**Gender and headship in the twenty-first century** *(draft – published by NCSL early 2005)*

**Marianne Coleman**

## Introduction

NCSL are committed to supporting diversity in leadership, and as part of that commitment are pursuing a programme of gender related initiatives including: middle leadership training for women; support for established women leaders and auditing for gender issues on the range of leadership programmes they provide. These priorities were identified following discussions at the Gender Agenda meeting at NCSL in November 2003.

Interview and survey research on the gender related experience of women and men secondary headteachers in the 1990s (Coleman, 2000, 2001 and 2002) partly informed these discussions and in early 2004, NCSL funded a further survey on gender issues, extending it to primary and special school headteachers (see methodology section at the end of the report and appendix 1 for the questionnaire). This report focuses on the findings of the 2004 survey but draws comparisons with the data from the 1990s survey. A summary of some of the conclusions from the earlier research is included at the end of the introduction and some direct comparisons between the two sets of findings are included in the conclusion. The concluding section also contains recommendations for schools, national programmes and aspiring heads, and suggestions for further research.

### Gender and leadership in schools: the 2004 figures

Most teachers in both secondary and primary schools are women, but most heads of secondary schools are men and the proportion of men who are heads in primary schools is large in comparison to the overall number of women in primary teaching. However, the proportion of women who are headteachers and deputy headteachers is growing; for example in 1997, 26 per cent of secondary headteachers and 35 per cent of deputies were women in a teaching force that was 52 per cent women. In 2002, 31 per cent of secondary heads and 39 per cent of deputy heads were women out of a teaching force that was 55 per cent women (DfES, 2004).

In the nursery and primary sector the proportion of women teachers has risen marginally from 83 per cent in 1997 to 84 per cent in 2002 and the proportion of women heads has increased from 56 per cent to 62 per cent in 2002 (DfES, 2004).

The picture in special schools and pupil referral units also shows men having a disproportionate number of headships. In 2002 53 per cent of the heads were men but they only made up 32 per cent of the teaching force, a picture that has been more or less static since 1997 (DfES, 2004).

Although there are changes in the numbers of women holding senior leadership positions in schools, particularly in the secondary sector, a man teacher still has a greater chance of being a headteacher than a woman in both the secondary and the primary phase and in special schools.

Rationale for the 2004 survey

Gender plays an important and sometimes unrecognised part in working lives, impacting in particular on women and men who challenge stereotypes. Women who aspire to senior positions, particularly headship are still likely to face gender related barriers as they seek promotion, as is evidenced in this report. There is still a common expectation that a headteacher, particularly of a secondary school will be a man, so women headteachers may also face resistance once in post. Men who work with young children may face difficulties and prejudice when working in areas usually associated with women.

Both men and women seek a balance in their lives between family and work, but family and domestic responsibilities usually impact more on women. Attempting to get a work/life balance can therefore be a particular challenge to women senior leaders and managers.

The stereotype that women leaders tend to be soft and caring and that men tend to be tough and dominant tends to act against women who aspire to be leaders as it may be assumed that they will not be as good at leadership as aspiring men. How do the headteachers see themselves as leaders? Do they relate to these gender stereotypes?

The research reported here (and also the earlier 1990s research) looked at the following questions.

1. What are the experiences and reflections of women and men on their routes to headship? How can gender related barriers be overcome?

2. What are the gender related work/life balance issues? What can we learn from the heads' views about work/life balance issues?

3. What is the impact of gender on the working life of headteachers?

4. Do women and men headteachers report that they lead in different gender-related ways?

In the 1990s the research was only with secondary school headteachers. The 2004 survey also included a sample of primary and special school headteachers, so an additional question in 2004 is:

Are there particular gender-related differences in the experiences of primary, and secondary school headteachers?

In addition, comparing the 2004 findings to those of the earlier surveys enables us to see what changes have occurred in the experience and views of the secondary headteachers over the last few years.

Limitations

The sample of special school heads was small, and as their results were generally very similar to those for secondary school teachers, this report does not consider special school heads separately although data from their responses is included.

Some of the sections of this report cover the leadership style of the headteachers. The views expressed in this report are those of the heads, the views of teachers in their schools who might see them differently have not been sought. Also the views and perceptions expressed are those of existing headteachers, not those of women and men who are now aspiring to headship, or who may have a different idea of a successful career (see for example, Acker, 1994). However, lessons for aspiring heads and for gender equity can be drawn from what the heads have to say.

Diversity: gender, ethnicity and disability

The views that are represented in the surveys reported here are from women and men headteachers from maintained schools of every kind. Gender is only one aspect of diversity, but it is the focus of this study and report. Other aspects of diversity are not considered in detail here. Issues for teachers and headteachers from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds are raised in the small-scale qualitative research for NCSL of McKenley and Gordon, (2002) and are to be the subject of further NCSL work. Within the current survey some comments testify to the particular difficulties that black women face in obtaining headship. Race and gender issues can both apply. One female primary head from an ethnic minority did state that in her experience: 'sexist attitudes are far more prevalent than racist attitudes', another male primary head that 'because of racist attitudes my gender issues were superseded by issues of colour.'

The heads in this survey were asked about their ethnicity and also whether they had a disability. The number of headteachers from black and minority ethnic backgrounds is very small (96 per cent reported that they were white). Out of total of 1100 responses there were: two Indian; four Caribbean; 18 (two per cent) White and Asian; one Chinese; two White and Black African; two White and Black Caribbean, one other Asian, four other Black or Black British and seven not stated. In all 96 per cent indicated that they were white.

Only one per cent stated that they had any disability. Of this very small percentage, most stated their disability as deafness, one as diabetes and one that they were a wheelchair user.

A brief summary of some of the major findings of the 1990s surveys follows, to help provide the background for the presentation of the main findings of the 2004 survey. In 1996 the whole population of women secondary headteachers were surveyed (number 670) and the response rate was 70 per cent. In 1999 a survey of one in four sample of men secondary headteachers (number 670) achieved a 60 per cent response rate.

A summary of some of the major findings from the 1990s surveys

*Discrimination and gender related barriers*

Women secondary heads felt isolated as leaders, with about two thirds reporting experience of discrimination and sexism, and feeling at some time that they have to justify their existence as women leaders. The male heads did not question their situation as leaders

Stereotypes about women identified them with the more 'domestic' and caring role in schools.

The most common example of sexism in interviews related to the family commitments of the women.

Women were favoured as heads of all-girls' schools. Becoming a woman head of a co-ed or boys' school was comparatively more difficult.

There were geographical differences, with women more likely to be a head in London and other metropolitan areas and less likely to be a head in the shire counties.

Mentoring and the existence of role models were particularly important to women.

There was not much of evidence of the heads giving any special support for women in terms of career development.

*Work/life balance*

There were difficulties for work/life balance for both male and female heads. However, the lives of the women were more deeply affected. 96 per cent of the men are married and 94 per cent have a child or children. 67 per cent of the women were married and 53 per cent had a child or children. Thirteen per cent of women were divorced or separated but only one or two per cent of men.

There were a number of differences between the older and younger women (nearly all were between 40 and 60). The most important was that the younger women (40 - 50) were significantly less likely to have a child.

The women headteachers were often responsible for the majority of domestic work in their households, this was not true for the male headteachers. The women heads tended to be in dual career households and the male headteachers to be in households where their wife or partner took overall responsibility for the running of the home and the care of children.

*Leadership style*

In relation to perceptions of the leadership style of men and women heads the major outcomes were:

The perceptions of both women and men headteachers were that there is a stereotypical if outdated norm of authoritarian leadership held by governors and parents, that endorses masculinity and therefore male leaders.

Contrary to masculine and feminine stereotypes, the self-perceptions of both men and women headteachers were similar in relation to their management and leadership style. Both men and women saw themselves as collaborative and people-centred leaders, incorporating a number of both 'feminine' and 'masculine' qualities, but tending towards the 'feminine'. However, there was a significant minority of older women headteachers who tended towards a more 'masculine' style of leadership.

Women heads saw advantages in being women, because they could diffuse aggression and felt free from the male stereotypes of headship.

**Main Findings of 2004 survey**

**1. What are the experiences and reflections of women and men on their routes to headship? What are the gender related barriers?**

In the 1980s and 1990s there were many studies that looked at reasons why women were less likely than men to become headteachers or other senior leaders in education (Ouston, 1993, Ozga, 1993, Shakeshaft, 1989). These and other studies Coleman, (1994) discussed overt and covert discrimination particularly related to appointment, and the issues of domestic responsibility and child related career breaks for women and how these are treated in the work place. The 1990s surveys (Coleman, 2002) also looked at whether there were any differences in age, qualifications and career experience between the men and women headteachers that might help to account for their respective career success. These surveys also confirmed that geography is relevant when looking at the appointment of women heads with many more appointed in London and less in other parts of the country. Other potential career problems that are gender related include women's lack of confidence in applications and career planning

The following sections cover:

- the experience of the men and women in applying for headship and other promoted posts;
- the numbers of women heads in the regions;
- the age profile of the heads;
- their qualifications and subject specialism;
- previous roles held in school and deputy headship;
- the prevalence and impact of career breaks;
- career planning;
- confidence;
- sources of support including mentoring.

<u>The experience of the men and women in applying for headship and other promoted posts</u>

The selection process is obviously a vital stage in becoming a headteacher. In particular many of the heads commented on their interview experience. If there is discrimination on the basis of gender it is perhaps most likely to appear at the appointment stage. Both women and men were asked if they had experience of sexist and discriminatory attitudes in relation to application and promotion. About half of the women secondary heads answered 'yes' to this question. The issues are different for women in the primary sector where numerically women predominate, but in some instances men are definitely preferred and despite their numerical superiority, over 30 per cent of the women primary heads said they had experience of sexist attitudes in relation to job applications. Only 18 per cent of secondary and 16 per cent of primary men headteachers said that they had experience of sexist attitudes.

It is good to note that the proportion of secondary women who said that they had experienced sexism had decreased from two-thirds to a half since the late 1990s. In line with this, women were much less likely to report that they had been stereotyped into pastoral and caring roles. In the previous surveys there were many references to this type of discrimination, for example that as deputies women would be

responsible for flowers, notice-boards and coffee, there were also a number of references to having 'token' women at interviews. These are issues that are now only rarely mentioned.

However, the fact that a half of secondary women heads are still answering positively about experience of discrimination is concerning, particularly as some of the women who answered 'no' to the question then went on to give actual examples of sexist behaviour that they had experienced. There seems to be a tendency for at least some of the women to deny or to rise above the experience of sexist behaviour and remarks and to discount them. The actual proportion of women who have experienced sexism is therefore more than the 50 per cent of secondary heads and 30 per cent of primary heads who responded positively. For example one woman head in her early 50s said: 'too difficult to specify, just feelings/perceptions/manner of being talked down to, therefore I have said "no".'

The proportion of men secondary heads saying that they had experience of sexism in relation to applications has also reduced since the late 1990s. At that time most of them were recognising sexism towards women, although a few felt that they were discriminated against as men, particularly at deputy head level, where they perceived that women might have an advantage if a sex balance was sought in the senior management team. This idea is still present amongst men in 2004.

*Family responsibilities*

The largest proportion of comments about discrimination from both primary and secondary women heads relate to family responsibilities, particularly having children. For example one primary school head in her late 30s said that she experienced: 'comments (constant) regarding my role and how it sits with being a mother of four young children - implication is I'm not doing a good job either as mother or head teacher.' A woman secondary head in her early 40s said tha:t 'I was asked at interview what my husband would say if I was appointed.' As can be seen in the later section on life/work balance a large proportion of women primary heads are married with children and there are now more women secondary heads married with children than was the case in the 1990s. Although there has been progress for women in secondary schools who wish to combine family and career, there is still reluctance about appointing women with families. Commenting on sexism in applications one woman head now in her mid 40s said that she had been: 'asked to withdraw my application for a teaching job with responsibilities when I told them I was pregnant.' A female secondary head in her early 40s mentioned sexism in relation to her: 'first application for headship following maternity leave from colleagues and governors.' Another woman secondary head now in her early 50s showed the difficulties that women can face in respect to combining a senior position with motherhood: 'my seniors thought the work I was leading would fall apart when I became pregnant. I took four weeks maternity leave and it did not.'

A woman secondary head in her late 40s commented on a:

> Very sexist headteacher who appointed me the assistant head. When I worked with him I knew I had been right not to mention family at the interview.

A woman primary head in her late 30s mentioned: 'older male dismissive of my aspirations as I was a woman with a young child'. These attitudes are part of a wider view reflected in what the heads report: that is that women are often simply seen as not fitted for leadership and men are preferred. This belief is compounded for younger women.

> I was a deputy head early and a head at 35 - comments were made about being young and female regularly (woman secondary head, early 40s)

Although youth may be a problem for men as well as women aspirant heads, youth can be interpreted differently for men and women. One woman secondary head in her early 40s reported that:

> I went for headship and was told that because I was 40 I should consolidate and do a further deputy's job. Other applicants who were male were told they were ambitious.

*Men are preferred - the role of governors*

Although family and children were most often linked to sexism in appointments, many of the comments simply referred to men being preferred for the role. Women are still very aware of tensions evoked simply by their being women applying for what is a 'male role': that of headteacher. Stereotypical views on the abilities of women can survive proof of their aptitude for headship:

> Still same resistance to a female head - noted by LIG consultants and despite dramatic improvement in the school i.e. serious weaknesses to good in two years. (woman secondary head late 40s)

Governors, who have a key part in the appointment process, seem to be particularly likely to be biased against women in leadership roles. Although there are indications, like the reduction in gender role stereotyping, that many schools are becoming more equitable in relation to gender, governors may be bringing in attitudes from business and the wider world that impact negatively on women.

> I overheard governors talking at an interview saying that I could not get the job as they needed a man on the staff! I didn't get the job (woman primary head in her late 30s).

> In application for headteacher post in a boys' school. Feedback from school to a referee was about a governor not voting for me as they can't have a woman heading up a boys' school. He was outvoted though and I was appointed (woman secondary head in her late 40s).

> I was the only female on all male shortlist - male got the job following a long line of male heads! LEA advice - Don't bother applying the governors won't appoint a woman (woman secondary head in her late 40s).

The reasons for not appointing women often relate to whether they could handle boys' discipline and the negative effect that they might have on boys' sport. A woman in her late 40s who is now head of a secondary school commented:

> Applying for a deputy headship at a tough inner city mixed school I came second to a male internal candidate – the feedback from the headteacher implied gender was a factor in the decision. They felt more confidence in the internal male candidate's ability to manage students.

Another woman secondary head in the same age group commented on how she has needed to demonstrate: 'I am actually firm enough to deal with difficult or disruptive boys (irritating when you can handle them easily and it has never been an issue).'

*Comments on appearance*

Women secondary heads reported interviewers and others making comments on the appearance of women. This is not the experience of men heads, although one or two did reflect on the advantage that they have in being over six foot and burly. A woman primary head in her early 40s mentioned: 'I was once told by a male colleague who was unsuccessful in getting the deputy headship to which I was appointed that my legs were the right shape'. Whilst another woman primary head being interviewed by an all-male panel was told: 'that I showed stress because my legs were wrapped round not just crossed once', she went on to say: 'happily my legs are slim enough to do this!' A woman primary head in her early 40s remembered: 'at interview - governors commenting - oh good, it's the one with the legs.' Women secondary heads reported feedback on unsuccessful interviews which included comments about too much gold jewellery, nail varnish, the colour of their outfit and comments about difficulties related to keeping discipline and being small in stature.

*Primary school issues*

Although women in primary schools may experience less sexism than their counterparts in the secondary sector, they are aware of a particular bias that favours men applying for headship in primary schools. A women primary head in her early 40s commented that in her experience: 'female applicants had to have had junior experience, but not one male applicant has had to have infant teaching experience.'

However, some male heads in the primary sector do comment on discrimination that they face in working with young children, with one male primary head in his late 30s saying that: 'as an early years specialist I have found it very difficult to gain my first appointment teaching infants.' Another man in the same age group stated that: 'sometimes people are suspicious of male primary teachers in infant early years'.

The fact that men are preferred for some primary headships is well reported, and some men experience a backlash from this. One man in his late 30s commented on allegations that: 'I gained promotion because I was a man, not because of my skills'. Men sometimes do feel disadvantaged in applying for primary posts. An older man stated that at his interview for headship he was faced with: '"how can a man cope with ..." type of questions (seriously)'. A man in his early 40s said that: 'I believe that one post I went for was given to a woman on the advice of a pro-woman LEA officer.'

These views are balanced by men primary heads who admit that they have the advantage. One stating that: 'As a man teacher in a primary school I was 'chased' professionally by female heads,' [who wanted to recruit him to their staff].

*The membership of the interview panel*

The role of the interview panel is key in appointment and the perceptions and memories of the heads are that men still predominate in this role, particularly in the secondary sector, where the average ratio is reported by women secondary heads as 6.5 men to 3.5 women on the interview panel and men heads recalling almost the same: 6 men to 4 women. Primary school panels are recalled as being roughly equal (but still a slight balance in favour of men) and special school panels as 5 men to 4.5 women. If selection panels are at all tempted to appoint in their own image, the membership has important implications for potential discrimination.

Although it may be experienced less frequently than in the 1990s, there are still plenty of reported examples of sexism related to appointments. What are the regional differences? Are there actual differences between the men and women who are appointed in relation to their age, qualifications and prior experience which might help explain the difference in the numbers of men and women appointed?

The number of women heads in the regions

The regional difference shows up in the secondary sector where there are fewer schools, and where women are relatively uncommon as heads. Nationally, women make up just over 30 per cent of the secondary heads, but across the nine regions of England the proportion of women secondary heads varies considerably as can be seen from Table 1.

**Table 1: Women secondary heads by region**

| | |
|---|---|
| London | 43% |
| South East | 34% |
| North East | 29% |
| East | 28% |
| West Midlands | 27% (but Birmingham 40%) |
| East Midlands | 27% |
| Yorkshire and Humber | 27% |
| South West | 24% |
| North West | 23% |

(data derived from DfES, Edubase, 2004)

The 'London effect' is apparent, with Birmingham being the only other large city with a relatively large number of women secondary heads. The age profile of the London and Birmingham heads was also a little lower than the rest of the country. The other big cities do not show very much difference from the overall picture in their region. The presence of more women heads therefore does not appear to be a distinctly urban phenomenon but does seem to be regionally biased.

In work undertaken a decade ago (Edwards and Lyons, 1994) there were the same regional differences as today, with the London effect being linked to the difficulties of recruitment and retention in London, and the lasting impact of the equal opportunities work of the ILEA. One of their major conclusions was that the further you go from London in any direction the less likely you are to find women secondary headteachers and the present data show that this is still true with the northern part of the country and the South West being the areas where women are least likely to be appointed. One woman secondary head in the survey reflected that she had been:

> Frequently asked in Scotland how a women would cope with being in charge, but in North East England attitudes were even worse!

The age profile of the heads

Most of the headteachers are in the age range 45 - 55. Very few women or men headteachers are over 60. However, it seems that secondary women headteachers tend to be appointed a little earlier than men as 51 per cent of the women, but only 40 per cent of the men are under 50 (see Table 2). In the surveys of the 1990s this was also the case. The tendency to appoint women younger than men is surprising as it might be expected that having children would delay promotion for women.

**Table 2: Age groups of secondary headteachers %**

| Age group | men | women |
|---|---|---|
| 36 - 40 | 2 | 2 |
| 41 - 45 | 13 | 14 |
| 46 - 50 | 25 | 35 |
| 51 - 55 | 39 | 31 |
| 56 - 60 | 19 | 17 |
| 61 + | 1 | 1 |

In the primary sector, there is little difference between the sexes in age, but men and women tend to be appointed younger than in secondary schools (see Table 3). About ten per cent of primary heads are 40 or under, compared to only two per cent in the secondary sector.

**Table 3: Age groups of primary headteachers %**

| Age group | men | women |
|---|---|---|
| 30 - 35 | 7 | 3 |
| 36 - 40 | 3 | 8 |
| 41 - 45 | 15 | 13 |
| 46 - 50 | 22 | 24 |
| 51 - 55 | 41 | 34 |
| 56 - 60 | 12 | 17 |
| 61+ | 0 | 1 |

Qualifications

There are only very minor differences between men and women headteachers in terms of their qualifications. Men and women secondary heads are equally well qualified with 60 per cent having a BA or BSc and about a quarter a BEd. Just over half have a Master's degree - 52 per cent of the women and 50 per cent of the men (see Table 4). There is quite a change here from the previous surveys when men were ten per cent more likely to have a Master's degree than women.

Of the primary heads, half had a Certificate of Education and about a quarter a BA or BSc (slightly more men than women) and the rest a BEd.

Only 18 of all the respondents had either a PhD or Ed D and they were spread across phase and gender.

**Table 4: Qualifications of headteachers %**

| Qualification | Female secondary | Male secondary | Female primary | Male primary |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| BA/BSc | 60 | 60 | 24 | 31 |
| B Ed | 28 | 25 | 35 | 38 |
| Cert. Ed. | 35 | 31 | 53 | 50 |
| MA/MSc/Med | 52 | 50 | 20 | 17 |
| PhD | 3 | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| Ed D | 0 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Other | 37 | 40 | 28 | 26 |

The headteachers who answered the survey would not have had to complete the National Professional Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH) which only became compulsory in April 2004. However, a small minority did report that they had this qualification, for example 14 per cent of the women secondary heads.

Subject specialism

There are a few differences in the subject specialisms of the men and women in the secondary sector. The most popular specialism for men is humanities (30 per cent) and for women English (25 per cent). Specialisation for women and men heads in the 'hard' subjects of maths and science is roughly equal. However, 'special needs' is largely a female specialism, mentioned by five per cent of women secondary heads and one per cent of the men. In the primary sector the pattern of specialisms was similar to that for the men and women secondary heads. As with secondary heads special needs was more likely to be a specialism of primary women heads (17 per cent against seven per cent of men), but early years was the specialism of 22 per cent of women and only three per cent of men. Heads of nursery schools are almost exclusively women.

Number of headships

Most of the respondents (particularly women) are in their first headship. In the secondary sector, 84 per cent of the women and 70 per cent of the men are in their first headship. In the primary sector 71 per cent of the women, but only 57 per cent of the men are in their first headship. As it seems that the women tend to be a little younger than their male colleagues and that they may be staying in their first headship longer than men this could have particular implications for the career development of women heads.

Men in primary headship are likely to move from one headship to another, more than both women primary and secondary colleagues. The data do confirm the idea that men are particularly sought after for the headship of primary schools and possibly therefore feel confident about moving from one school to another gaining more varied experience than their female colleagues.

Previous roles in school

There are very few differences in experience of roles held by women and men heads in general. In the case of secondary headteachers, there was a difference in that 37 per cent of men against 28 per cent of women have had the role of acting headteacher. In comparison, other senior management experiences for men and women of being an assistant headteacher, head of faculty or department or year, senior teacher or holding another SMT role was virtually identical. In a situation where an acting headteacher is required, and where possibly the procedure of appointment may be less rigorous than for a permanent post, men are more likely to obtain the position.

Deputy head experience

Not surprisingly virtually all the secondary heads had held the post of deputy. In the primary sector, smaller schools mean that heads are sometimes appointed without deputy experience but 88 per cent of women and 91 per cent of men primary heads had previously been deputies.

Most men and women deputies spend under five years in the role, but more women than men in the secondary sector spend between five and ten years as a deputy.

In past studies (McBurney and Hough, 1989, Singleton, 1993) there have been considerable differences in the areas of responsibility held by men and women deputies in secondary schools leading to a very gendered distribution of roles in co-ed schools where women tended to be given pastoral responsibilities and men responsibility for curriculum. That difference is now diminishing. In the 1990s the gaps in experience were smaller, but still applied with a marked tendency for men to have had experience in the important area of curriculum (Coleman, 2002).

**Table 5: Secondary headteachers – specialism as a deputy %**

| | **men** | **women** |
|---|---|---|
| Curriculum | 82 | 76 |
| Pastoral | 51 | 56 |
| Personnel | 34 | 49 |
| Finance | 25 | 20 |
| Premises | 20 | 15 |
| Other | 14 | 17 |
| not stated | 3 | 2 |

In 2004 (see Table 5) there was little difference in the experiences of men and women deputy heads, with 82 per cent of the men and 76 per cent of the women having curriculum responsibility as deputies. There were still some differences in the area of finance though, with 36 per cent of the men and only 20 per cent of the women having deputy experience in this area. There was a similar difference in the experience of male and female primary headteachers. In both primary and secondary schools, specialisation in finance is relatively unusual, although claimed by more men than women. Perhaps the growing importance of bursars means that the specialist handling of finance is less likely to be the responsibility of a deputy head, particularly a female one.

In the secondary sector, it may be that changes in structure have allowed women to take on more varied roles. Where management responsibility is given for key stages rather than dividing curriculum and pastoral the key stage dimensions could allow individuals of either sex to obtain experience of both curriculum and pastoral. It may also be that women have 'wised up' to the need to have curriculum experience and to therefore be making sure that they get it.

It is clear that the distinction and gender stereotyping in senior management and leadership roles in secondary schools that existed in previous studies in the 1980s and 1990s is now much reduced. Men and women secondary deputy heads are having similar experience. The days when women were automatically expected to take on the pastoral role in secondary schools appear to have passed, although some of the comments of women heads did hark back to this earlier experience.

In the primary sector, a small number of men commented on the difficulties faced by men in working with the younger age groups of children because of stereotypes related to this being women's work, or concern about child protection issues.

Some of the issues relating to gender differences in promotion have been related to differential expectations of men and women about careers, for example career breaks, career planning and women having less confidence than men in making applications.

Career breaks

Most of the heads seem to have had the expected progression through middle management to senior management roles, but a career break is a feature of many female careers, most often related to child bearing and child-care.

Of women secondary heads 40 per cent, and of women primary heads 63 per cent have had a break, the most common reason being maternity leave, although over a quarter of the primary women heads had taken off a longer period for child care (see Table 6). Relatively few other reasons for career break were given, although eight per cent of men primary school heads (against three per cent of women primary heads) had taken a secondment to obtain qualifications.

Breaks for longer term childcare were more common with the older age groups of women but are considerably less common in 2004 than was reported in the 1990s. A small change in life style is indicated by travel occurring as a reason for a career break (three per cent of secondary women heads), something that was not mentioned in the 1990s.

**Table 6: Career break reasons**

| | Women secondary | Men secondary | Women primary | Men primary |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Maternity/paternity leave | 26 | 0 | 31 | 5 |
| Longer term child care | 11 | 1 | 27 | 1 |
| Secondment (quals) | 4 | 5 | 3 | 8 |
| Travel | 3 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Secondment (industry) | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Other | 4 | 1 | 6 | 3 |
| Not stated | 60 | 92 | 40 | 87 |

In the majority of cases women and men said that they were able to come back at the same level after their career break, but there was a considerable difference in the experience of men and women. Twelve per cent of secondary women and 18 per cent of primary women said they were not able to return at the same level, and this was only true for three or four per cent of the men.

Career breaks and the return to work are of vital significance to a large proportion of women and have a considerable impact on their career progress. Some related issues are discussed in the later section on maternity and paternity leave.

Career planning

One of the factors that have been identified in the past as being problematic for women in relation to leadership is career planning and this is often linked to a lack of confidence (see next section). The difficulties for women in planning their career are compounded by child-bearing, and by the tacit acceptance in much of society that the career of the man (husband) takes priority over that of the woman. The particular experience of the women headteachers in relation to children and husbands is considered later. However, the women and men headteachers were asked at what stage of their lives they had formulated a career plan that included headship or deputy headship. In the case of both men and women the most common time was on gaining a post of responsibility. Over 23 per cent of the secondary women heads

and 17 per cent of the primary women heads said that they had never formulated a plan including headship. The proportion of men saying this was very small. In contrast 25 per cent of both the secondary and primary men had decided early in their career, at the point of entry to teaching, that they planned to be a head or deputy compared to only about ten per cent of the women. Men are more likely than women to rate the influence of their own teachers as important. There does seem to be some evidence for men being more determined and more confident in their career planning as they are more likely to set their sights on leadership from a relatively early stage in their career and in this they appear to be supported by the expectations of others such as their own teachers.

More men appear to think about their career earlier, but more women are appointed to secondary headship at a younger age. What happens to women in secondary schools in the middle of their career and in the emergent leader stage that brings this about? What supports them towards headship? It does appear that once women do make up their mind to think about headship - most typically when they have reached a post of responsibility - they then make speedy progress. This may possibly be associated with their children then being older and less dependent. Amongst the 272 secondary women headteachers that responded to the survey in 2004 there were only 38 children under ten of which ten were under five. A woman secondary headteacher with young children is therefore a relative rarity and it would seem that many of those who do have children have had them earlier in their career, before going for headship.

Despite the fact that women seem to be appointed to secondary headship younger than male colleagues they still face negative attitudes about their relative youth, such as those reported by a woman secondary head now in her late 40s:

> I was constantly challenged by male colleagues in the early years of headship and even described by a governor as 'a mere slip of a girl'. Members of the local community expressed their doubts as to whether I would succeed in the headship.

Women are less likely to plan their career from an early point and are more likely to have doubts associated with achieving headship. These doubts relate to their commitments as mothers and partners as well as to their confidence.

Confidence and doubting their ability to become a head

The belief that women lack confidence in relation to career planning is often cited (for example, Shakeshaft, 1989). Although they were not directly asked whether they rated themselves as confident, the heads were asked if they had ever doubted that they would achieve headship. The responses showed that the male primary heads were least likely to doubt that they would get a headship (61 per cent), perhaps reflecting the fact that the odds for men primary school teachers of becoming a head are relatively good. The most common reason for men and women doubting that they would achieve headship were their experiences of rejection after applications. Many of them also related their doubts to their own lack of career planning.

Overall, women in both primary and secondary schools were a little more likely than their male colleagues to doubt their ability, see Table 7.

**Table 7: Have you doubted your ability to be a headteacher?**

| | Women secondary | Men secondary | Women primary | Men primary |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | 46 | 43 | 42 | 34 |
| No | 48 | 55 | 55 | 61 |
| Not stated | 6 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

When the comments were analysed the women were very much more likely to link their doubts to issues of confidence. Obviously there were men who commented on their self-doubt and lack of confidence, but there were many more comments from women, including the next group of examples:

> It all looked a bit daunting, during acting head role (primary head, early 40s)
>
> Jobs were given to people who were known or 'made themselves known', (primary head later 40s)
>
> Doubts throughout! I am small and self-effacing - my promotion remains a surprise! (secondary head later 40s)
>
> [Doubts] when my mother died - she was so supportive and willing to help and give moral support. (secondary head early 50s)

The comments of the men about doubting that they would achieve headship were more related to the actual experience of being rejected or to factors that they considered were outside their control. The next four comments are all from men.

> I went to a number of unsuccessful interviews - minor reasons why I did not get the job. (primary head, early 40s)
>
> From 1987 - 95 blacklisted (secretly) by LEA officials for union activities. (primary head 50s)
>
> Deputy head of middle school but wished to be in primary and experience not considered relevant. (primary head late 50s)
>
> When a head of department in a secondary school, because people with ideas were not trusted to be heads. (head of special school, late 50s)

Another reason for doubts about headship that related more to women than to men was the consideration that they gave to their children and husband as well as how they perceived that others viewed these commitments. This was particularly true of women primary headteachers, who were more likely to be married and to have children than the women secondary headteachers. One young woman primary headteacher in her 30s gave a graphic account of the sort of dilemma only a woman could face:

> I was interviewed for headship one week after having my second child. I was breast-feeding in the car outside as no provision could be make in the school. Seriously I thought I must be mad!

Women headteachers are more likely to be divorced or separated than their male colleagues. It is possible that the sort of stresses that come from combining a difficult job with being a wife and mother contribute to this. One woman primary head

in her late 40s said that she doubted her ability to obtain headship when: 'I got my deputy headship and my marriage broke up'.

A woman primary head teacher in her early 50s stated that: 'Most of my career I have had young children and elderly parents to care for. I am only just free to take up a headship.' Another in the same age group, commented that she doubted her ability to become a head: 'moving round Europe due to my husband's career'.

Similar comments relating to children and partners came from women secondary headteachers, but they were not the norm amongst the men, although a few men did mention the impact of domestic responsibilities or marriage break up and one male primary headteacher in his early 40s did say that he had doubted his ability to achieve headship: 'when my children were very young and I couldn't devote long hours after school.' Men and women both mentioned the difficulty of being tied to a geographical area by their children's schooling.

A further factor that is likely to be perceived as difficult for women relates to age and qualifications. For women who have taken a career break or 'back-pedalled' because of children, age and experience can be seen to be a problem. For older women in primary schools who are more likely to have a Certificate of Education and less likely to have a degree it may be a particular difficulty. But in secondary schools too, qualifications can be a barrier. One woman secondary head in her late 40s said that she doubted her ability to become a head when: 'an attached advisor suggested a BEd was not intellectual enough for headship - so I did an MA.'

Both men and women pointed to issues relating to current government education policies or the impact of the LEA that had knocked their confidence:

- the LEA: 'suspicion of bias by advisers'. (Male primary head, late 40s)
- a poor Ofsted report,
- going into 'serious weaknesses as a deputy headteacher' (woman primary head early 40s)
- not succeeding at NPQH 'I did not complete this and if I had not got headship before it was statutory I would not have gone on'. (woman secondary head late 40s).

Confidence is very important for successful promotion and lack of confidence has been particularly linked to women (see for example Shakeshaft, 1989). The next section looks at the sources of support for those who aspire to headship.

Sources of support including mentoring

There are sources of support in both the home and the workplace. Since the 1990s surveys there has been an overall shift towards professional influences being rated as important in comparison with the support from home. All the heads, men and women, primary and secondary rated the support of a previous head as the most important influence on them, with men secondary heads naming them more than any one else.

Support from the home was rated next most important, with partner and family being particularly important for women. Their ‘own parents’ were mentioned more by men and women primary men than by secondary heads.

Virtually all the heads said that they had been encouraged to apply for promotion and again this encouragement was most likely to have come from their own previous headteacher and in the case of secondary heads other senior managers in the

school. The encouragement of colleagues was particularly important for women secondary heads who rated this ten per cent higher than any other group.

**Table 8: Encouragement to apply for headship %**

| | Women Secondary | Men Secondary | Women Primary | Men Primary |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Headteacher | 74 | 76 | 75 | 75 |
| Colleagues | 65 | 56 | 55 | 55 |
| Partner/family | 56 | 57 | 58 | 48 |
| Senior managers | 56 | 57 | 40 | 32 |
| Other | 16 | 10 | 17 | 9 |

One of the most important sources of support in career terms is mentoring. In the past it seemed that men as 'gatekeepers' were more likely to mentor other men both formally and informally. In addition, the absence of women from senior roles both denied role models to younger women and meant that there were less senior women to mentor other women. Mentoring is generally regarded as vital to support women to obtain senior roles in the most crucial middle stages of career progress in schools (Hill and Ragland 1995, Gupton and Appelt Slick, 1996).

Overall, in 2004 about 60 per cent of the heads, both men and women, stated that they had a mentor, and this figure is about the same as the 1990s. However, the overall figure masks a real difference in the experience of the younger age groups. The development of NPQH, Headlamp and other related initiatives which often include having a mentor, seems to have made a mark, as mentoring is much more likely to be mentioned amongst the younger heads who would have experienced these initiatives. Over 90 per cent of the women secondary heads who are under 45 reported that they have had a mentor.

The fact that there is an imbalance between men and women in the secondary sector means that male mentors are much more common for both men and women and the same is true for men primary heads, but women primary heads are twice as likely to be mentored by a woman as a man as there are so many more senior women in the primary sector.

The most important source of encouragement and influence is a previous headteacher, although the influence of the partner and family is strong, particularly for women. Mentoring is important and has become more common for the younger age groups of headteachers.

**How can gender related barriers be overcome?**

What lessons can be learnt from the experiences of the women and men headteachers reported here?

Some of the points that follow are particularly relevant to younger women and men who aspire to senior positions, some are more relevant to those already in senior posts. All the points are relevant to those interested in gender equity.

*Learning points*

*There are issues in relation to the views and attitudes particularly of some governors and other members of interview panels who are biased in favour of men in both secondary and primary headship and still discriminate against*

*women because of family responsibilities. Men may experience discrimination in some primary settings. It is important that governing bodies are fully aware of equal opportunities issues in the appointment of both women and men.*

*Women are less likely to be expected to take on stereotypical feminine roles, but women should continue to be aware of the need to have a range of management and leadership experience.*

*The membership of interview panels in all types of schools is still weighted towards men and steps could be taken to remedy this.*

*Women appear to be appointed younger than men in the secondary sector. This is a real encouragement to young women, who should have confidence in applying for headship*

*Women are at least as well qualified academically as men. Stereotypes about women being less well qualified are wrong.*

*There are cultural barriers to the full acceptance of women leaders that are regionally located. Equity issues could be addressed on a regional basis.*

*It is important that the relative equity for men and women that now exists in respect of senior roles in secondary schools prior to headship be extended to the role of acting head.*

*The way in which career breaks for child birth and child care are regarded and managed is of significance to a majority of the teaching work force. It is more difficult for women to resume work at the same level after a career break than it is for men. These are issues to address for senior managers and governors in schools.*

*Women should have confidence in their abilities and plan their careers. There is less evidence of men lacking confidence and they do tend to plan their career at an earlier stage than women.*

*As the stage of emergent leadership seems to be so important for women, more information is needed about the sort of support women receive prior to application for headship with a view to extending good practice.*

*Attention should be given to the support and development of women heads who are more likely than men to remain in their first headship post for a considerable length of time. More women in the secondary sector are appointed when relatively young, and stay in their first headship longer than men.*

*The role of the headteacher in encouraging younger staff is paramount. Most of the headteachers named a previous head as being the most important in encouraging them in their career.*

*Mentoring, seen as vital in supporting aspirant women heads has increased significantly in recent years, probably as a result of national training initiatives, and it is important that this is continued.*

## 2. Gender-related work/life balance issues

The job of headteacher is a responsible, stressful and time-consuming one. For all headteachers, men and women, there are work/life balance issues. When asked why they think they were successful, hard work was cited by over 80 per cent of them, with support from others coming in second at around 50 per cent. Meetings take place in the evening and as a result the days spent at school can be very long. Weekends and holidays will be spent preparing for the next week or term. However, these demands are likely to impact on women more than men. Although complete generalisation is unwise, it is usually women who bear responsibility for the home and for the well-being of any children. Despite differences and changes between the generations there are still issues which impact more on women than men. A good way of contextualising the issues is to look at the figures relating to marriage/partnership and children for the headteachers in 2004 (Table 9) and in the 1990s (Table 10).

**Table 9: Marital/partner status of headteachers in 2004 %**

| | married/partner | separated | widowed | single | divorced |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Women secondary | 78 | 2 | 0.5 | 10 | 9 |
| Women primary | 86 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 8 |
| Men secondary | 96 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Men primary | 89 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 6 |

Compared to men, more of the women, particularly in the secondary sector are single or divorced and they are less likely to have a child or children (see Table 11). In comparison with the 1990s, the figures for men have scarcely altered, but there is an increase in the proportion of women secondary heads who are married and a commensurate decrease in those that are single since the 1990s.

**Table 10: Marital/partner status of secondary headteachers in 1990s**

| | married/partner | separated | single | divorced |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Women secondary | 67 | 3 | 19 | 11 |
| Men secondary | 95 | 1 | 1 | 2 |

(widowed are included in the single category)

Although the picture for women is somewhat changed from previous surveys, there is still a considerable difference in life experience for the women and the men
There has been an increase in the proportion of women secondary heads who are married/partnered, but this has to be seen in the context of the total number of women secondary heads which has grown from 670 in1996 to 980 in 2004. It could be that a change in culture has meant that married women with children are less likely to be discriminated against as potential headteachers. After all, there are retention and recruitment difficulties throughout the teaching force including amongst headteachers and therefore an incentive for those appointing to be more tolerant of family circumstances. Cultural changes may also be taking place with regard to work-life balance and it may also be a better climate to admit to being partnered without being married. As might be expected, the proportion of women secondary heads having children has also increased from the 1990s.

**Table 11: Headteachers with a child or children 2004**

| | % |
|---|---|
| Women secondary | 63 |
| Women primary | 79 |
| | |
| Men secondary | 90 |
| Men primary | 93 |

In the earlier survey of secondary women (reported in Coleman, 2000 and 2002), the proportion of women who were aged 40 - 50 were much less likely to have a child or children than their older women colleagues. Over half of them apparently had taken a decision to remain child free, presumably because of the difficulties associated with combining motherhood and the role of headteacher.

**Table 12: The percentages of male and female (by age group) secondary headteachers having children 1990s**

| All men | All women | Women 50 and over | Women under 50 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 94.0 | 51.7 | 61.6 | 44.4 |

Although the proportion of women secondary headteachers having a child or children is now on average 63 per cent (similar to the figure for the over 50s in the 1990s), there does appear to have been a particular cohort of women who did remain child free. They can be identified in the figures in the 2004 survey as the cohort who are now in the 46-55 age group and who are less likely to have children than either those women who are older or who are younger than them.

**Table 13: Percentage of Secondary women heads (by age group) with children 2004**

| Age group | 40 - 45 | 46 - 50 | 51 - 55 | 56 - 60 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 61 | 53 | 52 | 71 |

The percentage of secondary women having children dips significantly for age groups 46 - 50 and 51 - 55. This cohort had less children than those older and those younger. It may be that this cohort of women were influenced by the feminist movement of the 1970s and/or the achievement orientation of the Thatcherite 1980s. They also were the first cohort to experience the effects of having statutory maternity leave. Although maternity leave protects women's rights to return to work, it does have the effect of changing expectations about how much time women take off to have children. The older women headteachers were much more likely to have taken off considerable amounts of time when their children were young - 27 per cent of the over 50s had taken a break of more than a year compared to only 4.5 per cent of the under 50s in the 1990's survey (Coleman, 2002). In 2004 only 11 per cent overall had taken a longer break and most of these were in the older age group. The general expectation now is that women who are making progress up the career ladder will take maternity leave and come straight back to work, with all the attendant difficulties. Perhaps this change in expectations had an effect on the age group which first experienced it. What is clear is that the reduction in child-bearing for the women secondary headteachers in the late 1990s has not continued as a downward trend in the current decade. However, the fact remains that women headteachers,

particularly those in the secondary sector are much less likely to have children than their male colleagues or women in less demanding work roles.

Childcare

It is in the issue of childcare that some of the differences between the experience of men and women headteachers can be seen best. It seems that the male headteachers are heavily dependent on their wives/partners to take responsibility for the children. Women headteachers, both secondary and primary are most likely to make use of childminders, nurseries and relatives whilst over two thirds of men headteachers rely on their partner for childcare. Although the word 'housewife' is rarely used, it was obviously common for the partners of the male heads to have put their own career 'on hold' and to be working part-time often in teaching. This stalling of their partner's career meant that generally speaking childcare was not a big issue for the male headteachers.

Most of the comments about childcare came from women, and were commonly about the expense and organisational difficulties. The following comments from women primary heads are typical:

> Difficult time when arrangements break down
> It involved long hours and many sacrifices

Older primary women heads referred to taking time out or working part time when children were young but this is a much less common pattern for those under 50. Nevertheless, the tensions that arise from combining motherhood and headship are apparent. One woman secondary head in her late 40s commented that she was: 'Personally determined that other staff would see my 110% commitment so my children probably suffered.' Another from the same age group felt: 'It has worked out really well, but getting the right person [to look after children] is a major factor. There is personal concern about whether you are doing the right thing'.

Obviously there is a mixed picture and, as we have seen in the earlier section, there is still evidence of some discrimination in relation to mothers having responsible jobs. One secondary headteacher in her 40s stated:

> I juggled and worked very hard so the headteacher of my new school at the time did not even know I had a young child, otherwise I'm not sure he would have appointed me. He was very surprised when after a year in post I told him I had a two year old.

The comments from male headteachers, primary and secondary tended to be about expense and the impact on their partner of them having to give up their career:

> But it meant my partner taking a career break until the youngest was seven (male primary head, late 40s)
>
> My wife had to give up work to look after children (male secondary head late 40s)
>
> My wife arranged childcare and worked part time initially as a teacher (male secondary head early 50s)

Just one per cent of the women headteachers stated that the job of their partner was 'househusband' roughly the same percentage of partners identified as 'housewife'

(see Table 14). One woman headteacher's experience was that: 'my husband has cared for me and the children since two weeks before my first child was born.' Although there were a small number of instances like this, the overall pattern of responsibilities and their allocation had changed only very marginally from the previous surveys.

As can be seen from Table 14 a majority of the male headteachers had wives/partners who worked in education, often in a part-time capacity. Nearly 40 per cent of the husbands or partners of the women secondary heads also worked in education, but their roles tended to be of a senior nature (for further discussion of the types of households and career planning of the heads see Coleman, 2002).

**Table 14: What is your partner's job?**

| | Men Secondary | Women secondary | Men primary | Women primary |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Education | 59 | 39 | 53 | 23 |
| Skilled/semi/skilled | 2 | 8 | 5 | 10 |
| Retired | 2 | 8 | 3 | 11 |
| Clerical | 7 | 1 | 9 | 0 |
| Management | 5 | 11 | 6 | 12 |
| Housewife/husband | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| Other professional | 15 | 17 | 10 | 26 |
| Other | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Not married/partnered or not stated | 6 | 19 | 11 | 15 |

Unsocial hours

Some of the work in schools has to take place in the evening and at the weekends. This is particularly difficult for those with young families. One woman primary head in her late 30s commented: 'Governors not sympathetic to the need for meetings being at a time when I can arrange child care - lots of evening meetings!'. A female secondary head in her late 40s commented on:

> The long-hours culture at Deputy head level. I was the only female on the senior team. The men all stayed late/came in during holidays. There were expectations that I would do the same.

A young male head of a primary school commented on the attitudes of governors:

> Establishing a work life balance - getting governors to hold meetings in the day rather than 7 - 10 at night because of my young family. I have been told that 'well I work in the city and I wish I could choose my hours.' Comment from my Headteacher was, as a man 'why would I need to be off when my wife was the one having the baby?'

However, It is important that in recognising the needs of families, single and childfree women and men are not automatically expected to take up the tasks that need to be done in unsocial hours.

When children are ill

Perhaps the issue of responsibility for childcare is most apparent when children are ill and need to be cared for. This is obviously a problem where both partners are

working. For the male headteachers, their partner was still most likely to have the responsibility of looking after an ill child (see Table 15). The next most likely source of help for men and the most likely for women came from grandparents, particularly in the case of primary women heads. The respondents themselves were not at all likely to take sole responsibility for their sick children and this applied to both men and women. However, both men and women heads said that they took joint responsibility with their partner for an ill child, indicating a change in the attitudes of men towards this shared responsibility. Women heads were more likely to mention using a nanny, and there is a small proportion who insist that their children never get ill, unless it is the holidays.

**Table 15: Who looks after the children when ill? %**

| | Secondary men | Secondary women | Primary men | Primary women |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Respondent | 3 | 4 | 0 | 9 |
| Partner | 37 | 17 | 34 | 15 |
| Respondent and partner | 23 | 18 | 23 | 16 |
| Grandparent | 19 | 20 | 23 | 33 |
| Childminder | 10 | 14 | 4 | 6 |
| Family/relatives | 3 | 4 | 7 | 9 |
| Friends | 1 | 4 | 2 | 4 |
| Au pair | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Nanny | 1 | 11 | 2 | 2 |
| Old enough to be left | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Never get ill | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Other | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 |

There is a particular tension for women who hold the dual role of headteacher and mother, both of which make emotional demands. The illness of a child brings this into focus, with the professionality of teacher or headteacher being in direct competition with the need to be a good parent. In a recent qualitative study of 20 women primary headteachers who are mothers (Bradbury, 2004) the overlapping identities of the women as mothers and headteachers, shows their apparently equal commitment to both with the inevitable tensions:

> In analysing why the women allowed circumstances at school to negatively affect home life there is almost a driven quality about their work as headteachers, as if this is something that is as intrinsic to their existence as motherhood itself. (p. 151)

Responsibility for other dependants including elderly

The impact of responsibility for the elderly on career planning for women has already been mentioned. Overall about 20 per cent of the headteachers commented on responsibilities, particularly in relation to parents. As might be expected, these responsibilities tend to accrue to the older headteachers, with slightly more of the women being involved than the men.

Sharing domestic responsibilities

The respondents were asked how domestic responsibilities were shared between them and their partner. The headteachers were not asked about the nature of their partnership, which will include some same sex relationships. The results show that

whilst the women headteachers are still quite likely to take most or an equal share of the responsibilities with their partner, the men headteachers are not (see Table 16). Since about ten per cent of the women state that their partners have retired, a number of these retired people will be responsible for the situation where the women heads are taking less than 50 per cent of the domestic responsibilities. What is most noticeable is that the men heads generally have a lot of support when it comes to domestic matters with a very traditional division of labour in their households. This applies to the younger as well as the older men. In around 70 per cent of the male heads' households their wives/partners have most of the responsibility. Only two per cent of secondary men heads and three per cent of primary men heads take most of the domestic responsibility. In the homes of the women heads, a third of the secondary women and 40 per cent of the primary women heads have overall responsibility for the home. The only change since the earlier surveys is that the balance has shifted slightly for the women secondary heads with a third rather than 40 per cent taking most of the responsibility. The pattern for the male heads has not changed at all.

**Table 16: Sharing domestic responsibilities with partner % (secondary heads only)**

| | 1990s | | 2004 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | All women | All men | All women | All men |
| More responsibility taken by the respondent | 43 | 4 | 33 | 2 |
| Responsibility shared 50/50 | 38 | 24 | 35 | 26 |
| More responsibility taken by partner | 19 | 73 | 32 | 72 |

Primary heads were not surveyed in the 1990s, but in 2004 the shares of domestic responsibility follow the same pattern as for the secondary heads, although the primary women are more likely to take major responsibility with 41 per cent of women primary heads are more likely to take more than 50 per cent of the share and only 16 per cent under 50 per cent of the share of domestic responsibility.

Follow your partner

One of the constraints on a career can be a move to a different location. Traditionally this has involved women in following their husband/partner when he has a career move, to the detriment of their career. As a result women have often built up a variety of experience gained piecemeal rather than in a planned fashion, as they take on work where it is available to them.

As with the division of domestic responsibilities, two patterns emerge from the data, one for the women headteachers, and one for the men. In the case of the women secondary heads there was only a small difference between the proportion of women changing jobs to follow their partner and their partner changing jobs to follow them. A different model emerges for the male heads where it was rare for the male secondary headteachers to have followed their wife/partner (four per cent) and relatively normal for their wife/partner to have followed them (53 per cent). Although there was a similar pattern for the primary heads, in all cases the proportions were smaller, indicating less geographical movement for primary heads. This would be

expected, as there are many more primary schools than secondary schools, so a change of job in the primary sector is less likely to lead to a change of geographical location than in the secondary sector.

A disruption of family life involving the running of two households may be caused by career moves. About a quarter of both women and men secondary heads have, at some time, operated from two bases as a result of career changes. This proportion is less for primary heads, but has affected fifteen per cent of women primary heads and nine per cent of men.

Maternity/paternity leave

A high proportion of the career breaks taken by women are for maternity leave. The ability to take maternity leave has had an impact on the career pattern of women as it is now much less common for women to take longer breaks, e.g. several years for child care. However, the taking of maternity leave does have implications, both financial and personal. Many of the comments about maternity leave (there were only a small number of comments on paternity leave) were about finance combined with the brevity of the time that can be taken.

Women primary headteachers commented:

> Too short, financial constraints.
>
> Pay reduction meant I had to go back earlier than I would have liked to and I have just found out that I didn't receive pension contributions when I went back four days a week after my third child.
>
> I had to return ASAP as I was/am the main wage earner.
>
> I would have liked longer but could not afford to work without pay.
>
> Worked against me as I was main breadwinner at the time.

The attitudes of governors are not always helpful and one primary woman head in her late 30s commented: 'the governors said I should not be paid whilst on maternity leave - I was irresponsible and had no right'.

The benefit of having maternity leave was certainly felt by the older women who might previously have had to give up work.

> It was wonderful to have quality time with my children as babies. I returned to work for the ILEA (not as a teacher) on a job share basis before going to university when my youngest was aged three.

The difficulties of coming back after any career break have already been commented on above, but there are particular difficulties with a young baby where more flexibility would be desirable:

> Not long enough - no facility to come back on part-time basis initially.
>
> I returned and asked to lose one of my management points. That was silly really as I still did the job (woman secondary head late 40s)

There is also an awareness of the impact on the career:

> I felt it would greatly impact on my chance of permanent headship post, therefore kept putting it off (woman primary head)
>
> Adequate time but left me feeling unconfident. Real challenge to be 'career woman' then 'mum, then 'career woman' (secondary head)

Maternity leave has opened up possibilities for women who want to develop their career, but it does not solve dilemmas relating to reconciling roles. One secondary head summed up the issues that women face in returning to work after having a baby:

> In part it was finance led that I returned so soon, but I wanted to pursue a career and have children - be both, and have the best of both worlds.

The introduction of official paternity leave is fairly new and there were only a few comments from men about it, although some of the women did refer to its inadequacy. Of the few male heads who did make comments, one primary head said that he was only able to take two days following birth of twins! One male secondary head in his late 40s commented that whilst he was on paternity leave: 'pressure was brought to bear to lead a college meeting on the evening when my wife left hospital with my daughter. Another, in his early 40s recounted how:

> I missed an interview for head of department due to the birth of my second daughter, the interview was rearranged and one of the panel made a comment that I wasn't needed at the birth.

We are obviously a long way from general acceptance of the importance of paternity leave.

**What can we learn from the heads' views in relation to work/life balance issues?**

The difficult job of being a headteacher is not lightly undertaken, and sacrifices are almost inevitable. However, it does seem that women headteachers contend with additional difficulties. In comparison with their male colleagues, they are:

less likely to be married/in partnerships;
more likely to be divorced;
less likely to have children
but when they have them, more likely to take responsibility for children;
more likely to bear responsibilities for domestic issues;
more likely to take a career break;
less likely to return to the same level after a career break.

In addition, in comparison with their female colleagues, male headteachers are much more likely to have a partner whose career takes second place, meaning that they are freer to offer support in a variety of ways.

The origin of these inequalities lies within the patriarchal nature of our society and cannot be overcome at the institutional level. However, those with responsibility in and for schools need to have awareness of the differential loads that men and women may bear and of the need for family friendly policies for the benefit of both women and men. For example the need for childcare facilities in or near schools, allowing flexibility of working hours for those with the care of very young children and making the return from a career break easier.

*Learning points*

*To accommodate work/life balance issues more fully it would be important to:*

*Nurture a culture in the school that is tolerant in relation to families, particularly children and elderly dependants;*

*Recognise that women are likely to be bearing most of the family and domestic responsibilities, particularly in primary schools;*

*Ensure that women experience an equitable return to work after maternity leave or other break associated with children;*

*Recognise and encourage paternity leave;*

Work/life balance issues affect us all, but for women the tensions are likely to be greater than for men because of their social role. When asked about their perceptions of sexism and gender related issues at work, what were the responses of the headteachers?

## 3. What is the impact of gender on the working life of headteachers?

The headteachers were asked about gender in relation to:

- attitudes of their peers and colleagues
- feeling that they have to prove their worth (as a man or woman) in a leadership role
- reasons for their being successful
- advantages experienced as a man or woman headteacher

Attitudes of their peers and colleagues

As with promotion and appointment, it is secondary women heads who are most likely to have experienced sexism from peers and colleagues. Although the proportion is less than it was in the 1990s, it is still about half of the sample who say they have experience of sexism in their work as heads. In the primary sector, women once appointed are working with mainly women staff, so it is less likely that they will experience sexism. All the same sexism in work is reported by about 15 per cent of both women and men in the primary sector. In the late 1990s and today, women who have children or who are divorced or separated are more likely to report experience of sexism. However, as mentioned in relation to promotion and appointment, women in the secondary sector are less likely to be stereotyped than before into pastoral or caring roles. Although stereotypes are less common, there is still a tendency to judge women by different yardsticks to men.

> Within my LEA, there are situations in which I have had to push for the needs of my school and am seen sometimes as difficult where a male head is seen as firm and assertive, but I can live with it! (woman secondary head, early 50s)

Women headteachers are operating in a context where they are not 'supposed' to be and one where at least some of the stakeholders would overtly prefer a man. A woman special school head in her late 40s recalled that: 'my inherited deputy told me on the first day that he wasn't working for a woman, especially one younger than him.' There is still resentment and/or surprise in finding a woman in the position of headteacher. In the 2004 data, specific groups are named in relation to this: governors; parents; male teachers and builders, who tend to be patronising. One woman secondary head in her late 40s commented about examples of sexism at work:

> Too many to enumerate - mostly in the way parents/other professionals speak to women in my position - I've got 100s of anecdotes!

As with appointments, governors' attitudes to a female head can also be a problem. One secondary woman head in her 40s stated that: 'I am presently being 'bullied' by the chair of governors as I am the first female headteacher at this school, but I am coping and fighting back!'

There were other comments from women secondary heads specifically in relation to male colleagues:

> A certain type of male colleague (2 - 3 on my staff) have a 'bullying' approach to me when I need to speak with them about an issue, concern or complaint. Responses have on occasion been very aggressive verbally.
>
> Men in senior positions have had noticeable difficulty in coping with me especially when they have not completed a task designated.

Women are also occasionally named as being judgmental about women leaders, particularly in relation to their family responsibilities, and specifically when they have young children. One woman secondary head in her early 40s commented that she had comments about her: 'first application for headship following maternity leave from colleagues/governors. Especially from a small number of parents who enquired when I was going to be a proper mother to my children!' A woman secondary head in her early 40s commented that she had experience of sexism: 'when pregnant at an all-boys school - but the sexism came from women who expected me to give up work, not from my male colleagues!'

*Meetings of heads*

One of the difficulties that women heads may face once in headship is working with a majority of male heads in their region. Although things have obviously improved since the 1990s, there are a number of instances of women still being isolated in these larger groups of predominantly male heads. A woman secondary head in her late 40s commented that she is the 'only female head in LEA - heads' meetings started with a full English breakfast and talk about rugby and cricket.' A woman in the same age group that: 'my current LEA has several senior officers who treat me differently, as I am the only female secondary head in the LEA. This is a very serious issue which affects my working life.' As mentioned earlier there are considerable regional variations in the proportion of women secondary heads.

It is not only secondary women heads who feel this sort of pressure in working with groups of heads and the LEA. A women primary head in her late 40s notes that: 'when I am working with the local heads' group, female headteachers are not included or asked for opinions to the same extent as male counterparts. This appears to improve with length of service as a head.' A woman primary head in her early 50s commented that: 'partnership headteacher meetings are male dominated and sexist attitudes apparent'.

There is a link between this type of sexist attitude and the size of the school, which indicates a male 'pecking order' putting large secondary schools at the top, followed by small secondary schools then, large primary followed by small primary. A woman secondary head in her late 50s recalled: 'a male head told me my school wasn't a real school as his was 1200 pupils to my 750 and I was only playing'. Men express disbelief that a woman could be running a large secondary school. A woman secondary head in her early 40s stated:

> At heads' conferences it is often assumed I am a primary head. Then when I say secondary, they say 'what size school is it?' Does this matter? It suggests that if it is a small school women are more likely to head it. Men don't ask men what size their school is as the first question!

Another head indicated that she experienced: 'surprise on first meetings that I am not "just" a primary school teacher'. One primary woman head tersely commented: 'small school/female head - no consequence/impact'.

*Comments on appearance and inappropriate language*

Comments on size do not only occur in relation to the school, but extend to personal appearance. Women experience this in the interview process, but colleagues also make comments on women's and men's size and appearance in relation to their responsibilities, i.e. women are regarded as inferior to be leaders, tall athletic men fitted to cope. A woman secondary head in her early 40s commented on the: 'surprise at a 'small woman' being a headteacher. Feeling of being looked down on.'

Sexual innuendo, patronising remarks and use of language and even bullying are evidenced by some of the women in comments about peers and colleagues. 'Using “love”, “duck” and “darling”' , (woman secondary head late 40s). Another in her early 50s had experienced: 'male line managers referring to me and other female senior staff as “love”, “dear” and making comments about appearance of women, but never male colleagues'. Women secondary heads also gave the examples of being: 'deputy head to an extremely sexist male headteacher who frequently made personal comments' and 'bullying male teachers who think that if they shout at me, as a woman, I will back off'.

*Male experience of sexism*

A few comments from men about sexism also related to their being stereotyped by women and also that in some circumstances women were favoured. One man primary head in his 50s did comment on 'feminist oppression' but this was an isolated instance. Comments were more in relation to the perceived superiority of women at certain tasks. Both of the following comments were from male secondary heads in their 40s:

> Some female colleagues state that they can multi-task better than their male colleagues'.
>
> Only very rarely, assumptions that, as a male, I would not be as caring etc.

<u>Having to prove your worth as a man/woman in a leadership role</u>

It is often presumed that the leader will be male so it is not surprising that a large proportion of women, particularly in the secondary sector think that they, at some time, have had to prove their worth as a woman leader. In fact 70 per cent of secondary women, ten per cent more than in the 1990s state this. Perhaps the increase has something to do with a perceived 'masculine' template of leadership concerned with the achievement of targets, league tables and being an entrepreneurial head. Expectations of leadership in education are high. Women may feel that they have to 'prove' they can do everything.

For both men and women, there are issues relating to the current situation of inspection and its outcomes that were not so important, or did not exist in relation to 'proving your worth' in the 1990s. These issues affect men and women, but do seem to engender a particular feeling of vulnerability in women.

> Leading a school from Special Measures. Governors had made it clear that they wanted a male head. Male governors I feel do put this kind of pressure on women (woman primary head late 40s).
>
> First school to go into special measures, hence had to be a man who got it out - the LEA appointed me! (woman primary head, late 50s)

> One week into headship when a male governor said ' You've got one year to turn the school around or you're out (woman secondary head early 50s).

Women may also feel vulnerable when dealing with issues relating to discipline with male staff. One woman head commented on this in relation to competency issues with a male colleague, another in relation to the introduction of a new pay policy. A general comment from a woman head summed up the situation: 'certainly in dealing with difficult situations or people. I am more aware people put expectations on you, more than on men. Sometimes people want you not to succeed.' On a lighter, but telling note, one woman secondary head in her late 40s identified: 'having to successfully address a large 'old boys' event!' as the time she felt that she had to prove herself. Particular areas mentioned by women as challenging are working within a mainly Muslim community, working in certain regions of the country, such as the north-east of England, and working in boys' schools.

The proportion of men who feel that they have to 'prove' themselves has also gone up, but their comments show that this feeling is not gender related, and why should it be? There is an unconscious linkage between leadership and men that is made internationally by both men and women, young and old (Schein, 1994) and being a man and a leader is perceived as natural, in a way that being a woman and a leader is not (Schmuck, 1996). Both men and women in primary schools are less subject to the feeling of having to prove themselves, than those in secondary schools.

In 1996 most of the reactions to the question on the need to 'prove your worth' related to stereotypes of women as inferior, the perception of women that they have to be twice as good as a man and a general feeling of isolation as a woman. In 2004 there is less stress on the experience of being stereotyped and isolated, although these feelings do persist particularly in relation to governors, builders and male support staff. A typical example from a woman primary headteacher in her early 30s who commented on: 'a caretaker who questions my every decision.' Another woman primary head in her 30s felt she had to prove her worth: 'to male governors who feel that headteachers' role is a nice job for a lady!'. However, some professional colleagues still exhibit unreconstructed stereotypes.

> A nearby secondary male headteacher referred to me when introducing me to his chair of Governors as 'my little satellite HT, she makes the tea.' (woman special school head, late 40s)

The responses of men to the question of having to prove themselves mainly fell into the category of gender being irrelevant and that we all have to prove ourselves. However, some men in primary schools who may be perceived as being in 'female territory' working with a largely female staff do feel the need to prove their worth as men in leadership. The following comments about having to prove themselves as men are from male primary heads in differing age groups.

> Dealing with colleagues' problems, having credibility as an understanding practitioner.

> As a deputy head in a SMT where all other members were female.

> By responding positively to issues where stereotypical male responses were anticipated.

> Being able as a man to teach reception.

On appointment where two women on the staff thought they were better able to do my job.

The idea that women may be regarded as superior in some respects to men was not at all common in the 1990s, but has now fed through to a few men in the secondary as well as the primary sector. Men secondary heads who were in their 40s commented on the perception that men had to prove themselves on: 'emotional intelligence issues', and 'demonstrating that a man can be sensitive'.

Reasons for career success

The headteachers were most inclined to put down their success to their own hard work. At least 80 per cent put this first, with support from others also seen as important, especially by women primary heads. Otherwise the heads put their success down to personal skills and the fact that they had proved themselves in the workplace and in having a vision for their school. Some women heads in early years related their success to the fact that they were operating in a female environment: 'I think as my first headship was infant I was only really competing with other women' (primary head in early 50s)

Being a head is not always a desirable job, and several heads of all types (although primary women heads less so) stressed that they did not see that being a head could be counted as a success any more. For example, one woman secondary head in her 40s felt that: 'It is not a competitive field - the job is no longer attractive'. A woman secondary head in her 50s put her success down to: 'a willingness to take on a challenging school as an acting headteacher - very high risk'.

Do men or women feel that they have an advantage as a headteacher?

Despite or perhaps because of being the 'outsider' half of the women secondary heads and nearly half the men primary heads state that they think they have an advantage because of their sex. Only 22 per cent of the men secondary heads and 29 per cent of the women primary heads feel this (see Table 17).

**Table 17: Gender experienced as an advantage as a headteacher**

| | Women secondary | Men secondary | Women primary | Men primary |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | 50 | 22 | 29 | 48 |
| No | 44 | 75 | 68 | 52 |
| Not stated | 6 | 2 | 2 | 0 |

Of the women, particularly those from the secondary sector, who felt that they had an advantage as a female headteacher, the main reason cited was the ability to defuse situations with male students, teachers and parents where they felt that a man might feel challenged and have a harder time. Two typical comments from women secondary heads in their late 40s are:

Aggressive fathers soon mellow!

I can diffuse aggressive situations

In addition women and men sometimes believe that women have superior social skills in this area:

> Dealing with difficult people - women have better mediation skills and are more likely to seek compromise (woman secondary head in her 40s).

The next most frequently mentioned advantage was the ease with which women heads, particularly in the primary sector feel that they can empathise with mothers and women staff.

> Parents see you as a mother as well as a head, i.e. feel that you understand in difficult times.
>
> Staff are able to talk to me about personal issues. Parents and children too I suppose.
>
> Empathy with mothers who are struggling to cope.
>
> (women primary heads in their 40s)

Women in both the secondary and primary sector are quite shameless about using their femininity to the advantage of their school.

> Whether it is because I am female or because of personality/determination, I am not sure, but some men are influenced quite easily.
>
> Usually with workmen the odd fluttering of eyelashes means they'll paint an extra wall etc!
>
> Unashamedly, I use it to get sponsorship for LEA projects.
>
> I can usually gain 'extras' and more discount when negotiating with male reps.
>
> You can charm when necessary, e.g. when trying to raise £50,000 for specialist school sponsorship.

There is also the 'shock' factor of being a woman that can work in their favour. One secondary head in her early 40s commented that in a new post she was a 'direct contrast to a former “big” male. People stop and take note.' Another slightly older woman secondary head commented that: 'when you prove you “can” the impact on “doubters” is even greater.'

In the earlier survey of secondary women heads in the 1990s there was a refreshing realisation that women in this role did not have to conform to the 'masculine' stereotype of the traditional head and some of them really welcomed the freedom of being a woman in a stereotypically male role. That more positive slant on being a woman is not as apparent with the 2004 survey. Instead, there is more stress on the use of charm and feminine wiles and more mention of the positive stereotypes about women, for example that they have greater emotional intelligence and the ability to multi-task. It is difficult to draw conclusions from these differences in the tenor of the comments, but the vulnerability of heads in relation to increased accountability may have meant that the freedom of action that women mentioned in connection with being a head in the 1990s has been curtailed.

In discussing their perceived advantages, male primary heads, recognised first and foremost that men were preferred as heads, particularly by parents and governors:

> 'Yes - I believe that some governing bodies have a hidden agenda of seeking a man for the position.'
>
> Parents seem to look towards men - sorry but it is true.
>
> Parents believe that a male headteacher can control children more effectively. (men primary heads in their 50s)

Men in the primary sector see that they have advantages simply as men; identified as having 'rarity value' by one head, which is particularly sought after in relation to sport and also in relation to being a role model for boys. A man in his late 40s recalled that for his first post in a primary school: 'boys' games were advertised with a management post. it was obvious a man was sought.'

In counterpart to the women's ability to defuse difficult situations, some of the men felt that they had the advantage here. One younger male secondary head reverted to the stereotype of the tough masculine head and said: being a 6ft 2 in male in an inner city comp often makes aggressive male parents think twice before resorting to aggression.'

Some of the men, particularly in primary schools felt that their sex benefited them in dealing with mothers and with female staff. In this they matched the women's reference to their ability to charm susceptible men. One primary man head said: 'many women say they prefer to work for a male head'. Another that he dealt with: 'lots of young single mothers - they treat me a bit like I am their father.' However, in the ways in which both these relationships play out there is a power balance that favours men.

Whether in applying for their posts, or in carrying them out it is apparent that gender impacts on many aspects of the work life of the headteachers

> *Learning points*
>
> *Although the culture within the school may be more equitable today than in the 1990s, it is still reported that some governors, parents and other visitors to the school exhibit sexist attitudes to women headteachers.*
>
> *Some women heads, in particular in the secondary sector still face sexist attitudes from colleagues and peers, and recognise that they work within a masculine culture in meetings of heads. This is particularly likely to occur outside the metropolitan areas.*
>
> *There is an assumption on the part of some male heads and others that the larger the school the more likely it is to have a male head.*
>
> *There has been an increase to over 70 per cent of women in secondary schools reporting that they have to prove their worth as a woman. In particular they seem to feel vulnerable in relation to national initiatives such as inspection.*

*Primary men heads may feel that they have to prove their worth in respect of stereotypes about males not being fitted for the leadership of women staff or of schools for very young children.*

*Success is generally put down to hard work by all heads.*

*Being an 'outsider' as a head is experienced as an advantage by about half of the women in secondary schools and men in primary schools.*

**4. Are there differences in the ways that women and men headteachers say that they operate as leaders?**

There are stereotypes about how men and women lead. As we have seen from the reported views of governors and others in the earlier sections, there are often doubts about whether women will be tough enough as a headteacher. A woman secondary head in her early 40s was asked by male interviewers if she 'had steel enough to do the job', another reported: 'aggressive interviewing from male governors who seem to regard you as a "little woman" who couldn't possibly be tough enough for headship!' Men in primary schools report that they perceived doubts about the their ability to manage in some circumstances. The underlying stereotypes are of a soft, caring woman leader and a tough, dominant male leader. These stereotypes can serve to support the belief that women are less suitable than men to be headteachers.

The survey set out to see how the heads actually perceived their own leadership style. As data were collected through a survey, it was not possible to check the answers of the heads against the views of their staff, therefore the views expressed here are the perceptions of the heads themselves who may have wanted to draw a favourable picture of the ways in which they operate.

They were asked first of all to identify three adjectives that expressed the way that they saw their own management style. They had a free choice in this, and of course a wide range of words was suggested. The words chosen most by heads from all the different types of school were the same for men and women, and the same in primary, secondary and special schools, although the order was slightly different:

open
consultative
inclusive
collegiate
supportive
collaborative
democratic
coaching

and these words seem to sum up what is seen by the heads as the dominant style of management and leadership. However, following these words in popularity is a second style which has more in common with the target driven, potentially managerial style that may be being demanded of today's leaders. Typical words mentioned here are:

decisive
determined
visionary
challenging
authoritative
strategic

In the choice of these words, there was not much difference between the sexes, but these more directive words were more common in secondary schools and less common in primary schools.

In the surveys done at the end of the 1990s the same question was asked of secondary women and men heads, and then as in 2004, most men and women

tended to see themselves in the caring and collaborative mode. However, in 2004, the more directive style is much more common (in the 1990s research the style was termed 'efficient' Coleman, 2002). There seems to have been a move to incorporate a slightly harder, tougher edge to the leadership style reported, and for this tendency to be shared by both men and women. Although the collaborative, caring and people centred concepts dominate, the more directive/efficient mode of operation is a strong second and this is slightly more so in the secondary sector and also slightly more apparent amongst women than men.

The influence of national programmes and of the current agenda in schools can be traced in the use in 2004 of words that were scarcely mentioned in the 1990s. Notable amongst these are:

inclusion
affiliative
coaching
authoritative
visionary.

Some of these terms are derived from the work of consultants Hay McBer and are used in the Leadership Programme for Serving Headteachers (LPSH).

In addition to the unprompted words that the heads gave to describe their style, they were also asked to pick from a list, termed by Gray (1993) as 'gender paradigms' those qualities that they felt applied to them as a manager and a leader. As in the previous surveys in the 1990s, there was very little difference between the choices of the men and the women, with both choosing qualities that mainly came from the 'feminine' paradigm supporting their earlier free choice of many caring and collaborative adjectives. From Tables 18 and 19 below the similarity between the choices of the men and women can be seen.

**Table 18: Secondary headteachers % choosing the gender related words that they felt applied to them**

| | Women | Men |
|---|---|---|
| <u>Feminine qualities</u> | | |
| Aware of individual differences | 90 | 88 |
| Caring | 85 | 91 |
| Intuitive | 86 | 72 |
| Tolerant | 74 | 78 |
| Creative | 68 | 60 |
| Informal | 57 | 62 |
| Non-competitive | 13 | 19 |
| Subjective | 17 | 14 |
| <u>Masculine qualities</u> | Women | Men |
| Evaluative | 74 | 75 |
| Disciplined | 61 | 60 |
| Competitive | 50 | 62 |
| Objective | 50 | 64 |
| Formal | 13 | 19 |
| Highly regulated | 13 | 10 |
| Conformist | 7 | 10 |
| Normative | 3 | 6 |

**Table 19 Primary headteachers % choosing the gender related words that they felt applied to them**

| | Women | Men |
|---|---|---|
| Feminine qualities | | |
| Aware of individual differences | 90 | 88 |
| Caring | 95 | 90 |
| Intuitive | 79 | 54 |
| Tolerant | 83 | 80 |
| Creative | 70 | 66 |
| Informal | 59 | 67 |
| Non-competitive | 26 | 21 |
| Subjective | 12 | 13 |
| Masculine qualities | Women | Men |
| Evaluative | 74 | 57 |
| Disciplined | 50 | 32 |
| Competitive | 33 | 34 |
| Objective | 51 | 55 |
| Formal | 7 | 9 |
| Highly regulated | 11 | 9 |
| Conformist | 9 | 8 |
| Normative | 3 | 6 |

There are some interesting differences between the men and women, but overall their choices are very similar. Men primary heads were less likely than women primary heads to say that they are disciplined and intuitive and much more likely to say that they are informal. These differences cut across the 'gender paradigms'. Secondary women were less likely to say that they were competitive and objective than their male counterparts, making them slightly more 'feminine' in their choices.

Although staff in the schools were not asked about their view of the head, the heads were asked something about their leadership and management practices in the school.

What opportunities are there for staff to talk to you?

If the heads are open and consultative as they claim, they should be readily available to the staff, and most of the heads, particularly the men claimed to be available most of the time. In the case of the men heads, over 90 per cent of both secondary and primary men said that they were available at any time (see Table 20).

**Table 20: What opportunities are there for staff to talk to you?**

| | Women secondary | Men secondary | Women primary | Men primary |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Any time | 85 | 92 | 86 | 90 |
| Any time in limits | 17 | 12 | 13 | 12 |
| By appointment | 24 | 23 | 3 | 7 |
| Not stated | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |

Given the size of the staff and the teaching role of many primary heads and absence of non-teaching time for primary teachers the primary heads were less likely to say that they saw their staff by appointment, whilst nearly a quarter of the secondary heads said that an appointment procedure was their choice. This is a further change from the 1990s indicating a more 'efficient' approach in 2004, since in the earlier surveys the use of appointments by secondary heads was rare, with the vast majority of heads saying that they were more freely available.

The heads were also asked about the amount of time they spent out of their office whilst in school. If they are claiming to be open, supportive and collaborative, it is reasonable to suppose that they are not isolated in their office. With a potentially greater teaching role, the primary heads, men and women spent more time out of their office than the secondary heads. However, the men primary heads were a little less likely to spend most of their time out of the office than their female colleagues. This may represent the fact that men do tend to be heads of the larger primary schools and the junior schools, rather than infant and nursery and may therefore have a lesser teaching load.

Amongst the men and women secondary heads there is little difference in the ways that they report that they spend their time. In each case the most common amount of time they say that they spend out of the office is between 25 and 50 per cent and there is little difference from the earlier surveys.

As the study was focussing on gender and its impact on headteachers it was relevant to ask how the men and women heads encouraged their staff to develop their careers. The importance of support and mentoring in the development of women's careers has been noted earlier, and the heads were asked if they helped to develop the careers of their women staff in any special ways.

How do you encourage teachers to develop their careers?

The most important way of developing teacher careers in general was through appraisal and performance management, but courses and the use of short term projects was also common. Mentoring was mentioned by about 60 per cent of all the heads. Women secondary heads were more likely than any others to hold one to one meetings with all members of staff and this had been a feature of how they operated in the previous survey in the 1990s. The types of career and professional development are much more varied and imaginative than those that were mentioned in the earlier surveys, for example, visits to other schools, international visits, peer group observation and the sharing of good practice are examples given by young women primary heads. One woman head in her 50s identified: 'coaching/ observation/ acting short term roles e.g. deputy head has a week of being acting head', another indicated: 'a culture of taking on responsibilities (many of which do not carry responsibility points)'. Opportunities for practitioner research, taking part in Master's courses and National Professional Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH) and Leading from the Middle (LftM) were also mentioned.

How do you encourage women teachers in your school to develop their careers?

The heads were asked how they helped all staff to develop their careers to establish the context within which women might be specially supported. As can be seen from Table 21, at least half of all the heads say that they do not use any special ways to develop women and this was the same response as in the 1990s. Of those that said they did help women in particular, short term projects, women only courses and mentoring were most often mentioned, although the women only courses were

mainly confined to the secondary sector, perhaps because the primary sector is numerically so dominated by women.

**Table 21: How do you encourage all teachers to develop their careers?**

| | Women secondary | Men secondary | Women primary | Men primary |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Appraisal/ Perf. man. | 93 | 94 | 97 | 89 |
| Courses | 78 | 81 | 84 | 75 |
| Short term projects | 80 | 74 | 70 | 50 |
| 1 to 1 meetings | 71 | 67 | 54 | 54 |
| Mentoring | 61 | 63 | 57 | 53 |
| Other | 18 | 9 | 11 | 8 |

In earlier reviews of women in educational leadership and management one of the barriers to progress that was identified was that men might be favoured for more informal career development and women passed over or stereotyped into pastoral roles. Ruijs (1993) comments on the informal male networks and resulting development opportunities that are more likely to benefit young male teachers in school:

> Where women have limited access to this type of informal system, they are then less likely to have informal training opportunities such as committee work, quasi-administrative duties and temporary management assignments. ... This puts female applicants at a disadvantage when competing for management positions against men who have had such opportunities. (p. 574)

It is therefore good to see that there is more overt recognition of informal development opportunities than there was in the 1990s and that in some cases heads are specifically directing such opportunities to women.

**Table 22: How do you encourage female teachers in your school to develop their careers? 2004**

| | Women secondary | Men secondary | Women primary | Men primary |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| No special ways | 46 | 49 | 49 | 49 |
| Short term projects | 39 | 38 | 29 | 28 |
| Mentoring | 34 | 35 | 22 | 26 |
| Women only courses | 17 | 13 | 1 | 3 |
| Other | 25 | 20 | 29 | 22 |
| Not stated | 4 | 4 | 6 | 3 |

Table 22 indicates some differences between secondary and primary schools, particularly in relation to women only courses. The issue of the encouragement of women teachers is treated slightly differently in primary and secondary schools. The majority of the comments from primary heads related to the fact that they were either an all women staff, or mainly women - as a result, the question of specific encouragement for women was not always relevant. However, there were still examples of primary heads encouraging women who might lack confidence. One woman primary head said: 'I nag them and tell them how talented they are! But I

can't get them interested in promotion.' Another said she encourages women by: 'praising successes, giving them confidence, looking for areas to develop.'

In the secondary schools, maternity leave was mentioned as a particular issue and a woman head in her early 40s stated that she offered: 'practical advice and support over maternity leave and return to work.' Another that she shows: understanding when children are ill, or family days, breakdown in childcare etc.'. Other approaches mentioned are facilitating job shares and flexible part-time arrangements, and job sharing. Although some of the comments from women heads were empathetic about maternity leave, there was actually little difference between the responses of the women and men heads overall.

In all this the place of men is not forgotten, one woman secondary head in her 50s summed up her attitude to women with: 'consideration of work/life balance - as for the men who also have family responsibilities'. Another in the same age group stated that: 'I don't specifically encourage men or women but I do specially encourage those who I think are good, but lacking in confidence.'

In all, although it is less than half who actively support women in their career development, in comparison with the late 1990s there seems to be a much richer offering of development opportunities and a greater recognition of the possibilities of being flexible and creative in relation to staffing, to the advantage of women easing their way back into work after having a child, and for the men and women with young families.

*Learning points*

*There are very few differences in the ways that men and women headteachers say that they operate as leaders.*

*The dominant style for both men and women is 'feminine' and typified by collaboration and openness. The second style that is important is much more directive and efficient and this style is much more common now than it was at the end of the 1990s and slightly more common amongst women secondary heads than any other group. Again this cuts across the gender stereotypes about leadership.*

*The impact of the vocabulary of national initiatives and training can be seen in the choices of adjectives to describe the heads' choice of words to describe their leadership style.*

*Most heads report that they are readily available to see their staff, but secondary heads are more likely to make appointments now than they were in the previous study.*

*Opportunities for career development reported for men and women are more varied and creative than in the 1990s .*

*Most heads do not offer special encouragement to their women staff, but those that do most often specify flexible arrangements related to maternity leave and families.*

**Conclusions and recommendations**

The 2004 survey of women and men headteachers confirms that there are still gender related barriers to becoming a headteacher and gender issues once in post. These are most apparent for women in the secondary sector, but women primary and special school heads also experience some discrimination on the basis of gender. To a lesser extent there are gender related barriers for men in primary education relating to young children and managing female staff, but it is generally recognised that men may have an advantage and be preferred for their 'rarity' value.

To what extent has the situation changed since the latter part of the 1990s when women and men secondary headteachers responded to the same questions as in the 2004 survey? How different are the reported experiences of primary and secondary schools headteachers?

The summary of findings from the 1990s in the introduction is compared directly with the 2004 findings below (secondary heads only), and this is followed by a brief comparison of the major differences between secondary and primary heads experience, and finally some recommendations for school leadership, national programmes and further research.

| Discrimination and gender related barriers 1990s | Discrimination and gender related barriers 2004 |
|---|---|
| Women secondary heads felt isolated as leaders, with about two thirds reporting experience of discrimination and sexism, and feeling at some time that they have to justify their existence as women leaders. The male heads did not question their situation as leaders | Women secondary heads can feel somewhat isolated as leaders, with at least half reporting experience of discrimination and sexism, and 70 per cent feeling at some time that they have to justify their existence as women leaders. The male heads did not question their situation as leaders |
| Stereotypes about women identified them with the more 'domestic' and caring role in schools. | Stereotypes are much less likely to identify them with the more 'domestic' and caring role in schools. |
| The most common example of sexism in interviews related to the family commitments of the women. | The most common example of sexism in interviews relates to the family commitments of the women. |
| Women were favoured as heads of all-girls' schools. Becoming a woman head of a co-ed or boys' school was comparatively more difficult. | Fewer respondents are from all-girls' schools. Becoming a woman head of a co-ed or boys' school is comparatively more difficult. |
| There were geographical differences, with women more likely to be a head in London and other metropolitan areas and less likely to be a head in the shire counties. | There are geographical differences, with women more likely to be a head in London and Birmingham and less likely to be a head elsewhere. |
| Mentoring and the existence of role models were particularly important to women. | Mentoring and the existence of role models are particularly important to women. |

There is not much of evidence of the heads giving any special support for women in terms of career development.

There was not much of evidence of the heads giving any special support for women in terms of career development.

Work/life balance 1990s

There were difficulties for work/life balance for both male and female heads. However, the lives of the women were more deeply affected. 96 per cent of the men are married and 94 per cent have a child or children. 67 per cent of the women were married and 53 per cent had a child or children. Thirteen per cent of women were divorced or separated but only one or two per cent of men.

There were a number of differences between the older and younger women (nearly all were between 40 and 60). The most important was that the younger women (40 - 50) were significantly less likely to have a child.

The women headteachers were often responsible for the majority of domestic work in their households, this was not true for the male headteachers. The women heads tended to be in dual career households and the male headteachers to be in households where their wife or partner took overall responsibility for the running of the home and the care of children.

Leadership style 1990s

The perceptions of both women and men headteachers were that there is a stereotypical if outdated norm of authoritarian leadership held by governors and parents, that endorses masculinity and therefore male leaders.

Contrary to masculine and feminine stereotypes, the self-perceptions of both men and women headteachers were similar in relation to their

Work/life balance 2004

There are difficulties for work/life balance for both male and female heads. However, the lives of the women are more deeply affected. 96 per cent of the men are married and 90 per cent have a child or children. 78 per cent of the women are married and 63 per cent have a child or children. Eleven per cent of women are divorced or separated but only three per cent of men.

There are a number of differences between the age-groups of women (nearly all are between 40 and 60). The most important is that the middle group (45 - 55) are significantly less likely to have a child. However, the dip in child-bearing of younger women in the 1990s was not the start of a trend.

The women headteachers are slightly less often responsible for the majority of domestic work in their households. The male headteachers are rarely responsible. The women heads tend to be in dual career households and the male headteachers to be in households where their wife or partner takes overall responsibility for the running of the home and the care of children.

Leadership style 2004

The perceptions of both women and men headteachers are that there is a stereotypical norm of masculine leadership held by governors and parents, that means that men are often preferred as headteachers.

Contrary to masculine and feminine stereotypes, the self-perceptions of both men and women headteachers are similar in relation to their

| | |
|---|---|
| management and leadership style. Both men and women see themselves as open and consultative leaders, incorporating a number of both 'feminine' and 'masculine' qualities, but tending towards the 'feminine'. 'feminine'. However, there was a significant minority of older women headteachers who tended towards a more 'masculine' style of leadership. | management and leadership style. Both men and women see themselves as open and consultative leaders incorporating a number of both 'feminine' and 'masculine' qualities, but tending towards the 'feminine'. However, there is a second style of leadership that is popular which is directive and tougher and this more 'masculine' style is more common amongst the women headteachers. |
| Women heads saw advantages in being women, because they could diffuse aggression and felt free from the male stereotypes of headship. | Women heads see advantages in being women, because they feel they can diffuse aggression and use their femininity to charm. |

Are there differences in the experiences of primary, and secondary school headteachers in relation to gender?

Women primary headteachers are in the majority in the primary sector working with a large majority of women teachers. Nevertheless they are aware of the preference that there is for male heads, particularly in large primary and junior schools and 30per cent are aware of sexism and discrimination at the time of appointment.

In their working lives primary women heads are less likely to meet sexism, but still comment on it in relation to things like meetings of all heads in the area where, as primary women heads they may feel their views are less likely to be heard. In comparison with the women secondary headteachers there is less concern with sexism and discrimination. The experience of women secondary heads once in post is different, particularly if they are in the regions where women heads are less well represented.

More women primary headteachers are married with children (79 per cent) than women secondary heads (63 per cent). They are more likely to take their domestic circumstances into account in weighing up the prospects of headship. Judging from the partner jobs that are named, it is more common for them to be the main earner in their family than it is for the secondary women heads. Also, from the range of comments relating to domestic circumstances, it does appear that women primary heads may be working in a culture that is more sympathetic to women having family responsibilities than is the case in the secondary sector.

The number of primary schools in the country means that primary heads are less likely to move from one region to another and therefore put demands on their partner to change their job and follow them. Secondary headteachers are more likely to move geographically.

It is very rare for men in the secondary sector to feel disadvantaged by their sex, but there are gender issues for male primary school headteachers. Although they are often favoured by governors and parents for appointment, they may experience some difficulties dealing with women staff and prejudice about working in early years. However, men in primary headship are aware of their 'rarity value' and are more confident of obtaining headship than any other group.

There are relatively small differences in the ways in which primary and secondary headteachers see themselves as leaders, but primary heads are slightly less likely to report themselves as directive/efficient in style and slightly more likely to see themselves as collaborative and caring than their secondary colleagues.

From the point of view of equity and social justice, it is right that we consider the implications of prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination that are perceived by at least half the women secondary headteachers in this country and by a proportion of all other headteachers. The learning points at the end of each section have summarised the main issues from the survey and pointed to some of the implications for action. Recommendations arising from the learning points follow.

**Recommendations for school leaders and governors and for national training programmes**

1. It is important that governing bodies are fully aware of equal opportunities issues in the appointment of both women and men in secondary and in primary schools. Governors in particular may be biased in favour of men and discriminate against women because of family responsibilities.

The relative equity for men and women that now exists in respect of senior roles in secondary schools prior to headship should be extended to the role of acting head.

2. The membership of interview panels in all types of schools is still weighted towards men and steps could be taken to remedy this.

3. There are cultural barriers to the full acceptance of women leaders that are regionally located. Equity issues could be addressed on a regional basis. The masculine culture of some regional meetings of heads should be noted.

4. The way in which career breaks for childbirth and child care are regarded and managed is significant. It is more difficult for women to resume work at the same level after a career break than it is for men. There are equity and practical issues to address.

5. To accommodate work/life balance issues more fully it is important to nurture a culture in the school that is tolerant in relation to families, particularly children and elderly dependants; recognise that women are likely to be bearing most of the family and domestic responsibilities, particularly in primary schools and recognise and encourage paternity leave.

6. The role of the headteacher is particularly important in encouraging both women and men to aspire to senior positions including headship. Mentoring, seen as vital in supporting aspirant women heads has increased significantly in recent years, probably as a result of national training initiatives, and it is important that this is continued.

**Recommendations for aspiring heads**

1. Although women are less likely to be expected to take on stereotypical feminine roles, aspiring heads should remain aware of the need to have a range of management and leadership experience and avoid gender stereotyping.

2. Women appear to be appointed younger than men in the secondary sector. This is a real encouragement to young women, who should have confidence in applying for headship.

3. Men are more likely than women to plan their career from an early stage, and women who aspire to headship should consider earlier planning.

4. There are regional differences in the proportions of women secondary headteachers that should be considered when applying for senior posts.

**Recommendations for further investigation and research**

1. As the stage of emergent leadership seems to be so important for women, more information is needed about the sort of support women receive prior to application for headship with a view to extending good practice, particularly in view of the fact that more younger women than men are appointed as secondary heads.

2. As women secondary heads tend to be appointed younger than their male colleagues and stay in their first headship longer the question arises of whether they feel that they need particular types of support and development.

3. There has been an increase to over 70 per cent of women in secondary schools reporting that they have to prove their worth as a woman and a leader. In particular they seem to feel vulnerable in relation to national initiatives such as inspection. At a time when sexism is decreasing and more women are becoming heads why is there this increase?

4. Some men primary heads feel that they may experience some discrimination in respect of stereotypes about males not being fitted for the leadership of women and organisations containing young children. Little is known about this area.

5. The heads self-reports on their leadership indicate that they perceive their dominant leadership style as open and collaborative and that a secondary style is directive. More research is needed through case studies in schools to identify other stakeholders views and to identify more about the impact of gender on leadership in action in both the secondary and primary sectors.

**Methodology**

A survey (see Appendix 1) was sent to a sample of women and men heads of secondary, primary and special schools in England in March 2004. As the focus of the survey was gender and the aim was to build on earlier surveys of women and men secondary headteachers, the samples were biased towards women and secondary heads. The sample was drawn from the DfES database provided by Edubase as follows:

Sample

women secondary heads 1 in 2
men secondary heads 1 in 5
women primary heads 1 in 10
men primary heads 1 in 20
women special heads 1 in 20
men special heads 1 in 20

Response rates

In total there were 1100 out of a potential 2382 responses, that is an overall response rate of 46%. A further 40 were returned after the analysis had started and could not be included. In terms of the individual samples the response rates were as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| All men | 321 out of a potential 910 = 35 per cent |
| All women | 725 out of a potential 1472 = 49 per cent |
| Secondary men | 189 out of a potential 490 = 39 per cent |
| Secondary women | 272 out of a potential 490 = 56 per cent |
| Primary men | 117 out of a potential 381 = 31 per cent |
| Primary women | 408 out of a potential 911 = 45 per cent |
| Special school men | 15 out of a potential 39 = 38 per cent |
| Special school women | 40 out of potential 71 = 56 per cent |

The numbers of responses were therefore:

| | |
|---|---|
| Primary | 117 men 408 women |
| Secondary, including middle | 189 men 272 women (of which,15 men, 24 women were from middle schools) |
| Special | 15 men 40 women |

The responses were analysed using SPSS.

The questionnaire was the same as ones sent to secondary headteachers in England and Wales in 1996 and 1999. The only additions to the survey reported here were questions on ethnicity and disability.

**Recommended further reading**

Acker, S. (1994) *Gendered Education*, Buckingham, Open University Press.

Acker, S. (1999) *The Realities Of Teachers' Work: never a dull moment*, London, Cassell.

Blackmore, J. (1999) *Troubling Women: feminism, leadership and educational change*, Buckingham, Open University Press.

Coleman, M. (2002) *Women as headteachers: striking the balance*, Stoke on Trent, Trentham Books.

Collinson, D. and Hearn, J. (2000) "Critical studies on men, masculinities and managements" in Davidson, M. and Burke, R. (eds.) *Women in Management: current research issues volume II*, London, Sage Publications.

Davidson, M. (1997) *The Black and Ethnic Minority Manager: cracking the concrete ceiling*, London, Paul Chapman.

Hall, V. (1996) *Dancing on the Ceiling: a study of women managers in education*, London, Paul Chapman.

Hall, V. (1997) 'Dusting off the phoenix: gender and educational leadership revisited', *Educational Management and Administration*, Vol. 25, No. 3, pp. 309 - 324.

Jirasinghe, D. and Lyons, G. (1996) *The Competent Head: a job analysis of heads' tasks and personality factors*, London, Falmer Press.

**References**


Acker, S. (1994) *Gendered Education*, Buckingham, Open University Press.

Bradbury, L. M. (2004) *A study of women who are headteachers and mothers*, unpublished thesis, University of Birmingham.

Coleman, M. (1994) “Leadership in Educational Management” in Bush T. and West-Burnham J. (eds) *The Principles of Educational Management,* Harlow, Longman.

Coleman, M. (2000) '“The Female Secondary Headteacher in England and Wales: Leadership and Management Styles” in *Educational Research*, Vol. 42 No. 1, pp. 13 – 27.

Coleman, M. (2001) 'Achievement against the odds' in *School Leadership and Managment*, Vol. 21, No. 1, pp. 75 - 100.

Coleman, M. (2002) *Women as headteachers: striking the balance*, Stoke on Trent, Trentham Books.

DfES (2004) *Statistics of Education: School workforce in England,* www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/VO:?v000380/index.shtml.

Edwards, S. and Lyons, G. (1994) “Female Secondary Headteachers - An Endangered Species?” in *Management in Education***,** Vol. 8, No. 2. pp. 7 - 10.

Gray, H.L. (1993) ‘Gender issues in management training’, in Ozga, J. (ed.) *Women in Educational Management*, Buckingham, Open University Press.

Gupton, S. L.and Appelt Slick, G. (1996) *Highly successful women administrators: The inside stories of how they got there*, Thousand Oaks, California, Corwin Press Inc.

Hill, M. S. and Ragland, J.C. (1995) *Women as Educational Leaders: Opening Windows, Pushing Ceilings,* Thousand Oaks, California, Corwin Press, Inc.

McBurney, E. G., and Hough, J. (1989) Role Perceptions of Female Deputy Heads, in *Educational Management and Administration*, Vol 17, pp. 115-118.

McKenley, J. and Gordon, G. (2002) *Challenge Plus: The Experience of Black and Minority Ethnic School Leaders.* Nottingham, NCSL.

Ouston, J. (ed.) (1993) *Women in Education Management,* Harlow, Longman.

Ozga, J. (ed.) (1993) *Women in Educational Management,* Buckingham, Open University Press.

Ruijs, A. (1993) *Women managers in education - a worldwide progress report*, Bristol, the Staff College. Coombe Lodge Report.

Schein, V.E. (1994) ‘Managerial sex typing: a persistent and pervasive barrier to women’s opportunities’, in Davidson, M. and Burke, R. (eds.) *Women in Management: current research issues*, London, Paul Chapman.

Schmuck, P. (1996) ‘Women’s place in educational administration: past, present and future’, in Leithwood, K., Chapman, J., Corson, D., Hallinger, P. and Hart, A. (eds.)

*International Handbook of Educational Leadership and Administration,* Boston, Kluwer Acadmic,

Shakeshaft, C. (1989) *Women in Educational Administration*, Newbury Park, Sage.

Singleton, C. (1993) Women Deputy Headteachers in Educational Management, in Preedy M. (ed.) *Managing the Effective School*, Paul Chapman Publishing, London

Appendix 1

**Questionnaire for Headteachers in England March 2004**

Name .....

Please indicate which qualifications you have

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| BA/BSc | | B Ed | |
| MA/MSc/MEd | | Certificate of Education | |
| PhD | | Ed D | |
| Other (please name) | | | |

Which of the following apply to you?

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Male | | Female | |
| Married or living with a partner | | Single | |
| Separated | | Divorced | |
| Widowed | | | |

Age group

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Under 30 | | 30 - 35 | | 36 - 39 | |
| 40 - 45 | | 46 - 50 | | 51 - 55 | |
| 56 - 60 | | 61 + | | | |

Ethnic origin

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Asian* | Indian | | Pakistani | | Other Asian | | | |
| *Black or Black British* | Caribbean | | African | | Other Black or Black British | | | |
| *Mixed* | White & Asian | | White & Black African | | White and Black Caribbean | | Other mixed | |
| *White* | British | | Irish | | Other White | | | |
| *Chinese* | Chinese | | | | | | | |
| *Other* | | | | | | | | |

Do you have a disability?

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | | No | |

If yes, please state the nature of your disability. …….

School Name .....……

LEA .....……County .....…

Please indicate which of the following apply to your school:

| | |
|---|---|
| Primary | |
| Secondary | |
| Special | |
| Middle | |

| | |
|---|---|
| Co-ed | |
| Girls | |

| | |
|---|---|
| Boys | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Community | Foundation | Independent | Voluntary-aided | Voluntary - controlled |
| CTC | Specialist College | City Academy | PRU | |

1. Year of appointment to present post .....

2. Is this your first headship?

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | | No | |

3. Before you became a headteacher, were you a deputy head?

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | | No | |

If yes please indicate the number and duration (in years) of deputy headship(s)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| deputy headship one | | years |
| deputy headship two | | years |
| deputy headship three | | years |

What were your main area(s) of responsibility as deputy head?

| | |
|---|---|
| Curriculum | |
| Pastoral | |
| Personnel | |
| Finance | |
| Premises | |
| Other (please state) | |

4. Which of the following posts have you held? Please tick the appropriate box

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Acting Headteacher | | Assistant Headteacher | |
| Other member of Senior Management Team | | Head of Faculty/Department | |
| Advanced Skills Teacher | | Head of Year | |
| Other (please specify) | | Senior teacher | |

5. Indicate your specialist subject area

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| English | | Creative | |
| Maths | | Technology | |
| Science | | Early years | |
| Modern Languages | | Social Sciences | |
| Humanities | | Special needs | |
| Other (please specify | | | |

6. At what stage of your life did you formulate a career plan that included headship or deputy headship?

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| at school | | in higher education | |
| on becoming a teacher | | on gaining a post of responsibility | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| never | | other | |

7. What or who has had a major influence on your career path?
(indicate all those that apply)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| your parents | | partner | |
| friends | | those who taught you | |
| domestic circumstances | | previous headteacher(s) | |
| | | other | |

*If you have children, please answer questions 8 and 9.*

8. Number of children ..... their present age(s) .....

9. If you have children, what were/are the main methods of child-care used?

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Partner | | Nursery | |
| Nanny | | Childminder | |
| | | Other relative (indicate which) | |

Were/are you able to make childcare arrangements satisfactory to you and your family?

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | | No | |

Comment .....……

Who looks/looked after your child/children when ill .....……

*Please answer questions 10 - 14 if applicable to you.*

10. What is your partner's job? .....……..

11. To what extent do you and your partner share domestic responsibilities e.g. housework, shopping, cooking, washing, gardening, organising holidays and social life? Indicate an approximate overall percentage undertaken by each of you.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Me | | Partner | |

12. Have you ever changed your job to follow your partner?

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | | No | |

13. Has your partner ever changed their job to follow you?

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | | No | |

14. Have you ever operated two separate households as a result of career commitments?

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | | No | |

15. Apart from children, do you have responsibility for the care of other dependents including elderly relatives?

| Yes | | No | |
|---|---|---|---|

If yes, please indicate nature of responsibilities .....

16. Have you had a career break?

| Yes | | No | |
|---|---|---|---|

(Please indicate length of break in weeks, e.g. 52 weeks rather than one year)

| Longer term child care | | Maternity/paternity leave | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Secondment to obtain qualifications | | Secondment to industry | |
| Travel | | Other | |

17. If you took maternity/paternity leave, please comment on its adequacy and impact

……

18. If you had a career break were you able to resume your career at the same level as before the break?

| Yes | | No | |
|---|---|---|---|

19. Have you ever been aware of sexist attitudes toward you in connection with job applications or promotion?

| Yes | | No | |
|---|---|---|---|

If yes, please indicate the circumstances .....

.....

.....

20. Have you been aware of sexist attitudes toward you from your peers or from those you work with?

| Yes | | No | |
|---|---|---|---|

If yes please indicate the circumstances .....

.....

.....

21. Were you encouraged at any time to apply for promotion?

| Yes | | No | |
|---|---|---|---|

If so, by whom? (mark all those that apply)

| Partner /family | | Colleagues at work | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Senior managers at work | | Headteacher | |
| Other | | | |

22. Have you had a mentor, or role model who encouraged or inspired you?

| Yes | | No | |
|---|---|---|---|

If yes, please indicate their role .....

If you had a mentor, please indicate if they were male or female

| Male | | Female | |
|---|---|---|---|

22. Of the interview panel that selected you as headteacher, approximately how many were men and how many were women?

| Men | | Women | |
|---|---|---|---|

23. Was there a point in your career when you thought you would not achieve headship?

| Yes | | No | |
|---|---|---|---|

If so when and why? .....

.....

24. Do you feel that as a woman or as a man you ever had to "prove your worth" in a management position?

| Yes | | No | |
|---|---|---|---|

If yes, please give an example? .....

.....

25. Give three key words to describe your style of management. .....…….

.....

26. What are the key values that you are trying to promote in your school?

.....

.....

27. What opportunities are there for staff to talk to you?

| Any time as long as you are not in a meeting | | Any time within specified limits | |
|---|---|---|---|
| By appointment | | | |

28. While you are in school, what proportion of your time do you spend out of your office?

| under 10% | | between 10 – 25% | |
|---|---|---|---|
| between 25 - 50% | | between 50 – 75% | |

29. How do you encourage all the teachers in your school to develop their careers?

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mentoring | | Special one to one meetings | |
| Courses | | Appraisal/Performance Management | |
| Other (please specify below) | | Short term projects or responsibilities | |

……

30. How do you encourage female teachers in your school to develop their careers?

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| No special ways | | Courses for women only | |
| Mentoring | | Other (please specify below) | |
| Short term projects or responsibilities | | | |

……

31. Why do you think that you were so successful in such a competitive field?

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Through hard work | | Support from others | |
| Knowing what you wanted from life | | Academic achievement | |
| Other (please specify below) | | | |

……

32. As a headteacher, have you ever found your gender an advantage?

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | | No | |

Please give an example .....

.....

33. Would you be prepared to be interviewed as a follow up to this questionnaire?

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | | No | |

Finally, please would you tick in the list below, those qualities that you feel apply to you:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Caring | | Creative | |
| Intuitive | | Aware of individual differences | |
| Non-competitive | | Tolerant | |
| Subjective | | Informal | |
| Highly regulated | | Conformist | |
| Normative | | Competitive | |
| Evaluative | | Disciplined | |
| Objective | | Formal | |

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Please return it before the 31 March if possible. A stamped addressed envelope is enclosed.

Please return the questionnaire to: Dr Marianne Coleman, Institute of Education, University of London.