Back to the Future in the UK?
Current and Planned Changes to the Development of Headteachers

by

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INTRODUCTION

Since its inception as a part of the 1994 Education Act the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) has busied itself with a series of actions which, they claim, will significantly improve the quality of the teaching force in England and Wales. The earliest manifestation of this has been the introduction of two new developments specifically geared to the role of the headteacher and the TTA have signalled their intent to introduce a third. Other measures include a re-assessment of the formal system of teacher appraisal and a comprehensive review of the funding mechanisms for the continuing professional development of teachers, but it is on the headteacher's role that most effort and early work has focused.

Prior to this time attempts to improve the quality of headteachers in England and Wales have been the subject of disjointed and insubstantial attempts at development programmes by central government (see accompanying paper by Linda Ellison). Until this year it has been a matter of fact that there is no common qualification for headship and role definition was the province of the hiring body which, since 1988, has been the governing body in all maintained schools. Running concurrently with this lack of systematic preparation there has been a growing understanding in the education community that leadership is the most significant quality in the management of successful schools. Various attempts to improve the quality of school management have failed both to define the role and to reach a high enough proportion of school leaders to make a difference. In the main it has been individuals seeking headships who have organised and, in many cases, paid for their own development which has

usually been a postgraduate qualification in educational management. Sometimes prospective candidates have availed themselves of qualifications from business management, but usually with a focus on public service or personnel management.

Now the TTA has announced the introduction of a set of national standards for the teaching force that will operate at four levels: Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT), Expert Teacher, Subject Leader and a professional qualification for Headship. Each of the four standards are to be based on the notion of competence in role for which the TTA will provide certification. Standards already exist for NQTs who now graduate with a Profile of Competence and career entry profiles. Work has also started on one of the remaining sets of standards - the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH).

Slightly ahead of the announcement regarding NPQH was the introduction of the Headteacher Leadership and Management Programme (Headlamp), also a TTA initiative. Headlamp is for those entering their first headship and provides funds to assist their continuing professional development within the context of their school. NPQH, on the other hand, will be the minimum entry qualification for Headship in the future. In addition to these two initiatives the TTA is also planning to introduce a 'refresh and renew' process for long serving headteachers and has appointed an advisory committee to begin work on this aspiration. The Secretary of State for Education is confident that the three processes will lead to a significant improvement in the management and leadership of schools which, in turn, will result in higher levels of academic achievement from the nation's school population. Too little work has been done on this third aspect to be able to provide further detail. Neither given the title of this paper is it relevant to talk of the support available through Headlamp which is an 'after the event' mechanism. Consequently this paper describes and analyses the work so far on NPQH.

THE NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION FOR HEADSHIP

ESTABLISHING THE QUALIFICATION

The first public notice of the intention to move toward a formal qualification for aspiring headteachers was made through a press release by Gillian Shephard, the Secretary of State for Education, in September 1995. This was swiftly followed by the publication of draft standards for the new qualification which were to be open for consultation for a period that eventually extended to April, 1996 - an unusually long time for the TTA who, in their short life, have already established a reputation for brutally short periods of consultation. The pace soon picked up again in May, however, when the TTA invited potential training & development and/or assessment contractors to a briefing meeting in central London. The new qualification was to be awarded by the TTA who would administer the assessment process and the officially sanctioned training & development programmes through regional centres and distance learning packages. Potential bids for these contracts were to be with the TTA less than a month later with decisions on successful contractors to be made before the end of the school year in mid-July.

In the event announcement of successful contractors was delayed until late September with the official press release indicating that only 18 of the potential 23 contracts in England & Wales were to be let in the first instance. The scheme was to be administered through 10 regional centres in England and one centre in Wales. Each region was to have both an Assessment Centre and a Training & Development Centre. In addition there was to be one contract for a distance learning provider. Re-advertisements were issued in September for the remaining five contracts and to date there has been no news on the successful contractors.

The process envisaged for the route to the qualification is that those who are aspiring to become Headteachers will present themselves to a regional Assessment Centre who will determine how much of the formal training

programme they have to complete through a regional Training & Development Centre before undertaking a summative assessment that will lead to the granting of the qualification. The qualification is designed to demonstrate that successful candidates should be competent in the headteacher role so is an assessment of potential rather than of competence. NPQH will thus provide a guarantee to school governing bodies that headteacher candidates have undergone a thorough preparation programme for the role. The expectation amongst the teaching profession is that within five years every aspiring headteacher will need this qualification.

The scheme gets under way in January 1997 with a trial group of between 18 and 24 candidates in each of the 11 regions in England and Wales. The full scheme will start in September 1997 and each region has been told to expect between 500 and 1000 candidates per year. Central government money has been put into next year's Grants for Education Support & Training (GEST) for 100% funding for those admitted to the programme. Potential candidates in schools maintained by local authorities will be selected by officials from the school district office; those in schools maintained directly by central government (Grant Maintained Schools and City Technology Colleges) will apply direct to a regional Assessment Centre. There will be mechanisms to recognise previous experience and learning and it is expected that in the early stages large numbers of candidates will be exempt from some parts of the five part qualification.

WHAT IS IN THE QUALIFICATION?
Following consultation the TTA has published the second draft of the Key Principles and standards for NPQH which outline the core purpose of Headship, key areas for development and assessment, skills and abilities, knowledge and understanding required for award of the qualification (see Appendix One). They have identified 23 tasks for successful management and leadership of schools which are grouped into five categories:

1. Strategic direction and development of the school.
2. Learning and teaching in the school.
3. People and relationships.
4. Developing and deploying staff and other resources..
5. Accountability for the efficiency and effectiveness of the school.

It is planned to develop five modules for training & development which match these categories with Module One - Strategic Direction and Development - liable to be compulsory for all hoping to achieve the qualification. Successful completion of the programme of development will require participants to be able to demonstrate mastery of 14 skills and an appropriate level of knowledge and understanding.

DEVELOPMENT WORK IN PROGRESS

Successful contractors had to nominate named managers of each regional centre. Where the bid was for both an Assessment Centre and a Training and Development Centre the potential contractor has been required to demonstrate clear division between governing structures and operational activity of the two centres in order that objectivity was retained in the assessment procedure. At the time of writing the TTA is convening a series of workshops every two weeks for all the managers from the regional centres in order to determine the procedures that will underwrite the operation of the award and ensure comparability across the regions and maintenance of standards nationally. The agenda for action includes:

1. The establishment of criteria for eligibility.
2. Defining the content and process for the core module.
3. Determining assessment objectives for all modules.

A two way communication process has been established between this national group and the regions through centre managers who generally bring these issues back to their local group for further development . In the case of the region of which the author is a member the contract has been awarded to a consortium of Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and Universities each of whom has representation on management groups for both Centres. Within the agenda for action the following proposals have so far emerged, although it must be remembered that we are far from the final model:

Eligibility

A candidate for NPQH should provide evidence that he or she has:

    a. Qualified teacher status (QTS) and is not through any legal reason prevented from being a headteacher;
    b. at least three years as a school teacher;
    c. at least two years experience in a post involving management, co-ordination or leadership responsibilities.

A candidate should also provide evidence, which would normally be from within the previous five years, of:

- achievements in a management/leadership role;
- effective written and oral communication skills;
- improving the quality of pupils' learning and standards of achievement;
- initiating, planning and implementing school development;
- the ability to motivate others and establish and maintain effective working relationships;
- planning, undertaking and evaluating his or her own professional development and learning;
- planning and managing financial resources;
- monitoring, assessing and reporting on pupils' work;
- working with parents and governors

Defining the content and process of the core module

This debate is currently centred around whether the module should be an introduction, the spine or the culmination of all previous learning. One school of thought sees the synoptic view to be of paramount importance to the candidates and thus favours the core module at the end of the training & development period; it is only through possession of all the skills and abilities aligned to the other modules that the successful manager can see the whole and thus make strategic decisions. The converse view is that it is impossible to go forward in knowledge and understanding until you can see the 'whole' picture; candidates need to first broaden their perspective in order to be able to make sense of the elements of management. In typical British fashion opinion is divided, so a compromise solution is emerging of the module acting as a spine for the development process; it would thus provide a vehicle by which candidates could keep returning to the strategic overview after completing various other modules. This is an ongoing debate that will probably be resolved by diktat rather than by democracy!

1.   The aims of the core module are to enable the candidates to:

- develop and gain commitment to a strategic educational vision focused on raising pupil achievement
- translate vision into practice through the creation of a strategic plan and associated policies, ensuring that all staff understand, and are committed to, the role they play in the achievement of that vision;
- devise and implement systems for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the strategic plan and its associated policies in relation to improving pupil achievement;
- acquire the knowledge and understanding of being accountable for the effectiveness and efficiency of the school, particularly to the governing body and the parents.

2.   The core module will:

- be based on best management and leadership practices from inside and outside education;
- be based on an understanding of the organisation of the school in terms of its cultural, structural and local aspects;
- incorporate the lessons learned from the research into school effectiveness and school improvement;
- recognise the strengths and limitations of strategic planning;
- view the headteacher as the leading professional for leading and reviewing their own and others' practice.

3.   Structure of the Core Module

3.1   Developing a strategic educational vision committed to raising achievement.

Candidates must demonstrate that they possess the appropriate skills, abilities, knowledge and understanding to:

- develop a strategic view of a school in its community, analyse its needs and plan for its future within the local, national and international context.

In particular this will entail being able to:

- articulate in writing and orally a coherent educational philosophy and vision;
- communicate effectively and persuasively with different audiences on school issues, both internally and externally, in keeping with the vision.

The content areas which should be covered include:

- developing and articulating an educational vision for improvement, located within the international, national and local environments;
- leadership of staff, pupils and governors in the formation of the vision and strategic direction;
- knowledge of effective and less effective schools and their improvement strategies;
- collecting and using data to benchmark the school and set priorities for the future;
- involving staff, governors, parents and pupils in the collection, analysis and use of data and the setting of priorities;
- difficulties and issues in developing educational vision.

3.2 Vision into practice

Candidates must demonstrate that they possess the appropriate skills, abilities, knowledge and understanding to:

- identify appropriate priorities and targets for improvement, lead the preparation, implementation and maintenance of school improvement initiatives.

In particular this will entail being able to:

- apply appropriate strategies for change and appropriate models of organisational management to the school to improve standards;
- use financial and resource management to support the strategic direction of the school;
- allocate and organise staff and other resources in the school to meet effectively specific objectives in line with the development plan and the financial context.

The proposed content areas which should be covered include:

- the identification of policies and plans which are required to support the achievement of the strategy (either in terms of reviewing the effectiveness of existing policy, or in terms of new policies which may be required);
- development planning, including policies, resources, staff development, success criteria and target setting;
- implementation of the development plan, managing others, managing resources, managing teacher effectiveness and pupil achievement;
- difficulties and issues in translating the vision into practice;
- the role of the headteacher and others in translating the vision into practice.

3.3   Monitoring, evaluation and review

Candidates must demonstrate that they posses the skills, abilities, knowledge and understanding to:

- employ appropriate methods of monitoring, evaluating and reviewing, using the results to inform planning and target setting for school improvement.

In particular this will entail being able to:

- articulate the key factors that lead to improvements in the standards of learning and quality of teaching;
- evaluate colleagues' teaching and assessment practice in the classroom and ensure targets are set to effect improvement.

The proposed content area which should be covered include:

- structures, strategies and techniques for monitoring;
- structures, strategies and techniques for evaluating and reviewing, using such information as SCAA benchmarking and OFSTED inspection reports;
- involving governors, staff, pupils and parents in the process;
- difficulties and issues in monitoring, evaluation and review;
- the role of the headteacher and others in monitoring, evaluation and review.

3.4   Being accountable for the effectiveness and efficiency of the school to governors and parents.

Candidates must demonstrate that they possess the appropriate skills, abilities, knowledge and understanding to:

- recognise and analyse the interests of differing stakeholders and respond appropriately;
- work with governors and other stakeholders in setting targets to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the school.

In particular this will entail being able to:

- understand and explain the role of a governing body in strategic matters and work effectively with them in planning and development for school improvement;
- communicate information about individual and school performance in appropriate ways to different audiences;

- provide for the governors and appropriate stakeholders an account of actions taken and results obtained in relation to policies laid down by them.

The proposed content area which should be covered include:

- role of governors and their relationship with headteachers;
- role of parents and their relationship with headteachers;
- the role of the headteacher and others in accounting to governors and parents;
- accounting for school performance and planning for future improvement;
- communication;
- difficulties and issues in accountability to parents and governors;
- understanding statutory requirements and the contribution of information from national bodies such as SCAA, OFSTED and the TTA.

Draft Assessment Objectives

Under the headings of the five Key Areas of the award 35 Assessment Objectives are set out which candidates must meet to attain the NPQH. The objectives are to be viewed as a whole. Although some repetition is evident this is deliberate, especially in the last assessment objective in Strategic Planning which deals with understanding and applying the planning cycle. Aspects of this objective will be found in more specific contexts in the other four Key Areas. To reach the standards required for the award of the NPQH candidates must demonstrate that they can;

STRATEGIC DIRECTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCHOOL

1. articulate in writing and orally a coherent educational philosophy and vision;
2. develop a strategic view of the school in its community, analyse its needs and plan for its future within the local, national and international context;
3. communicate effectively and persuasively with different audiences on school issues, both internally and externally;
4. apply appropriate strategies for change and appropriate models of organisational management to the school to improve standards;
5. use financial and resource management can be used to support the strategic direction of the school;
6. understand and explain the role of the governing body in strategic matters and work effectively with them in planning and development for school improvement;
7. identify appropriate priorities and targets for improvement, take the lead in preparing, implementing and sustaining initiatives relating to school improvement, employ appropriate methods of monitoring, review and evaluation and use the results to improve standards.

LEARNING AND TEACHING

8. identify, encourage and sustain good teaching and good teachers throughout the school and ensure that processes are set to improve teacher effectiveness;
9. Articulate the key factors that lead to improvements in the quality of teaching and the standards of learning.
10. evaluate colleagues' teaching and assessment practice in the classroom and work with them to effect improvement;
11. take the lead in preparing, implementing and sustaining a significant curriculum initiative and in monitoring the impact on pupil' learning;
12. apply statutory requirements in local and institutional guidance;
13. take into account the learning needs of individual pupils in the organisation of teaching and implement appropriate strategies for the pupils;
14. devise and apply methods of assessing and recording the progress of pupils which can promote their future learning and improve their achievement;
15. devise and implement school policies to promote appropriate behaviour, attendance and pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.

PEOPLE AND RELATIONSHIPS

16. motivate, support and sustain staff and pupils' in meeting the aims of the school;
17. organise effective links between school, parents and the community in order to improve pupil's achievements;
18. understand the impact of school systems and structures on individual effectiveness and devise organisational structures and working arrangements appropriate to the task in hand;
19. understand the theories of leadership and management and apply them to the leadership and management of the school to bring about improvement;
20. deal constructively and creatively with conflict;
21. reflect on and analyse their own practice and the degree of congruence between intention and outcome, and set themselves challenging personal goals.

DEVELOPING AND DEPLOYING STAFF AND OTHER RESOURCES

22. allocate and organise staff and other resources in the school to meet effectively specific objectives in line with the development plan and the financial context;
23. devise appropriate systems to monitor, evaluate, and actively review the effectiveness of the allocation of staff and other resources in relation to pupil learning and achievement;
24. negotiate job profiles, roles and responsibilities with staff, taking into account their personal qualities, professional knowledge, understanding, skills and abilities;
25. manage staff recruitment and retention;
26. devise, implement and review a staff appraisal policy and a staff development programme to ensure continuing improvement in the performance of all staff;
27. interpret and apply the legal aspects of staff management and the procedures relating to equal opportunities, discipline, grievance, redundancy, severance and other conditions of service;
28. understand and use role of information technology in improving efficiency and effectiveness in the management of school resources;
29. understand basic accounting procedures and how to prepare and monitor the school budget.

ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

30. recognise and analyse differing interests and priorities of the different stakeholders (e.g. governors, pupils, parents, staff, local employers, the local community) and to respond appropriately to their interests;
31. communicate information about individual and school performance in appropriate ways to different audiences;
32. work with governors and other stakeholders in setting priorities and targets to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the school;

33. provide for the governors (or employers) an account of actions taken and results obtained in relation to policies laid down by them;
34. review and evaluate the cost-effectiveness of a major spending decision in terms of the quality of education and standards of achievement;
35. handle appropriately and effectively local radio, newspapers and other media.

COMMENTARY

This paper is reporting a process of development that will continue to engage many academics and professionals in debate for the foreseeable future and until such time as the first awards of NPQH are made. Commenting at this stage carries with it the risk of being overtaken by events and readers should be aware of that possibility. Nevertheless there have been a number of issues and concerns arising which the author presents below:

The Consultation Process

Only one significant change was made to the nature of the proposed award following the extensive consultation period and processes outlines above in that the last word was changed from "Headteacher" to "Headship". It seems we can conclude that the arguments presented on the issue of the efficacy of the award were accepted by the TTA in that they changed the title. The crux of those arguments were based on the fact that it was not possible to state that those successfully completing the process of preparation would actually be *competent* in post as headteachers (as had been the original intention). Instead all the award could hope to do was to indicate that the successful candidate had the *potential* to be successful as a headteacher. Other than that the proposed award stayed much as had been outlined in the draft consultation document.

Management Styles

A number of observers and commentators see the model of management contained in the draft documentation as mainly operational and largely androcentric in nature. It is a model designed for direction and control rather than for facilitation and empowerment and is one that is often presented as a typical 'male' model. From the literature on school improvement (Duke, 1987; Hopkins & Ainscow, 1992; Per Dalin, 1994; Reynolds, 1996) we know that it is

aspects of the latter model of facilitation and empowerment that need to be exhibited by successful school leaders who will look to meet the learning needs of their students *with* others rather than *through* them.

A further concern is the (over) emphasis on accountability and efficiency, so much so that there is still discussion of a fifth module in the preparation programme that focuses solely on this aspect of school management. Certainly arguments were ranged against this during the consultation process, including by this author, with the suggestion that the production of reports and outcomes which demonstrated that school leaders were being accountable to the various stakeholders should be a natural by-product of the management process.

Selection procedures

This is currently the most active area for debate and discussion with the issues ranging from procedures based on normative or criterion referenced selection through to the principle of equal opportunities.

The early working documents from the national working group suggested that the quality of the award could be guaranteed through the quality of the selection procedure i.e. only the 'best' applicants would get through to become members of the programme. Letters of application supported by references and interview procedures were put forward as the way in which candidates could be chosen on a competitive basis. Whilst this suited the espoused central government philosophy of market forces it is a model that would be largely unworkable on practical grounds alone. The sheer volume of potential candidates would make such an approach a bureaucratic nightmare but, more importantly in this case, would produce an administrative burden for which there is no funding. The expectation is that LEAs will undertake the duty of 'selecting' suitable candidates from the state maintained schools and yet there has been no provision made within the draft funding regulations for LEAs to be able to cover their costs for this activity. The thought of making that selection based on a letter of application supported by reference and interview has made most LEA

officers blanche. An alternative model is to determine criteria by which serving teachers can be judged eligible and then bring in normative methods for determining who will get central funding.

The concern illustrated over normative selection in the previous paragraph has also emerged in terms of the principle of equal opportunity. To date there has been no indication of how candidates from a variety of backgrounds will be able to access the preparation programme or how it is planned to meet the development needs of those in schools where there is no active support for them. The documentation also seems to assume that potential candidates will have had opportunity to engage in management issues at a senior level within a school setting and makes no allowances for others with potential who may be currently operating outside of the school situation. School Inspectors, LEA advisory staff, university faculty members and qualified teachers in other forms of employment are examples in this instance. Similarly little is made of the difficulties some aspirant headteachers would have in schools where the current incumbent or governing body are not in the habit of actively engaging other staff in the management process. These issues of concern are still to be addressed at the time of writing.

The Programme of Preparation
Careful reading of the tasks outlined for headteachers demonstrates that a great deal of skill will be needed by those leading programmes of preparation if all the objectives are to be met. Certainly as things stand the new award sits uncomfortably between the need to demonstrate the levels of knowledge and understanding needed to achieve an award from a university and the need to demonstrate competence in role at a level commensurate with a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ). This is because, as described above, the award cannot demand competence in role and can only seek to demonstrate the candidate's potential as a future headteacher. Consequently the award will be made by the TTA and on that basis. The components outlined in the draft documentation show, however, that there is to be a mix of skills, abilities,

knowledge and understanding with all to be presented in a modular structure. This presents serious problems for course design as not only does the same material keep appearing from module to module, but also no existing certificated programmes move so rapidly between the need for knowledge and understanding and the demonstration of skill and ability. Early deliberations from the national working group demonstrate that the five module approach may not survive, particularly when the first re-draft of Module One is currently covering 28 of the 35 attributes expected from a successful candidates.

A further criticism that could be levelled against the proposals is that there has been no debate about the need for recording and authenticating the learning experiences of candidates that happen either as a part of the planned programme of preparation or incidentally with school based activity. One solution in this context would be to commence work on a Professional Development Portfolio (PDP) that prospective and actual candidates would be encouraged to maintain. Careful construction of the PDP should allow NPQH candidates to also record and be able to verify their learning for a variety of audiences such as universities and NVQ providers as well as for this qualification. Such an approach brings with it, of course, a requirement to provide the means whereby suitably qualified verifiers are available to support the process.

The Quantity and Quality of Training

Successful contractors for the regional Assessment Centres and Training & Development Centres are required to incorporate quality assurance procedures that are designed to ensure that the final qualification stands up to scrutiny by the future employers of successful candidates and by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI). There are serious reservations about the achievement of these aspirations in the time frame given that the philosophy and content of the programme of preparation is still being actively worked on with less than three months to go before the commencement of the pilot phase in January, 1997. Certainly the management group for the Training & Development Centre of

which the author is a member foresees problems with ensuring sufficient and suitable facilitators will be available to lead the programme of preparation of candidates. This concern exists on two levels: both in quantity and quality.

In terms of quantity the TTA has instructed successful contractors to be prepared for between 500 and 1000 fully funded candidates per region from September, 1997 and has allocated £12m nationally for this purpose. Running a cohort programme for potential candidates means finding enough facilitators to service something between 35 and 70 groups, each of which could be engaged in up to five modules. The situation does not ease greatly but passes to the Assessment Centre in the event of many of the early candidates seeking exemption from parts of the new award as a result of prior experience. Certainly this is anticipated by the TTA who expect the first tranche of funding to allow for that very outcome with some candidates thus qualified within a year. Getting assessors and/or trainers in sufficient quantity to meet this volume will not be easy given the lack of guidelines still evident at this stage.

In terms of quality similar concerns exist within the contractors in that inadequate attention seems to have been paid to providing school based support mechanisms for candidates. Literature on staff development and training (e.g. Joyce & Showers, 1988) show that most transfer of new concepts takes place when there is feedback on performance, especially when there is coaching on the job, with consequent higher levels of skills and ability evident when those processes have been employed. The current debate from the national group regarding training seems to focus more on content than process and on instruction rather than on-site, on the job coaching. A 'cascade' model seems to be forthcoming whereby 'experts' will lead instructional sessions for two representatives from each region which are meant, in turn, to be transmitted to those who will lead the preparation programmes for NPQH candidates. This seems a weak model for the development of the next generation of school leaders!

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The introduction of this new qualification is being conducted at breakneck speed and apparently with little opportunity to reflect on theory and experience from either the world of research or from the educational world in general. Consequently there are many areas of concern that have not been adequately addressed and there are many issues that still remain unresolved. It is to be hoped that the opportunities to absorb knowledge and understanding from other systems and to fully explore the unresolved issues will remain a feature of the evolving culture that accompanies the new qualification. This is by no means guaranteed in a country where the professional associations remain divided and factional at a time when the incorporation of a General Teaching Council would probably be the most efficacious mechanism by which to respond to the concerns and issues which have been outlined above and to others that will undoubtedly emerge in the future. While the certification of the nation's teaching force remains in the hands of a central government agency it continues to be vulnerable to political rather than professional pressure to improve learning outcomes.

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