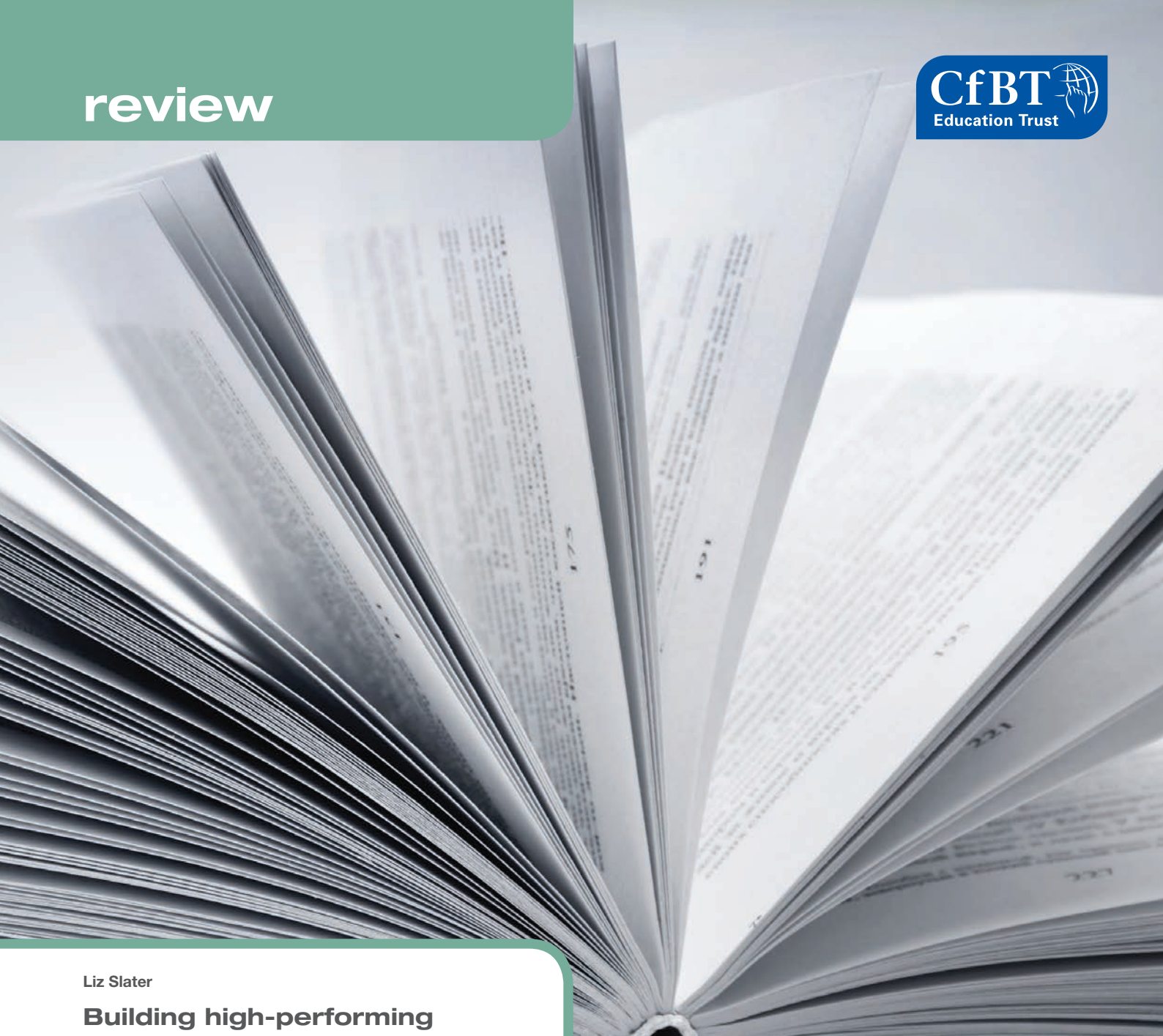


review



Liz Slater

**Building high-performing
and improving education
systems**

Leadership

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1 Introduction

Many of the policy documents and much of the recent literature talk about ‘leadership’ when discussing the role of headteachers and principals of schools. The word is also used when writing about other senior and middle managers. It is a way of showing the difference between what used to be expected of headteachers and what is expected of them now. They now have more responsibilities. As a result, they need different characteristics and a wider range of knowledge and skills. ‘Leadership’ is a generic term. It opens up the possibility of learning from the exercise of successful leadership in other organisations, particularly where improved performance is needed. Leithwood and Strauss¹ note it is ‘the major factor accounting for successful turnarounds’. Leadership, particularly by the headteacher, is important in promoting school improvement.² Research has also identified the role of middle leaders, particularly heads of subject departments, in shaping the academic effectiveness of the school.

In this Review, for the sake of clarity, job titles such as ‘headteacher’ and ‘principal’ are used. This Review looks at key aspects of policy and practice relating to headteachers: their changing role; management of supply; recruitment; performance management; training and development.

2 Why are headteachers so important?

Teachers have the most direct impact on students’ learning.³ Headteachers are of critical importance because they establish the environment in which teachers work.⁴ They need to be able to set high aspirations for the school in terms of student outcomes and take effective steps to achieve them. A number of education systems now recognise this. Hong Kong, for instance, has established a programme of professional development for headteachers designed:

“... to empower principals to become effective leaders of schools as dynamic and accountable professional learning communities in facing the challenges of an ever-advancing knowledge-based society.”⁵

In Australia, both national and state/territory governments have recognised the importance of headteachers in raising standards.⁶ They know there is a close link between the effectiveness of the headteacher and the quality of the school. Victoria’s effective schools model sees headteachers as central.⁷ Chile saw the significance of headteachers in implementing education policies in the 2000s. Consequently, Chile developed the *Good School Leadership Framework* (2005).⁸

Headteachers are also an important part of the move towards decentralisation.⁹ While the details differ, education systems are devolving decision-making powers to regional,

^a The headteacher is in the lead, ensuring a focus on teaching and learning, purposeful teaching, a shared vision and goals, high expectations of all learners, accountability, learning communities and a stimulating and secure learning environment.

district, municipal^b and school levels. Generally, education systems retain policy-making powers centrally. The devolution is supported by frameworks and standards relating to key parts of the system (such as the curriculum and teacher standards) and accountability mechanisms (such as responsibility for pupil attainment, and requirements to report to school councils representing a range of stakeholders, such as parents, teachers and members of the community). This is the case in Australia.¹⁰

In Slovenia¹¹ headteachers work within a framework which defines the national curriculum, student and staff numbers. They are responsible for the development and implementation of the annual school plan, and its submission to the School Council; the selection, development and recommendations about promotion of staff; resource allocation; supplementary curriculum provision; quality of provision; relations with the community; and compliance. In schools with sixteen or fewer classes, they also teach.

While headteachers may have more freedom to create and implement their vision, they are more accountable and have a more demanding job. (However, Barber et al.¹² did not find a direct link between the extent of principals' autonomy and the amount of time they spent on leadership rather than administration.) Headteachers also have to lead in responding to other challenges¹³ including school populations that may be more socially, economically or ethnically diverse, and to policy changes. These policy changes are often designed to improve the system's educational and economic performance and to enable students to achieve their potential.¹⁴

Even countries with a long history of school independence – such as the Netherlands and Finland – are finding that external pressures are changing demands on headteachers. In Finland, decentralisation is well-established¹⁵ with a 'broad, unobtrusive steering system' at national level, a local system able to adapt provision to meet local circumstances and a very well qualified workforce, among which headteachers have been first among professional equals. However, demands on headteachers are increasing in most education systems. This may be attributed to a variety of factors including reducing resources, falling student numbers and a more diverse student population, alongside greater requirements for self-evaluation, auditing and planning and higher expectations of what schools need to deliver in the 21st century. If headteachers are to give more of their time to the leadership role, they may need to give some of their responsibilities to other members of the workforce. See the section 'How do they cope with the new demands?' (page 8).

The changed demands require a different set of skills and characteristics.¹⁶

^b Some systems devolve powers to several levels (for instance regional, district and municipal) and others to only one, such as regional.

3 How are headteachers' roles changing? What skills, knowledge and attributes do they need?

Changing roles

In these circumstances, it is not enough for a headteacher either to be simply a lead teacher or a competent administrator/manager.

Expectations of headteachers differ depending on the system they work in. (See examples at Annex A.) However, they are increasingly asked to combine a leadership role with continuing responsibility for effective management. As leaders, they are likely to create a more ambitious vision for the school and put it in place. At the same time, they will need to be efficient managers. So, their tasks may include:¹⁷

- a. re-designing the structure of the school's teams and management
- b. being a professional role model, able to show teachers what good practice looks like; this is often linked to revisions to the curriculum
- c. setting high expectations for academic attainment, as well as high standards of behaviour for students and teachers
- d. taking an active interest in the recruitment, development, management, motivation and retention of their staff – especially their teachers. In Victoria, Australia, for instance, OECD reported strong support from principals for their new power to select staff on merit to meet the needs of their particular schools (as part of the Schools of the Future programme)
- e. making sure management systems, processes and school routines are efficient
- f. looking outwards from the school to work with parents and the community; as well as other educational organisations; health, social and law agencies. Influential headteachers may also work with local, regional and national policy-makers. They make a point of ensuring other stakeholders feel involved and understand the school's mission.

Successful leaders are able to manage external pressures. They protect their staff by acting as a 'buffer against the excesses of the mounting and sometimes contradictory external pressures'. Rather than passively taking on new policies, they adapt them and integrate them into their own plans, so that they form a coherent whole.

Beliefs and characteristics

Effective headteachers share a set of characteristics. They:

- a. have a strong ethical/moral value system which forms their work, showing integrity and empathy
- b. focus on the achievement of their students. They believe all students have a right to learn and, with the right teaching and support, can fulfil their potential
- c. despite setbacks and outside pressures, remain focused on their goals
- d. think strategically and creatively and are good at solving problems
- e. work hard, setting an example to others and gaining their respect
- f. take risks and, where necessary, challenge accepted beliefs, behaviours and even policies
- g. know what their strengths and weaknesses are
- h. are open to new ideas, and tell their staff about them. They create an atmosphere where there is lively, well-informed professional debate
- i. are strong leaders, but they treat their workforce with consideration and respect. They take into account the context, as well as the needs and capacities of the people with whom they work.¹⁸

Research into effective schools in Slovenia exemplifies the roles and attributes of effective headteachers.¹⁹ They:

- a. had a vision for the school as well as concrete goals
- b. were seen as problem solvers
- c. had a strong relationship with students
- d. were professional leaders, demonstrating teaching and their belief that all students could learn.

These characteristics are shaped by culture and religion, as well as by the context within which headteachers find themselves working.

A survey of successful headteachers in Indonesia showed they had similar characteristics. These headteachers supported professional development, focusing on school improvement and the creation of a team culture among teachers. They showed

through their actions that they were reliable and honest, committed to equality and the community's values. The headteachers were clear that their drive for improvement grew out of their religious beliefs and their conviction that they had a duty to fulfil the role entrusted to them by God as well as they could.²⁰

Effective headteachers of schools that are failing to provide good quality education, including those in challenging circumstances,^c also demonstrated broadly the same skills and characteristics. However, they gave priority to showing they value change by:²¹

- a. bringing in funding and other resources
- b. making changes to management practices (e.g. decision-making)
- c. developing a culture where teachers learned by working in teams and setting goals together
- d. investing time and resources in the staff, not only in professional development, but also to grow shared values
- e. choosing to spend more of their time working with students and creating a sense of community inside the school as well as among parents
- f. developing teaching strategies appropriate to the students
- g. monitoring and evaluating student progress, the impact of teaching and the design of tailored strategies to improve learning
- h. spending more time in school than their colleagues, but addressing wider issues likely to have an impact on the school.

Particularly important traits included the ability to:²²

- a. solve problems, work well with others and communicate effectively
- b. share leadership and responsibility as teachers become better
- c. do what is in the interest of the school, either by limiting the impact of outside events or even by ignoring system-wide policies where they considered it necessary.

One Australian study²³ noted that headteachers of more challenging schools tended to come from similar backgrounds to those of their students (which is why they had more drive and empathy) and to be less experienced – possibly because more experienced headteachers had a greater choice of school.

^c For example, in areas of high unemployment; high levels of immigration and mobility; family break-up; malnutrition; health problems; substance abuse and low expectations. See Mulford et al., *Successful principalship of high-performance schools in high poverty communities*.

Changing roles: challenges for serving headteachers

Although a focus on professional leadership is recognised as important, many serving headteachers are still used to spending more time and energy on management and administration. Ensuring schools are efficiently organised and well managed remains important. Strong organisation and administration are necessary for school effectiveness and improvement. However, they are not sufficient alone. Headteachers need time to exercise professional leadership. Distributed leadership may include devolution of some administrative tasks to other senior or middle leaders. Attitudes to the change vary, even in high-performing systems as well as those that have achieved substantial progress, partly for cultural reasons and partly because headteachers are more confident in carrying out familiar tasks.

- a. In Europe, primary headteachers spend an average of 40% of their time on management.^d A substantial proportion of the remaining time (averaging 20%+) is spent on relations with parents and students and professional matters. Slovenian headteachers spent a high proportion of their time (22.2%) on the development of the curriculum and teaching skills.²⁴
- b. In South Korea, headteachers were ‘supervisors’ responsible for school finance, facilities and the curriculum. While they welcomed the chance to take greater professional responsibility, they found dealing with parents and the wider community challenging.²⁵
- c. In Chile, traditionally, training has not focused on professional matters. Therefore, headteachers lack skills to use data and observation to improve teacher performance. They have been accustomed to carrying out internal management and administration, with an authoritarian leadership style.²⁶

In countries that are improving, but facing even greater challenges because of the size of the education system and the need to build capacity, this pattern is even more marked.

- a. In Ghana, surveys of headteachers revealed they saw their role as largely managerial and administrative,^e acting as an intermediary between the various parties, with no scope for taking initiatives. Indeed, they saw teaching as an inappropriate distraction from their main role and were reported as viewing sharing of knowledge as a dilution of their power.²⁷
- b. In Indonesia, headteachers had seen themselves as ‘passive recipients’ of government policy.²⁸

As the World Bank noted,²⁹ in the case of Indonesia, moves to decentralise responsibilities were best delayed until the crucial building blocks were in place, including:

^d Including managing staff, staff development, appointing staff, budgeting etc.

^e Responses to questionnaires to headteachers showed that 50% of heads considered day-to-day running of the school the most important task. Only 25.4% of respondents concerned themselves with managing instructional time, 6.7% with staff development and 1.8% with assessing pupil performance (accorded the lowest priority).

- a. clarity about responsibilities at various levels
- b. objectives (e.g. in relation to equity and quality of provision), and
- c. local ability to monitor and support teaching and learning.

A survey in Ghana carried out by Zame et al.³⁰ came to a similar view, arguing that management^f was important to ensure schools functioned, and headteachers had not yet been sufficiently prepared to take on a leadership role.⁹

How do they cope with the new demands?

Decentralisation and changes in responsibilities generally lead to an addition to the workload of schools – and therefore, potentially of headteachers. Headteachers in Finland have a long-established role as professional leaders. However, more formalised responsibilities for planning and evaluation are leading to fear of overload.³¹ Similarly, the OECD³² warned that if headteachers and other senior managers in Australian schools were to focus on improving student outcomes, then the system needed to consider how to deal with their increased responsibilities.

Effective and improving systems show steps that can be taken at system, regional/ district/ municipal and school levels. Even high-performing systems need to ensure that headteachers have the time and support available to enable them to provide leadership in teaching. In 2005,³³ the incoming McGuinty government in Canada provided additional vice-principals, supervisory and administrative support staff. They reduced external demands (e.g. by reducing requirements by the Education Quality and Accountability Office, as well as for reports) so that headteachers could ‘focus relentlessly on teaching and learning, and to do so through the development of other leaders in the school’. Further policy changes were made to arrangements for teacher performance appraisal, and additional staff development days were granted to support this move.

At school level, leadership can be distributed through:³⁴

- a. formal management structures (which include not just teachers, but also governing bodies/school councils) supported through clear job descriptions, training and performance management arrangements
- b. temporary working groups established to deal with specific issues and involving people with relevant expertise.

In Slovenia,³⁵ for instance, elementary schools will have a headteacher and, possibly, a deputy headteacher. In upper secondary schools, there may be directors of centres with headteachers and deputy headteachers. In these cases, the director manages the school, the headteacher takes the lead on teaching matters and the deputy headteacher deals with operational matters. Shared responsibility for management and teaching/learning

^f i.e. administration in line with the system's requirements, working with staff to create a safe and orderly learning environment, keeping up to date with education policies, managing the school buildings and equipment. *Education reform in Ghana: the leadership challenge*, M. Zame.

⁹ Of the respondents to the survey, 29% of headteachers had had some training before taking up their appointment, of whom only 15% said they had had training in leadership.

helps make links between teaching priorities and resources. Increased delegation means the system is reducing the burden on individual managers by sharing out leadership responsibilities.

Distributed (or 'dispersed') leadership has several advantages:³⁶

- a.** It develops the leadership skills of other teachers, so they feel more involved and motivated.
- b.** The whole staff takes responsibility for improving student attainment. Teachers may observe one another's lessons and give feedback. They may carry out research to solve problems. In other words, the school becomes a learning organisation.
- c.** It reduces the dependence on the headteacher to maintain the school's success.

In distributing leadership, headteachers need to take account of staff capacity. Where staff lack the capacity to take on a leadership role, it is likely to be counterproductive to expect them to do so. On the other hand, once a school starts to improve, distributing leadership often becomes an important strategy that promotes positive change.

While headteachers have to take the lead in distributing leadership, they also have to create an atmosphere of trust and teamwork so that other staff will be prepared to take responsibility and take (sensible) risks. As the Czech case studies³⁷ showed, headteachers may need to gain confidence in their own skills and knowledge of the school before delegating responsibilities.

Sometimes schools are not sufficiently large to have the range of knowledge and skills, time or resources to cope with the increased demands on their own. In these cases, it is particularly important to think about working with other schools and taking advantage of the community's resources.

4 How can central and regional government officials and headteachers work together effectively?

The relationship between headteachers and the wider education system in which they operate works two ways. On the one hand the wider system can provide support to headteachers. On the other, effective headteachers can extend their professional skills and contribute to the wider education system.

At the most basic level, the system needs to ensure it is not working against the interests of schools and their headteachers. If policy innovations are to succeed, they need to be designed so they do not place an unmanageable burden on schools (particularly headteachers), or require schools and other parts of the system to make a contribution that is beyond their resources or capabilities.

- a. In Finland,³⁸ the government and headteachers recognised that, while the pace of change had increased, government needed to limit the numbers of initiatives. Heads of basic schools in Slovenia³⁹ believed that the burden of administrative tasks was reducing the time available to give professional leadership. They also thought they did not have enough knowledge of the curriculum to manage teachers or deal with poor performance.
- b. Australian headteachers in small schools, particularly those in rural schools, also felt the impact of increased administrative requirements. They were particularly concerned that changes to governance and organisational structures meant policy-makers had no real understanding of their situation. Consequently, they chose to take the initiative, working with other schools and the community to find practical solutions to their difficulties. Measures included joint planning exercises with other schools and education department officers; job-sharing; joint administrative arrangements; and using retired staff to mentor, train and take the place of missing teachers.⁴⁰
- c. In the Czech Republic⁴¹ headteacher networks seem to have been initiated largely by headteachers, and valued for the support and knowledge they offered. (They may be disappearing with the policy which increases competition between schools.)

While there are high-performing headteachers working in isolation, education systems can provide support to enable more of them to be effective. Education systems that have direct links to headteachers (that is, the central organisation in a small system such as Singapore, states in Australia or even more local units within Ontario, Canada) are potentially well placed to work collaboratively with headteachers. Systems can support headteachers by:⁴²

- a. carrying out, advising on or arranging appointments, performance management and professional development for them, their staff and governing bodies/school councils
- b. establishing networks for sharing good practice, networking, distributing information on policy developments and innovations
- c. making available usable data and information to enable headteachers to plan, monitor and benchmark performance (for example, in terms of resource allocation and pupil outcomes).

In South Korea,⁴³ regional offices oversee research into improving teaching methods, encourage teacher study groups and arrange for teachers to observe good practice by their peers in other schools. In Finland,⁴⁴ municipal offices coordinate activities such as curriculum planning so that knowledge can be shared and resources used efficiently.

Countries on an improvement trajectory may need simultaneously to strengthen and develop both headteachers and intermediate bodies in order to sustain and drive improvement.

- a. Headteachers who took part in a leadership development programme operated jointly between Ghanaian educators and the University of Cambridge fed back their views on what would be necessary to make sure that what they had learned would not be lost. They believed that important factors would be strong links between headteachers and their own teachers and between schools and district offices and circuit supervisors,^{45 h} as well as between schools and their communities.
- b. Evaluating the impact of a project in the Australia-Indonesia Basic Education Program, researchers concluded that the recruitment and training of school supervisors needed to be improved and their responsibilities clarified so they could support headteachers better.⁴⁶
- c. In Chile, education authorities have ‘variable capacities and resources’ with consequences for their ability to support headteachers.⁴⁷

Education systems can also make arrangements that enable effective headteachers to contribute to school improvement beyond their own school.⁴⁸ Aside from the benefits to the wider system, including improving collaboration and more efficient use of resources, it provides opportunities for wider challenge and an extended career path for good headteachers:

- a. In Finland, municipal offices use the expertise of experienced headteachers and help them to develop further by allowing them to work part-time in their own schools and part-time in the municipal offices where they carry out planning, development and evaluation. In addition to bringing practical experience to policy-making, this approach increases leadership capacity in the headteachers’ own schools, because the headteachers delegate some of their responsibilities and encourage sharing of expertise.⁴⁹
- b. In Australia, Queensland has a school leadership strategy which hopes to use high-achieving headteachers⁵⁰ (including those about to retire) to act as mentors and coaches.

^h District directorates overseen by supervisors.

ⁱ i.e. identifies as a ‘desirable’ part of the strategy.

5 What needs to be done to ensure there are sufficient good headteachers?

Is there an issue about headteacher supply? What factors affect headteacher supply?

High-performing and improving education systems face difficulties ensuring there are sufficient good headteachers. Factors include:⁵¹

- a. the increased demands of the role, including a greater range of responsibilities; a perceived lack of support; continuing change; reductions in funding; and a need to cope with conflicting demands. This may deter potential applicants or encourage post-holders to retire early (as occurred in Ontario, Canada)
- b. an increase in the number of schools, leading to a need for more headteachers
- c. an ageing cohort of headteachers (e.g. in Victoria, Australia and Finland)
- d. salaries that do not take account of the scale of responsibility compared with that of other teachers.

Sometimes the difficulties in finding sufficient good headteachers are obvious (that is, small numbers of potential headteachers) and in others they are shown in the quality of aspiring headteachers.

- a. In Australia, there are problems with headteacher supply at all stages of the recruitment process – starting from the potential leaders of the future, low numbers of applications for vacant posts and difficulties filling vacant posts. The shortfall is linked to negative media coverage, concerns about headteacher appointment processes and the demands of the role, including increased responsibilities and greater accountability.⁵²
- b. While Chile has no formal evidence of a headteacher supply problem, some municipalities are reporting difficulties obtaining sufficient applicants for posts to shortlist five for consideration. Yet there are features that make it less attractive, including the potential need to seek re-appointment every five years and salaries that are not sufficiently greater than those of other leadership and professional positions.⁵³
- c. In Korea, headteachers' posts had been much sought after, being seen as the peak of a career in education. Post-holders had been highly regarded, though there have been difficulties in deploying headteachers to rural or remote regions and small schools. Headteachers are an ageing, predominantly male¹ group.⁵⁴
- d. In Finland, salary structures reflect a system where the headteacher is first among professional equals. There is little incentive to take on greater responsibilities when

¹ 92.2% of South Korean headteachers are male and 91% are aged 55-60+, with a retirement age of 62. *Improving school leadership: Korea*. OECD.

teachers (e.g. in shortage subjects) can earn more.⁵⁵ Similarly, in Ghana, headteachers' responsibility allowances are relatively low.⁵⁶

- e. In Singapore, there is no shortage of principals. However, the Ministry of Education is working closely with the National Institute of Education to ensure that the mandatory headteacher training programme will equip successful participants to work in the more independent and innovative ways required by government policy.⁵⁷

What can be done to ensure there are sufficient qualified candidates for headship?

Education systems have recognised the need to make the job more attractive by:⁵⁸

- a. making sure headteachers' responsibilities focus on work directly related to improving student outcomes. In order to achieve this, headteachers need to be able to pass on responsibilities to other members of staff. This may include more managerial and operational responsibilities or professional roles (e.g. as subject lead, or as chair of a curriculum working group). In South Korea, for instance, teachers are able to take on professional responsibilities in chief teacher roles⁵⁹
- b. giving headteachers more flexibility to make decisions which take account of their schools' circumstances. This may include staff appointments or changes to the curriculum. While Slovenia⁶⁰ does not have a headteacher supply problem, it is taking steps to ensure the role remains attractive by giving principals more professional freedom and time for professional leadership, reducing other parts of principals' work^k and making available professional support
- c. strengthening headteachers' professionalism while reducing their feeling of isolation. This includes opportunities for professional and career development, and establishing collaborative and networking arrangements, as well as the chance to have their skills recognised by inviting them to contribute to the system more widely
- d. demonstrating the prestige of the role in terms of its value to society. Slovenia,⁶¹ among other high-performing systems, has given a high priority to ensuring the quality and accessibility of education and therefore shown the key role played by headteachers
- e. ensuring that headteachers' salaries are sufficiently larger than those of teachers (and other senior post-holders) and that they compare favourably with salaries paid in other jobs that may be open to the target group.⁶² Slovenia⁶³ is giving priority to creating salary scales that will pay headteachers more than teachers. However, if headteachers are to distribute responsibilities, there need to be matching salary increases and forms of recognition for others taking on these responsibilities)
- f. putting in place recruitment arrangements that inspire confidence, because they are transparent and use clear criteria (such as professional standards). South Korea⁶⁴

^k For example through giving support with legal and financial matters. *Improving school leadership: country background report for Slovenia: 3/2007*

planned to change appointment arrangements so they were based less on length of service, as well as developing performance standards that could be used in making appointments (and designing training programmes).

Some are widening the range of potential candidates. Some systems are establishing mechanisms to fast-track promising young candidates through training,^l while others are considering opening up recruitment to non-teachers. This includes the Netherlands, South Korea^m and New York. There is a risk is that headteachers without teaching experience will lack professional credibility: New York still requires that such candidates teach for a period of time.⁶⁵

In a number of systems, headteachers are on time-limited contracts, though many (e.g. in Slovenia⁶⁶ and Ontario) see this as a disincentive to taking on the role. In Ontario, the Dalton McGuinty administration outlined measures to attract potential headteachers which included improved job security depending on performance.ⁿ

What is needed to make well-informed plans for headteacher supply?

Sound planning is based on good quality data and information to understand the current position, as well as identifying trends or comparing the situation in different parts of the system. In its OECD report,⁶⁷ even Australia acknowledged it had insufficient data to carry out this type of analysis as fully as it wished to do.

Demand for headteachers is related to:⁶⁸

- a. the numbers of existing and future schools
- b. changes in career structures (e.g. the introduction of intermediate leadership roles, lengths of service required to qualify for headteacher posts)
- c. the age profile of headteachers
- d. the rate at which headteachers leave post (either through retirement, early retirement or for other reasons). In Australia, for instance, there are about 20,000 headteachers; the majority are male, though there are more women headteachers in primary schools. On average men tend to spend eleven years as headteachers and women seven years.

The supply of headteachers is related to:⁶⁹

- a. the numbers and make-up of potential candidates for headteacher posts (e.g. deputy headteachers, inspectors) including their knowledge, skills and experience

^l The New South Wales Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney, Australia, runs a 'Leaders for the Future' programme designed to accelerate progression to headship.

^m South Korea launched a pilot scheme for non-educationalists in 2006. See *Improving school leadership: Korea*

ⁿ Including the possibility of 'earned security' for those who meet appraisal standards, and for boards to provide principals with 'assured assignments' of five years, subject to review after two years.

- b. existing and potential career paths into the role as well as overall labour market trends. This enables systems to map not just potential candidates coming through existing routes, but also to explore the impact of opening up alternatives. For instance, in Australia, teachers tend to remain within their sector and state. They may move into the independent sector, but rarely move from the independent to the maintained (that is, public) sector
- c. the relative attractiveness of the headteacher's role compared with potentially alternative professions. (This may include not just comparisons of pay and conditions, but also survey data from existing and potential candidates.) In Slovenia,⁷⁰ headteachers' salaries are published and take account of comparable posts in other parts of the public sector, such as Directors of Health.

How does planning for headteacher supply link into other planning?

Planning to ensure sufficient good quality headteacher candidates takes place at system, local and school level. It is most effective where plans are closely linked to other initiatives.

- a. In Singapore,⁷¹ schools are expected to identify potential headteachers, who are given the chance to take on greater responsibility and join training programmes. Singapore also provides training to allow vice-principals to switch from a largely administrative role to that of principal.
- b. Ontario, Canada, requires its districts to have succession and development plans.⁷²

Not all high-performing education systems undertake central planning. Barber (McKinsey)⁷³ reports that in the Netherlands, teachers interested in becoming headteachers join 'development pools'. Schools with staff in development pools often appoint headteachers from those pools without advertising. There are concerns that teachers working in schools without development pools and the schools themselves may lose out – the former on development and career progression and the latter on attracting good candidates for headship.

High-performing and improving education systems are increasingly turning to the development of professional standards because they link planning of career paths, succession planning, and pay structures, as well as criteria for appointment, performance management and professional development. This is the case in Australia where professional standards are set out in a way that illustrates career progression. They are seen as the starting point for designing development programmes for prospective and existing headteachers.⁷⁴

6 What are the characteristics of effective headteachers?

What are leadership standards? Why do they exist?

In long-established education systems, there has often been informal agreement about the knowledge and skills required of headteachers. With the increasing range and complexity of demands on headteachers, some education systems have described the knowledge, skills, attitudes/beliefs and practices of headteachers in sets of standards.^o This not only formalises expectations of headteachers, generally with a firm emphasis on the headteacher as professional leader, but also provides a basis^p for the recruitment, training, performance management and development of headteachers.⁷⁵

In high-performing and improving systems, professional standards form part of school improvement policy. In Victoria, Australia, *The Developmental Learning Framework for School Leaders* (2007) is part of the Office of School Education's strategy for building leadership capacity. This covers selection, performance and development. Ontario has taken a similar approach with *The Ontario Leadership Strategy* which has a three-year implementation plan.

Similarly, in Australia, when the Hon Julia Gillard MP, Minister for Education, asked the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership⁷⁶ to develop and maintain national standards for teaching and school leadership, she described this as the 'single biggest priority' because the standards would provide a framework for the Institute's role in promoting and accrediting professional development, including its work with leadership institutions in the states and territories. (The Minister's letter emphasised the need for close links with organisations responsible for regulating the profession, as well as curriculum and assessment bodies.) A similar linkage is established between the Victorian⁷⁷ *Developmental Learning Framework for School Leaders* (2002) and the *School Accountability and Improvement Framework*.

Chile used the development and publication of its *Good School Leadership Framework* to show how the headteacher's role under the 'non-democratic' regime which was 'largely administrative... in the most classic and restrictive sense of the word'⁷⁸ has changed, and to 'grant professional status' to headteachers. The *Framework* is presented not just as a description of the characteristics and practices required of headteachers, but also as a basis for performance management and professional development. Recognising the demands of the change in role, requirements for professional (i.e. teaching-related) leadership are tied closely to the *Framework for Good Teaching and the National Curriculum Framework*.

Frameworks of standards allow education systems to show routes through the teaching profession into leadership roles. This helps succession planning. Queensland has a school leadership strategy encompassing aspiring, beginning, serving and high-achieving leaders. It also shows routes beyond individual schools into system leadership.⁷⁹

^o Aside from Australia and New Zealand, standards – even for teachers – are rare in the Asia-Pacific region (*State of teacher education in the Asia-Pacific region*). However, South Korea describes moves to use performance standards (*Improving school leadership: South Korea*).

^p As well as a shared language and understanding. See Ontario's *Leadership Framework*.

Victoria's *Framework* includes five levels of competence in a hierarchy to show 'increasing proficiency'.

A few systems, such as in Ontario, have recognised that officials, too, will need to develop and practise particular types of knowledge and skill if they are to fulfil their complementary role. Accordingly, the *Leadership Framework* includes a second part relating to 'supervisory officers'⁹ which also shapes training programmes.

How are professional standards developed?

Development of standards requires:

- a. clarity about what the standards are to cover, starting with high-level aims, through areas of activity to descriptions of performance⁸⁰
- b. decisions about how proof of achievement is to be provided and how benchmarks are to be established
- c. a process for evaluating the evidence against each of the standards.⁸¹

The contents of standards are generally drawn from research into existing standards in other systems, as well as good leadership practice. In Ontario the standards were developed following 'research by world-recognised experts in leadership' and consultation with educators.⁸² The Chilean government acknowledged it had drawn on a survey of international standards.⁸³ In some cases, particularly in long-established systems with a tradition of decentralisation, development of standards may be delegated to the profession. In 2001, the Ministry of Education in the Netherlands made time available to headteachers to develop criteria for professional leadership standards.⁸⁴

The development process is an opportunity to build professional understanding and credibility. To achieve this:⁸⁵

- a. the development schedule needs to allow for consultation and revision. In Australia, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) had an extended development timetable for the professional standards, starting with research early in 2010, followed by drafting, critical review and feedback, and approval by the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs of the draft standard for release in December 2010. Subsequently pilots were used to test for 'authenticity' and usefulness. The launch following revision is scheduled for mid-2011.⁸⁶ Chile consulted on its Framework through a series of surveys with teacher and headteacher associations
- b. the process should draw on effective practitioners from a range of settings. This not only makes sure the standards have credibility, but also that the standards are not narrowly tied to a particular phase or type of school. Nor do they try to make all

⁹ http://www.oct.ca/additional_qualifications/supervisory_officers_qualification/pdf/supervisory_officers_qualification_e.pdf

successful leaders behave in particular ways.⁸⁷ It also ensures that standards take practical account of the abilities of serving headteachers while offering signposts to improvement.⁸⁸ For example, the ability to understand and act on data is critical to improvement. The Chilean *Framework* requires headteachers to be able to gather and analyse qualitative and quantitative data so they can evaluate learning outcomes. Headteachers had appeared to struggle to use the outcomes from pupil tests (SIMCE results) to identify and remedy weaknesses in teaching and learning.⁸⁹

What do professional standards need to include?

Standards need to:

- a. link together high-level policy aims and practical descriptions of what the standards look like on the ground⁹⁰
- b. group the required attributes into ‘large, meaningful elements of the school leader’s work, exemplifying purposes’
- c. identify an action, behaviour or outcome so that evidence can be gathered.⁹¹

In practice, the common overarching aim is the improvement of student attainment (and therefore increased public confidence in the system) with headteachers concentrating on professional leadership (while also fulfilling management responsibilities).^r

Ontario’s Leadership Framework (OLF) for Principals and Vice-Principals^s has five ‘elements’ (or areas), each with an overarching statement: Setting directions; Building relationships and developing people; Developing the organisation; Leading the Instructional Program; Securing accountability.

There is also a complementary Catholic OLF in Ontario which has an additional aspect (given first place in the OLF) dealing with the principal’s role in nurturing and modelling the Catholic faith and values. The Catholic dimension is woven into the other areas (for example the principal articulates, communicates and implements a Catholic vision; and believes that ‘all students are created in the image of God’). In some systems separate professional standards are developed by faith organisations (such as in Victoria).⁹²

Chile identifies four areas of action: Leadership (seen as the ‘driving force’); Curriculum Management; Resources Management; and Management of the School Atmosphere and Coexistence. In the case of Leadership, the *Framework* notes that the criteria will apply to others with responsibilities for management or teaching-related aspects of the school’s work. Each area comprises an overarching statement about why it is important and what is encompassed in it. For example, Curriculum Management: ‘The competences contained in this area describe how the school Head Teacher assures effective learning in classrooms in line with the school culture and specific school project. Specifically, the criteria in this domain describe the competences needed to design, plan and deploy

^r The OLF includes ‘systems for the effective management of the school’ among the competencies.

^s The Framework has a second part targeted at school boards. *Principal/Vice-Principal Performance Appraisal: Technical Requirements Manual 2010*, Ontario Leadership Strategy.

the institutional structures needed to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the curriculum and the quality of teaching.’

The third level of professional standards identifies the actions, behaviours and outcomes required.

- a. In Ontario the criteria are divided into Practices (what the principal does) and Competencies (subdivided into Skills, Knowledge and Attitudes respectively using terms such as ‘the principal is able to/has the knowledge and understanding of/demonstrates’). For instance, Leadership of the Instructional Program includes use of data to focus on student achievement; recruitment, management and development of staff; planning/allocation of resources for learning; supporting strategies relating to behaviour, equity. The principal is expected to be the leader in terms of professional **knowledge** (e.g. of pedagogy, curriculum design, accountability) and to be able to demonstrate relevant **skills** (e.g. effective teaching, use of data, management) and **attitudes** (e.g. commitment to equity, to closing the achievement gap).
- b. In the Chilean *Framework*, there is a further sub-division into criteria and descriptors by area. For each area, there is a series of sub-criteria, each with an explanatory statement and a brief description of what the headteacher does to demonstrate performance in line with the sub-criterion. For example, Curriculum management is divided into four sub-criteria, covering: knowledge of the curriculum; time organisation/allocation; quality assurance of teaching; and monitoring of curriculum delivery and learning outcomes. The sub-criterion on quality includes descriptors relating to promotion of high teacher expectations; the allocation of time for teacher reflection on practice and links between school objectives and student outcomes.

Rules for gathering evidence and what counts as having met the standard

The most difficult task seems to be setting levels of performance and reliable systems for applying and acting on the standards. Victoria, Australia describes the process used to develop profiles exemplifying levels of performance in *The Developmental Learning Framework for School Leaders*.

Even where the standards give a lot of detail about behaviours, knowledge, skill and attitudes, it is necessary to build up a shared understanding of requirements through discussion and training. In Ontario the rules for gathering evidence are set out in the Technical Requirements Manual⁹³ relating to performance appraisal. Indicators are agreed as part of the appraisal process. There is no guidance on what counts as having met the standard, though goals are to be written so that they meet SMART criteria (i.e. specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely) and examples of indicators are given (e.g. graduation rates). Guidance is given on factors to be taken into account in determining an overall satisfactory/unsatisfactory rating.

7 How are headteachers appointed?

Are there any requirements that candidates must meet in order to apply?

Generally, candidates for headship have teaching experience and a professional qualification. Teaching experience has long been seen as a requirement of headteachers. In some systems, such as South Korea, length of service (and seniority) has been seen as the main qualification,⁹⁴ though there are now moves to open promotion up to younger candidates.

Although a headship qualification is not a requirement in all high-performing and improving systems, it is becoming increasingly common, and preference is often given to candidates who are qualified, enrolled on an appropriate programme or will undertake one shortly after taking up post.

Candidates in Alberta, Canada must be enrolled on a Master's programme; in Singapore they need to have completed the Principal training programme; in Ontario, Canada they need to have passed the Principals' Qualification Program;⁹⁵ in South Korea candidates must hold the Principals' certificate⁹⁶ and in Slovenia⁹⁷ headteachers must either hold a headship certificate (or complete it within a year of taking up appointment). The position is similar in the Czech Republic,⁹⁸ but headteachers are given two years to qualify. In Australia, there is no national requirement, but many would-be headteachers undertake postgraduate programmes.⁹⁹ In the Netherlands, while there is no requirement to hold a qualification, preference is given to candidates who hold postgraduate qualifications in school management.¹⁰⁰

How does the appointment process work? What are the options?

Decisions about who may be considered for headteacher posts are made in broadly one of two ways: either prospective candidates put themselves forward for consideration or the system selects candidates.

In systems such as Slovenia, the Netherlands and the Czech Republic, teachers with the required qualifications and experience can choose to apply.¹⁰¹ In the Czech Republic, for instance, the Ministry has set out a compulsory competitive recruitment process which spells out how the vacancy will be publicised, the types of people who must be on the selection committee, the way in which the appointment decision is to be made and the requirements of candidates in terms of qualifications and experience. In Chile, applicants must apply by submitting documentation including a curriculum vitae and training certificates. Using this, the Commission selects five candidates for a short-list. These candidates must submit a proposed work programme for the school as well as taking any other tests decided by the appointment commission. The commission sends a report

showing weighted scores to the mayor, who must appoint the candidate with the highest score, unless there are good reasons not to do so.¹⁰²

In other systems, such as South Korea, promotion to the post of principal has traditionally been the final reward for a long career after work as either a vice-principal, school inspector or research officer.¹⁰³ A list of candidates, ranked according to scores covering service, training, work and other aspects of their careers, is created annually as a starting point for the selection and appointment process involving national universities (for affiliated schools) or metropolitan/provincial offices of education, and ending in recommendations to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education. An alternative route, 'employment by invitation' enables the school council to have greater involvement, but final decisions are still made at national level.¹⁰⁴ In Singapore, the Ministry selects and trains potential candidates for principal roles. Once trained, they join a pool from which the Ministry makes appointments to schools, carefully matching candidates to individual institutions. Long service as a teacher is no longer the most important factor: increasingly, appointees are in their thirties and the gender balance is becoming more even.¹⁰⁵

There is a trend to delegate decisions about the appointment of headteachers to district or school level. To be successful, this requires that the appointing body is appropriately skilled (which may require training) and operates in a clearly fair and open way (e.g. uses consistent processes and criteria). Some systems give complete independence to schools or municipalities to make appointment decisions and others require that they be signed off at a higher level.

- a. Complete freedom is exercised by school boards in the Netherlands,¹⁰⁶ though, when appointed, headteachers become civil servants.
- b. In Victoria, Australia school councils select their preferred candidate, whom they recommend to the Department of Education and Training;¹⁰⁷ similarly, in Chile the shortlist of five candidates is selected by a commission made up of the director of the municipal education department, a headteacher from the same phase, a teacher from the school with a vacancy and a member of the parents' association. The commission produces a final ranking and the director has five days to pick the preferred candidate.

Where the overall system is small, such as in Singapore, the Ministry of Education may retain control over appointments.¹⁰⁸

Interview panels remain widespread and are used in a number of systems including in states in Canada, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Singapore, Slovenia, South Korea and Australia.¹⁰⁹ However, the reliability of the selection process may be increased through the addition of other elements. Interviews may:

[†] KEDI comments that moves to appoint using different selection criteria and delegating powers to metropolitan/provincial offices may cause difficulties where teachers have committed themselves to achieving promotion points through long service and professional development. The alternative may be to introduce the new system in parallel.

- a. form one part of a recruitment exercise: for instance, in Ontario there is first a filter process (through assessment by a 'promotion readiness committee'),¹¹⁰ followed by an interview by a committee that makes the decision to appoint. In South Korea the interview (and presentation of a school management plan) forms the final phase in a three-stage screening process¹¹¹
- b. be supplemented by requirements designed to test candidates' abilities to carry out the responsibilities of the post: Slovenia's appointment process includes the option of presentation of a proposed school development programme to the school council and the teachers' assembly.¹¹²

What are headteachers' terms and conditions of service?

Contracts

While some high-performing systems appoint to contracts which are open-ended, many are fixed-term:

- a. In Victoria, Australia, appointments are usually for five years, with the school council making the decision about re-appointment.¹¹³ A similar process is used in Chile, in theory, but the cost of the re-appointment process is expensive, so the exercise is not always carried out and the principal remains in post.¹¹⁴
- b. In South Korea, appointments are generally for four-year terms, with a maximum of eight years in one school. KEDI (the Korean Educational Development Institute) views the 'semi-automatic' re-appointment process as likely to change with the introduction of more rigorous evaluation procedures. Where teachers holding a Principal's certificate are invited to take up a post, the time limit of eight years does not apply. Given the length of time it takes to qualify for appointment, many principals have reached retirement age by the time their contract runs out.¹¹⁵
- c. In Singapore, principals generally remain at a school for around five years. The Ministry may then move them to another school or to the Ministry itself.¹¹⁶

While fixed-term contracts are attractive in theory, because they might incentivise headteachers to deliver results, in practice, they may have disadvantages.

- a. Fixed-term contracts are seen by headteachers as a disincentive to taking up the post. This is evident in Chile.¹¹⁷
- b. In Slovenia there are worries that the process limits the headteacher's ability to take difficult decisions in the final year, since re-appointment takes account of the views of the academic assembly, the local community and the Minister.¹¹⁸

The alternative, which is likely to lead to greater commitment and a more successful appointment, is to set up an effective performance management and development policy.

Pay

High-performing and improving systems generally pay headteachers salaries that compare well with salaries overall. In Europe, headteachers' salaries are generally comparable to or exceed per capita GDP, while in the Netherlands the minimum salaries are around double the per capita GDP.¹¹⁹ In Korea, pay tends to be related largely to length of service;¹²⁰ principals are paid slightly more than civil servants but less than members of the armed forces or police.

Systems are increasingly taking steps to ensure that the role of headteacher is financially attractive compared with that of teachers, bearing in mind the increased responsibilities.

There are also moves to relate headteachers' salaries to the scope and scale of their responsibilities and to their performance. There is a risk that if safeguards are not put in place, the salaries for headteachers of smaller schools will be inadequate to attract good candidates. Headteachers' pay scales may reflect the size of the school (i.e. student numbers and therefore, by implication, budget and staff numbers). In Slovenia,¹²¹ headteachers' pay scales in lower and upper secondary schools are similar, while those for lower secondary and primary schools are the same. They take account of student numbers and the curriculum. School councils have the freedom to make additional performance-related payments. Some pay scales also take account of both the demands of the job and the length of service – as in the Czech Republic.¹²²

There continue to be difficulties with linking salaries to performance: in Chile, for instance, performance-related payments to senior staff in schools began in 2004, but the OECD reported that take-up and payments have been low.¹²³ In part, this may be because the basis for payments is complex and not well understood by teachers or headteachers.^u ¹²⁴

8 Developing headteachers: what approaches have been used?

Long-term commitment

Culture change and the linked development of knowledge and skills are long-term projects, needing commitment and a consistent approach over a number of years. In Victoria, headteacher development is part of a 'Blueprint for Government Schools' which has had the support of Ministers since its publication in 2003.^v ¹²⁵ Similarly, feedback from headteachers in Ghana participating in a leadership development programme reported that all stakeholders (from government to parents) needed to recognise that change was slow, required support, commitment and 'resilience'.¹²⁶

Barber et al.'s study of leadership¹²⁷ in successful and improving systems concluded it was possible to build leadership capability. Critical aspects to be considered in planning included:

^u An evaluation of the value of SIMCE for school improvement found that both teachers and directors (i.e. headteachers) struggled to interpret the results, partly because the reports were difficult to understand and partly through lack of training. Headteachers are supposed to use the outcomes of SIMCE for quality improvement planning.

^v Other areas include the curriculum, professional development and resource allocation.

- a. the career stages of potential participants, i.e. aspiring, newly-appointed, 'early career', 'mid- and late-career'
- b. the content
- c. delivery arrangements (e.g. training at an HE institution, school-based support, distance learning)
- d. how success would be measured and evaluated.

Content and approach

Where it is available, initial training and development for future headteachers, or headteachers who have not been trained, generally covers¹²⁸ the design of the school's vision, aims and strategic plan; re-organising the school to focus on improved student attainment; teaching (instructional leadership); relations with stakeholders (parents, community); recruitment; performance management and development of staff; resource allocation and management; the curriculum and assessment.

While there is less training available specifically for new headteachers,¹²⁹ there is evidence that it increases their effectiveness. High-performing systems use a range of approaches:¹³⁰

- a. In Ontario, headteachers are mentored in their first and second years by experienced headteachers identified by superintendents. The mentors help them to develop goals and to evaluate their performance. As school leader, they also join one of the 22 learning networks run by the Institute for Educational Leadership.
- b. In the Netherlands new headteachers can take up a part-time role alongside a colleague.

There is great variation in time spent on training: in Singapore, two-thirds of headteachers spend more than 400 hours training; whereas 15% or fewer do so in New Zealand and Ontario.

High-performing systems are also introducing training tailored to meet the needs of experienced headteachers – not only improving their performance, but potentially providing them with opportunities that will encourage them to stay in their jobs and allow them to contribute more widely to the system.

What are the trends in the professional development of aspiring and serving headteachers?

The International Successful School Principal Project^w identified the following trends in school leadership training:¹³¹

- a. an increased focus on developing capacity to achieve school improvement
- b. interest in programmes rather than one-off training events
- c. linking development activities to the context of participants' schools
- d. designing programmes that combine theory and practice
- e. taking account of headteachers' desire to learn from one another (including through learning communities and the use of mechanisms such as acting or shared leadership roles, apprenticeships and mentoring)
- f. recognising that, in addition to providing professional leadership, headteachers needed to be able to make sure that management and administration were carried out effectively.

Focus on headteacher development as part of school improvement strategies

Effective systems are making headteacher development part of their strategy for improving educational outcomes. The Victoria leadership development strategy – *Learning to Lead Effective Schools* – is part of the overarching Blueprint for Government Schools.¹³²

Programmes rather than single training events: achieving continuity and progression in professional development

Effective systems bring together development strategies for aspiring and serving headteachers. Victoria's leadership development strategy includes plans not just for serving headteachers and senior managers, but also for teachers aiming to become headteachers.

Some strategies aim to place headteacher development within a framework that looks beyond school improvement to system improvement. Ontario's College of Teachers' *Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession* is an example. It describes a range of development opportunities covering the span from pre-service teacher training through to headship and beyond (into the Supervisory Officer's Qualification Program). Headteachers and other teachers who are members of the College of Teachers are encouraged to work out their training needs and plan their development by reference to the Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession and the Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession. All the activities accredited by the College are designed to match the Standards.

^w <http://www.uv.uio.no/ils/english/research/projects/isspp/>

Queensland, Australia has built some of its current leadership development activities into a longer-term plan for a leadership development strategy. This ensures continuity. Australia is also looking at how effective headteachers can be offered opportunities to develop wider expertise and feed it back into the system.¹³³

- a. Aspiring headteachers can use the existing Leadership Toolkit and the new foundation programme *Enhancing Leaders for the Future*.
- b. New headteachers can join the existing Principal Induction Programme and use the Toolkit. The Strategy also plans to provide mentoring and work shadowing, together with activities to enable headteachers to carry out their managerial responsibilities (e.g. financial and personnel management).
- c. Experienced headteachers have access to the Strategic Leaders programme and the Toolkit. The Strategy aims to provide, in addition to coaching and mentoring, opportunities to achieve further qualifications and work shadowing.
- d. High-achieving headteachers have access to the same foundation programme and Leadership Toolkit, but they have opportunities to widen their expertise through sabbatical study (including looking at lessons to be learned internationally). They are expected to feed back their expertise into the system by carrying out mentoring and being the subject of work shadowing.
- e. In order that the expertise of retiring headteachers is not lost to the system, Queensland wishes to identify potential coaches, mentors and trainers. (See Table 1 on following page.)

In Slovenia, the National School for Leadership in Education ensures headteachers' development is focused on improved learning outcomes. Its activities include a headship licence programme, mentoring and the establishment of networks of learning schools.¹³⁴

Career pathways	Foundation programmes			Activities (seen as desirable additions to the Strategy)
Aspiring	Enhancing Leaders for the Future	Performance Development Processes	Leadership Toolkit	
Beginning	Principal Induction Programme			Mentoring for new principals Your accountabilities: facilities, people, finance Work shadowing
Consolidation and growth	Strategic Leaders			Work shadowing Coaching/mentoring for experienced principals Accreditation e.g. to Master's in Leadership Reward and recognition
High achieving	Strategic Leaders			Being work-shadowed Mentoring/coaching others Sabbatical study tour/principal exchange Leadership Challenge Reward and recognition
Transition		Pre-retiring		Identifying potential mentors, coaches and trainers
Other career options	e.g. EDS	Retired		Selected meritorious principals to provide mentoring/coaching

Table 1. Derived from Figure 4: School leadership strategy, Queensland, Australia: *Country background report: OECD improving school leadership activity*, Prepared by the Australian Council for Educational Research for the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training. Submitted November 2006, revised March 2007.

Key: black: existing; green: new; blue: desirable

Professional standards help providers of professional development and schools themselves to make sure that programmes and activities for teachers, aspiring headteachers and headteachers match the level of knowledge, skills and attributes they need for particular stages in their careers. (See references to Ontario, page 19.) They also enable headteachers to plan to delegate responsibilities appropriately (that is, use 'distributed leadership'), taking account both of teachers' knowledge and skills and enabling them to develop their leadership skills.

Context: building the capacity of serving headteachers

Systems aiming to improve have recognised the need to develop and support headteachers who are already in post. This is the case for many systems.¹³⁵ It may be because earlier training is no longer adequate for the demands of the role or because they have not had any training. In Ghana, building headteacher capacity has already been identified as a key issue,¹³⁶ partly because of the lack of training for aspiring or new headteachers.^x

Both initial and later training needs to take account of the context and of what headteachers say they want. It should combine theory and practice (including opportunities to carry out action research or see good practice):

- a. In Slovenia¹³⁷ headteachers of basic schools felt they lacked sufficient knowledge of the curriculum to advise teachers or deal with underperformance; upper secondary headteachers wanted training which blended theory and practice on aspects of learning-centred leadership; to develop particular skills (such as performance management and collaboration with parents to promote student learning).
- b. In Chile,¹³⁸ while most headteachers had studied school administration, many of the courses were theoretical rather than practical. Few headteachers had expertise in subjects related to professional leadership, such as assessment for learning. Consequently, in 2004, the Ministry of Education invited universities to run pilot training programmes. A Management Team Formation Programme based on the pilot was designed in 2006. Its purpose was to contribute to the professional development of headteachers. Its content was linked to the *Good School Leadership Framework*. The training covered management of the curriculum, resources and the school environment with leadership as a cross-cutting theme. Delivery comprised teaching about theory by academics, workshops at commune and province level, and academics working in schools, as well as visits between schools. In order to build networks, a minimum of three schools per commune was invited to attend and an internet-based forum was established for participants.

Where systems are already improving, it is particularly important to take account of lessons learned about effective practice in training and development.

- a. A development project in Ghana and Tanzania¹³⁹ used an action research approach to find out actions headteachers could take to improve education for disadvantaged learners. The projects focused on basic building blocks for learning. They ranged from community support for a feeding programme to remedial programmes for working boys.^y

^x Responses from serving headteachers to questionnaires revealed that 29% had had some training before being appointed, of which only 15% mentioned training in leadership.: Zame, M., Hope, W., Respress, T. 'Educational reform in Ghana: the leadership challenge' *International journal of educational management*, Vol 22 No 2, 2008.)

^y i.e. building blocks for enabling pupils to participate in education.

- b.** The process involved surveys, workshops, cluster groups for local headteachers and support in the headteachers' schools from the workshop leaders.
- c.** Headteachers carried out many of the roles required of leaders: collecting and analysing information about the school; identifying areas for change, and making and carrying through plans; presenting data and information to stakeholders (e.g. to parents on the need to ensure students arrived at school with proper stationery and having eaten); and working with their staff and education officers to solve problems. They were asked to keep logs of their actions and develop ways of collecting data and write reports.
- d.** District officers were kept informed of progress.
- e.** The evaluation showed that the participants (with some exceptions) had had their attitudes to leadership 'transformed': they felt they could make a difference to teaching and learning rather than simply being administrators.

In Indonesia¹⁴⁰ a programme focusing on improving school management (as part of the Decentralised Basic Education Project) included training for school teams in development planning and for school committees in supporting their headteacher, as well as leadership training for headteachers. Headteachers were also shown how to enter and use data for school management and reporting purposes.

While there does not appear to be any independent evaluation of these projects, they do share characteristics which may have contributed to their success:

- a.** a practical focus on school-level issues and implementation
- b.** a mixture of development strategies, including workshops and on-site mentoring. In the case of Ghana, this included action-research by the headteachers
- c.** alignment with government policy
- d.** keeping in touch with local administrators and communities so they stayed involved. In the Indonesian project, this included school supervisors and, sometimes, representatives of the district education office and office of religious affairs joining the leadership training sessions.

These types of actions are more likely to lead to lasting results. However, a Leadership for Learning Project in Ghana¹⁴¹ concluded that to maintain momentum, there need to be continuing arrangements for headteachers to liaise with one another (networking), capacity building among professionals who could support headteachers,^z monitoring of progress and follow-up activities. These lessons are applicable more generally.

^z i.e. training effective practising headteachers, district officials, teacher educators and university lecturers to become professional development leaders. Individuals were selected for this role on the basis of their knowledge of Ghanaian schools, of educational issues, expertise in professional development and commitment to the values of the programme.

Funding

Systems use different approaches to funding the cost of headteacher training. In systems where candidates for headship are identified and invited to undertake training – such as in Singapore – the government generally meets the cost of funding.¹⁴² In more decentralised systems, such as the Netherlands, money for professional development has been increasingly delegated to local – including school – level with the aim of achieving more cost-effective use of funding.¹⁴³

Putting the right kinds of training in place

High-performing and improving education systems are keen to ensure that headteachers have access to effective training that will give them the knowledge and skills considered necessary if they are to provide professional leadership in their schools.

Planning headteacher training needs to take account of:

- a. the scale (i.e. size) of the system
- b. the extent to which the system is centralised or decentralised
- c. what types of training headteachers are used to
- d. the level of control the system can exert over providers of development and training.

In Singapore and Hong Kong,^{aa} which are small, design and quality assurance are operated centrally. Following consultation, Hong Kong adopted a very directive approach to the training of principals. From 2002:¹⁴⁴

- a. teachers wishing to be principals had to hold the Certification for Principalship from 2004/05 (i.e. there was a lead time to allow for training)
- b. newly appointed principals have to take part in a designated programme, participate in CPD relevant to their own and their schools' needs; and present their professional portfolio annually to their sponsoring body/management committee from 2002/03
- c. serving principals have had to spend 50 hours on professional development each year. In a three-year period, they also had to spend 30–90 hours on structured learning, action learning, service to education and the community (30–90 hours of each in a three-year cycle).

Once this model was well established ('embedded in the psyche and career planning of school leaders'), the focus moved on to carry out research into finding out the best ways in which school leaders learn.¹⁴⁵

^{aa} While the system is small, its school governance structures are diverse, so establishing a system-wide mechanism for training principals was challenging. See Walker, A. et al. *Preparing leaders, preparing learners*.

Conversely, in the Netherlands, which has a tradition of decentralisation, it is up to individual teachers and professional organisations whether to take part in development activities. They can also choose the content. The Dutch Headteachers' Association¹⁴⁶ has established a Dutch Principals Academy to develop professional standards, keep a register of competent headteachers and accredit management courses for primary schools. In Finland¹⁴⁷ the design of leadership qualifications is also decentralised. Helsinki, for instance, trains new headteachers in municipal and national administration, occupational counselling, leadership training, educational management, organisational theory, economics and IT. Theory and practice are closely linked. Helsinki also introduced programmes at university level for newly-appointed and experienced headteachers, following successful pilots between 1999 and 2001.

However, increased recognition of the importance of headteachers seems to be leading to greater government interest in shaping provision. In Finland¹⁴⁸ the Ministry of Education has created a system to accredit programmes, though there is still much flexibility about content. Similarly, in the Netherlands, a consortium of five universities^{bb} is providing a Master's level qualification in school management available not only to aspiring headteachers, but also to serving headteachers and managers at regional level. The government has recognised its value by paying half the fees of participants and permitting them to deduct the other half from their tax liabilities after graduation.

Controlling quality

Where systems are small-scale, such as in Singapore, the government can easily control the content and quality of provision.¹⁴⁹ The Singapore Leaders in Education course is linked to the National Institute of Education's Master's course in educational management.¹⁵⁰ Larger systems find this approach impractical. An alternative is to accredit provision meeting an acceptable standard.

- a. In Ontario, some qualifications accredited by the Ontario College of Teachers have legal standing^{cc} and span a potential career in education, including Pre-service Ontario Teacher Education Programs, Honours Specialist Courses, the Principal's Qualification Program and the Supervisory Officer's Program.¹⁵¹
- b. In Chile, the system is not well placed to regulate the higher education sector which operates in the market.¹⁵² Therefore, the Ministry of Education invited universities to develop and run pilot training programmes for headteachers from 2004, leading to the development of the Management Team Formation Programme in 2006 which was linked to the *Good School Leadership Framework*.^{dd}

^{bb} Amsterdam University, the Free University of Amsterdam, as well as the universities of Nijmegen, Utrecht and Leiden.

^{cc} Regulation 184/97, Teachers Qualifications made under the Ontario College of Teachers Act recognises specified qualifications.

^{dd} The programme combines face-to-face training in theory by academics, workshops at commune/province level and work in schools with academics, as well as visits between schools.

Who else will need training and development activities?

Officials at national and, in larger systems, regional and district level, have an important role to play in supporting headteachers.^{ee} In order to be effective, they need to understand and be committed to working with headteachers to achieve school-level and system-level improvement. This requires training and development.

Chile recognised¹⁵³ that dissemination of the *Good School Leadership Framework* would require training for local teams responsible for administration, quality assurance and support.

Ways of doing this include:

- a. building local officers' knowledge and skills, changing their view of their role by involving them in development activities – as occurred in the Leadership for Learning project in Ghana¹⁵⁴ and enabling them to join in training. In Indonesia, for instance, leadership sessions for headteachers were also open to supervisors and more senior staff¹⁵⁵
- b. complementary qualification routes for supervisors/education officers. Ontario requires that supervisory officers employed by school boards hold supervisory officers' qualifications along with a principal's qualification or two years' experience in administrative work in education. In order to join the Supervisor Officers Qualification Program, individuals have to have had at least five years' successful teaching experience and a Master's degree.¹⁵⁶

What appears to work?

Design and implementation of headteacher development programmes differ according to context, but there are some common features.

- a. Programmes draw on research into effective practice in other systems. Hong Kong took account of international evidence, research studies and feedback from participants in the newly appointed principals' programme to identify the most effective ways to design and deliver development activities. Victoria acted similarly.¹⁵⁷
- b. They look closely at context to ensure understanding of the current situation, and to understand opportunities and constraints. The Leadership for Learning project in Ghana used an early part of the programme to introduce the Leadership for Learning principles, identify issues, constraints and opportunities and begin data collection.¹⁵⁸
- c. They have clear aims and objectives, focusing on student outcomes as well as detailed and carefully thought-through implementation programmes. Victoria's programmes aim to be 'evidence-based and data driven to guide improvement and measure impact'.¹⁵⁹
- d. They take careful account of the existing knowledge and skills of participants.

^{ee} A research/development project targeted at headteachers in Ghana (*Primary school leadership for quality improvement in Ghana and Tanzania*) identified the need for further research into the role of district officers in promoting school improvement. Another project [1072] identified aspects of the Ghanaian context which was directive rather than collaborative (Macbeath, J. *Developing leadership for learning in Ghana...*).

Their design:¹⁶⁰

- a.** brings together theory and practice to develop skills required of headteachers (such as managing teacher performance)¹⁶¹
- b.** deals with the realities of school life
- c.** gives opportunities for thinking (reflection)
- d.** uses experienced headteachers whose roles are clear and who have been trained for those roles
- e.** includes a range of learning options, timings and mechanisms
- f.** gives opportunities for formal networking as well as informal contact. This may include internet-based forums, tutoring and distance-learning, if they are of good quality and work¹⁶²
- g.** includes both formative and summative evaluation
- h.** gives participants control over timing, the pace of their learning and the topics they wish to cover
- i.** includes a flexible range of content to meet the needs of participants. While training for professional leadership has become more important, headteachers still need to know about how to manage the school (e.g. timetabling) and about legal requirements (e.g. in relation to pupils with special needs).¹⁶³

Effective learning options, preferred by headteachers include:¹⁶⁴

- a.** action learning;
- b.** problem-solving;
- c.** small-group structures (within a larger group);
- d.** using real materials and data, e.g. examination of students' work, case discussions, peer observation, visits to see and discuss good practice with other headteachers.

One of the most challenging areas is evaluation. Slovenia notes¹⁶⁵ that it is particularly difficult to gather evidence about the impact of development activities.

9 Why manage the performance of headteachers?

Performance management

Piggott-Irvine, referring to policy in New Zealand,¹⁶⁶ describes performance management as a 'macro-descriptor' for all the activities linked to personnel management including recruitment, career development, appraisal, pay and professional development. All these activities are connected, and many of them have been discussed elsewhere in this Review. This section deals with establishing goals, evaluating performance and follow-up actions.

Aims

Headteachers are a key factor in improving schools and, as a result of decentralisation, have greater power and responsibilities. Performance appraisal and follow-up action are seen as necessary to ensure accountability and to contribute to headteacher development.

The Victoria, Australia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DCEED) links the two issues in its appraisal guidance:¹⁶⁷

'...The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) is committed to providing young Victorians with high-quality education and training to raise achievement levels, reduce disparity in student outcomes in and across schools, and provide opportunities for all students to reach their full potential.

The DEECD is committed to ensuring that all school staff, including Principal Class Officers, are provided with objective and constructive feedback on their performance, with consequent opportunities to learn and grow...'

Ontario, Canada¹⁶⁸ sees school leadership as a key factor in achieving improved student outcomes (as well as increased public confidence in the system) and emphasises the role of performance appraisal in supporting better leadership.

Chile's priorities in 2007¹⁶⁹ included supporting leadership teams, and the organisations managing schools, putting into action collective performance incentives as well as increased publicity for the *Good School Leadership Framework*.

Linking the performance management of headteachers with wider strategies for school improvement

Just as for teachers, high-performing and improving systems have usually already put a performance management system in place or are developing one. Increasingly, performance management is part of a strategy which brings together professional standards, professional development, promotion and pay. Good performance management systems are clear about what will happen if headteachers fail to perform up to standard, but they emphasise much more how they will help headteachers improve.

These features are all evident in the approach adopted by Victoria, Australia.

- a. The *Learning to Lead Effective Schools Strategy* includes the Developmental Learning Framework (which applies to teachers and headteachers), as well as guidance on performance management, development and principal selection.
- b. The 2011 Guidelines¹⁷⁰ for performance management of principals draw out the links with the *School Accountability and Improvement Framework*. This is the model to be used by principals to carry out strategic and operational planning for school improvement.
- c. The *Guidelines* make the link between performance management and the process for considering whether to renew the principal's contract at the end of the five-year term, noting there is an expectation that the appraiser will 'support them to develop and perform in their role' as well as an understanding that 'principals will, over the course of their contract, acquire a more sophisticated and comprehensive understanding of the knowledge base and skills of an effective educational leader and that they will deploy this knowledge base in increasingly effective ways.'

Similarly, the performance appraisal¹⁷¹ of principals and vice-principals in Ontario is one strand of the *Ontario Leadership Strategy*, which is designed to attract and develop leaders at school and system level. Other components include the Ontario Leadership Framework and a requirement that school boards develop a (Board) Leadership Development Strategy. In order to ensure coherence at Ministry, school board and school level, principals have to take account of the goals and priorities of the Ministry and school board in preparing their own Performance and Annual Growth Plans.

Chile, too, requires that its headteachers¹⁷² performance appraisal brings together consideration of school targets in line with the *School Management Quality Framework* as well as personal targets which take account of the *Good School Leadership Framework*.

Developing and implementing a performance management system

Effective performance appraisal and development arrangements require the active participation and confidence of the people being appraised – in this case headteachers. This means it is important:

- a. to plan the arrangements carefully. Planning should involve the profession. It is wise to try out arrangements on a small scale first (piloting)
- b. to make sure the arrangements are seen to be fair, unbiased and suitable
- c. that appraisers are seen as trustworthy, with the right knowledge and skills.

In Australia, Victoria's arrangements were developed to take account of the *Schools Workforce Development Strategy* report. Implementation included consultation and piloting in 2005 involving senior education officers and 200 headteachers.¹⁷³ Similarly, development of Ontario's¹⁷⁴ performance appraisal process included input from working groups and organisations with representation from principals and vice-principals, the Minister's Principal Reference Group, leadership experts from district school boards and higher education. Twelve districts piloted the process, in which involvement on the part of principals was voluntary.

Confidence is strengthened, not just through piloting, but by ensuring that requirements are well understood and information about arrangements is freely available. New Zealand, for instance, publishes appraisal guidance on its website,^{ff} as do the Victoria Department of Education and Early Childhood Development^{gg} and the Ontario Ministry of Education.^{hh}

What are the main building blocks of a performance management and development system?

Components

In order to carry out performance appraisal and follow-up, systems need to have:¹⁷⁵

- a. a job description for the headteacher being appraised, setting out responsibilities. It is helpful, in addition, to have professional standards setting out expectations of headteacher post-holders in terms of knowledge, skills and attributes
- b. clear descriptions of the roles played by other participants in the process, such as education staff at district/municipal level and members of school governing bodiesⁱⁱ
- c. an agreed system-level policy framework, along with manuals and guidance setting out the process and consequences of the appraisal (for instance, how the outcomes of appraisal are reported, access to development activities, what action is taken in cases of poor performance)
- d. arrangements for:
 - providing information and data (e.g. on student performance, resources, school contextual data, data for benchmarking purposes) that can be used for setting goals and reviewing performance
 - ensuring evidence is robust, including taking evidence from a range of sources (e.g. feedback on performance) and comparing it

^{ff} <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/Schools/SchoolOperations/EmploymentConditionsAndEvaluation/PerformanceManagementSystems.aspx>

^{gg} <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/workm/perform/pmgmntTS.htm>

^{hh} <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teacher/appraise.html>

ⁱⁱ Or school boards.

- e. templates to ensure everyone follows procedures and records plans and outcomes accurately. This may include templates for collecting evidence (e.g. feedback from parents or teachers, observation of teaching or other activities, such as chairing meetings) as well as for recording targets and the outcomes of appraisal
- f. appropriate training and information for all participants to ensure they have the right skills, as well as carrying out the process correctly and consistently
- g. ensured that there is enough time to carry out the entire process thoroughly.

What does the performance management process look like?

Process: timing and targets

The process generally comprises:

- a. a meeting between the headteacher and appraiser(s) to agree on goals for the specified period
- b. carrying out agreed activities, including development activities, by the headteacher
- c. interim meetings to review progress and deal with any issues arising
- d. evidence collection
- e. appraisal meeting
- f. reporting.

In order to link planning for school improvement and the performance appraisal and development of headteachers, effective and improving systems ensure that:

- a. the timing of planning and evaluation cycles fits together
- b. selection of headteachers' targets for performance and development takes account of their own needs as well as the needs of the school as set out in its plans.

The Principal Class and Staff Performance Development processes in Victoria, Australia¹⁷⁶ must focus on schools' key improvement strategies and any related development needs. Both this and the school planning and review process follow a four-year cycle, each with annual implementation plans and checks on progress. There are in-year opportunities to examine progress. These are timed to take account of the release of school-level data reports (e.g. on pupil progress) and the preparation of schools' annual reports. Principals are expected to lead on all of schools' strategic plans, selecting important projects in which they will be directly involved. Development requirements are decided by taking

account of the *Leadership Framework*, the demands of the projects they are undertaking and any other relevant information such as colleagues' feedback and previous plans.

In Ontario, Canada, also, principals have a strategic Performance Plan with Annual Growth (i.e. implementation) Plans. The Performance Plan is developed in a year in which performance evaluation is scheduled. It takes account of system and school priorities. The Annual Growth Plan is used to identify areas for professional development, using the Ontario Leadership Framework and Core Leadership capacities as starting points. There are in-year opportunities for review and adjustments. Newly-appointed principals are exempt from the Performance Plan in their first year.

In Chile,¹⁷⁷ headteachers' performance assessment evaluates achievement of objectives relating to school improvement (in accordance with the School Management Quality Framework) and Good School Leadership Framework. Headteachers must set between two and four school-related targets and two-four professional development targets each year in discussion with a representative of the body running the school.^{jj}

Roles and responsibilities

Effective and improving systems have adopted broadly the same approach to the formal aspects of the performance management of headteachers throughout their area (e.g. at school board level).

In Ontario, school boards develop policies for performance appraisal, providing training, record-keeping and administrative support. Directors of education and/or supervisory officers appraise principals' performance (and sometimes vice-principals' performance).

In Victoria, in addition to the formal appraisal arrangements involving headteachers and the Designated Officer, there are also arrangements for support from other headteachers.

- a. Principals may identify someone (a 'critical friend') who can provide advice and challenge. This friend may be a retired principal or a coach from the Professional Coaches for Principals Program. He/she may be invited to help with the development of the Performance Plan and to attend review meetings.¹⁷⁸
- b. Principals are encouraged to establish Collegiate Groups^{kk} whose members meet to advise and support each other in preparing Strategic Plans, Annual Implementation Plans and the Principal Class Performance and Development Process.

Gathering and evaluating evidence

The evidence to be selected and collected for evaluation needs to be relevant to the objectives and seen as sound and fair by the headteacher being appraised, the appraiser and the wider system. It needs to be sufficiently detailed to enable well-informed discussions about progress, challenges and future development requirements. In Victoria, principals can draw on the School Level Report, quantitative and qualitative measures

^{jj} 'Sustainer'

^{kk} Guidance is available in the Collegiate Group Toolkit.

relating to the goals and milestones in the schools' strategic and annual implementation plans, feedback from leadership programmes, parents' and students' surveys, and can, if they wish, seek 360-degree feedback via the staff opinion survey.

Pay, rewards and other measures

While superficially attractive, fixed-term contracts may lead to difficulties in attracting candidates for headship. Once in post, faced with the prospect of potential unemployment at the end of their contract term, some headteachers may choose to leave early for another post.

On the whole, direct links between pay and performance have not proved effective. An alternative approach is to make a longer-term link, by relating appraisal to contract renewal. This is the strategy adopted by Victoria, where principals are appointed to five-year contracts. At the start of the contract, principals meet their Designated Officer to set targets ('expectations') for the duration of the contract and incorporate them in the principal's performance and development plan.¹⁷⁹ There is a strong emphasis on taking account of school context and on the support to be made available so that the principal can meet requirements, since that is in everyone's interest. Evaluation of performance is used in making decisions about contract renewal.

Although headteachers in Chile are now, in theory, on fixed-term contracts, employment is more likely to be ended when, even though the municipality has provided support, a principal is given an unsatisfactory performance rating for a second consecutive time. The link between appraisal and potential ending of employment has been resisted by the principals' union.¹⁸⁰

In practice, few systems actually terminate headteachers' appointments on capability grounds. Singapore, however, is the exception and, does so quickly – presumably to avoid further damage to student outcomes.¹⁸¹

10 Conclusions

In common with their approach to other aspects of education policy, high-performing and improving systems draw on research and evidence of best practice elsewhere. They do so selectively. In developing their own policies relating to headteachers, they take careful account of data and information about their own context. In particular, they evaluate whether their serving headteachers are able, yet, to take on more responsibilities. They also look at the ability of staff in supervisory positions at system and local levels to support them. Planning relating to headteachers takes account of the lead time for putting in place complementary frameworks and structures – such as the curriculum and assessment; quality assurance and accountability; funding and governance; recruitment, development and management of the teacher workforce.

Teachers have the most direct impact on student outcomes. However, headteachers create the environment in which teachers and students work, setting the vision for the school as a learning community (including expectations of performance and relationships) and building the skills of the workforce overall.

High-performing and improving systems have recognised this. They are also, increasingly, delegating some responsibilities from system level to local and school level so that, within system-wide frameworks and standards, provision can respond to local needs. Therefore, while they have greater autonomy, headteachers are also more accountable.

Consequently, while it remains important for headteachers to manage their schools efficiently and ensure compliance with legal requirements, the scope of their work has expanded. In most cases, they are being asked to move from a largely administrative role to one requiring more professional leadership in school and in the community. In some cases, they are taking on more responsibility for managing the direction of the school and the performance of their professional peers.

Inevitably, this expanded role is more demanding, both in terms of time and skill. Some systems are helping headteachers to cope by reducing the other demands they make on them and by providing funding or people to carry out administrative tasks. They can also support them in distributing professional leadership appropriately within the school through management structures. Professional leadership can also be distributed through ad hoc working groups and one-off projects. Over time, these approaches develop teacher capacity, increase teacher commitment and reduce the reliance on the headteacher.

Research into effective practice has identified the knowledge, skills and attributes required of headteachers if they are to fulfil the leadership role. Many high-performing and improving systems have chosen to build on this information to construct standards for professional practice. In some cases, the standards provide route maps through the profession from beginning teacher to experienced headteacher. They also provide a basis for recruitment and performance management, as well as the contents and accreditation of programmes of professional development. Where systems are less well established, standards may need to take account of the existing level of headteachers' knowledge and skills while setting out aspirations for improvement. Some systems have linked headteacher standards to strategies for school improvement.

Given the new challenges and accountabilities facing headteachers, even some high-performing systems are having problems finding sufficient good-quality applicants for posts. Far-sighted systems are taking steps to reduce the problem, by ensuring they have appropriate data on the demand for headteachers, as well as information on factors affecting supply. Only then can they make decisions about policies that will mitigate issues likely to deter applicants and ensure sufficient high-quality candidates for headship are available.

While a few systems have broadened the field of eligible candidates beyond the teaching profession, the requirement that headteachers should provide professional leadership generally means that they need to be qualified, skilled and experienced teachers. There is also a trend towards appointing headteachers with qualifications specific to the role. Transfer of qualified staff between headteacher and system-level roles can encourage greater understanding and more effective policy implementation.

Decisions about whether aspiring headteachers should be invited to put themselves forward via open competition or be identified as part of a succession-planning strategy often reflect the history, culture and size of the system. Whatever the approach taken, it is important that the process and criteria used are seen to be fair, transparent and related to the role. Selection processes increasingly require candidates to show they have the relevant skills. Involvement of school or community representatives ensures the appointment takes account of local circumstances, but it is important that the selection board is appropriately skilled and follows established procedures. This may require system-level involvement in the appointment process until standards and processes are firmly rooted.

While not popular with headteachers, a few systems now choose to appoint on a fixed-term contract of four to five years. Unless security of employment is assured, this may put off potential candidates. On the other hand, if it is linked to automatic renewal subject to good performance and an obligation on the system to provide support and development opportunities, it may encourage improvement. Systems with no supply issues may be able to assign headteachers to challenging schools, possibly balanced by the prospect of greater say in their subsequent career moves.

Systems wishing to appoint good quality headteachers pay salaries that compare well with those of other potentially competing professions. Headteachers' pay is increasingly differentiated from that of other teachers to encourage applications for the job. Headteachers' pay scales may take account of school size, the age of the students and the school's location (including socio-economic factors). Systems may also wish to design pay scales that give additional money for relevant qualifications and expertise, as well as to encourage headteachers to stay in their jobs (retention).

High-performing and improving systems are putting in place strategies with different types of training aimed at would-be, newly-appointed, experienced and outstanding headteachers. The strategies incorporate existing training where it has been proved to be effective and relevant. Development strategies are long term, giving priority to training headteachers of most importance to system improvement – such as those already in post but lacking appropriate knowledge and skills. To succeed, a training strategy needs to take account of the scale of the system, the capabilities of providers, and potential incentives and barriers to participation in training. It needs to establish arrangements for ensuring that training is of the right quality – whether through centralised design and delivery, inspection and/or accreditation. In any case, the outcomes need to be evaluated.

There is growing evidence about the content and approaches to training that are viewed as likely to be most effective. The focus needs to be on developing the knowledge and skills directly related to headteachers' work. While theory is valuable, it is most useful in combination with school-based activities. Headteachers particularly welcome opportunities to reflect on learning, liaise with their peers and see good practice. Programme development and delivery provides an opportunity to identify a group of existing headteachers, higher education and system-level officials who can form the core (i.e. basis) of a larger group of trainers and mentors.

Performance appraisal of headteachers brings together the focus on school improvement and accountability with their own professional development. Effective arrangements require the commitment and confidence of headteachers. They need to be fair and consistent, based on sound evidence and conducted by appraisers with appropriate skills. High-performing systems make available time and resources for the process itself and for follow-up training and development activities. While there is no expectation that the arrangements will be used often, there is clarity about what will happen when headteachers fail to perform.

Ensuring there are effective headteachers across the entire system is a long-term task which remains incomplete even in high-performing systems. However, the choice of appropriate proven strategies, their adaptation to context and systematic implementation are likely to support improvements in schools and, in the longer term, may enhance whole-system performance.

Annex A: Responsibilities of headteachers

Australia

Headteachers' jobs vary considerably depending on the organisation they are running. This may be a large secondary or combined primary/secondary school with several campus principals and an overall principal director; or a typical primary school, organised in classes by age with a small management team of principal and vice-principal; or an organisation combining not just primary and secondary education, but also offering health, recreation and sports services.

Headteachers are expected to work with staff and their community to develop strategic plans and report on outcomes.¹⁸² In Queensland, for instance, each year they must set and report on targets relating to pupil performance in key learning areas (particularly literacy and numeracy) and other outcomes (e.g. attendance) as well as pupil and parent satisfaction with teaching and learning.

Chile

In 2004,¹⁸³ headteachers' roles were defined as comprising the following:

- a. Formulate, follow up and assess the targets and goals of the school, study plans and programmes as well as strategies for their implementation
- b. Organise, guide and observe the professional development of teachers
- c. Put in place arrangements for parents to receive regular information about the operation of the school and progress of their children
- d. Organise and supervise the work of teaching and non-teaching staff; identify/recommend contract and replacement teaching and non-teaching staff; promote positive relations in the school; participate in the selection of teachers
- e. Allocate, manage and control financial resources in accordance with legal provisions for delegation of authority.

Headteachers have the ability to delegate tasks relating to the final two bullet points.

Czech Republic

Headteachers¹⁸⁴ are responsible for the administration and management of the school, including the quality of education and the recruitment and dismissal of teachers. Their responsibilities include:

- a. Delivery of the programme of education in accordance with education legislation and the curriculum documents

- b. The quality of teaching and learning
- c. The recruitment, professional development (and dismissal) of teachers and appointment of deputy headteachers
- d. Implementing the Ministry's measures to evaluate educational attainment (as well as following up on actions required after an inspection by the Czech School Inspectorate)
- e. Accountability to the community and governing body through preparation of an annual report on school performance
- f. Pupils' admission (and expulsion), attendance, welfare and guidance
- g. Decisions about fees, charges and scholarships.

Slovenia

Slovenia¹⁸⁵ is moving to increase decentralisation and the autonomy of headteachers. Headteachers work within a framework relating to the national curriculum, student and staff numbers. Headteachers of elementary schools (providing basic, compulsory education) and directors of upper school centres are responsible for:

- a. Development and implementation of the school plan, which has to be submitted to the School Council annually
- b. The selection and development of staff; including oversight of arrangements for teacher induction and mentoring; lesson observation, evaluation and feedback
- c. Recommendations about teacher promotion whether in relation to professional advancement or pay increases
- d. Allocation of resources
- e. The design of the elective part of the curriculum and any additional curriculum offerings
- f. Organisation of work in the school, including teachers' workload and timetable, though national prescription means they have little flexibility on instruction time
- g. Ensuring the quality of provision
- h. Dealing with compliance and legal matters
- i. Teaching (in schools with 16 or fewer classes).

Headteachers are expected to lead collaboration and the formation of consortia to establish links with business and the community.

South Korea

South Korea's¹⁸⁶ moves towards a decentralised education system with more emphasis paid to consumers (pupils, parents and the community) required an expansion in the role of headteachers. Previously they were 'supervisors' responsible for school finance, facilities and the curriculum, with an emphasis on administration rather than professional leadership. The Korean Educational Development Institute explored the development of headteachers' roles and implications for policy, identifying how the new role requires them to be the lead professional, leading a learning organisation and exercising 'self-direction':

- a. Setting the school vision and leading the school's planning, drawing on the views of the teachers
- b. Organising and managing the curriculum within guidelines set nationally, and standards/ contents established by the provincial office
- c. Evaluating teacher performance, providing information on professional development and supporting improved practice
- d. Supervising and evaluating school performance using data on outcomes (pupil attainment, attendance)
- e. Establishing student guidance and discipline
- f. Increasing the efficiency of resource allocation and management, including ensuring greater clarity and openness about spending
- g. Improving the participation of teachers and parents in the management of the school
- h. Establishing effective relationships with the local community.

Headteachers retain a responsibility for some aspects of administration, as well as fulfilling the Ministry's requirements for record-keeping.

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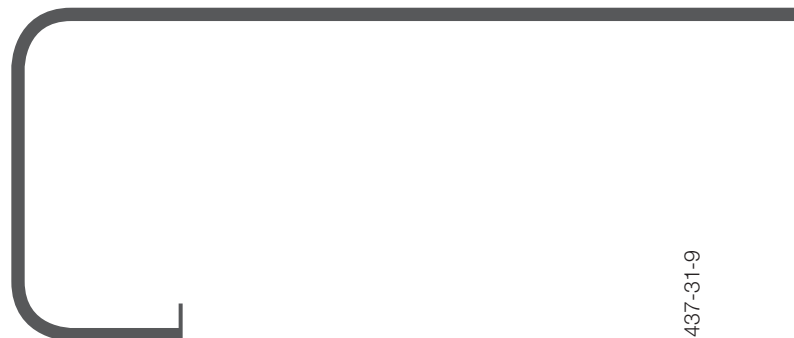
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