driven approach called legitimation (comprising of nine types of legitimation) which encompasses the iterative, interactive and continuous process of mixed methods research throughout the course of the study (p.56). Thus they argue inference closure may never occur as further understandings and depth of understanding may occur subsequent to the stage at which a study is believed to be concluded. In critiquing and reflecting on this study, I accept that this may indeed be true.

Conducting the study has involved full 'immersion' in the research as

Making inferences is both an art and a science. It involves elements of creativity, intuition, and meaning making as well as the ability to compartmentalize components or aspects of a phenomenon, understand each, and then reconstruct them for a full understanding (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009, p.289).

The iterative process of employing a mixed methods design and the challenge of disseminating the meta-conclusions in this thesis have led to layers of understanding which have deepened over time and may indeed continue to do so as further dialogue within the academy and wider dissemination occurs.

Used in a complementary manner, the integration of data, findings and interpretations from both quantitative and qualitative elements in every stage of the study (Figure 7, Chapter 3) has resulted in a 'negotiated account' in which the quantitative and qualitative components are brought together and 'talk to each other, much like a conversation or debate' (Bryman, 2007, p.21). Therefore, the study contributes not just to the literatures about headteacher supply and departure but also to the small body of doctoral mixed methods studies which utilise something other than a 'standard PhD thesis' structure (Bryman, 2007, p.11).

## **8.6. Summary of original contribution to knowledge**

The five research questions posed at the beginning of the study have been answered and the use of a theoretical lens in the form of communities of practice has led to the nuanced conceptual understanding of headteacher departure presented in this thesis.

My thesis is that issues of practice, meaning and identity as experienced in a 'dis-ease' or dis-identification influence headteacher departure. The study highlights that there are substantive issues associated with leadership of an Anglican school which influence headteacher departure and contribute to the haemorrhage of expertise and experience from Anglican school headship. It is in this respect that this thesis makes an original contribution to the extant literature about headteacher supply.

In summary, what we now know about departure from Anglican school headship that we didn't know before is:

1. The haemorrhage of headteachers leaving Anglican school headship includes a group of headteachers not currently recognised in the discourse about headteacher supply. These are headteachers choosing to leave headship altogether and Anglican school headship in particular.
2. Many of the headteachers leaving headship altogether are leaving with few or no plans and with no intention to return to headship at a later date.
3. Of those headteachers leaving for a substantive headship many are electing to move to a non-Anglican school. Some have no intention of returning to headship of an Anglican school in a future career move.
4. There are substantive issues associated with Anglican headship which can lead to leaving decisions. Anglican headship has a historical dimension which intersects with public and personal dimensions of headship in particular ways which reflect historical aspects of Christianity and Anglicanism, the history of Anglican schools in England and individuals' own faith perspectives. Five expectations coalesce in the experiences of headteachers as members of the spiritual community of practice which present challenges as headteachers negotiate meaning for themselves in their own identity work. The expectations can lead to feelings of 'dis-ease' and dis-identification with members and/or the practice of the spiritual community. This 'lack of fit' influences headteachers' decisions about leaving an Anglican school, headship per se and Anglican school headship in particular.
5. Calling or callings in the form of personal experiences of God can influence headteacher departure.

## **8.7. Future research**

Further research in the area of Anglican school leadership and the historical, public and personal dimensions that are so powerful in their influence would

contribute to the creation and nurture of an 'Anglican education academy or theological community which in time will make a substantial contribution to the 'centre of the Church's educational enterprise' (Elbourne, 2013, p.244). Further research could also contribute to what is known about career trajectories and headteacher supply of this under-researched category of schools.

Therefore, potential areas for future research include:

- a longitudinal study that follows headteacher career decisions and examines the notion of a 'church school career';
- a study of teachers' early career decisions, particularly those who train at, through or in association with one of the nineteen Cathedral Group (Anglican) Higher Education institutions or through a Teaching School which is Anglican in its religious designation;
- an ethnographic study which investigates how the notion of 'chaplaincy' might be 'used to think with' (Jenkins, 2003, p.200) and which fulfils expectations of partnership held by members of the spiritual community.

## **8.8. Personal reflections on the research journey**

This study has used various lenses in pursuit of understanding the extent of headteacher departure from Anglican schools and the contributing influences. This thesis has presented the data through the three focal lengths of a photographer flying high above the landscape of England with its Anglican schools often lying in the lee of their parish church (see Chapter 1.2. and 3.10.) in addition to using the theoretical lens of communities of practice in the interpretation and dissemination of the findings. In attempting to understand the lives and experiences of headteachers, I have utilised panoramic, mid-distance and close-up lenses (see Chapter 1.2.). In so doing I have told three interlocking stories: my own research journey in the actions taken (Chapter 3),

the story of the research (Chapter 3) and the stories of the participants (Chapters 5, 6 and 7). Now I turn the camera back on myself to reflect on my own research journey.

In undertaking this study I have, of necessity, gained new skills and competences, not least in mastering SPSS and some thematic analytic processes (Chapter 3). I have learnt much about the process of research and, in particular, have loved the challenge of a mixed methods study even if, at times, I wondered and worried about the 'creativity, intuition and meaning making' of the art and science of research (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009, p.289). I loved the complexity of making sense of the stories I heard and read in the survey responses even if at times I doubted my ability to do so. At times a number of things threatened to derail the study, not least the size of the sample and some of the early decisions I took which resulted in a plethora and overload of data. My own determination to conduct a methodologically rigorous study and immerse myself in the data took its toll at times. The responsibility to be faithful to my participants' stories and their trust in me as a researcher was overwhelming and sometimes paralysing. Despite all these things it has been a privilege to be offered a 'window' into the lives and decisions of so many headteachers. Although the stories are presented in their own words the interpretations of the data and headteachers' stories are mine. I hope participants will regard them as faithful to their lives.

Of course, if I were to undertake such a study again, I would do some things differently. Hindsight is a wonderful thing - I might even reduce the scale of the study so that it was more manageable! Certainly I am aware that conducting a mixed methods study, a large scale study (for a doctoral study) and undertaking so many interviews resulted in a level of complexity in analysis that at times threatened to destroy clarity.

But my journey has not just been technical, competency and task dominant. My journey has been emotional which, perhaps somewhat naively, I hadn't considered it might be. I brought my own experience as headteacher of an Anglican school and a community maintained school to the study. Those

experiences enabled me to understand something of the experiences headteachers shared so honestly with me. But I didn't expect to go on a personal journey 'through' my engagement with their stories.

As I have read, analysed and written through the years of doctoral study, I have come to understand my own experiences as a headteacher better. I didn't leave my first, Anglican, headship as a result of dis-identification – I left when I relocated on getting married. But now, as the result of conducting this study, I understand more about the challenges I faced that related to expectations of personal faith, adherence to the Anglican tradition and visibility. I understand something more of the nature, responsibility and privilege of spiritual leadership, mission and knowledge sharing. I understand and reflect with gratitude on the sense of confirmation that it was 'right' - for me and the Anglican school - that I was headteacher there at that time even though I can't explain it in quite the way the headteachers in Chapter 7 explained their callings 'to' and 'from' their schools. I also understand more about what I missed when headteacher of a community maintained school in terms of the 'shared domain of interest' of the spiritual community of practice experienced previously as an 'Anglican school headteacher' and the rites and rituals practice that were tangible expressions of the historical dimension of Anglican headship.

In short, I am grateful for the generosity of the participants in this study who shared their lives and experiences with me. Conducting the study and writing this thesis has given me a greater understanding of headship in general and the historical, public and personal dimensions of Anglican school headship in particular. It has also given me a deeper understanding and appreciation of the ways in which my own identity has been shaped by membership of professional, nurture, family and spiritual communities of practice.

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