LEADERSHIP OF VOLUNTARY AIDED SCHOOLS: AN ANALYSIS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF HEADTEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

Voluntary aided schools exhibit a unique combination of characteristics including; responsibility for admissions, employment of staff (including the right to prioritise on the basis of faith), control of the RE curriculum, ownership of the premises, and funding from and being part of Local Authorities. This thesis investigates how headteachers of voluntary aided schools perceive their leadership role across the range of small/large, urban/rural and different faith schools of this type and whether they demonstrate similar leadership styles.

The paradigmatic approach for this research is that of realism which acknowledges the benefit of both quantitative and qualitative data to generate a broad empirical picture of educational practices, patterns and institutional outcomes. This approach is particularly appropriate for this research as there is a real world of school regulations and requirements imposed externally by central and local government that affect how voluntary aided schools are organised. However, within schools it may be that individual perceptions and priorities distort the image of the external reality and affect how headteachers lead and manage their schools.

Mixed methods were utilised comprising an on-line Likert-style questionnaire containing rating scales which provided the opportunity to determine quantitative frequencies and correlations. This was combined with open ended questions which provided the freedom to fuse measurement with opinions, quantity and quality. In addition, a purposive sample of 12 semi-structured interviews provided rich qualitative data conveying the views and perceptions of headteachers of voluntary aided schools in 12 different Local Authorities.

This thesis has made a significant original contribution to the body of knowledge in this field by presenting an overview of the perceptions held by headteachers of 450 such schools throughout England (over 10% of the total number) from different phases of education, sizes of school, types of location and denominations. It has addressed the current gap in existing research, supported the findings of several previous smaller-scale studies, identified the distinctive ethos in voluntary aided schools, highlighted the pivotal role of personal faith for these headteachers, produced a new model of ‘ethotic leadership’ and presented suggestions for future research and training.

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Finally, I would express my gratitude to my pupils, past and present, who have always been an inspiration to me and to whom, hopefully, I can present as a model of a 'lifelong learner'.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABBREVIATION	DEFINITION
ATL	Association of Teachers and Lecturers
BERA	British Educational Research Association
CASRO	Council of American Survey Research Organisations
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CRB	Criminal Record Bureau
CVA	Contextual Value Added
DCSF	Department for Children Schools and Families
DES	Department for Education and Science
DFC	Devolved Formula Capital
DfE	Department for Education
ERA	Education Reform Act
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
FSM	Free School Meals
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationery Office
LA	Local Authority
LEA	Local Education Authority
LMS	Local Management of Schools
NAHT	National Association of Headteachers
NCSL	National College for School Leadership
NCTL	National College of Teaching and Learning
NPQH	National Professional Qualification for Headteachers
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
RE	Religious Education
RS	Religious Studies
SAT	Standard Assessment Task/Test
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
SMT	Senior Management Team
SRA	Social Research Association
TES	Times Educational Supplement

CHAPTER 1 – AIMS, BACKGROUND AND STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the rationale for this research is explained and the aims, scope and limitations of the thesis are established. Contextual information is provided regarding the history and characteristics of voluntary aided schools and why this subject is of particular interest to me as an EdD researcher. Finally, the structure of the thesis is outlined with regard to the contents of each chapter.

1.2 Rationale

The need for more research into the leadership of faith-based schools has been highlighted by Grace (2003), Flintham (2004a), Parker-Jenkins, Hartas, and Irving (2005), Gardner and Cairns (2005) and Scott and McNeish (2012). Lawton and Cairns (2005) stress the need to involve headteachers in faith school leadership research and note that the underlying question about school leadership in faith schools is 'to what extent is leadership in a faith school a different process from leadership in a non-faith school?' (p. 251).

In 2009, Grace noted that leadership programmes and studies 'are still blind to religious differences in the philosophies, practices and challenges of faith school leadership' and describes the school leaders of faith schools as the 'forgotten constituency of both academic researchers and of programme providers in education' (Grace 2009a:2). Scott and McNeish (2012) note that relatively little research has been carried out in the field of faith school leadership and that most existing studies are largely qualitative and based on relatively small samples of informants.

Much of the literature that has been researched on faith schools has been written from the perspective of a particular faith such as Catholic (Arthur 1995a, 1995b, 2005; Grace 2001, 2002; Fincham 2010), Anglican (Chadwick 2001, Luckcock 2004), Jewish (Miller 2001) and Moslem (Hewer 2001). It often does not distinguish between voluntary aided and other faith schools or does not focus solely on headteachers. Furthermore, these studies tend to focus on one aspect of leadership such as spirituality or role in the community.

Examples of previous studies involving headteachers include:

- Arthur (1993) interviewed 18 headteachers and 7 governors from Catholic schools in Oxfordshire
- Stone and Francis (1995) researched attitudes of 486 Anglican governors of whom 37 were headteachers
- Grace (2002) interviewed sixty secondary school headteachers and ten other professionals from Catholic inner-city secondary schools in Birmingham, Liverpool and London
- Johnson (2002) contrasted 3 small research projects involving 6 headteachers from Catholic schools, 7 from Church of England schools and 1 from a voluntary controlled Quaker school
- Short and Lenga (2002) interviewed 15 senior staff (not all of whom were headteachers) in Jewish schools
- Parker-Jenkins et al. (2005) conducted interviews with senior managers (not all of whom were headteachers) in 10 faith schools (not all of which were voluntary aided)
- Flintham (2007a) – interviewed 26 headteachers of faith schools (not all of which were voluntary aided)
- Fincham (2010) – interviewed 8 headteachers of Catholic schools which would have been voluntary aided

These and other studies are reviewed in Chapter 2 (Literature Review) but none gives a national perspective of the views of headteachers of voluntary aided schools across different denominations.

This thesis focuses specifically on headteachers of voluntary aided schools with their unique combination of characteristics and addresses the current gap in existing research to fulfil the aims outlined below. It examines whether there is commonality between voluntary aided schools of different faiths and to what extent headteachers of these schools feel greater or lesser kinship to each other than to colleagues in other types of schools. It also examines the various theories of leadership (e.g. transactional, transformational, distributive) and discusses whether voluntary aided schools tend to attract a particular style of headteacher.

1.3 Aims, Scope and Limitations

The underlying aim of this thesis is to investigate how headteachers of voluntary aided schools perceive their leadership role and to what extent the particular characteristics of voluntary aided schools influence and impact on this. This research investigates whether headteachers of voluntary aided schools in England face similar challenges and have similar needs as a consequence of their schools' characteristics and whether these can be generalised across the range of large/small, urban/rural and different faith schools of this type.

My own interest in this area has been developed through having worked in voluntary aided schools for 35 years; 27 of which have been in the role of headteacher. During this time, I have met and conversed with many headteacher colleagues of various denominations both formally and informally.and the opportunity to engage in this doctoral research with a large sample of fellow headteachers aims to provide personal enrichment of both an academic and professional nature. Feelings of isolation and loneliness are common among headteachers (Thornton 2002) and this research provided the opportunity for me to engage with fellow practitioners to enhance my own understanding of leadership in voluntary aided schools and to encourage them to share their beliefs and perceptions and appreciate the valuable resource that colleagues can provide to support each other (Ragland 2006).

The relationship between academic study and practice also interests me and is the driver for me to have undertaken an EdD rather than a PhD. Writing from a nursing perspective, Arber (2006) notes that, for practitioners, the credibility of one's research is dependent upon a degree of reflexivity about one's theoretical and methodological assumptions and how these are experienced in the field. Reflectivity and reflexivity are discussed in Chapter 3 but, as an introduction, I am interested to investigate how my headship practice can be improved by reflecting through the lens of an educational researcher utilising the skills of critical research and analysis developed through the academic rigour of doctoral study. This thesis also aims to develop my command and confidence in discussing and applying paradigmatic approaches, methodological issues, research methods and critical analysis and attempts to demonstrate accomplished organisation and management of an independent study.

This doctoral thesis seeks to provide an original and significant contribution through the scope of the study by providing a national picture of the perceptions of headteachers of voluntary aided schools from different denominations; as well as through recommendations for further research and professional practice. On a professional level, this thesis seeks to provide a significant forum for contributing to my own development as a headteacher of a voluntary aided school and, hopefully, to contribute to the wider development and improvement of leadership in these schools nationally. Denholm and Evans (2006) note that doctoral students are able to expand professional and academic networks and this study aims to produce outcomes that should raise implications for policy, practice, training and future research and be of interest to a wide range of audiences including;

- Headteachers and governors of voluntary aided schools
- Religious leaders of faith communities
- Policy makers
- Academics researching educational leadership and management
- Training providers
- Members of the public with regard to public funding of voluntary aided schools

Although the terms 'leadership' and 'management' are not synonymous (Hannagan 2002; Lewis, Gooodman and Fandt 2004; Davies 2005a), they are frequently linked together with regard to schools (Glatter and Kydd 2003). This has become more relevant as headteachers have taken on a greater management role since the 1988 Education Reform Act (Calveley 2005). Notably, one of the 4 grades by which OFSTED evaluates schools is a judgement on 'the quality of leadership in, and management of, the school' (OFSTED 2013) and legally 'the head teacher is responsible for the internal organisation, management and control of the school' (DfE 2012). For the purposes of this thesis, therefore, 'leadership' will encompass this dual role. Leadership and management tasks are not the sole responsibility of headteachers (Leithwood and Riehl 2003, OFSTED 2003). They are evident at various levels within schools (Fink 2005) and beyond (Glatter and Kydd 2003). However, this thesis presents an analysis of leadership of voluntary aided schools from the perspective of headteachers and will focus on their role rather than on that of others such as governors, senior staff and subject leaders which are beyond the scope of this project but which have been the subject of other

studies such as Storr's research into the role of governors in Catholic schools (Storr 2009 and 2011).

1.4 Historical Background to the Voluntary Aided School Sector.

Many researchers have charted in detail the development of state-funded schooling in the UK. These include; Pile (1979), Arthur (1995a), Francis and Lankshear (2001), Grace (2001), Chadwick (2001), Walford (2001), Gates (2005), Parker-Jenkins et al. (2005), Holness (2006) among others. A brief description of this development is necessary as background to this research in order to understand the views of the denominational bodies that are responsible for voluntary aided schools as well as the other stakeholders involved with whom headteachers are required to interact

Prior to the nineteenth century, two-thirds of English children received no formal schooling. Individual philanthropists and private groups provided some schools for the poor such as Robert Raikes' Sunday Schools movement in 1780 and ragged schools. Gradually, education societies developed such as the Royal Lancastrian Society in 1808 (renamed as the British and Foreign School Society in 1814). The National Society for the Education of the Poor was set up by the Anglicans in 1811 (having been long involved with the education of the social elite) as a result of competition with non-conformist churches for the loyalties of the working class (Holness 2006)

Mass Irish emigration in the mid-nineteenth century strengthened the Roman Catholic Church in the UK and many new Catholic schools were opened. Jewish refugees arrived from Eastern Europe and also established their own schools. The government, in 1833, made small grants of £10000 to each of the two societies named above to show its concern – this was the origin of the 'dual system' of education in England (Parker-Jenkins et al. 2005). Annual grants increased gradually to over £500000 by 1857 when a Department of Education was set up. This was followed by the 1870 Education Act, in response to political pressures from trade unions and employers (Holness 2006)

This Act imposed stricter standards on the existing voluntary schools and established local school boards to set up local Board Schools - the fees for the poorest pupils in these schools were paid by the boards. Some of the existing voluntary schools were

converted to Board Schools. The 1902 Education Act abolished the school boards and set up Local Education Authorities (more recently renamed as Local Authorities) to be responsible for the renamed 'county' schools – county secondary schools were also now introduced. Church of England and Roman Catholic schools were incorporated into the state system with the Catholic schools attracting much opposition and protests of "No Rome on the Rates" (Parker-Jenkins et al. 2005)

It was the 1944 Education Act that saw the creation of the current system whereby Church schools became either voluntary aided or voluntary controlled and this Act is seen as the cornerstone of the partnership between the Church and the State and in providing the safeguarding of arrangements of the establishment of a national network of viable schools at primary and secondary levels (Arthur 1995a, Chadwick 2001; Francis and Lankshear 2001)

Church of England schools opted largely for voluntary controlled status which provided greater state funding and greater control by the Local Education Authorities (Arthur 1995a, Lankshear 2002). Few Anglican dioceses could meet the cost of maintaining all of their schools as voluntary aided where only 50% of funding was provided by the state at the time; though this increased to 75% in 1959, 80% in 1967, 85% in 1975 (Chadwick 2001) and subsequently to 90%. Catholic schools opted entirely for voluntary aided status which enabled the schools to retain more control over the curriculum and staffing (O'Keefe 1999, Grace 2001).

As the 1944 Act did not specify which denominational groups could be included, it paved the way for other non-Christian religious groups to set up voluntary aided schools (Parker-Jenkins et al. 2005). Furthermore, the incorporation of faith-based schools into the state system was intended to establish an educational system designed to uphold spiritual and moral values (Baumfield 2003).

The Conservative government from 1979 began to move towards promoting free markets and more parental choice in state schools and to take back control of the curriculum and teacher training from educationalists (Arthur 1995a, Chadwick 2001, Grace 2001). The resultant 1988 Education Act was seen by the Anglican churches as marginalising their influence and role as part of their local community. Instead, it

seemed to encourage ‘survival of the fittest’, advocate ‘market forces’ and view parents as ‘consumers’ rather than partners (Chadwick 2001:481).

The Catholic authorities similarly felt that they had diminishing influence and were not invited as a valued partner to negotiate proposals. In these ways, the Catholic hierarchy and its educational advisors faced an entirely new configuration of power and ideological relations in educational policies in England and Wales during the 1980s and 1990s (Grace 2001).

However, Chadwick (2001) suggests that the Church’s influence then improved as a result of pressurising the government to respond to the need for better RE teacher training, more effective GCSE RE examinations and improved local syllabuses. The Labour Government in 1997 wished to continue the Tory policies regarding high academic standards and parental choice and to capitalise on the success of faith schools whose characteristics distinguished them from the unfortunately labelled (by Prime Minister Tony Blair’s press secretary in Feb 2001) ‘bog-standard’ comprehensives (Chadwick 2001:484).

The 1998 School Standards and Framework Act (HMSO 1998) provided for local School Organisation Committees to include representatives from local authorities, governors and churches to establish, close and restructure schools. Voluntary controlled schools could change to aided status and the appointment of headteachers in voluntary controlled schools could have regard to the candidate’s ability and fitness to preserve and develop the religious character of the school. In voluntary aided schools, governing bodies could show preference when appointing all teachers to candidates of the faith– this strengthened the influence of the churches and other faith-based groups (Parker-Jenkins 2005).

The Dearing Review “The Way Ahead” (Archbishop’s Council Church Schools Review Group 2001) recommended significant expansion in the number of Anglican secondary schools (100 over the subsequent 8-10 years) – at that time 25% of all primary schools were Anglican but only 6% of secondary schools were so. Commenting on this report, Brown (2003) contrasts the Roman Catholic model where the mission is ‘a Catholic education for a Catholic child’ with the Anglican tradition of serving all who live in the

parish and asks whether 'this could be interpreted as a withdrawal of Church into itself, primarily concerned only with serving the needs of its own' (Brown 2003:107). Other questions raised included: Did the public demand more voluntary aided schools because of their ethos rather than their faith? Were these schools seen by the public as a way of excluding certain pupils thus, potentially, deepening rifts in society? (Worsley 2006)

Contrasting views exist regarding the importance of the Dearing Review. Johnson (2003:476) notes that 'This major and comprehensive document has the specificity of an action plan' with forty-five strategic recommendations and thirty-four examples of good practice whereas Street (2007:147) suggests that this report had minimal impact and that the Church's new-found enthusiasm for its schools appears not to be matched by a coherent and consistent consideration of the role and function of the Anglican Church or the ministry of school leadership.

As noted above, the 1944 Act allowed for non-Christian schools to be funded as voluntary aided. Existing Jewish schools availed themselves of this opportunity. The growth in the number of Jewish voluntary aided schools since 1944 has been attributed to a variety of reasons including: a high achievement factor, an alternative to synagogue involvement, the wish on the part of parents for a strong Jewish education and dissatisfaction with some values in wider society (Miller 2001). More recently, other faiths have opened voluntary aided schools: Moslem (since 1998 - following 15 years of unsuccessful applications), Sikh (since 1999) and Greek Orthodox (since 2000) (Parker-Jenkins et al. 2005). The first Hindu voluntary aided school opened in Harrow in 2008.

Johnson (2006) notes the change in less than 10 years from a lack of opposition to faith schools to an immense amount of attention from within and outside the field of education and in many national contexts and notes factors such as: government education policy, parental perception and choice, seemingly contradictory social trends including secularisation and cataclysmic events such as 9/11 and 7/7. Parker- Jenkins et al. (2005) suggest that the increasing dominant ideology of accountability, management and performance indicators in education is likely to create tensions in faith-based schools in terms of incorporating this thinking into their internal workings and, at the same time, preserving their own identity and ethos. This thesis investigates how

headteachers in voluntary aided schools perceive their leadership role within this context.

1.5 Characteristics and Numbers of Voluntary Aided Schools in England

Table 1.1 indicates how voluntary aided schools differ from other maintained schools in terms of responsibilities:

Table 1.1 – Responsibilities in Maintained Schools*

RESPONSIBILITIES	COMMUNITY	VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED	FOUNDATION/ TRUST	VOLUNTARY AIDED
Employment of staff	Local Authority	Local Authority	Governors	Governors
Admissions	Local Authority	Local Authority	Governors	Governors
Land ownership	Local Authority	Diocese/ Trust	Governors/ Trust	Diocese/ Trust
Capital costs	Local Authority	Local Authority	Local Authority	10% by Diocese/ Governors
RE syllabus	Local Authority	Local Authority	Local Authority	Governors
Governing Body representation	No foundation governors	Up to 25% foundation governors	Up to 25% foundation governors	Majority are foundation governors

*Maintained Schools by Local Authorities as defined by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (DfEE 1998)

Since the 2010 Academies Act a growing number of maintained schools have converted to Academy status including some (mainly secondary) voluntary aided schools. These converter academies have no funding through Local Authorities.

Table 1:2 indicates the number and categories of voluntary aided schools in England as at January 2011.

Table 1.2 – Number and Types of Voluntary Aided Schools in England*

DENOMINATION	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	TOTAL
None	13	36	49
Church of England	1939	120	2059
Roman Catholic	1673	323	1996
Methodist	2	0	2
Other/mixed Christian	33	26	59
Jewish	29	10	39
Moslem	6	5	11
Sikh	3	0	3
Other	2	1	3
TOTAL	**3700**	**521**	**4221**

*Official figures as at January 2011 (DCSF 2011)

The survey for this EdD thesis was compiled during 2011 – the table above, therefore, is the most accurate indicator of voluntary aided schools during the survey period. As only 49 (1.2%) of the 4221 voluntary aided schools had no religious affiliation, this thesis focuses on the 98.8% of such schools that had a denominational authority.

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

This chapter has set the research within its context, identified the aims and provided background information.

Chapter 2 provides a Literature Review examining previous studies regarding:

- School leadership
- Research relating to faith school leadership
- Previous research with headteachers of faith schools
- Employment of staff
- Admissions
- Curriculum and achievement
- The Faith School debate (autonomy, indoctrination, community cohesion and state-funding)

The findings of the review are utilised to build a conceptual framework for the research study including a suggested initial model of distinctive school leadership for investigation.

Chapter 3 presents the Research Methodology for this thesis which is based on the realist approach with mixed methods. A critical discourse is offered to provide the rationale for this choice of approach and to support the decisions made regarding the chosen methods and tools. Issues such as insider researcher bias, triangulation, reflexivity, validity and reliability are considered; as are matters of ethics appertaining to this research.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the on-line survey both in terms of overall responses as well as group responses noting where differences are statistically significant as demonstrated by chi-square tests. Responses to open-ended questions in the survey are coded and utilised to form the basis for interview questions.

Chapter 5 presents the findings of the semi-structured interviews in coded categories and quotations from the interviewees are given to add colour and depth to the data. Emerging generalisations from the interview responses are highlighted.

Chapter 6 discusses and critically analyses the findings of the survey and those of the interviews and links these to the academic discourse and theoretical underpinnings in the literature review. These are presented as emerging themes and reasons for these are suggested. Conclusions are drawn and a new model of leadership – developed from the initial model in Chapter 2 - is offered. Recommendations are proposed for further academic research, dissemination and professional practice. The chapter then outlines ways in which the thesis has made an original contribution to knowledge and practice and concludes with personal reflections regarding this doctoral journey.

CHAPTER 2 – REVIEW OF EXISTING LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, existing literature is reviewed. A brief overview is given regarding school leadership in general before considering the literature specific to faith school leadership. A section then reviews previous research with headteachers of faith schools much of which will be relevant for headteachers of voluntary aided schools.

As explained in Chapter 1, voluntary aided schools have specific legal responsibilities regarding the employment of staff and admission of pupils and existing literature in these areas is considered next. Subsequent sections discuss literature appertaining to curriculum and achievement as well as areas that regularly feature in relation to faith schools - autonomy, indoctrination, community cohesion and state-funding – all of which may impact on how headteacher's perceive their leadership role.

This review provides a secure and valid knowledge base upon which further knowledge can be added through completion of this thesis. It highlights questions that can be put to headteachers so that their answers can be utilised for clarification and explanation and, hopefully, provide new insights into their leadership role.

2.2 School Leadership

Traditionally, leadership was perceived as a manifestation of a leader's personality and traits, or behaviour and actions, or context requirements. Burns (1978), from a non-educational perspective, examined the relationship between leader and led and identified transactional leadership, based on mutual benefit, and transformational leadership, in which relationships are developed. He developed his theories of transformational leadership for the business community and, gradually, these theories were adapted to educational leadership (Sergiovanni 1990, 2000; Leithwood 1999). Links were made between leadership and management in the educational and business worlds (Hannagan 2002, Alvesson and Sveningsson 2003, Kinicki and Williams 2008) though other views suggest that these functions should be separated (Fink 2005). The link between leadership and management in education is difficult to separate (Lewis and Murphy 2008) and both are regarded as essential with leadership being necessary in

order to provide a clear vision and management being the implementation of policies and activities with which to achieve the vision (Bush and Glover 2003; Brookes 2005). This thesis examines the perceptions of headteachers of voluntary aided schools regarding their leadership responsibilities and styles and whether they differentiate between their leadership and management functions.

The 1988 Education Reform Act introduced many new aspects of managerialism to the role of headteachers (Stoll and Fink 1989, Ironside and Seifert 1995, Wilson and McPake 2000, Parker and Stone 2003, Gunter 2006, Bush 2008) with greater responsibilities for areas such as premises and finance. Gewirtz (2002) describes the changing role of headteachers from 'welfarists' pre-ERA to 'managerialists' post-ERA. This 'centralised-decentralisation' (Calveley 2005), with managerial responsibilities linked to public sector accountability, rendered business theories of leadership and management even more relevant to educational settings. Though some hold that school leadership differs from business leadership in that there is a focus on students' development (Southworth 2005), other theories of business leadership seem particularly apt for schools with some authors, for example, stressing the importance for leadership and management of mundane and everyday activities such as administration, solving practical and technical problems, giving and asking for information, chatting, gossiping, listening and creating a good working atmosphere (Alvesson and Sveningsson 2003). These will be recognised by many headteachers as forming much of their daily caseload.

Despite the increased managerial role of headteachers, the view has been expressed that 'leading learning and teaching ought to be at the heart of school leadership, not a calculated managerialism' (Lingard, Hayes, Mills and Christie 2003:76). Some promote the concept of 'leadership for learning' through which the climate for effective learning is created (Stoll, Fink and Earl 2003, Swaffield and Macbeath 2009) while others promote the concept of 'leadership of learning' with the headteacher as the 'principal learner' (Bowring-Carr 2005, Gronn 2010). Scott and McNeish (2012) cite a number of studies that evidence the important influence of leadership in effecting student outcomes (e.g. Day, Sammons, Hopkins, Harris, Leithwood, Gu, Brown, Ahtaridou and Kington 2009; Robinson, Hohepa and Lloyd 2009; Robinson, Bendikson and Hattie 2011; Leithwood and Seashore-Louis 2012). This thesis seeks to ascertain the extent to which

headteachers in voluntary aided schools perceive their role as primarily promoting pupil outcomes as opposed to other priorities and demands.

Some authors promote a broader view of school leadership with its function extending beyond the school to encompass both the school and wider communities. For example, Fullan (2003) identifies four levels of 'moral imperative' for schools: individual - devoting personal care and attention to staff; school - making a difference through change; regional - showing concern for the community and other schools; societal - being part of the bigger picture. Similarly, Day, Sammons, Hopkins, Leithwood, Gu and Brown (2010) identify ten 'strong claims' for successful school leadership and note the importance of leaders being sensitive to the specific circumstances of their schools as these could affect the nature, characteristics and pace of leadership action. Dimmock and Walker (2000) advise that there must be due consideration of cultural and contextual appropriateness before transferring policies and practices between schools and others express the view that leadership is always context based (Clarke and Wildy 2004, Ford 2006). The particular circumstances and culture of voluntary aided schools, according to these views, would affect the leadership roles and practices of headteachers and this thesis seeks to establish the extent to which this is so. Three dimensions of leadership are suggested by Bush (2011): leadership and values, leadership and vision, leadership as influence. He warns that vision can sometimes be so generic that it does not highlight a school's uniqueness and identifies the importance of a leader's own values on his/her leadership role.

Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins (2008) also emphasise the important role played by values as they suggest that the most successful school leaders are open-minded and ready to learn from others and are also flexible rather than dogmatic in their thinking within a system of core values. Marshall (2012) in his research with 7 secondary school headteachers in one LEA noted that the one voluntary aided school head was very clear about the advantages of having a clear vision for his school and that 'faith schools are empowered by this idea of a common purpose of vision' (Marshall 2012:198). This thesis investigates whether this view is shared by other headteachers of voluntary aided schools and the extent to which they believe their own personal values affect their leadership role. Regarding styles of leadership, a variety have been discussed and promoted by researchers in the field. Bush and Glover (2003), for example, identify

eight different models of leadership: instructional – focusing on teaching and learning; transformational – building unified common interest between leader and followers; moral – where the values of the leadership are critical; participative – where there are group decision making processes; managerial - focusing on functions, tasks and behaviours; post-modern – with situations open to multiple interpretations; interpersonal – relying on effective engagement with others; contingent - where styles are adapted according to context. Of these models, moral and transformational leadership styles may be particularly strong in faith schools where they are underpinned by religious beliefs and values (Scott and McNeish, 2012) though strongly held values have also been shown to influence leaders of non-faith schools (Gold 2003; Campbell, Gold and Lunt 2003; Gurr, Drysdale and Mulford 2005; West-Burnham 2009).

There are several interpretations as to transformational leadership; all linked to the concept of managing change (Southworth 1998). These include; helping followers grow and develop (Bass and Riggio 2005); shaping members' beliefs, values and attitudes while developing options for the future (Davies and Davies 2005); and inspiring others to take on leadership roles (Lewis and Murphy 2008). Hammersley-Fletcher and Adnett (2009) note that the pressure of OFSTED and league tables may result in School Development Plan priorities that are not in keeping with the freedom to lead schools transformationally. Others criticise transformational leadership for relying too heavily on persuasion and influence (Allix 2000) and for not taking into account context and personal dimension (Gronn 1997).

Shared, distributed, collective, democratic, devolved, participative and collaborative are all terms that come under the broad banner of distributed leadership (Currie, Lockett and Suhomlinova, 2009) though distributed suggests that responsibilities have been transferred by the headteacher to others whereas shared implies more collaboration (Harris 2005). Macbeath, Oduro and Waterhouse (2004) identify six categories for distributed leadership; formal, pragmatic, strategic, incremental, opportunistic and cultural. Hammersely-Fletcher and Kirkham (2007) suggest that this form of leadership sits happily with primary school headteachers due to the relatively small size of their schools and the resultant need for everyone to take on several responsibilities but add that 'at times, it may be appropriate for the Head to act autocratically, at others more democratically or, indeed, in a more distributed manner' (p 430). Robinson (2011) notes

that OFSTED reports are not consistent in their use of the terms ‘delegated’, ‘shared’ and ‘distributed’.

Invitational leaders demonstrate four basic values of optimism, trust, respect and intentionality to create an effective learning environment (Stoll and Fink 1989) and they ‘share leadership, delegate effectively and hold people accountable for their actions’ (Fink 2005:66). Novak (2005) discusses the importance of inviting oneself, as well as others, both personally and professionally.

Strategic leadership underpins all types of leadership, linking long-term vision to daily work (Davies 2005a). It links to distributive leadership as it is important to create the strategy with others (Davies 2005b), to transformational leadership (Leithwood 1999) and to sustainable leadership (Davies 2003). Strategic leaders need the skills to be able to influence people and their activities and they need to direct these activities through setting goals and creating meanings (Davies and Davies 2004). Davies (2003:295) notes the need to ‘filter out the unimportant, interpret reality and share this with staff’.

Sustainable leadership, note Hargreaves and Fink (2003), is based on seven principles: creating and sustaining learning; securing success over time; sustaining the leadership of others; addressing issues of social justice; developing human and material resources; developing environmental diversity and capacity; undertaking active engagement with the environment. Commenting on these principles, Pepper and Wildy (2008) note that they are based on the belief that educational leaders want to achieve goals that matter, inspire others to join them to attain these goals and create a lasting legacy. Others comment on the need to make connections between past, present and future (Fink 2005) and prepare and share the vision for the future (Shackleton 1995).

Similar views have been expressed by other authors. Leithwood et al. (2008) identify four categories of leadership practice that are applicable to education: building vision and setting direction; understanding and developing people; redesigning the organisation; managing the teaching and learning programme. A sense of stewardship is called for by Morrison (2002) who expresses the view that leadership is best thought of as a behaviour rather than as a role or position. Southworth (2005) describes school leadership as a combination of modelling, monitoring and dialogue. A study by the

National College of School Leadership (NCSL 2006) suggests that, in large schools, self-evaluation and priorities are identified by a senior management team whereas in a small school, all members of staff are effectively the senior management team even if they do not recognise this and are not paid for their contribution. Robinson (2011) notes that in small schools, administration forms a third element to leadership and management as there are so few staff. My personal experiences resonate with the four categories suggested by Leithwood et al. (2008). However, having led one-form, two-form and three-form entry primary schools, I can also personally vouch for the extra layer of administration tasks that affect headteachers in smaller schools which are extremely time-consuming; many of which might be termed as 'necessary trivia' but which fall to the headteacher due to a lack of supporting administration staff.

Emotional leadership is discussed by Crawford (2009); this is concerned with individual motivation and interpretation of events rather than emphasising the fixed and the predictable. She criticises much of the current literature on leadership for underestimating this dimension and notes that the educational leadership literature rarely considers headship from the perspective of the headteacher. She adds that emotion is socially constructed and stresses the importance of individual interpretation of events and situations.

This also resonates with the aims of this thesis which seeks to ascertain how headteachers of voluntary aided schools perceive their leadership role; whether they are familiar with, and can subscribe to, the above leadership styles, whether these schools tend to attract a particular type of headteacher and the extent to which the size, type, location and denomination of the school affects the leadership role.

2.3 Faith School Leadership

It is suggested by Arthur (1995a) that, post-1979, government legislation promoted influences that clashed with Catholic ideals. For example, market forces were introduced into the educational arena and these were considered by the Catholic Church to be incompatible with the duty to support the poor. Similarly, it was felt that competition between schools was morally wrong as it placed smaller schools at a disadvantage. In particular, he discusses notable changes such as the diminishing role of trustees, the loss of control over the curriculum, the increasing influence of OFSTED

over spiritual and moral education, the decreasing support by the government for free transport to Catholic schools and the creeping influence by government over admission matters. It is the leadership role of trustees and the Catholic Church that is the focus in his study rather than educational leadership by headteachers whose perceptions of their leadership role are sought in this thesis.

Also writing from a Catholic viewpoint, Grace (2009a) referring to his earlier research (2002) notes the tensions that result from competing pressures of faith and market forces and comments that faith schools have a dual mission to serve 'God and Caesar' and that a major challenge for faith school leadership is to keep that mission in an appropriate balance. He suggests that 'educational research, consultancy and CPD provision can help to meet the needs of such school leaders as these dilemmas become sharper for Anglican, Catholic, Jewish and Moslem school leaders' (Grace 2009a:490). He notes that there is no shortage of training courses provided for the secular professional needs of faith school leaders, but that this is less extensive for religious, spiritual and moral responsibilities. Although he quotes examples of specific courses provided by religious institutions (for example, the MA in Catholic School Leadership at St. Mary's University, Strawberry Hill) he sees potential disadvantages as this reinforces the idea of faith schools occupying a 'private realm' within the secular modern state. He suggests that the 'in-house' provision of programmes and research by the various faith communities in the UK must be complemented by and integrated with mainstream and public provision by secular agencies.

The growing pressures of secularisation are noted by Gallagher (1997) who comments that 'especially in the academic and media worlds, a secular culture reigns with the result that religion is subtly ignored as unimportant' (Gallagher 1997:23) Similarly, Grace (2009a) suggests that the distinctive educational cultures of faith schools and the distinctive challenges that their leaders face have been side-lined within this secular world view. Fincham (2010) raises the challenge as to what model of leadership is appropriate in Catholic schools; the ruthless business leader or a model of compassionate leadership that exemplifies Catholic teachings.

The additional challenge of leadership succession is observed (Gallagher 2007, Fincham 2010) noting the decline in the number of applicants for headteacher and deputy

headteacher posts in Catholic schools. Fincham (2010) also suggests that just as the principle of subsidiarity has led to more delegation in the Catholic Church hierarchy, so leadership in schools should move to more shared and collegial modes of leadership. He suggests that 'in Catholic schools there is a need to promote a distinctive, specifically Catholic nature and ethos of school leadership' (p.74), a need to develop leaders to face the specific challenges of a faith school and a need to provide opportunities for staff to enhance their 'theological literacy' (p.75).

The challenges posed by secularisation are also highlighted in the Assciation of Muslim Social Scientists Position Paper (2004) which discusses the Muslim perspective on a variety of issues such as the purpose of education, multiculturalism, funding, parental choice and governance with particular emphasis placed on the view that 'secular' is not synonymous with 'neutral' but is fundamentally opposed to religion (a view also expressed by Lankshear 2001). Although leadership by headteachers is not directly addressed in this paper, the issues outlined may impact on their role. The research with headteachers for this thesis investigating how they perceive their leadership role seeks to ascertain the extent to which they feel the pressures of secularisation and criticism of faith schools. This is addressed further later in this chapter.

Differences in attitudes between Catholic and Church of England schools are discussed by Johnson (2003). She suggests that Catholic schools have a clear ethos and sense of purpose and that the headteacher 'part personifies the leadership of the local Catholic community and so is to embody Catholic values in his or her behaviour as an example to the school as a whole' (p. 473). By way of contrast, the communion of the Church of England does not have a tight central control of church management and doctrine and 'at school level, there is no expectation that the headteacher and teaching staff should be practising Anglicans (or even practising Christians)' (p. 474). However, she suggests that the Dearing Review marked a Church of England shift in policy with their schools to be viewed as a central part of the Church's mission to the nation and that the role of the headteacher had changed from one that sometimes made no religious demands to one whereby he/she is 'to lead the church school in a committed manner that maintains its Christian character in its everyday activities and curriculum' (p. 477). This thesis seeks to investigate whether there are noticeable differences in the perceptions of headteachers from different denominations.

A one day conference entitled "Leading Schools of a Religious Character" was organised in 2004 by the National College of School Leadership. The Conference Papers from this Leading Edge Seminar (Flintham 2004b) contained a pre-seminar think-piece and a keynote presentation from West-Burnham in which he discusses a variety of aspects pertaining to faith schools. With regard to leadership he comments that one of the key functions of leadership is to create a sense of community by building alignment around principles, purpose and people and that there seems little doubt that schools of faith have been remarkably successful in this respect.

The Conference Papers also include pre-seminar papers from the Archbishop of Canterbury, who commented that 'leadership in a school of a religious character can only be appreciated fully from within the perspectives and expectations of the faith', the Archbishop of Birmingham who commented that 'the head is the point where the cultures of church, society and specific institution intersect and that sort of position is never comfortable' and the Chief Rabbi who commented that 'a faith school must embody the principle that every child counts, that each has unique gifts, that each has a singular contribution to make, without which the world would be a poorer place.' The papers include reports from workshops on the role of faith schools, the nature of leadership in faith schools and suggestions for ongoing support. This conference was attended by ninety delegates representing all phases of education and the Anglican, Roman Catholic, Jewish and Muslim faiths. The papers reveal that much of the discussion appears to have been about the sociological impact of religious schools and their place in society with relatively little discussion about the specific challenges and pressures faced by leaders of such schools Delegates did, however, identify the need for 'Recognition' (of the need for specific selection and training of headteachers of religious schools), 'Research' (into the specific characteristics required for leading religious schools) and 'Reflection' (opportunities to develop). However, it is not clear how many of the delegates were headteachers.

A further publication "Leadership and faith: working with and learning from school leaders" was produced by the National College for School Leadership (NCSL 2006) which recapped on the 2004 conference and reported on a national survey of provision for leadership and management development in faith schools carried out by the NCSL

together with the Catholic Education Service and the Church of England Education Division across Anglican and Roman Catholic dioceses. Key priorities identified include: a more strategic approach to leadership and management development; understanding and making effective, through training and development programmes, the distinctiveness of faith-based schools; faith-based activities to nourish teachers and leaders personally as well as professionally; creating effective models to strengthen community leadership; supporting school and network-based training and development; strengthening links with higher education, particularly the network of Church Colleges and Universities; more effective marketing of NCSL programmes and activities within the context of Anglican and Roman Catholic schools and the communities that they serve; more inter-diocesan and regional opportunities. These aims, laudable though they are, are broad rather than specific, do not distinguish between voluntary aided and other faith based schools (private and maintained) and would appear to concentrate primarily on the spiritual role of faith schools.

The National College for School Leadership has supported a number of studies and developments with regard to faith schools. These include:

- A study by the Grubb Institute of transformational leadership in three church schools (Grubb Institute 2002)
- Pre-NPQH leadership development programmes coordinated by the Dioceses of Oxford and Birmingham
- The development of NPQH materials addressing issues specific to faith schools
- Reflective papers; 'Reservoirs of Hope: spiritual and moral leadership in headteachers' (Flintham 2003a), 'When Reservoirs Run Dry: why some headteachers leave headship early' (Flintham 2003b) and 'Leadership, Spirituality and the Journey of Faith' (Flintham 2004b)
- A survey of provision for leadership and management across Anglican and Catholic dioceses of England by the Catholic Education Service and the Church of England Education Division
- Leadership development for succession planning in the Jewish community by the United Jewish Israel Appeal organisation
- A focus piece (Goulden and Robinson 2006) as a composite of the views of a group of headteachers from schools with a religious foundation

addressing how the national standards for headteachers apply to the leadership of faith schools.

- A study by Scott and McNeish (2012) investigating the issues and challenges faced by leaders of faith schools – the findings of which are discussed elsewhere in this thesis

Different approaches that enable faith-based schools to flourish are discussed by McGettrich (2005). He suggests that in a systems-driven approach, schools are required to deliver priorities set by communities external to the faith community. As a result, government and civic authorities are more inclined to be interventionist in matters such as targets, outcomes, standards and competencies but less likely in matters of faith, values and ethics other than to speak of pluralism and the celebration of diversity. An alternative, he suggests, is to have a values-based approach to education in which faith-based communities set their own vision and related agendas and in which faith is a critical dimension of that learning. In such cases, faith-based schools are most likely to thrive under a system which gives precedence to the values and aspirations of the community and where 'the state is a servant of that community' (p. 106).

The pressures of managerialism are addressed by Luckcock (2006) from the perspective of a serving headteacher and he comments that Christian headteachers will need to be able to do theology for themselves in a way that 'enables them to maintain a dual allegiance to their faith and the managerial demands of contemporary school leadership' (p. 2-3). Furthermore, he suggests that since Church school leadership involves religious and spiritual leadership, to the Christian it comprises a form of lay ministry which is complementary to the Church's ordained ministry (p. 60-61). This begs the question as to whether other faith school leaders share his views regarding spiritual leadership of their schools; particularly if they are not practising or are of a different faith to that of the schools they are leading – this question is investigated in this thesis as well as the extent to which managerial demands impact on the workload of headteachers.

2.4 Previous Research with Headteachers of Faith Schools

Writing from a Catholic perspective, Arthur (1993) conducted semi-structured interviews with 18 headteachers and 7 governors from Catholic schools in Oxfordshire -

all of which would have been voluntary aided - and noted that there was no consensus among the interviewees regarding admissions, appointments, curriculum, control or aims of the schools. He felt that, within the sample, many headteachers and governors held different intentions and objectives for Catholic education and that about half the sample thought that 'the Church was clear at expounding the ideal of the Catholic school but not at finding ways of embodying this vision in practice' (p. 285). He concludes that, although there was general commitment to retaining Catholic schools, this was not a cohesive group in educational matters and that there were competing ideologies regarding the direction of Catholic education. This research focused solely on the aims and ethos within 18 Catholic schools in Oxfordshire which may not have been representative of other faith schools or, indeed, of other Catholic schools in other locations.

The 34 Catholic headteachers in Grace's research (Grace 1995) with 88 headteachers, mainly in the north-east of England, expressed concerns at having to 'play the market' in order to conform to current government directives and that this created a moral dilemma for them in that it ran counter to the teachings of their Church:

> In essence, playing the market involved selecting the most able pupils from the most educationally supportive homes in order to maximize the output of measurable success on league tables of performance ….The moral dilemma for educational leaders (as opposed to simply managers) was constituted by a recognition that 'playing the market' made it much more difficult to serve the poor and the powerless (Grace 1995:176-177)

Subsequently, Grace (2002) interviewed sixty secondary school headteachers and ten other professionals from Catholic inner-city secondary schools in Birmingham, Liverpool and London seeking to elicit how they understood Catholicity, the ethos of their schools and the pressures they experienced in maintaining their mission integrity while operating in a competitive market. He addressed the issues of the government's market-based approach to education and how this causes tensions in the Catholic religious value system 'to keep alive and to renew the culture of the sacred in a profane and secular world' (p. 5). Two key questions (p.13) centred around whether the integrity of the Catholic mission was being compromised by the influence of market values and

secular success cultures and to what extent were Catholic schools showing a 'preferred option for the poor' in ethnically mixed and poor urban conurbations.

He found differing priorities among the headteachers; for example, while the majority had traditional discourses of 'holiness and service', more utilitarian discounts were emerging in a minority of others and many commented on an 'ebbing tide' of living Catholicity despite comments from OFSTED about a 'distinctive Roman Catholic' ethos in these schools. Headteachers of 'successful' schools (as judged by GCSE results) did not believe that selection by faith influenced covert academic and social advantages (though Grace seemed sceptical about this). Regarding the government's encouragement at the time for schools to convert to Grant Maintained status, five of the headteachers were 'pro-market', twenty-five were 'pragmatic survivors' and thirty were 'market regulators' trying to balance the values of competition with the common good. This prompted Grace to ask, 'If schools in a market economy in education must show good 'company' results in academic success and growing social status, what becomes of the Catholic principle of 'preferred option for the poor?' (p. 181). He concludes that while many Catholic schools succeed in maintaining a 'Catholic synthesis' despite the market-driven system, continued 'spiritual capital' among school leaders is essential for the preservation of these schools' mission integrity for the future.

Commenting on Grace's research, Walford (2003) suggests that this was not a representative sample of Catholic headteachers nationally and that there is a need for more research by researchers both in and out of the faith in question. A subsequent study from a Catholic perspective was conducted by Fincham (2010) who interviewed eight Catholic headteachers and found that they were satisfied with support from Diocesan officers although there were some concerns about their effectiveness in some problematic areas such as sex education. Most of the headteachers found their governing bodies to be supportive though relationships with parish priests and parents varied among the interviewees. Other challenges included; work overload, secular values, the impact of family breakdown, market culture in society, staffing issues and the role of the headteacher as a faith leader.

In contrast to the views expressed by the Catholic headteachers in both Arthur's 1993 survey and Grace's 2002 survey, are those expressed in Flintham's study (Flintham

2007b) in which he interviewed fifteen English and fifteen Australian Catholic principals as well as nine English and two Australian diocese representatives investigating the spiritual formation, development and sustainability of Catholic school principals across twelve dioceses in England and Australia. They reported that the Catholic system was felt to provide a 'ready-made purpose' for service and community and working in it gave not only 'a way of putting something back into the faith' but also the opportunity to 'live out one's faith in a community of consistency between personal values and school values' (p. 4). This report would also appear to contradict the findings of Storr (2009) who, based on a survey of Catholic school governors, found no consensus on what is meant by Catholic ethos and suggested that these schools were beginning to lose their distinctive ethos. Similarly, research by Walbank (2012) suggests that some Catholic schools are shifting away from the historic model of providing education solely for the Catholic community. Regarding leadership attributes, Flintham (2007b) suggests that the need to publicly 'uphold the code' not only in the immediate school community and its Catholic environs, but also in a bridge-building role within the pluralist and secular world, could create the 'added burden' of 'being the moral icon' and 'modelling expectations' which requires additional 'reservoirs of resilience' (p. 7).

Other studies investigate from the perspective of Anglican schools. Stone and Francis (1995) researched attitudes of 486 governors (of whom 37 were headteachers) of 55 Church of England voluntary aided primary schools in the Diocese of Chichester. This was undertaken by means of questionnaires including a number of attitudinal items arranged for a Likert-type scoring on a five-point scale. Their aim was to chart the perceptions of school governors in the light of changing compositions of governing bodies (the 1980 Act enhanced the status of governors in primary schools and included teacher and parent governor roles) and whether perceptions differed among different categories of governors.

Drawing on earlier research (Francis 1986), they note that a study of primary schools in Gloucestershire found that church schools expressed more signs of church-relatedness than county schools, encouraged more contact with clergy and church, held more explicitly Christian assemblies and had more emphasis to church-related aspects of RE. This research also found that headteachers' personal religious commitment had a

significant influence on the ethos of a school and that younger teachers were less likely to emphasise religious ethos. Other quoted research (Francis 1986) in Suffolk noted considerable variation in attitudes of teachers in voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools and that age and personal commitment were key predictions of attitude. The data suggested that as younger teachers replaced more senior ones, the desire to assert the distinctiveness of church schools would decline.

The 1995 research by Stone and Francis found that foundation and headteacher governors were significantly more positive than local authority, parent and teacher governors with regard to the Christian character of their schools and that this was closely related to their own faith, commitment and practice. They also found that younger governors were less committed than older ones and concluded that the Anglican Church 'may experience greater difficulties in implementing its hopes that the governing bodies of church schools will continue to assert the distinctive character of these schools' (Stone and Francis 1995:185). The possible consequence, which is not articulated, is that as younger governors take over from more senior colleagues and will be responsible for appointing new headteachers, they may not see the necessity for appointing practising Anglicans in leadership roles. As with previous studies, this one based in Chichester may not be representative of the national situation. This thesis seeks the views of a large number of headteachers of voluntary aided schools and will also investigate whether there is any significant difference in attitudes of new compared with more experienced respondents.

Another study from an Anglican perspective is that of Colson (2004) in which he interviewed four headteachers of voluntary aided Church of England secondary schools in the Diocese of London to investigate the source of values and the part they played in the transmission and expression of these values. They all identified the importance of the senior management team in that they served as 'an arena where values are discussed as well as acting as a conduit for the head's dissemination of his or her own concepts of value' (p. 74). All viewed the purpose of their school to be one of service to a local community:

> Headteachers do not see their schools as deliberately socially or religiously divisive. Rather they see them as servant communities where ethnicity and creed are honoured,

> valued and enabled and this belief is enshrined at the core of the schools' value structures (p. 82)

Colson suggests that further research is needed to see whether these headteachers' views are shared widely and suggests that the ability of the head and governing body to control the nature of schools is limited in the face of a multiplicity of external factors.

Further research into Church of England schools was conducted by Street (2007). This consisted of semi-structured interviews with ten headteachers of voluntary aided secondary Anglican schools in two dioceses to assess the impact of the 2001 Dearing Review (Archbishop's Council Church Schools Review group 2001). This had set out to identify factors which contribute to the distinctiveness and effectiveness of church schools, to assess the need and opportunities for increasing numbers of these schools and to develop strategies for increasing the vocation to teach. Street notes the earlier default position of Anglican schools as being "general" – providing good education for the community - rather than "domestic" - developing faith in Christian children - but suggests that confidence in church schools grew in the 1990s fuelled by schools' abilities to withstand the rigour of external inspection and from public popularity based upon the perception that children in church schools were better behaved and achieved better examination results.

Of the ten headteachers interviewed, six had a strong faith background, two did have significant involvement in their local church but their prime motive was to tackle challenging schools regardless of church status and the remaining two had weak personal ties to the church. From their comments, three main themes emerged. First of all, that they identified the 'value-driven ethos of their schools' with examples such as 'respect', 'caring', 'being nice' and 'working hard' but did not identify specific Christian values. Secondly, regarding the 'nurture of students in faith' there was a provision of a Christian environment with 'bolt-on' specific Christian activities but there was a lack of theological and philosophical rationale for these. Thirdly, although the schools encouraged families to attend church, there was a frustration that the churches failed to 'cash in' on this captive audience and that 'local clergy were seen to be sensitively reactive but not creatively proactive' (p. 145).

Street concludes that the Dearing Review seems to have had minimum impact on the thinking and practice of church school headteachers and suggests four reasons for this. First of all, he suggests that the Dearing Review reflects present good practice rather than offering anything new, for example, it does not explore what is meant by Christian values. Consequently, headteachers looked to Local Authorities and central government, rather than churches, to inform development of policy and practice. Secondly, the Dearing Review had not been the subject of strategic consideration by dioceses who's 'boards of education appear to be content with sustaining a pragmatic taxonomy of distinctiveness' (p. 146). Thirdly, the Dearing Review had been ignored by other branches of the church, for example, the Report of the Archbishops' Council 2004 failed to consider the role of church schools. Fourthly, he notes the lack of any systematic planned programme addressing the nature of Anglican school leadership. It should be noted that this study looked at just ten headteachers across two dioceses and it would be interesting to investigate whether a larger national sample would elicit the same responses from headteachers of voluntary aided Church of England schools. The extent to which personal faith and diocesan support guides and impacts on roles of headteachers in voluntary aided schools is investigated in this thesis.

A further study examining Christian distinctiveness was conducted by Jelfs (2010) who sent survey questionnaires to all the headteachers of Church of England schools in one diocese. 45 questionnaires were analysed representing 34% of the schools in the diocese. Of these, 22 were from voluntary aided and 2 from voluntary controlled schools. In addition, ethnographic studies were undertaken in the diocese of one voluntary controlled and two voluntary aided schools. Her findings suggest that Church of England schools understand and demonstrate their Christian distinctiveness in two main ways. First of all, a commitment to the Christian and Anglican foundation, that is demonstrated by strong links with the Church and a significant religious dimension in the corporate life of the school. Secondly, a definite intention for their shared way of life to reflect Christian beliefs and be characterised by love, care and respect for all; and it is from this that an emphasis on personal development and academic achievement is derived. She concurs with Street (2007) that there appears to be no critique of educational ideas and practices but rather an uncritical compliance with the dominant educational discourse and she suggests that schools do not have a clear understanding of

how their Christian character relates to the core pedagogical practices of teaching, learning and curriculum.

Several studies compare the perceptions of headteachers from different denominations. Johnson (2002) compares three different research projects to see how headteachers perceive their role in developing children's spirituality. The first (Johnson and Castelli 2000) interviewed six headteachers of Catholic schools, the second (Johnson and McCreery 1999) interviewed seven headteachers of Church of England schools and the third (Johnson 2001) interviewed the headteacher of a Quaker voluntary controlled school. She notes the strengthening popularity of church schools despite the fact that the Church of England and Catholic churches are believed to have lost over half a million members during the period 1975 – 1999. She notes existing research (Nias, Southworth and Campbell 1992, Southworth 1995, Grace 1995) which suggests that the culture of a school is based on the enduring beliefs and values of the headteacher who then encourages them among the rest of the school's staff and that 'the headteacher must conform to government stipulations….. whilst also addressing pupils' spiritual and moral development to some extent in terms of the traditions of the denomination' (Johnson 2002:217).

She concludes that the Catholic headteachers, all of whom were practising Catholics, had a 'closed' leadership style due to a strong sense of identity and certainty. This would seem to support the views expressed in Flintham's study (Flintham 2007b) but contradict the views expressed in the studies by Arthur (1993), Grace (2002), Storr (2009) and Walbank (2012) as noted above. The Church of England headteachers, only two of whom were practising Anglicans, had an 'ambivalent' style dependent on individual headteachers; due to their dual loyalty to the church and the local community. The Quaker school headteacher had an 'open' style. As with previous items, this research consisted of a small number of interviews and may not be representative of the national picture. This thesis, in addition to producing a national sample, examines whether headteachers of voluntary aided schools appear to share particular styles of leadership.

Senior staff (not all headteachers) from fifteen Jewish primary schools (thirteen of which were voluntary aided) were interviewed by Short and Lenga (2002). The focus of

this research was on approaches to and the teaching of multiculturalism and a wide variety of approaches were discovered. They concluded that the study did not support the charge that faith schools were 'divisive' or that they propagated intolerance as even those that rejected conventional multiculturalism were committed to teaching respect for people irrespective of their ethnic or religious background. This research focused solely on attitudes towards multiculturalism in response to charges levelled against faith schools. As part of this thesis, the perceptions of headteachers regarding the effect on their role as a result of criticism of faith schools is investigated.

Interviews were conducted by Parker-Jenkins et al. (2005) with senior managers (not all of whom were headteachers) in 10 faith schools (not all of which were voluntary aided) to explore matters such as religious ethos, cultural background of pupils, admission policies, community involvement, curriculum issues, special educational needs, staff recruitment, accountability and inspection. This formed one part of an extensive work tracing the development of faith based schools from Anglican and Catholic establishments through to the more recent Muslim, Sikh, Greek Orthodox and Seventh Day Adventist schools. Views of those opposed to faith schools are also quoted and discussed. Leadership is not the main focus of this research but the authors comment that the success of faith-based schools, both funded and non-funded, is very much dependent on the quality of the school leadership and its ability to manage the external environment and liaise with other schools to share good practice.

Twenty-six headteachers from a variety of faith schools (not all voluntary aided) were interviewed by Flintham (2007a) investigating the development and professional implications of the personal faith of headteachers in the spiritual and moral leadership of schools. Fourteen of these headteachers described themselves as religious, seven as secular and five as being of a different faith to the schools which they led. He suggests that the respondents demonstrated three 'attitudes of passion' which provide an underlying and unifying theme across all responses; 'to make a difference, power to change entrenched attitudes and capacity to make progress in the face of challenging circumstances' (p.5). However, it could be argued that these same attitudes could be evident in headteachers of non-faith schools and, consequently views are sought in this thesis from headteachers who have led both voluntary aided and other schools to investigate whether they perceive differences in the required leadership skills or not.

Studies focusing on spirituality of headteachers were conducted by Woods (2007) and Flintham (2010). Woods' research investigated questionnaires sent to headteachers across 3 Local Authorities. However, of the 244 respondents, 54% were from headteachers of non-denominational schools. Similarly, Flintham (2010) conducted research with 150 headteachers from England, Australia and New Zealand but not all were leaders of faith schools.

An overseas perspective is also provided by McInerney (2003) who interviewed six Australian principals to investigate the impact of school-based management on educational leadership. This research follows on and quotes from Grace (1995) who argued that local management of schools had not only distracted headteachers from children and classroom learning but had also seriously undermined their work as educational leaders. The Australian principals reported that there had been a shift in their activities from curriculum to administration; that divisions had been created between leadership and staff; that they were now part of a chain of authority up to Minister level; that business management systems had been brought into schools and that principals were now viewed as having either old-fashioned or new leadership styles. Although McInerney's research does not deal with voluntary aided schools it does raise the question as to whether voluntary aided schools with their additional responsibilities for admissions, capital expenditure and staffing place more pressure on headteachers than do other maintained schools – these questions are put to respondents in this thesis.

An American study by Bryk, Lee and Holland (1993) investigating Catholic schools provides another overseas perspective. Although these schools were privately funded as there is no state funding for religious schools in the USA, the study identified an inspirational ideology by which a vision of the school as a caring community, committed to social justice and the common good, is promoted. This thesis investigates the perceptions of headteachers regarding their role in leading school communities.

None of the above research articles in isolation adequately addresses the issues of Leadership of Voluntary Aided Schools in England. Ten of the articles deal with one faith only and those that consider more than one faith do not deal solely with voluntary

aided schools. Furthermore, most of the research samples are small and so may not be representative of the national picture. The largest sample of 88 voluntary aided school headteachers (Grace 1995) was based primarily in the north-west and the next largest was based in three large cities. However, as we have noted, these articles have highlighted a number of questions that will be incorporated into the research for this thesis.

2.5 Staffing

In voluntary aided schools, preference may be given in connection with the appointment, remuneration or promotion of all teachers at the school, to persons whose religious opinions are in accordance with the tenets of the religion or religious denomination of the school (Walford 2001). In fact, the Education and Inspection Act 2006 (DfES 2006) extended this to include all staff in voluntary aided schools (and headteachers in voluntary controlled schools). Teachers' unions such as the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL 2007) are opposed to these rights and regard them as discriminatory.

The importance placed by faith schools on the role of the teacher as an exemplar of the faith tradition is discussed by Hewer (2001) who notes that the position of the teacher in a Moslem school is not that of 'neutral communicator' but rather the 'committed embodiment of the message being taught.' Parker-Jenkins et al. (2005) state that this attitude is also shared in other faith schools and that this poses difficulties for recruitment. They note the ability of the governing bodies of voluntary aided schools to 'give explicit preference to committed members of the faith-based group in the appointment of the headteacher and other teachers' but point out that 'the Muslim, Sikh and Hindu schools we researched for this study all employed staff from a variety of faith backgrounds, but difficulties emerge over leadership of the institution' (p. 105).

A contrasting view is suggested by McGettrick (2005) who notes that, in a Christian school, the faith base is normally one concerned with relationships and care and that the criterion for the school being faith-based is its leadership, mission and values and how these are reflected in the culture of the school. Consequently, much depends on how things are taught rather than what is taught. However, others share the view that personal commitment to the faith is important. McGrath (2003) notes that a Catholic

philosophy of education can only be fully delivered by teachers who are themselves fully committed to it.

This resonates with my own view which is that parents who send their children to faith schools want them to be taught by teachers who share the same religious values and who will, therefore, create an all-pervading ethos within the school. One cannot compare a music lesson given by a non-musical teacher, to one given by a teacher who derives personal pleasure from singing or playing instruments. In the same way, RE in faith schools is provided by members of staff that have an extremely close affinity with what is being taught because they practise it as an important part of their own lives…there is an enormous difference, and resulting impact on pupils, between teaching 'what others do' and teaching 'what we practise' (Shaw 2010).

With regard to training, Gardner and Cairns (2005) ask to what extent should teachers, leaders and managers in faith schools expect to be offered or to participate in continuing personal and professional development which is different to colleagues in non-faith schools (p. 222). They also note a management-leadership dilemma for faith schools; namely, 'For whom and to whom do they speak? They are responsible to their faith school sponsors, as well as to the wider community which supports them financially' (p. 230). This thesis seeks to ascertain the extent of conflicting pressures on headteachers of voluntary aided schools.

Faith schools have traditionally found it more difficult to recruit headteachers. Howson (2006) noted that 24 out of 49 Catholic schools that had advertised for a headteacher had not filled the post and that some schools were sharing headteachers due to shortages. Scott and McNeish (2012) note that faith schools overseas face similar recruitment problems. Helm (2000) reported on the recruitment problems experienced in Catholic schools in the United States and Dorman and d'Arbon (2002) reported on the situation in Catholic schools in Australia; the latter suggesting contributing factors such as the clash between Catholic and contemporary culture and that pupils, parents, the Church educational system and the Church authorities scrutinise the faith commitment, personal lives and religious practices of school leaders.

These articles have highlighted a number of questions that this thesis seeks to address:

1. To what extent do headteachers in voluntary aided schools consider that it is essential for their teachers to be of the faith?
2. Has recruitment been a problem and if so, why?
3. Do these headteachers have dual loyalties to their dioceses/local authorities?
4. Do these headteachers have issues or suggestions with regard to training**?**

2.6 Admissions

Voluntary aided schools act as their own admissions authorities and this has led to frequent accusations (e.g. West 2006) of 'cherry-picking' middle-class families in order to achieve high standards. As this may impact on the leadership role of headteachers, an overview of developments in recent years with regard to admissions would seem appropriate.

Gorard, Taylor and Fitz (2003) state that areas with considerable diversity have higher levels of segregation and have tended to maintain these levels over time. Consequently, West (2006) argues for a controlled choice admissions system administered by local authorities with a moderated system of parental choice. She suggests that, in relation to catchment areas, whilst the use of criteria related to place of residence may be inevitable in rural areas given transport costs, this is not the case in densely populated urban areas where transport is less likely to be a problem.

Similarly, Tough and Brooks (2007) note that different neighbourhoods are segregated by social class and income and argue that all local authorities should move towards a system of area-wide banding where the objectives of achieving a mixed ability intake of pupils at every school would sit alongside other factors such as parental preference and the distance from home to school. They suggest that this argument applies equally to schools with a religious character, which means that religious faith would no longer take strict precedence over all other factors in allocating places to these schools. However, attempting to engineer social mixing would appear to be problematic as it has been shown that areas such as Bradford have experienced 'white flight' as a result of parents not wishing their children to contribute to social mixing (Rahman 2009).

The 2006 Education Act introduced a number of factors to facilitate fairer admissions (Tough and Brooks 2007). These include:

- Banning of interviews for admissions
- Strengthening the status of the Admissions Code
- Establishing a process for Admission Forums
- Extension of the duty on local authorities to provide free transport for the disadvantaged
- Introducing the duty on local authorities to provide advice and assistance to parents in expressing a preference

However, although the banning of interviews was intended to prevent schools from 'cherry-picking' higher ability pupils and higher income families, an alternative view is that, prior to this ban, interviews had helped schools to identify the genuinely religious families. For example, Odone (2010) suggests that interviews were designed to catch out the 'convenience converts who suddenly found God when private school fees loomed and the local church looked like a little piece of Heaven'. She suggests that the admission process that replaced interviews involves a show of photocopied documents and (often) a request for a record of voluntary work in the parish which is far more likely to discourage the genuinely religious but disorganised non-professional parent.

Gorard et al. (2003) suggest that it is the ability of schools to act as their own admissions authorities that is the chief determinant of increased segregation in their local areas. Similarly, West, Hind and Pennell (2004) found that foundation and voluntary aided schools used certain criteria designed to 'select in' certain groups; for example, those with aptitudes for particular subjects and children of former pupils/employees. Analysing admissions intakes to comprehensive schools in London, West and Hind (2006) found that comprehensives with autonomy over admissions were more likely to have criteria that creamed off certain pupils, were more selective, had a lower proportion of pupils with Special Educational Needs and achieved higher scores in published league tables. They suggest that, although it might be argued that differences in attainment are due to voluntary aided and foundation schools being more effective, it might be hypothesised that this is because parents are less likely to choose voluntary aided or foundation schools if their child has Special Educational Needs believing that the school is not one that will offer a place for their child or one that will cater for their child's needs.

In 2006, Education Secretary Alan Johnson suggested that faith schools be required to accept 25% of pupils from other faiths. Opposition from the Catholic community was sufficiently robust to defeat this proposal (Browne 2006). However, within the teaching profession itself, concerns are expressed regarding the effects caused by admissions policies of faith schools. Crace (2006) reports on a Headspace survey regarding attitudes towards faith school admissions policies which revealed that many headteachers believed that these schools rarely reflect the social compositions of the communities in which they are located, that they seem to get a disproportionally high percentage of their intake from the educational middle-classes in comparison to non-denominational community schools and that they have an adverse effect on their own schools' admissions.

Teachers' unions would appear to be extremely critical of faith schools. For example, the ATL (2007) criticises faith schools that see their mission as the transmission of religious belief and culture from one generation to another and have closed admission procedures with the majority of places allocated to those from their own faith community. They state that research has shown that higher performance levels of faith schools occur in those with selective admissions procedures and that these higher rates of achievement are due to autonomous governance and admissions arrangements and not to religious character. In this thesis, views will be sought from headteachers of voluntary aided schools as to whether they perceive difficulties with colleagues in community schools as a consequence of admission arrangements and the extent to which this affects their leadership role.

The new Admissions Code which came into effect on 28th February 2007 (DfES 2007) stated that 'Admissions authorities must ensure that their determined admission arrangements for 2008 comply with the mandatory provisions of this Code' replacing the previous requirement for them to 'have regard' to the Code. This appears to have heralded a new wave of political and media criticism regarding admissions in faith schools. In 2008, the Education Secretary accused schools in Manchester, Northamptonshire and Barnet of breaking the Code claiming that they were asking parents to commit to making financial contributions as a condition of entry. However, only six such schools could be named. With regard to lack of 'compliance', it was found

that in Manchester 13 out of 156 schools did not 'comply' and that the figures for Northamptonshire and Barnet, respectively, were 49 out of 307 schools and 37 out of 107. Furthermore, most of these breaches of the Code were regarding criteria drawn up before the Code came into force that had not yet been amended rather than a deliberate flouting of regulations (Paton and Tibbets 2008).

A headline in the Times (Frean 2008) stated that "Half of school authorities in England infringe Admissions Code". However, in the text of the article, Sir Phillip Hunter, the chief adjudicator, said that the breaches were technical and administrative and that they appeared to be unintentional on the part of most schools and local authorities who were keen to rectify any technical breaches found in their arrangements.

In the first part of a research project analysing admissions criteria and practices in England; West, Barham and Hind (2009) give a resume of previous research (West and Hind 2003; Pennel, West and Hindl. 2006, West and Hind 2006; West and Currie 2008; Coldron, Tanner, Finch, Shipton, Wolstenholme, Willis, Demack and Stielle 2008) and note changes from 2001 to 2005. They then analyse changes following the Education and Inspections Act of 2006 and the third School Admissions Code of 2007 and conclude that there is a strong case for either the local authority or possibly a religious body with no vested interest in the outcome to take responsibility for the allocation process to ensure procedural fairness.

In the second part of the research project, Noden and West (2009) focused on the operation of admissions forums in five local authorities. They note differences among schools in their admissions criteria with some seeking to differentiate the degree of membership of the religious community while others only apply an all or nothing test of membership of the faith community and then apply other criteria (such as distance) to differentiate between applicants. They suggest that there is a need for greater control by local authorities over school admissions in schools that are their own admissions authority.

In the third part of this research project, Allen and West (2009a) analysed admissions and composition of religious secondary schools in London. They note that 8% of Londoners attend church (based on an English Church census in 2005) yet 20% of

London pupils attend religious secondary schools. They also found that in Anglican schools, 73% of the intake were Anglican; in Catholic schools 96% were Catholic; and in Jewish schools virtually all were Jewish.

They found that many religious secondary schools were not serving the most disadvantaged pupils and that their intakes were significantly more affluent than the neighbourhoods in which they were located with 17% of pupils on Free School Meals compared to a national figure of 25%. They also found that these schools had 20% lower ability pupils compared to the usual 31%, and 28% of high scoring pupils compared to 25%. They suggest that there has been a 'distortion of mission' with some elite religious schools, both Anglican and Catholic (five schools of each denomination), 'selecting out' low income religious families through complex admissions criteria. Whilst stating that they cannot directly infer that schools are 'cream-skimming' the more affluent pupils via admissions criteria and procedures because they do not know whether the less affluent families apply; nevertheless, 'these schools tend not to have a mission or admissions policy directed at educating local families' (Allen and West 2009a: 483). They conclude that although recent regulations such as the banning of interviews will result in fewer potentially selective criteria being used, the sanctioning of supplementary information will ensure that religious schools will still be able to select socially if they wish. They suggest that religious bodies external to schools should administer admissions and that banding should be used to ensure better social mixing.

Grace (2009b) commenting on the above paper by Allen and West takes issue with the use of the term 'fostering segregation' noting that the language of 'segregation' seems to be applied when parents make an educational choice based upon religion but not when it is based upon secular considerations. He quotes from his own research showing that 37% of Catholic school pupils receive Free School Meals and concludes that while some religious schools may have more affluent pupils, this should not be generalised across the sector. Regarding the high scoring pupil proportions, Grace suggests that this is a marginal difference and that this may be attributable to a stronger 'teaching to the test' culture in religious primary schools. Regarding the 'elite' schools, he suggests that five schools is a small sample but supports the proposal for further research suggesting that there is a real danger that the founding mission of Catholicism and religious schools

in general, to be of service to the poor, may in contemporary conditions be subject to distortion. Grace also extends the note of caution expressed by Allen and West regarding the generalisation of affluence in religious schools pointing out that the communities of faith served by religious schools 'tend to be widely disposed across a number of geographical communities' (p. 501). He also suggests that researchers need to be from both within and out of the faith so as to give inside perspective and external questioning.

Allen and West (2009b) responding to Grace, stand by their use of the term 'segregation' as the 'standard term used by empirical researchers to measure the extent to which groups are separated from one another in a system' (p. 505). They point out that the DCSF (2008) mentions the importance of the geographical community in which schools are located and that this justifies their focus on proximity to schools. They do not agree that researchers need to be both within and out of the faith.

A number of individual schools have faced legal challenges as a result of issues regarding admission. In 2009, the Supreme Court ruled that the Jews' Free School had breached the Race Relations Act by refusing a place to a child who was not Jewish according to the orthodox tradition as ruled by the Chief Rabbi (Woolcock 2009). As a consequence of this ruling, Jewish schools could no longer allocate places on the basis of Jewish by birth or conversion and set in motion systems to allocate points on the basis of religious practice.

In 2009, the Catholic Church complained about one of its own comprehensives, the Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School, to the school's adjudicator over a points-based system that penalised the less devout. This followed a lengthy and public struggle between the governors, who accused bishops of wanting to dilute the Catholic ethos of the school, and the church, which claimed the religious practice test was distorting the social and ethnic demographic of the intake (Butt 2009).

In 2011, the Archdiocese of Southwark complained about the Coloma Convent Girls' School for giving points for early baptisms and for parents who helped in church. The school governors claimed that this avoided having criteria based on distance which would have given an advantage to more affluent parents. (BBC News 2011)

Some media coverage consists of sensationally critical headlines ascribing deliberate intentions on the part of some schools to exploit the system. To give a few of many possible examples:

> "Schools use dirty tricks to attract best pupils" (Shepherd 2009)
> "A rather unChristian school admission policy" (Wright 2010)
> "Faith schools 'favour better-off parents who can plan ahead'" (Buchanan 2013)
> "Poorer pupils rejected by faith schools" (Gledhill 2013)
> "Faiths schools 'selecting wealthy pupils by the back door'" (Paton 2013)

However, other media coverage criticises state interference. The Telegraph (Paton 2010) notes that over thirty faith schools had been subjected to investigations for breaches of the Admissions Code in the previous six months and gives examples. These include an Anglican secondary school that was criticised for asking parents to 'support' their child's attendance at Christian assemblies and RE, as well as eight Roman Catholic schools that were asked to change their admission rules after asking parents and children to meet a local priest for a reference as this could be deemed to be an 'interview'. The Leader in the same edition questions the political motives behind these developments:

> The degree of government interference in the affairs of teachers and parents of children at faith schools is disgraceful……..In all this, the Government is displaying a mixture of two unpleasant qualities. One is the increasingly aggressive secularisation of the modern Labour party, whose members equate religion with superstition. The other is a dislike of independence, whether in the private or state sector (Leader, the Telegraph, 2010)

Similarly, Odone (2010) questions the motivation behind the Education Secretary's criticism of faith schools admission policies and suggests that the motivation is political.

West, Barham and Hind (2011) examine how secondary school admissions criteria and practices changed from 2001 to 2008 due to changing legislation, policy and practice. They note 'worthy' changes and state that 'the legislative reforms appear to have had an impact in schools' published admissions criteria and practices: but where there are

opportunities for schools to seek to manipulate their intake, given particular incentives, some will do so' (p. 16) thus inferring that there is a deliberate intention on the part of some schools to 'cherry-pick' their pupils.

Allen and West (2011) explore reasons why secondary schools with a religious character have pupil intakes that are of a higher social background and ability than their secular counterparts stating that the reasons for this are complex and include the fact that parents reporting a religious affiliation are more likely to be better educated, have a higher educational class and a higher household income. They also show that higher income religious families are more likely to have a child at a faith school than lower-income religious families. They note that research in London has focused on the composition of the faith secondary schools where almost all were found to have a lower proportion of children known to be eligible for Free School Meals than the proportion of such pupils in their immediate neighbourhood (Allen and West, 2009a) but state that 'London is not typical as it has a higher proportion of faith schools and so it is not possible to generalise to England as a whole' (2011:695). They state that overall, young people tend to be more likely to report having no religion than their parents (23% versus 38%) with much lower levels of affinity to the Church of England in particular (33% versus 47%).

The Fair Admissions Campaign was launched by the British Humanist Society in June 2013 to campaign for all state-funded schools in the UK to be open to all pupils regardless of religion. In November 2013 they produced a Map of Schools by Religious and Socio-Economic Selection that showed every secondary school in the UK and identified to what extent admission was based on religious selection and how proportions of pupils on Free School Meals and with English as an Additional Language compared with those in their local area. This prompted media reports that 'faith schools discriminate against the less well-off' and that 'the campaign claimed a 'clear correlation' between religious selection and socio-economic segregation.' (Gledhill 2013).

The above overview of the admissions situation for voluntary aided schools in England highlights a number of issues that may add to the pressure on and workload of headteachers in voluntary aided schools. In this thesis, the views of headteachers are

sought as to the impact on their leadership roles as a result of admissions, how they are viewed by other headteachers in their locality and whether the studies in London (West and Hind 2006, Allen and West 2009a, Allen and West 2011) represent the situation nationally.

2.7 Curriculum and Achievement

Whereas voluntary aided, voluntary controlled and other maintained faith schools can have distinctive worship, only voluntary aided schools can have 'denominational' RE (Parker-Jenkins et al. 2005) rather than follow a local Agreed Syllabus. An important distinction is made between 'religious education' as taught in community schools where pupils are taught about religion and 'religious nurture' – the passing on of religious values and traditions from one generation to the next – as taught in faith schools (Hull 1984, Jackson 1997). This will present challenges for headteachers leading these schools as, in addition to organising appropriate RE staff and resources that will ensure effective teaching of their own faith values, the increasing demands of accountability, management and performance in secular education will need to be reconciled with their own principles and commitments.

There may be a potential conflict between a school's own religious principles and the secular philosophy which accompanies modern curriculum content. Schools that are funded by the state are required to teach the National Curriculum and so state-funded faith-based schools aim to develop educational policy along religious guidelines and, at the same time, incorporate the National Curriculum with the school's religious framework (Parker-Jenkins et al. 2005). Areas that are particularly sensitive include sex education, evolution and certain works of literacy and these may leave education in some faith-based schools 'walking a tightrope between providing explicit material or leaving pupils ignorant and ill-informed' (Parker-Jenkins et al. 2005: 138). Although the National Curriculum requires schools to develop the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of pupils' lives, it does not detail how this should be taught and some argue that only faith-based schools can effectively provide the spiritual aspect of education that is demanded (Gardner 2005).

A general perception that faith schools are universally successful – fuelled by media headlines - has been challenged by Schagen, Davies, Rudd and Schagen (2002) whose

findings suggest that the performance of faith schools varies considerably with factors such as family background, culture and religio-specific values contributing to good practice. This contrasts with the views of Arthur (2005) who notes that high academic success achieved by pupils in Catholic schools has been highlighted both by OFSTED and by writers such as Morris (1998) and Marks and Burn (2001). He takes issue with the suggestion that this is due to academic and social selection pointing out that the social composition of the UK Catholic community has largely been Irish urban working class with origins in poor immigrant families and that this has been the case in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and the USA. He suggests two main levels of explanation for the success achieved by Catholic schools; religio-philosophical consisting of shared purposes, values, goals and ideals of Catholic philosophy; and pedagogical with less emphasis on 'child-centered' and vocational courses and more emphasis on authoritative and academic approaches.

Similarly, Arthur and Godfrey (2005) note that pupils in voluntary-aided schools averaged more progress than those in voluntary-controlled schools and suggest that the stronger religious ethos in the former category of schools may impact on academic performance. Green (2009) also concluded that evidence supports the claim that pupils in maintained church schools perform better academically and that this cannot be entirely accounted for by the prior attainment and socio-economic status of these pupils. Morris (2005) suggests that pupils in Catholic schools serve communities where there is a high level of social cohesion between home and school and that this is likely to produce a high degree of social harmony and educational purpose which, in turn, leads to high levels of academic effectiveness and productivity.

Schagen and Schagen (2002) hypothesise whether creating a 'caring, supportive and well-ordered climate' would provide a climate that would lead to high achievement and whether a recognisable faith community would encourage shared values, a high degree of parental support and good home-school relations. This thesis will aim to ascertain the views of headteachers of voluntary aided schools with regard to these hypotheses and the extent to which they impact on their leadership role.

Subsequent research by Gibbons and Silva (2006) examines whether faith schools raise attainment or whether they enrol pupils with characteristics that foster educational

progress. Building on existing research by Schagen et al. (2002), Benton, Hutchinson, Schagen and Scott (2003) and Prais (2005), they ask whether any benefits of faith schools are due to religious affiliation, governance or admission arrangements. They suggest that faith schools could offer a very small advantage and that any benefits are linked to the greater autonomy and governance that exists in voluntary aided schools and pupil selection.

Media headlines including 'Faith Schools failing to improve standards' (Curtis 2009) followed a report by Allen and Vignoles (2009) measuring the extent to which the presence of religious state-funded secondary schools impacted on the educational experiences of pupils who attended neighbouring schools as a result of competition or sorting. In the introduction the authors noted that providing a quasi-market for school places was central to the government's aims to improve standards so that, in a system with spare capacity, religious schools would present a competitive threat to neighbouring schools, who would respond by exerting effort in some way to attract local families to their schools. They note that this incentive would be weakened where schools were full to capacity anyway or where they would be judged by league tables rather than by the quality of their intake. The incentive for schools would then be to seek an advantaged intake.

The report found that faith schools did not raise overall area-wide achievement but suggests that their findings add to the evidence that the apparent effectiveness of faith schools is due to within area sorting. They suggest three possible reasons for the lack of competition by other schools to raise standards; that community schools do not feel threatened as they are not competing for the same pupils; that schools may feel threatened but cannot act on this as they are unable to improve their GCSE results or do not need to act on this as they are full anyway; that faith schools actually mute competition as they introduce stratification into the system. The views of headteachers are sought in this thesis regarding the concept of competition, their relationships with neighbouring schools and the extent to which this impacts on their leadership role.

Godfrey and Morris (2008) examine the hypothesis that higher standards in faith schools are due to the fact that most of their pupils take more examinations - usually an additional GCSE or equivalent in RE or RS - than do their counterparts in non-faith

schools. In fact, they found that pupils in faith schools scored higher (in terms of capped point scores) without the contribution of points gained in RE examinations than pupils in non-faith schools scored with RE points. Consequently, they conclude that their GCSE RE exam results do not totally account for their generally higher point scores and that further investigation is required into the probable complex causes of their superior academic performance.

OFSTED reports from 1993-1995 were examined by Morris (1998) to seek reasons for a statistically significant higher standard of education in Catholic secondary schools. He suggests three factors; transmission of values – whereby Catholic teachers are more likely to hold more focused values; discipline and control – with a supportive environment to exercise control; religious culture – prominence of religious activities may produce an environment that is conducive to learning

Interestingly, Morris (1997) had contrasted two Catholic schools in the same LEA; one was of a holistic 'confessional' type with 98% Catholic pupils and with a broad social mix, the other was of a pluralistic 'alternative life-style' type with less than half of the pupils being of the faith and who were drawn from higher social groupings. The former was highly effective academically while the latter was noticeably ineffective. This led Morris to speculate about causal links and to suggest that 'the greater the degree of congruity between the values, attitudes, practices and expectations of the school with those of parents, the greater the likelihood of the success of the joint enterprise' (p. 389)

Morris' subsequent work (2009) highlights a number of factors. The traditional Catholic sector had a 'confessional' approach – the transmission of Catholic faith and culture to the next generation; whereas the Church of England sector was a 'neighbourhood' model – providing education to all children who lived in the parish regardless of their parents' religion. A trend is noted, however, that the Church of England may be adopting more of a 'preservation and transmission of values' approach due to the secularisation of society. He also points out that it is easier to track similar Catholic schools as they are all voluntary aided and so have fewer variables to consider whereas Church of England schools consisted of 54% voluntary controlled and 10% foundation schools. (Since the Academies Act 2010 a growing number of faith schools, including

Catholic schools, have in fact opted for academy status and are no longer voluntary aided).

Evidence that family background and prior attainment can account for differences between schools is acknowledged as is the contradictory evidence, noted above, regarding the impact made by institutions. Nevertheless, Morris (2009) states that, overall, Catholic primary schools have better Contextual Value Added scores compared to the non-Catholic sector and notes similar patterns in secondary schools. He suggests that this may be due to the organisation and management of these schools or to the shared sense of mission and values in these schools. He notes that changes in the way that CVA scores have been calculated make comparisons over time difficult and so can only describe his findings as 'possible' rather than 'definite' but asks whether these might indicate a 'Catholic school factor' or even a more general 'religious effect' on school performance. Similarly, research by Yeshanew, Schagen and Evans (2008) into progress from Y2 to Y6 in primary schools, taking into account contextual background factors, indicated that faith schools made slightly more progress with their pupils, including SEN pupils, than non-faith schools.

Morris (2010) analyses six years of OFSTED reports from 2000-2006 comparing Catholic and other schools in terms of their links with parents and the attitudes towards them held by their pupils. Over the six year period, on average, 35% of the Catholic primary schools had excellent/very good links with parents compared with 33% of other primary schools and 31% of the Catholic secondary schools had excellent/good links with parents compared with 20% of other secondary schools. On comparing the numbers of schools during this period with excellent/very good attitudes displayed by pupils, the figures obtained demonstrated 63% of Catholic primary schools compared with 49% of other primary schools and 58% of Catholic secondary schools compared with 39% of other secondary schools He suggests that these differences are due to a combination of a number of factors such as the role placed by the Catholic church on parents as prime educators and employment practices which enable Catholic schools to prioritise practising Catholics. This, he posits, gives governors of such schools the mechanism to reinforce Catholic values with parents and pupils resulting in an ethos which improves educational performance.

As part of this thesis, headteachers' views are sought regarding their understanding of their school's 'ethos', how this impacts on their pupils' learning and whether this varies among different denominations of voluntary aided schools.

2.8 The Faith School Debate

Previously, the lack of organised and substantial challenge to faith schools from either academic or political sources was noted by Johnson (2000) but by 2006 she commented that this had changed to 'an immense amount of attention from within and outside the field of education and in many national contexts' (Johnson 2006:1) and suggested that the changing attitudes are due to a combination of government policy, parental perception and choice, social trends including secularisation as well as cataclysmic events such as 9/11 and 7/7. This thesis investigates how headteachers of voluntary aided schools perceive their leadership role including whether or not they are affected by the growing opposition to faith schools. Consequently, a brief summary of the main arguments both in favour of and in opposition to faith schools is presented. Matters appertaining to admissions and the curriculum have been discussed above. Other concerns that opponents of faith schools frequently raise are those concerning autonomy, indoctrination, community cohesion and state funding.

Historically, education was regarded as the responsibility of parents and their communities with the state playing a subordinate role (Pring 2005). The 1998 Human Rights Act notes that 'the State shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions (Human Rights Act 1998) and it is families and faith communities that have established and who maintain faith-based schools (Parker-Jenkins et al. 2005). Currently, voluntary aided schools have to raise 10% of capital costs and their premises are usually owned and maintained by Dioceses or other denominational bodies. Many voluntary aided schools request 'voluntary contributions' from parents to help finance resources that are not provided by their delegated budgets from Local Authorities.

The characteristics of a "community" namely, shared territory, shared values and shared spirit are reflected in religious communities which have a sense of value and purpose which is shared by the associated families who choose faith-based schools. These schools and their communities share a desire to perpetuate faith and cultural traditions

often in the face of a perceived increase in secularisation in mainstream society. Supporters of faith schools would, therefore, argue that these schools enable parents to exercise their legal rights regarding the type of education provided for their children and to preserve their own cultural and religious identity (Parker-Jenkins et al. 2005). The 2001 White Paper which announced the government's intention to expand faith school provision did not only lead to growth within the large Catholic and Church of England sectors but also encouraged the minority faith groups to be 'more strident in affirming who they are … (and) why their culture should be recognised' (Parker-Jenkins et al. 2005:174). It has also been suggested that expansion of the faith school sector was politically expedient with Labour viewing it as developing a pluralistic society and Conservatives viewing it as promoting parental choice and moral education (Parker-Jenkins et al. 2005).

Faith rather than community or culture has also been presented as a justification for maintaining faith schools. Sacks (1997) identifies the voice of religion and faith as being a vital part of the 'conversation between the generations' and Pring (2005) suggests that in order to achieve true personal autonomy, there has to be a 'careful and delicate initiation into the different forms of understanding' which, in the case of religion and faith are manifest in 'forms of practice and relationships' (Pring 2005:57). Faith schools, he reasons, can be justified as long as there is also an openness to alternative understandings.

Support for faith schools from a liberal perspective is provided by Wright (2003) who argues that only when a community feels secure in itself can it risk seeking to establish quality relationships with those beyond its boundaries and that community schools would not be able to provide effectively for all pupils; particularly for those from minority faiths. De Jong and Snik (2002) also conclude that liberal neutrality is compatible with funding of denominational schools but only for primary schools and where children's autonomy is promoted and where they are encouraged to contribute to common culture.

Also arguing from a liberal perspective, Brighouse (2005) would prefer to see faith schools admit children from non-religious homes so pupils would mix with each other there but also so that pupils in community schools would see children from religious

homes in their classes – only then, he suggests, would all children have the experiences to become autonomous. However, Brighouse cautions against the adoption of the American schooling system in which all religious schools are private establishments as this has resulted in moderately religious families having to choose between secular state schools or more extreme private schools.

Opponents of faith schools argue that they limit the autonomy and free choice of pupils, that they contravene the Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations 1989) and that the expansion of religious schools could result in more children getting a limited type of education; preferred by their parents but not necessarily in their best interest (Mason 2003). Furthermore, faith schools should not be able to take advantage of children's vulnerability and induce in them a belief system to which they are not in a position validly to consent (Humanist Philosophers Group 2001; Marples 2006). However, Pring suggests that indoctrination, in the sense of closing minds to alternative viewpoints, can also arise from the 'secular assumptions of the media and the cold indifference of the humanist' just as much as from 'closed institutions of religion' (Pring, 2005:59)

My own view is that education, by its nature, instils values into children. Parents train children from infancy that it is "wrong" to steal – they do not wait for them to make a 'lifestyle choice' when they reach adulthood. Similarly, all schools will promote values such as discipline, consideration towards others, honesty and a strong work ethic without waiting to see whether pupils will choose these for themselves. Is this indoctrination or taking advantage of children's vulnerability? Faith schools incorporate additional religious values, cultural awareness and academic knowledge to give an extra dimension to their pupils' understanding of the world. Some might regard this as indoctrination, but others would maintain that it gives pupils the necessary tools and experiences with which to make informed life choices (Shaw 2006e).

Another argument proposed by opponents of faith schools is that they are divisive and do not promote community cohesion. The White Paper (DfES 2001) which announced the government's intentions to expand the faith school system was published in the same month, September 2001, as the terrorist attack in on the World Trade Centre in New York and this, together with the riots in the North of England, caused much concern

regarding segregation of minorities (Parker-Jenkins et al. 2005). Official reports, for example, the Cantle Report (Cantle 2001) called for more community cohesion and were latched onto by opponents of faith schools, encouraged by some politicians and sections of the media, as evidence as to the 'dangers' they posed.

The Cantle Report contains the following statements:

> The development of more faith-based schools may, in some cases, lead to an increase in mono-cultural schools but this problem is not in any way confined to them (par. 5.8.3)… The issue is, therefore, not whether we should restrict or extend faith-based provision, but how all schools ensure some diversity in their intake or that other means are adopted to promote contact with other cultures (par.5.8.10)

The report does recommend that all schools should offer at least 25% of places to reflect the other cultures and ethnicities within the local area (par. 5.8.6) but lists the difficulties in effecting this recommendation such as; parental choice, discrimination, bussing of pupils and the fact that 'many schools are already dominated by one or another ethnic or religious group, due to the segregated nature of catchment areas' (par. 5.8.9). However, reports such as these have been selectively quoted to portray faith schools as the cause of the riots when there is no evidence to support this.

For example, an article in the Jewish News by Romain (2007) states that he is opposed to all faith schools as a matter of principle quoting the Ouseley Report (Ouseley 2001) which blamed part of the problems that led to the riots in Bradford in 2001 as being due to segregation in schools. Thus, he insinuates, that faith schools are the cause of disharmony in society and that it is vital for the future harmony of the country that children of different religions and ethnic groups mix with each other.

This prompted me to respond, in a subsequent article in that publication, that analyses of the Bradford riots of 2001 portray a complex situation caused by a combination of several factors. These included: poverty, above-average unemployment coupled with a steep increase in population, segregated housing (resulting in many catchment area Local Authority schools which were either predominantly white or Asian), gang warfare and infiltration by hundreds of right wing extremists from outside the area. The Ouseley Report notes the victimisation of minorities in largely mono-cultural schools, whether

Asian, white or black and virtual apartheid in many secondary schools. However, there was no suggestion that faith schools were the cause of racial tensions in Bradford (Shaw 2007a).

Opinions differ regarding the advantages of mixing pupils. Research by Bruegel (2006) found that day-to-day contact between children has far more chance of breaking down barriers between communities than school twinning and sporting encounters (Bruegel 2006) though this study focuses more on race and ethnicity than faith. She suggests that friendship at primary school can, and does, cross ethnic and faith divides wherever children have the opportunity to make friends from different backgrounds and that at that stage, in such schools, children are not highly conscious of racial differences and are largely unaware of the religion of their friends. She also quotes research from the USA which shows that the daily experience of attending racially diverse schools has long term effects on students as adults and their comfort in interracial settings.

This opinion, often referred to as the 'contact hypothesis,' is not universally shared. Halstead and McLaughlin (2005) suggest that community schools, in an attempt to be fair to all groups represented in their schools, adopt a 'neutrality': whereas faith schools aim to counter the dominant ethos of secularity found in non-faith schools. However, they point out that this is far removed from making them intolerant or disrespectful of others. They quote research by Greeley and Rossi (1966) that found no difference in tolerance between Catholic pupils in community schools and those in Catholic schools. Similarly, Short (2003) disagrees with the argument put forward by secularists that inter-personal contact across ethnic lines will improve race relations and quotes views that mixed schooling can aggravate racial or ethnic tensions. He notes that research by Troyna and Hatcher (1992) found significant degrees of racism in three mixed primary schools. He argues against the view that ignorance can only be overcome by personal encounter and against the implicit assumption that the only opportunities for mixing are in schools.

A report by the Runnymede Trust (Berkeley and Viji 2008) stated that many faith schools have done little to promote community cohesion. I was moved to respond in a letter to the Times (Shaw 2008b) that, having read the report, I noted that the research was based on visits to only seven schools and that if the authors of the report had visited

more of the 6,900 faith schools in the UK, they might have discovered that such schools have been at the forefront of community cohesion activities long before this became a political catchphrase. I also gave my own school as an exemplar of outstanding community cohesion noting that our pupils had entertained hospital patients and elderly care home residents; raised funds for various charities; devoted a week to a different ethnic group with visiting speakers; arranged reciprocal visits with local schools for shared assemblies and sports fixtures; participated in local council events and that our contribution to the community was described by Ofsted as 'outstanding'.

Parker-Jenkins, Shanthu and Meli (2008) conducted research with nine schools (5 Moslem and 4 Jewish) to investigate relationships with the wider community. The researched schools demonstrated degrees of engagement with the community at local, national and international levels with examples of good practice and the fact that parents and pupils requested more inter-faith events, it was felt, suggested that positive relationships were being promoted. Jesson (Archbishop's Council Education Division 2009) conducted a study comparing the number of 'outstanding' grades for community cohesion achieved by Church of England schools over a six month period to those achieved by local community schools. He found that faith schools contributed substantially more to community cohesion than did either community or foundation schools and concluded that 'this provides a useful corrective to some misguided assumptions about the roles that faith schools play within their communities' (p. 7).

In addition to concerns regarding indoctrination and community cohesion, secularists such as the National Secular Society are opposed to religious schools per se and some would like RE removed from all maintained schools as well. Others, such as some member organisations of the Accord Coalition and the Fair Admissions Campaign, advocate that faith schools should be open to all pupils regardless of faith (as noted in the previous section on admissions). Some question whether the state should be funding faith provision from tax-payers funds. For example, a TES editorial (TES 2009) expressed the view that faith schools should not expect to take the cash and largely exclude the payer. This prompted me to respond (Shaw 2009) that with regard to tax-payer funding, parents of pupils at such schools would point out that they are also taxpayers and that faith communities have raised millions of pounds to buy the land and buildings comprising these schools; that 'the remarkably cheap price of a 10%

contribution to building costs' (as quoted in the TES editorial) is, in reality, a substantial financial burden that mainstream schools do not face and, in fact, parents in voluntary aided schools could argue that they are subsidising the state education system.

A report for Theos was prepared by Oldfield, Hartnett and Baile (2013) which summarised a number of previous studies regarding faith schools with a view to informing debate in this area. They argue that the debate around faith schools is often a proxy for a wider debate around the role of religion in the public arena. They consider four key questions as to whether faith schools are divisive, whether they are exclusivist, whether there is a faith school effect and whether they produce a distinctive educational experience. They conclude that there is little evidence that faith schools are socially divisive, that there is a degree of social sorting as is the case with other non-faith schools that act as their own admissions authority, that there may be a faith school effect but with disputed causes and that there is insufficient research to establish a distinctive educational experience. This report omits a number of other opinions expressed in studies that have been included in this thesis; for example, that a number of authors do not agree with the 'contact hypothesis' and that faith schools serve a wider catchment area than do community schools. This report makes a number of recommendations including the suggestion that debaters in this area make more constructive conversations and that supporters of faith schools promote the benefits of a religious education rather than justifying them as having higher academic standards.

2.9 Summary and Conclusion

This literature review has examined a variety of articles and studies appertaining to leadership in faith schools and has reviewed previous research with headteachers. However, the existing body of knowledge is insufficient to answer the main research question of this thesis; namely, "how do headteachers of voluntary aided schools perceive their leadership role?" Its limitations include the fact that many of the existing studies approach this research from the perspective of one faith only and that many of the studies do not investigate 'voluntary aided' schools but 'faith' schools which include private and voluntary controlled schools. Furthermore, most of the studies are based on small samples and so may not be representative of the general picture nationally.

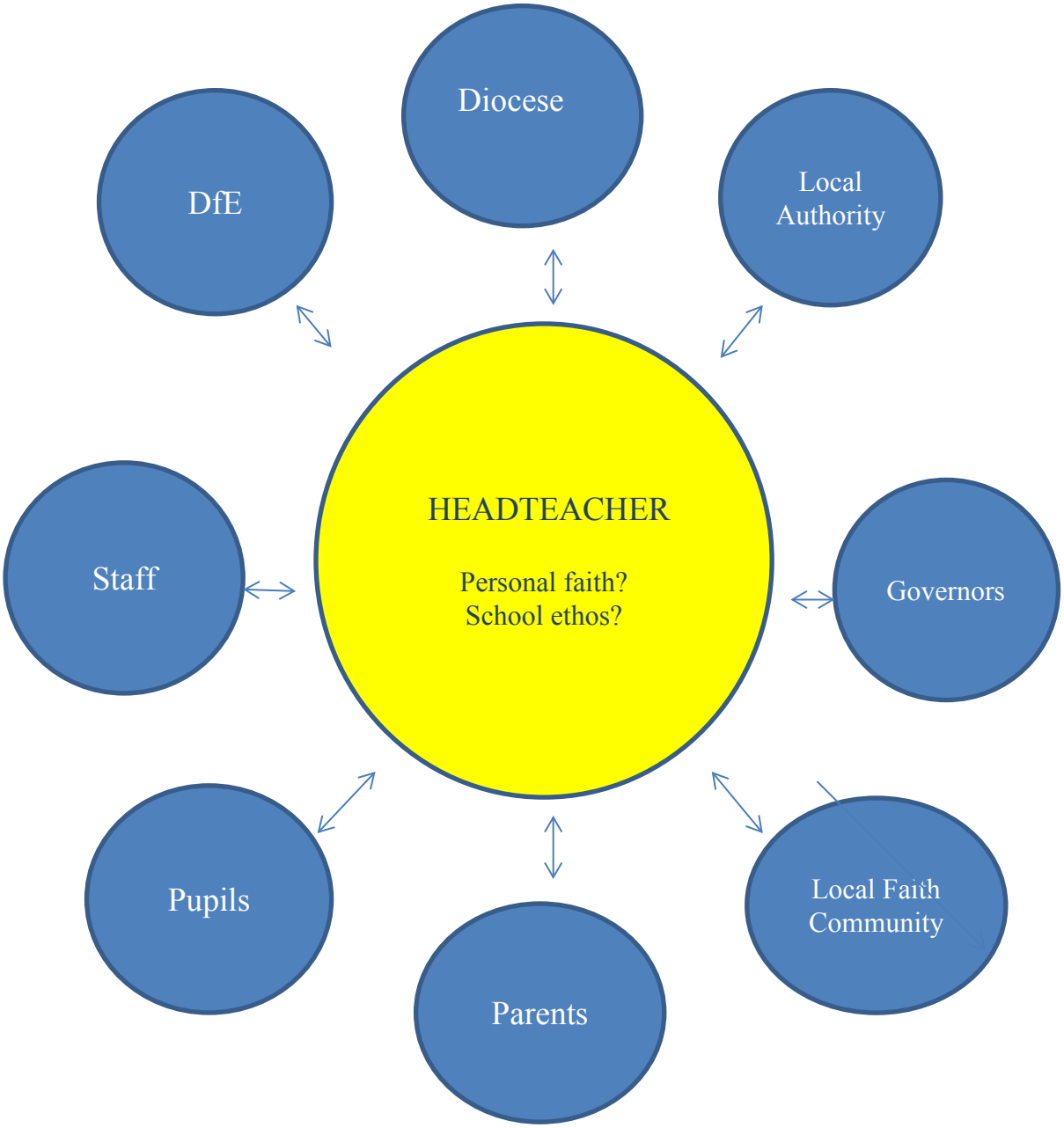
A number of elements have been highlighted in the literature and form the basis of the conceptual framework for this thesis. Headteachers of voluntary aided schools have to interact with additional stakeholders compared with their colleagues in maintained schools; namely, Dioceses/Foundations/Trusts, local faith communities and governing bodies that comprise a majority of foundation governors appointed by the denominational authority. The importance of personal faith for headteachers has been expressed (Flintham 2007a) as has the significance of a particular ethos in faith schools (Grace 2002, Worseley 2006, Fincham 2010, Morris 2010). This research investigates how headteachers from a large national sample of voluntary aided schools of different denominations perceive their leadership role in relation to the various stakeholder groups, the extent to which personal faith impacts on their role and whether these headteachers sense that a particular ethos exists in their schools.

Figure 2.1 (below) presents an initial model of distinctive leadership of voluntary aided schools. The headteacher is shown in the centre surrounded by the eight different stakeholder groups with whom he/she interacts This research investigates the extent to which personal faith and school ethos are crucial to voluntary aided school leadership and these two areas are, therefore, placed in the centre alongside the headteacher with a question mark until the centrality of their role can be ascertained. This model is developed and enhanced further by the data elicited through this research.

The conceptual framework for this thesis has also taken into account the distinctive legal obligations faced by voluntary aided school headteachers such as responsibilities for staffing, admissions and curriculum, and the extent to which headteachers of voluntary aided schools may be affected by the 'faith school debate' and the pressures of managerialism.

To address these issues, this thesis investigates the perceptions of headteachers both with regard to the above elements and also with regard to other issues that they themselves highlight as major factors in their leadership roles. This conceptual framework is addressed through the approach of realism which encompasses and facilitates the methodology and methods required for this thesis and this is explained fully in the next chapter.

FIGURE 2.1 - INITIAL LEADERSHIP MODEL FOR HEADTEACHERS IN VOLUNTARY AIDED SCHOOLS



CHAPTER 3 – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND ETHICS

3.1 Introduction

This thesis examines the leadership of voluntary aided schools from the perspective of headteachers through a realism approach and utilising mixed methods. While it aims to be of practical interest to the various stakeholders involved in these establishments; it also aims to make a significant and valuable contribution to the research community. This chapter, therefore, engages with literature regarding the nature of educational research and paradigmatic approaches given that every study should offer some clarity with regard to the nature of the research within a particular paradigm (Taber 2007). It discusses and justifies the realism approach adopted for this research; the methodology, methods and tools chosen; as well as data collection and analysis. Issues such as inside researcher bias, triangulation, reflexivity, validity and reliability are considered; as are matters of ethics appertaining to this research.

3.2 Educational Research

The literature regarding educational research is both extensive and, frequently, contradictory. Opinions differ as to whether educational research should form "disinterested inquiry" and follow the methods and methodologies of other sciences (Jonathon 1995; Hammersley 1995) or whether it is purely concerned with action as it 'can lay no claim to abstract neutrality or being a curiosity-driven quest for knowledge …… rather in the short-run and in the long-run, it is action-oriented' (Griffiths 1998:67). Others, such as Bassey (1999) make the distinction between discipline research which is a 'systematic, critical and self-critical enquiry which aims to contribute towards the achievement of knowledge and wisdom' (p. 38) and action research which is 'critical enquiry aimed at informing educational judgements and decisions in order to improve educational action' (p. 39). Morrison (2002) describes educational research as being a 'systematic inquiry that is both a distinctive way of thinking about educational phenomena, that is, an attitude, and of investigating them, that is, an action or activity' (p. 3). Kvale (1995) when recommending three approaches to validity - craftsmanship, communication and pragmatism – stresses the need for application rather than just knowledge.

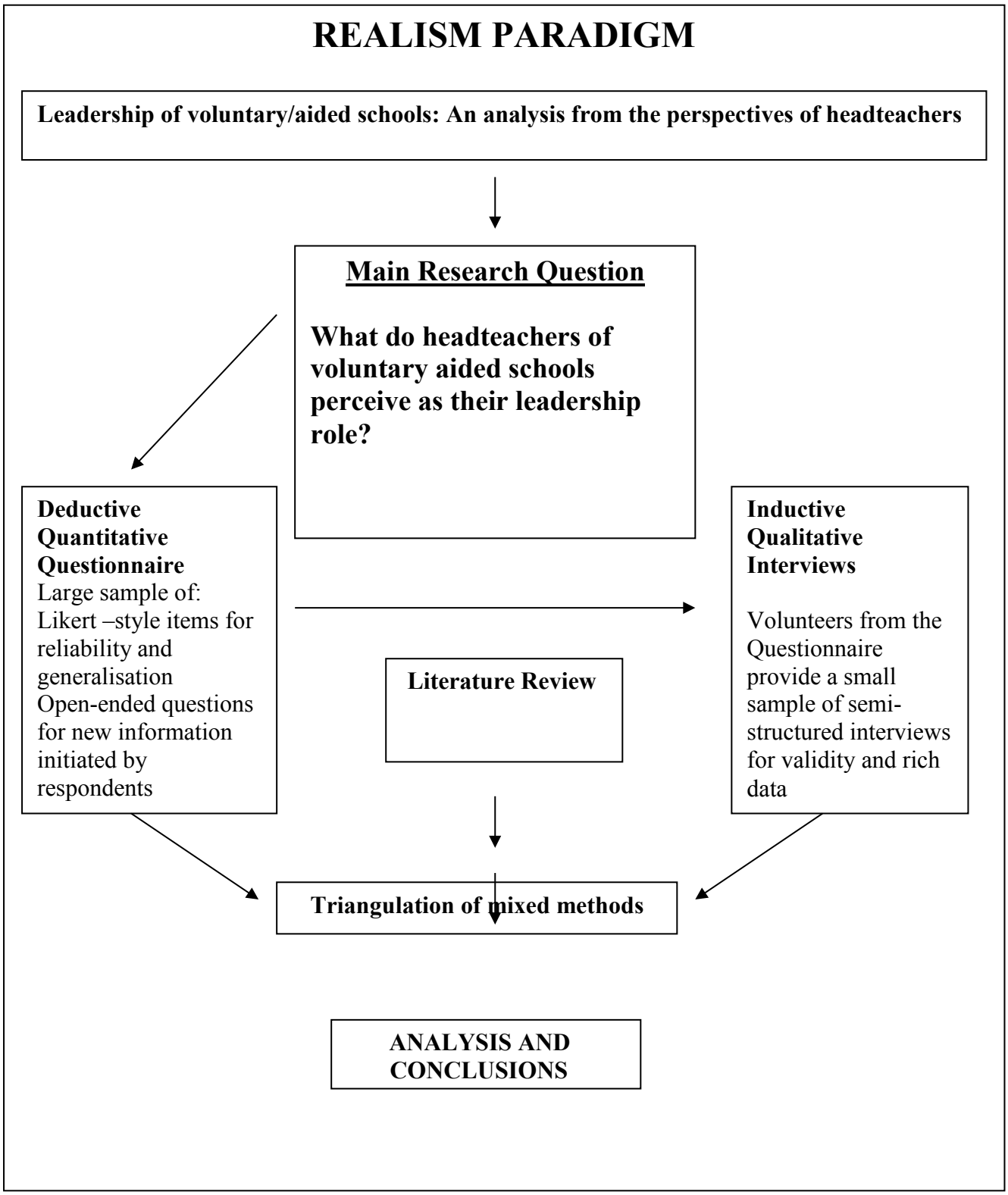
However, a focus on action and activity clearly causes concern to many academics who feel that the emphasis on practice should not be the main function of research. In his commentary on the Hillage Report (Hillage, Pearson, Anderson and Tamkin 1998), Goldstein (1998) comments that the assumption that all major research is concerned with influencing practice is false and that much major educational research is methodological or theoretical. He suggests that while research may provide new perspectives on learning, teaching or policy; it does not have to be of immediate relevance and attempts to make it so will eventually stifle it – and this can surely be in no-one's real interest. Similarly, Brown and Dowling (1998:165) are concerned that educational research should be viewed as a 'distinctive activity' in its own right.

A possible reason for the debate regarding academic research for its own sake as opposed to research in order to influence practice is suggested by Morrison (2002). She posits that the growth of professional doctorates and research-focused post-graduate degrees is seen as a counterpoint to managers and teachers feeling alienated by academic elitism and the perceived irrelevance of educational research and is concerned that such tendencies may fail to distinguish 'professional educational practice' from 'educational research practice' (Morrison 2002:4).

This thesis is intended to satisfy the requirements of both 'professional education practice' and 'educational research practice'. It seeks the views of headteachers of voluntary aided schools regarding their perceptions of their leadership roles but will also investigate whether practitioners are conversant with academic discussions regarding leadership. It is written from the perspective of realism as this resonates with my own views as a researcher, the requirements of the research question and the practicalities of the project.

Figure 3.1 presents a summary of the methodology for this thesis in a diagrammatic form.

Figure 3.1 – Research Diagram



3.3 Realism

Realism has elements of both positivism and interpretivism in that it investigates multiple perceptions about a single, mind independent reality (Healy and Perry, 2000) which may not be directly observable, but this does not rule it out from consideration (Ackroyd and Fleetwood 2000). The inability to directly observe or quantify a reality differs from the positivist approach but the fact that the reality exists separate to interpretation rules out an interpretivist approach. Thus, in ontological terms, realists like positivists contend that there is a real world that exists independent of our knowledge of it and that social phenomena do have causal powers. However, like interpretivists, realists believe that outcomes are shaped by the way in which the world is socially constructed and that not all social phenomena are directly observable.

Although causal powers may not be observable through events, they can be interpreted and explored through an understanding of the interplay between agency and structure (Reed 1997; Archer 2000). Reality is subject to value-laden observation with the reality being intransitive and enduring and the observation being transitive and changing (Dobson 2002). Consequently, realists acknowledge the benefit of both quantitative and qualitative data (Marsh and Furlong 2010). In epistemological terms, realism can enlist the full range of educational research tools to generate as broad an empirical picture of educational practices, patterns and institutional outcomes as possible (Luke 2009). Realism research has been described as a desire to develop a family of answers that covers several contingent contexts and different reflective participants (Pawson and Tilley 1997). The aim of the realism paradigm is to generalise to theoretical propositions and not to populations (Yin 2003).

This thesis seeks to investigate how headteachers of voluntary-aided schools perceive their leadership roles taking account of their additional responsibilities when compared to community schools; particularly their control over appointing staff, organising admissions, being responsible for premises, setting the RE curriculum and their relationship with both their foundation/Diocesan bodies and Local Authorities. These aspects, in turn, may impact on relationships with parents, other schools and the wider community. There is a real world of school regulations and requirements (e.g. National Curriculum, Health and Safety, OFSTED, etc.) imposed by central and local government that affect how schools are led. However, within schools it may be that

individual perceptions and priorities distort the image of the external reality and affect how headteachers lead and manage their schools. This resonates with Layder's description of realism as offering 'a layered or stratified model of society which includes macro (structural, institutional) phenomena as well as the more micro phenomena of interaction and behaviour' (Layder 1993:7-8).

With regard to suitable approaches for researching leadership, the 'definition of leadership ultimately rests on one's ontological commitments' (Fairhurst, 2008:4). Some (e.g. Avolio 1999) regard leadership as a quantifiable phenomenon; others (e.g. Grint 2000) as more interpretive. A number of authors (e.g. Ackroyd and Fleetwood 2000; Fleetwood 2004; Rowland and Parry 2009) regard realism as being a suitable approach given that leadership is a phenomenon that is socially real. This, too, satisfies the requirements of this thesis as it seeks to investigate how individual headteachers in voluntary-aided schools perceive the social phenomenon of leadership in their institutions and to what extent there are similarities/differences in their various establishments against the backdrop of social and organisational pressures.

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Hammersley (1992) identifies ethnographic realism which involves 'independent and unknown realities that come to be known by the researcher getting into direct contact … through participant observation or in-depth interviewing' (p. 196) as well as subtle realism, more closely aligned to grounded theory as it involves revising previously held views and beliefs according to the research outcomes. Miles and Huberman (1994) identify transcendental realism which involves finding causal explanations for events as well as providing evidence to show that each event is connected to the explanation.

Critical Realism (Madill, Jordan and Shirley 2000; Porter 2002; May 2011) has developed into an approach that shows how knowledge of the social world affects how people behave. Egbo (2005) suggests that critical realism offers a philosophical compass to researchers engaged in critical social scientific enquiry that is more cognisant of the altruistic, subjective and moral aspects of knowledge production and that it is particularly attractive for research into educational administration as it assigns priority to agency, voice and real-life experiences. Sobh and Perry (2005) note that in the paradigm of realism, the findings of one study are extended by analytical generalisation that shows how the empirical findings of a research project nestle within

theories. Elements of all of these approaches are developed through this EdD thesis and it investigates possible causal explanations for shared leadership/administrative challenges among headteachers of voluntary aided schools.

3.4 Overview of paradigmatic approaches

Having defined realism and why this is the approach adopted for this EdD research, I believe that some general thoughts on paradigmatic approaches are important to establish why other approaches would not be appropriate.

Ontological assumptions lead to epistemological assumptions which, in turn, lead to methodological considerations so that issues of instrumentation and data collection can then be considered (Hitchcock and Hughes 1995). This need for epistemological roots is reinforced by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) who comment that research methods should not be regarded as simply a technical exercise but that research is concerned with understanding the world and this is informed by how we view our world(s), what we take understanding to be, and what we see as the purposes of understanding. Similarly, others stress that the theoretical orientation of the researcher should dictate the decisions regarding data analysis (Grix 2004; Mertens 2005; Mackenzie and Knipe 2006) since a paradigm 'is composed of certain philosophical assumptions that guide and direct thinking and action' (Mertens 2005:7) and that the choice of methods should, therefore, be a consequence of the researcher's paradigmatic approach. However, this view is not universally shared. Plowright (2011:7) argues that you do not need to hold a particular philosophical position prior to the research as this 'encourages a more responsive, flexible and open-minded attitude based on answering one or more research questions, finding a solution to a problem or addressing an important issue'. Similarly, Crotty (2003) holds the view that researchers can choose at which stage to begin; ontological, epistemological, methodology or methods.

Opinions differ as to which paradigm is more prevalent in educational research.
Morrison (2002) states that she 'would agree with Bassey (1999) that the 'public' world of educational policy, practice and research has become more positivist' (Morrison 2002: 24). This contrasts with other views such as those of Roberts (2005) who maintains that the interpretive/hermeneutic paradigm has held greatest sway in

educational research in recent times. Other authors (e.g. Kuhn 1996; Anderson and Arsenault 1998) stress the importance of working in one paradigm to avoid confusing perspectives. Others (Creswell 2003, Cameron 2011) note the various schools of thought in the 'paradigm wars' of the 1980s; in particular, the purists who advocate no mixing of paradigms and methods, the situationalists who suggest that certain methods can be used in certain situations and the pragmatists who advocate efficient use of different approaches.

Quantitative research, based on a positivist paradigm, has a number of key features as discussed by Morrison (2002) and Cohen et al. (2011):

- A central relation between concept formation, observation and measurement with the research problem being broken down into manageable bits
- An interest in causality making frequent use of variables
- An interest in generalisation with corresponding concern for valid representation of survey samples
- An interest in whether the research could be replicated given that researchers are never completely 'value-free'
- A perception of participants as objects of research whose individual responses can be aggregated to give a summative measurement
- An acceptance that phenomena must be observable and verifiable

By contrast, qualitative research, based on an interpretivist paradigm, exhibits differing key features:

- Researchers are part of, rather than separate from, their research topics
- Participants are subjects of research and events and phenomena are explored from their perspective
- Reality is not 'out there' waiting to be uncovered as facts but is a construct which people understand in different ways
- Much attention is devoted to detailed observations often with a longitudinal element
- There may be a reluctance by researchers to impose prior structures or prior theoretical frameworks

A third emerging paradigm, that of critical educational research, is noted by Cohen et al. (2011). The two earlier paradigms are regarded as incomplete due to the neglect of

the political and ideological context of much educational research. The purpose of Critical Educational Research is intensely practical – to bring about a more egalitarian society in which individual and collective freedoms are practised and to eradicate the exercise and effect of illegitimate power by those who do not operate in the general interest. This paradigm relates to the political agenda as the task of the researchers is not to be dispassionate, disinterested, and objective (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2011).

Action research, which some (e.g. Bassey 1990) regard as a further paradigm, began to emerge in the 1980s as a practitioner-based, developmental approach to research. Elliot (1991) explains that action research aims to feed the practical judgement in concrete situations, and the validity of the 'theories' it generates depends not so much in scientific tests for truth, as on their usefulness in helping people to act more intelligently and skilfully. In action research, therefore, theories are not validated and then applied to practice. They are validated through practice. This has led to the view by other writers such as Roberts (2005) that it is not a paradigm at all but rather a guide to practitioners on how to assist their own reflection on practice through the practical application of some research techniques within an apparent appropriate methodology.

None of the above paradigmatic approaches suits the requirements of this thesis. As it investigates the 'perceptions' of headteachers, a purely positivist, quantitative study would not be appropriate as perceptions are not scientifically observable and measurable. Although a purely interpretivist, qualitative study might appear, initially, to be appropriate, it is also problematic given that a large sample of headteachers is required in order to gain a national picture and there is a limit as to how much detailed observation would be possible with large numbers of participants. With regard to an approach of Critical Education Research, this thesis does not have a political agenda though it is hoped that its findings will be of benefit as outlined in the aims in Chapter 1. Similarly, it does not aim primarily to feed the practical judgement in concrete situations or help people to act more skilfully or intelligently – the main rationale for action research.

3.5 Methodology

Given that the purpose of the research determines its methodology (Cohen et al. 2011), it is important to consider both the rationale and practicalities involved. The principal research question is how headteachers in voluntary aided schools perceive their leadership role – this would suggest qualitative interviews. Authors such as Conger (1998) argue that qualitative methods are most appropriate for leadership studies as they allow for emergence of nuanced and contextualised richness of structures, relationships and practices. However, an aim of this thesis is to investigate similarities/differences between leading voluntary aided schools of different sizes, faiths and phases in different geographical locations throughout England. Given that there are 4221 voluntary aided schools in England (DCSF 2011), a large sample of participants would be required in order to provide a substantial amount of quantitative baseline data to reflect a national picture. Headteachers who have led both voluntary aided and other types of schools would be able to provide valuable comparisons and a small number of qualitative interviews with such headteachers would provide depth and colour to the quantitative baseline data as well as the opportunity to discover new perspectives.

Within the realist framework, both qualitative and quantitative methods are appropriate for researching the underlying mechanisms that drive actors and events (Healy and Perry 2000). Similarly, Krauss notes that with realism, the seeming dichotomy between quantitative and qualitative is therefore replaced by an approach that is considered appropriate given the research topic of interest and level of existing knowledge pertaining to it (Krauss 2005).

Some writers (e.g. Morrison 2002; Denzin and Lincoln 2005) argue against combining methods; others (e.g. Aubrey, David, Godfrey and Thompson 2000; Creswell and Plano Clark 2011) support combining and complementing the strengths of different methods. The mixed method approach has been advocated by some for social research (Tashakhori and Teddlie 2003). MacKenzie and Knipe (2006) argue further that almost inevitably in each paradigm, if the research is to be fully effective, both approaches need to be applied. Similarly, Woolley (2009) suggests that integrating both quantitative and qualitative components can produce a greater meaning or understanding than the sum of their parts. Other writers (e.g. Brown and Dowling 1998; Creswell 2003; Thomas 2003) also extol the virtues of mixed methods. Creswell (2003:20)

recommends ‘gathering both numeric information (e.g. on instruments) as well as text information (e.g. on interviews) so that the final database represents both quantitative and qualitative information.’ Morrison (2002), warning that using a combined approach does not necessarily provide a balance between the short-comings of one approach and the strengths of another, advises that:

> “The critical issue for researchers is to choose the approach that best addresses the questions asked; and, as importantly, that researchers are aware of the implications of choosing one approach over another (or combining them), and its impact on the things that researchers will find” (p. 24-25)

Other authors lessen the distinctions between different forms of data. Halfpenny (1997:6) states that ‘despite obvious surface differences between words and numbers [such] data are not fundamentally different’ and Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2006) suggest that there are two types of data; numerical and everything else This prompts Plowright (2011) to argue that the traditional dichotomy between qualitative and quantitative methods can be rejected. He suggests that all data result from the intervention of the researcher in that part of the social world that is chosen for study and that the researcher structures, to a greater or lesser extent, the information that is generated. This is achieved using number, words and/or other types of imagery such as photographs, drawings or sounds.

Gorard (2004:7) comments that combined/mixed methods research has been identified as a ‘key element in the improvement of social sciences, including educational research’ and that this ‘creates researchers with an increased ability to make appropriate criticisms of all types of research.’ Furthermore, he suggests (in Gorard and Cook 2007) that ethical concerns have tended to be focused on the participants rather than on the quality of the research which affects tax-payers, charity-givers and public who use the education service and that problems of research quality are due to traditional research methods training and ‘experts’, quantitative researchers who prefer to devise complex methods of analysis and a lack of willingness to test theories:

> researchers are introduced to a supposed paradigmatic division between ‘qualitative’ and ‘quantitative/ studies in a way that encourages methods identities based on a choice of only one of these ‘paradigms’……..there is a shortage of texts and training resources that take the

> far superior approach of assuming that there is a universal underlying logic to all research. Such an approach leads from the outset of training to a focus on the craft of research, thus bringing design, data collection, analysis and warranting results to the fore, leaving little or no place for paradigms (p316/7)

Symonds and Gorard (2010) note that mixed methods represent an approach that encourages integration of the two major methodological approaches, qualitative and quantitative but note that this does not acknowledge the potential of other approaches and are concerned that researchers seem to believe that valid research must align with these three approaches. They also suggest that, as more mixed methods research is generated, funding bodies may begin to show preference for these techniques. Furthermore, they point out that 'the process of mixing requires distinct method elements to mix and so, ironically, the metaphor of mixing actually works to preserve method schisms in part' (Gorard 2007:1)

They posit that the common assignment of close- and open- ended data gathering methods into separate paradigms is based on their most common use, and not on their potential, or on some cases their actual, uses. For example, a survey could give a wider range of options than the potential response of a participant. Similarly, types of data are not necessarily paradigmatic – numerical data began as word, visual, audio or kinaesthetic data (e.g. words in Likert, measuring sound waves, visual data) and so can be representative of both open- and close-ended states whereas qualitative data can be categorised into numbers (e.g. counting responses to interviews) - 'data can be fluid and shift in form as determined by the researcher and are not restricted by paradigm' (p127).

Furthermore, analytic techniques are also not necessarily paradigmatic. Numerical data do not need to be quantified – they can be analysed by inductive coding or can show qualitative change. Conversely, survey results can be displayed in matrices and interview data can be counted – 'no generic method of analysis is fixed to any one paradigm' (p127). They contend, therefore, that all types of authentic data can become numerical and, inversely, numerical can revert to categorical data that can be analysed thematically or as narrative and so opine that qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods are historical constructs and that mixed methods can be seen as a label for how we might do research. However, they opine that current mixed methods must involve quantitative data and so there is a bias towards numbers.

Giddings and Grant (2006) warn that;

> 'Mixed Methods is a Trojan Horse for positivism, reinstalling it as the most respected form of social research, while at the same time – through inclusion – neutralising the oppositional potential of other paradigms and methodologies that more commonly use qualitative methods' (p.59)

However, they acknowledge that the development of mixed methods has been beneficial for research in that it has resulted in an extensive focus on triangulation when multiple findings either confirm or confound each other and also reduce the risk of bias. They state that an additional benefit has been the growth of innovative research designs for promoting integration and data synthesis such as the combination of surveys with observations or interviews.

Symonds and Gorard (2010) take issue with Greene (2008:17) who suggests that researchers should develop guidelines for how to 'choose particular methods for a given inquiry purpose and mixed methods purpose and design' as this gives power to methodological theorists. Similarly, Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner (2007:127) argue for a 'contingency theory for the conduct of human research' where conditions for qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods should be met by all researchers.

Their view is that there should be a move towards the 'universal underlying logic to all research' that leaves 'little or no place for paradigms (Gorard 2007:3), that 'mixing methods is wrong, not because methods should be kept separate but because they should not have been divided at the outset' (Gorard 2007:1). They advocate the development of a research community where 'all methods have a role, and a key place in the full research cycle from the generation of ideas to the rigorous testing of theories for amelioration' (Gorard 2005:162)

I would venture to suggest that the move away from recognised paradigms and methods in research may be feasible for experienced researchers who can accept or reject views that they have read based on their own global overview of research methodology. However, I believe that there is a real danger that a new research community may develop with an attitude of 'anything goes' and that academic rigour may be lost. A sensible view is put forward by Plowright who suggests that 'the methodology leads to

the selection of a philosophical perspective that enables you to explain and, therefore, understand better the methodology you have used' (Plowright 2011:186).

The aims of this thesis are best served by a mixed methods approach – quantitative data to establish a sizeable amount of data from headteachers from various types, denominations, locations and sizes of voluntary aided schools across England and qualitative data to investigate the in-depth thoughts and perspectives of headteachers. This is in accordance with the views of Bell (2005a) who suggests that quantitative researchers collect facts and study the relationship of one set of facts to another while researchers adopting a qualitative perspective are more concerned to understand individuals' perception of the world.

Examples of research studies with some similar themes that have used mixed methodologies include:

- The study of management skills in small Scottish schools by Wilson and McPake (2000) in which a small number of case studies were combined with a postal questionnaire to 863 schools;
- The study of leadership in small primary schools in one Local Authority by Robinson (2011) in which ten interviews were supplemented by questionnaires to other headteachers of similarly small schools.

In both of the above cases, a small number of case studies/interviews provided rich qualitative data and a larger number of questionnaires provided substantial quantitative data.

3.6 Methods and Tools

Having justified the use of realism and mixed methods, consideration was given to the most suitable methods for this thesis having regard to the main research questions; namely, how do headteachers of voluntary aided schools perceive their leadership of their schools compared with that in other types of schools and which particular aspects of their roles present particular pleasure or challenge.

An ethnographic approach would fulfil the need for evidence as to how headteachers of voluntary aided schools 'see their world' (Taber 2007:77). However, true ethnography

also requires 'prolonged and repetitive study in the participants' natural setting' (LeCompte and Preissle 1993:232) necessitating a sustained focus on a small number of participants and eliminating the possibility of a large sample to provide a national picture.

Grounded theory presents as a possible approach in that it develops theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analysed (Strauss and Corbin 1998). However, grounded theory analyses incidents rather than participants and there would typically be several hundred incidents in a grounded theory study (Glaser and Strauss 1967). This would not be practical for this thesis which, in any case, seeks to analyse the perceptions of headteachers rather than incidents. Furthermore, as leadership cannot be readily seen, it is not suited to grounded theory as this is applied to observable phenomena – though Parry (1998) disagrees and argues that grounded theory can be used to measure non-observable phenomena like leadership.

Situational ethnomethodology (Cohen et al. 2011) examines the social contexts of participants but, as Robinson notes in her research into the leadership of small schools (2011), leadership comprises one particular aspect of a headteacher's context rather than an entire social context. The research questions for this thesis investigate leadership perceptions of headteachers of voluntary aided schools – they do not necessitate investigation into the broader social contexts of their schools.

Phenomenology is an approach that is concerned with people as opposed to systems and which 'takes into account the reality for the person and their experience' (Van Manen 1990). However, phenomenology stresses the need to present matters as closely as possible to the way that those concerned understand them and the task is to present the experiences in a way that is 'faithful to the original' (Denscombe 2010). This would appear to limit the ability of the researcher to interpret or analyse the experiences (Robinson 2011), a key feature for this thesis which seeks to investigate and analyse the perceptions of headteachers of voluntary-aided schools.

Phenomenography differs from phenomenology in that it studies experiences and thoughts of participants in an empirical manner (Boulton-Lewis and Wilss 2004) making use of contextual analysis. However, there are limitations in that it relies

primarily on the interpretation by participants and researchers without taking into account the cultural situation and external factors (Richardson 1999). This would also limit the role of this thesis as external factors (e.g. government legislation, Local Authority involvement, faith requirements) do impact on the leadership role of headteachers in voluntary-aided schools.

With regard to case studies, these focus on one instance (or a few instances) of a particular phenomenon with a view to providing an in-depth account of events, relationships, experiences or processes occurring in that particular instance (Denscombe 2010). They can be conducted using a group (Robson 1993, Yin 2003) and their findings may be used to generalise (though not by statistical inference) and can lead to changes in educational policy making (Cohen et al. 2011). Easton (2010) suggests that a critical realist case approach is particularly well-suited to relatively clearly bounded, but complex, phenomena such as organisations, inter-organisational relationships or nets of connected organisations. However, for the purposes of this thesis, the logistical difficulties would severely limit the number of headteachers that could participate in the research thus preventing the portrayal of a national picture of voluntary aided school leadership.

None of the above methods is totally suited for this thesis though, as discussed, many elements can be incorporated. As one of the aims is to investigate and compare data from a large group of headteachers of voluntary aided schools representing primary and secondary phases, large and small rolls, different faiths and geographical areas across England, a Survey approach was utilised. Fogelman (2002) comments that this is the most frequently used method in researching educational leadership and management. He notes that 19 out of 35 papers in Educational Leadership and Management Journal over two years utilised surveys as the main instrument of data collection (though some were combined with other methods). He does, however, note the great variety of exercises that come under the heading of 'survey' and suggests that a survey of interviews with a number of headteachers could be described as a small number of case studies.

Survey research is defined by Hutton (1990) as the method of collecting information by asking a set of pre-formulated questions in a predetermined sequence in a structured

questionnaire to a sample of individuals drawn so as to be representative of a defined population. However, Fogelman (2002) comments that this is a narrow definition since other methods e.g. semi-structured or unstructured interviews can be used for surveys. Furthermore, some surveys, such as a national census, can be carried out on an entire population rather than on a sample. Surveys can gather data from a wide research population and this data can be used to identify relationships and connections between different variables that usually relate to the present state of affairs and provide a snapshot of how things are at the specific time at which the data are collected (Denscombe 2010). However, potential weaknesses of survey data include: poor response rates, lack of sufficient depth and detail, sampling bias issues and honesty of respondents (Sharp 2009). These issues are addressed later in this chapter.

A survey is appropriate for this thesis as, typically, surveys gather data at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of existing conditions, or identifying standards against which existing conditions can be compared, or determining the relationships that exist between specific events (Cohen et al. 2011). For the purposes of this survey approach, a questionnaire was constructed containing closed questions to gather generalised data and patterns as well as open questions to generate discursive responses of a much more rich and personal nature (Robert-Holmes 2005) and to 'provide information that was not constrained by any pre-conceptions held by the researchers' (Tashakkori and Teddlie 2003:304).

Practical guidance is provided by Bell (2005b) regarding the formatting of questionnaires, the importance of precise wording, the use of questions and statements, order and appearance, respondents' rights and piloting the questionnaire. However, with regard to distribution, she advises against postal distribution. Cohen et al. (2011) disagree noting that response levels to postal surveys are not invariably less than those obtained by interview procedures; frequently they equal, and in some cases surpass, those achieved in interviews. They also discuss the validity of postal questionnaires from two viewpoints; whether respondents complete questionnaires accurately, honestly and correctly, and whether those who fail to respond would have given the same distribution of answers.

It was decided to utilise an on-line questionnaire for this thesis as it presents a number of benefits:

- Practical considerations in terms of time and cost in comparison with postal questionnaires thus facilitating a larger sample
- Ease of completion for participant headteachers thus facilitating a greater response
- Facility for analysing the responses utilising on-line survey software

The rationale behind the choice of an on-line questionnaire was to gather data from a substantial number of headteachers of voluntary aided schools encompassing a variety of faiths, locations, sizes and phases. This would generate a large number of responses that would better support reliability in their representation of the voluntary aided sector as a whole. By appealing to potential respondents as a 'fellow headteacher' (see Appendix A – the introductory letter to the on-line Survey), it was hoped that colleagues would be more likely to respond to a credible insider researcher. Similarly, it was hoped that the construction of a simple, quick to use, on-line questionnaire would encourage a large number of responses. A pilot questionnaire and covering letter was sent to a headteacher colleague who herself had a PhD and was able to view the pilot both from academic and practitioner viewpoints. She felt that the covering letter and questionnaire were clear, to the point and manageable for busy headteachers.

A specialist survey company was utilised to submit the survey and it provided the software facility for the researcher to analyse and filter the responses. It had been expected that a list of email addresses of voluntary aided schools could be obtained easily from the DfE. However, on submitting a request for these, the response was 'The Department does not generally release email addresses, as some addresses that we hold may be personal'. A request was then submitted to the 19 Catholic and 43 Church of England Dioceses in England for email addresses of their voluntary aided schools. Eight dioceses sent such lists (though several of the addresses were out of date) and a further four dioceses offered to forward the on-line questionnaire to their schools.

It became necessary, therefore, to commence a process of examining each Local Authority's website to ascertain the names and addresses of their voluntary aided schools. Although some Local Authority websites listed email addresses of schools, others did not; and in many cases it was necessary to go to individual school websites to

obtain an email address. Eventually, a list was compiled of 2200 email addresses of headteachers of voluntary aided schools ensuring that several were included from every Local Authority in England and the on-line Survey was emailed to these schools. This represented over half of the 4221 voluntary aided schools in England (DfE 2011).

Responses were forthcoming from 450 headteachers (over a tenth of the total number of voluntary aided school headteachers in England and 20.5% of those emailed) with representation from 151 out of 152 Local Authorities in England. (The 152nd Local Authority was the Isles of Scilly Authority which does not maintain any voluntary aided schools).

The survey comprised three sections:

The first section consisted of five questions that were put to respondents to identify different groups as this would facilitate more detailed analysis. These groups were defined by:

- Age range of school
- Size of school
- Religious affiliation
- Location
- Length of headship experience

The second section consisted of eleven Likert-style questions for which respondents were asked to state the extent to which they agreed/disagreed with the statements presented to them. This provided quantitative data from a large group of respondents.

The third section consisted of open ended questions that asked respondents to state which aspects of their leadership roles presented the greatest sense of pleasure and challenge. This provided the opportunity for the respondents to initiate areas for discussion.

All respondents to the on-line questionnaire were headteachers of voluntary aided schools and the status questions enabled quantitative data to be gathered to ascertain the extent to which the proportions of different sizes, faiths and locations of such schools nationally were represented in the responses to the survey. Headteachers who had led both voluntary aided and other types of schools were invited to volunteer to be

interviewed and from these volunteers a purposive sample of was selected (Robson 1993, Denscombe 2010, Cohen et al. 2011). It was necessary to construct a purposive sample in order to ensure that the twelve interviewees were from different faiths, locations and sizes of schools. Given that the vast majority of the initial 65 volunteers for interview were from rural Church of England schools, a representative sample of these would not have included headteachers from other types of voluntary aided schools. A selection of 12 interviewees enabled representatives from Catholic, Church of England and Jewish schools of different phases and locations to participate – there were no volunteers for interviewing from Hindu or Moslem respondents. The selected interviewees were allocated reference numbers as shown in Table 3.1 below:

Table 3.1 – Identifying interviewees by reference number, faith, type of school and location

HEADTEACHER REFERENCE	**FAITH**	**PHASE**	**LOCATION**
H1	Jewish	Secondary	Suburban
H2	C of E	Primary	Coastal
H3	C of E	Primary	Suburban
H4	C of E/ Catholic	Secondary	Suburban
H5	C of E	Secondary	Inner City
H6	C of E	Secondary	Suburban
H7	Catholic	Secondary	Inner City
H8	C of E	Primary	Rural
H9	Catholic	Primary	Rural
H10	C of E	Primary	Inner City
H11	Jewish	Primary	Suburban
H12	Catholic	Primary	Suburban

These twelve headteachers were selected for interview from the following Local Authorities though the exact location of each interviewee has not been given so as to protect anonymity:

Barnsley
Bournemouth
Brent
Essex
Harrow
Hertfordshire
Leicestershire
Lewisham
Salford
Stoke
Wolverhampton
York

Questions were formulated for these 12 qualitative interviews based on the responses to open-ended questions in the questionnaire. Wragg (2002:148) notes that 'it is common for a sub-sample of people who have been given a questionnaire to be interviewed, partly to amplify and partly to check their written answers.' Robson (1993:136) notes that 'it may still be possible to say something sensible about the population from a non-probability sample – but not on statistical grounds' and that it is 'common to use non-probability samples in small-scale surveys and case studies where there is no intention or need to make statistical generalisations' (p. 140).

A purposive sample of headteachers (as explained above) who had led both voluntary-aided and other types of school and who were, therefore, able to make comparisons was drawn from respondents to the on-line questionnaire for qualitative interviews. Interviews may be 'used as a resource for understanding how individuals make sense of their social world and act within it' (May 2011:157) and so are appropriate for realist research. They enable the researcher to find out about the knowledge, values, attitudes and beliefs of the interviewees (Denscombe 2010) and so should facilitate the understanding of the responses of the headteachers in the survey and enable these responses to be clarified and correctly interpreted (Patton 2002, Lowe 2007). Open

ended questions allow for a variety of responses (Robert-Holmes 2005) and clear interpretation and meaning of the described phenomenon (Bryman 2012) which add to the rich data collection.

Potential difficulties with interviews have been expressed. For example, if respondents are made aware of the researcher's interests, this could affect their responses and could also lead to lazy research in which careful data analysis is simply replaced by reporting back what people have said (Burns 2000, Silverman 2010). Potter (2002) criticises too much dependence on interview data, believing that these are "got up by the researcher" to ask pre-determined research. Brownhill (2011) notes the different terms used for interviewees with Robert-Holmes (2005) referring to them as 'participants' and Rubin and Rubin (2005) referring to them as 'informants and conversational partners'. Lichtman (2006) suggests that the choice of terms used and flexibility with questions can raise issues of interpretation, power and positioning of the researcher. Cohen et al. (2011) note other disadvantages of interviews including; the amount of time needed to conduct interviews, travel and administer the process; as well as the possibility of bias and subjectivity on the part of the researcher.

To overcome these difficulties within this research, interviewees were chosen on the basis of their volunteering to participate and no preconceived hypotheses were expressed by the researcher (Davies 2007). A climate for interview was created in which the interviewees could talk freely (Davies 2007) and, as location can affect the quality of data (Punch 2005), the interviews were conducted in the interviewees' own schools in which they felt comfortable and familiar (Davies 2007). As this necessitated considerable time in terms of organising, transport, interviewing and transcribing, the number of interviews was limited to twelve respondents. There are no hard rules about the number required (Lichtman 2006) and most qualitative researchers use a small number of interviews (Blaikie 2010). This number was manageable and yet still enabled a cross-section of faith, phase and different sizes of voluntary-aided schools in 12 different local authorities to be represented.

Interviews were taped and then fully transcribed. This facilitated 'natural talk' and subsequent accurate reading of notes (Silverman 2010). Denaturalised transcripts – in which idiosyncratic elements of speech are removed – were considered appropriate as

the interest for this research is informational and accuracy is reliant on the substance of the interviews (Oliver, Serovich and Mason 2005). The importance of reading transcripts thoroughly and repeatedly to prepare for analysis is stressed by authors such as Bogdan and Biklen (1992), Dey (1993) and Lewins (2001:310) who suggests that 'discovery achieved by reading and re-reading is likely to be the most thorough method of exploring qualitative data'.

The main method for this thesis, therefore, was a survey from which a sample for interview was derived; the tools being the on-line questionnaire and interviews. This was "sequential quantitative-qualitative" and involved "forming groups of people/settings on the initial basis of quantitative data and then comparing the group on qualitative data subsequently collected or available (Tashakkori and Teddlie 2003). It provided both intra-method mixing using both closed and open ended questions in the questionnaire and inter-method mixing using the interviews in addition to the questionnaire (Johnson and Turner 2003). It also provided the benefit of collected quantitative and qualitative data from the same individuals as validity for mixed – methods design (Creswell and Plano Clark 2011).

Given that the main research question is to investigate the perceptions of headteachers, the qualitative data is dominant. The quantitative data provided a national picture showing results whereas the qualitative data help to provide reasons as to why these results occurred (Creswell and Plano Clark 2011).

3.7 Researcher Bias and Reflexivity

It is suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1998) that researchers come to the field with a range of knowledge and skills which inevitably act as a filter for what is seen and its analysis. Similarly, Davies (2007) notes that all researchers are, to some degree, connected to part of the object of their research and, depending on the extent and nature of these connections, questions arise as to whether the results of research are artefacts of the researcher's presence and, inevitably, the research process. Denscombe (2010) notes that as researchers, the meanings we attach to things that happen and the language we use to describe them are the product of our own culture, social background and personal experiences.

In the realist tradition, suggests Patton (2002), it is impossible to conduct research that is not influenced to some extent by the values and preconceptions of the researcher. Consequently, it is important to make biases explicit and take steps to minimise their influence on the data. There is also a risk that the researcher may look for data that 'fit' the research (Cohen et al. 2011). Sobh and Perry (2005) suggest that potential bias may be minimised through interaction with interviewees and literature but agree that there is an issue of the researcher's own values influencing the picture of an external reality. They suggest that the researcher states his/her own background explicitly and aim for 'value-awareness' rather than 'value-removal'.

Others note the advantages in conducting interviews of being an insider researcher in that having prior knowledge also helps in the selection of interviewees, helps the researcher to make more believable small encouraging noises during the 'conversation' of the interview and helps the researcher to recognise when something important has been said (Sobh and Perry 2005). Other advantages include the researcher having a profound understanding as a result of belonging to similar institutions (Hellawell 2006) and the fact that the language of the setting will not be alien to the researcher (Hockey 1993). Similarly, Hellawell (2006) states that both empathy and alienation are useful qualities for a researcher as an inside researcher possesses intimate knowledge of the community and its members while the outsider attempts to avoid polluting objectives. Where these are one and the same, the researcher can 'slide along more than one insider-outsider continuum in both directions during the research process' (Hellawell 2006: 489). Anderson (1990) suggests that researchers may be better able to judge the truthfulness of responses when they are themselves familiar with the situation and, according to Savin-Baden (2004), the researcher has several roles as: co-inquirer, confidante, colleague and sympathiser.

In her research with headteachers of small schools, Robinson (2011) posits that being an insider headteacher researcher could be advantageous in that she would be familiar with the social contexts in schools and so have a good understanding of the issues raised through the data. She points out that she had insider knowledge and empathy with colleagues as a practitioner but was also an outsider in that she was not part of the participants' specific school communities. These same elements are present for this research with headteachers of voluntary aided schools. Furthermore, it has been

suggested (Fox, Green and Martin 2007) that practitioner researchers 'can embed the research within practice in ways that academic research cannot' (p. 1).

Given that situating oneself in relation to data is regarded as a 'reflexive engagement' (Savin-Baden 2004:365), it is important to discuss the role of reflection and reflexivity within this study. Various authors differ as to the definitions of these terms. Archer (2010:2) suggests that 'reflection and reflexivity have fuzzy borders and can shift from one to the other' whereas Finlay (2008) notes that reflection, critical reflection and reflexivity are often confused and wrongly assumed to be interchangeable. Finlay and Gough (2003) suggest that there is a continuum ranging from reflection through to reflexivity.

Reflection is defined by Bolton (2006) as learning and developing through examining what we think happens and how this is perceived by others. Through studying data and texts there can be an in-depth consideration of events or situations looking at whole scenarios from as many angles as possible. Reflexivity, she continues, is finding strategies to question one's own attitudes, thought processes, values, assumptions, etc. to strive to understand our complex roles in relation to others and how we are involved in creating social structures. Similarly, Savin-Baden (2004) suggests that reflexivity is about working with people, doing research that is collaborative and sharing perspectives. Patton (2002:64) suggests that to be reflexive is to undertake an ongoing examination of 'what I know and how I know it' and that reflexivity requires researchers to use their own knowledge and experiences to make sense of the data that is collected.

Adkins (2002) notes that reflexivity continues to be recommended as a critical practice for social research and, similarly, Foley (2002) maintains that 'greater reflexivity will provide a firm reliable foundation for an objective social science' (p.163). Denscombe (2010) points out that, with reflexivity, there is no prospect of the social researcher achieving an entirely objective position from which to study the social world - the researcher's self is inevitably an integral part of the analysis and should be acknowledged as such.

In this thesis, the participants did not know the researcher prior to this study but were able to empathise due to shared experiences. Several respondents to the questionnaire stated that the covering letter for the survey from a "fellow headteacher" had encouraged them to participate in the research. Similarly, interviewees stated that they had been more amenable to be interviewed by an 'insider colleague' than would otherwise have been the case. These factors would support the view that my role as an insider researcher strengthened this study rather than leading to problems of bias. Similarly, my own experiences and familiarity with the voluntary aided sector enabled me to be more reflexive throughout the research process than would have been the case for an outside researcher.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The importance of ethical considerations in research has been highlighted by many authors (e.g., Busher 2002, Punch 2005, Blaxter et al. 2006, Resnik 2009, Cohen et al. 2011). Some focus on the principle of beneficence which 'imposes a duty to benefit others and, in research ethics, a duty to maximise net benefits' (Tooth, Lutfiyya and Sokal 2007). Halai (2006) suggests that beneficence is particularly relevant for researchers in education and that, consequently, there is a need to identify how the profession could benefit from the research. Potential benefits resulting from this thesis were outlined in Chapter 1. Other authors suggest that the key principle guiding ethical activity is non-maleficence - that researchers should not make matters worse (Haight 2006; Wiles, Charles, Crow and Heath 2006). Caution is expressed by Henn, Weinstein and Foard (2006) that ethical codes can stifle researchers' creativity as they attempt to produce a blueprint or recipe book of good research.

For the purposes of this thesis, the mental template for an ethical framework as suggested by Murray and Lawrence (2000) was deemed appropriate in which the following areas are investigated:

- Privacy
- Informed consent
- Right to withdraw
- Deception and secrecy
- Incentives

- Risks to participants
- Protection of the researcher
- Data protection

Privacy has an intrinsic value tied to human dignity and security (Howe and Moses 1999) and the participants' rights to the confidential and anonymous treatment of data are regarded as the norm for the conduct of research (British Educational Research Association 2011). Denscombe (2010) advises that researchers avoid reports which allow individuals or organisations to be identified by name while Henn et al. (2006:76) state that it is 'almost impossible' to assure anonymity given the close proximity of researcher to participant. They advise that researchers need to be more conscientious than simply changing names since people can often be identified through geographical locations, work places and other characteristics. Similarly, Lewis (in Ritchie and Lewis 2003) warns against indirect attribution that might identify individuals or groups. Blaxter et al. (2006) advise that greater care than usually perceived as being necessary should be taken by researchers to conceal identities; and others (e.g. Angrosino, 2007) suggest the use of codes for participants. Patton (2002) warns that pseudonyms can be punctured by looking up an institution's affiliation.

Regarding confidentiality and anonymity, Sapsford and Abbott (2006) note that confidentiality is a promise that research participants will not be identified or presented in an identifiable form, while anonymity is a promise that even the researcher will not be able to tell which responses came from which respondent. Complete anonymity could not be guaranteed in this thesis as this researcher needed to contact participants who had volunteered for interview and organise timings and locations. However, confidentiality was maintained as no one other than the researcher had access to these identities (Newby 2010). As an additional precaution, schools whose headteachers were interviewed were not identified within specific local authorities.

To ensure that informed consent occurs, participants need to be informed in a manner which is intelligible to them about the research processes as advised by the British Educational Research Association (BERA 2011) and this is a principle to which all researchers should be aiming (Bell 2005a). The Economic and Social Research Council suggest that informed consent entails giving as much information as possible about the

research to prospective participants (ESRC 2010) while others recommend a 'need to know' basis in case too much detail might pre-empt responses (Ritchie and Lewis 2003) or deter participation due to being overwhelmed (Cohen et al. 2011). Differences of opinion also exist with regard to the need for explicit consent; some feel that the return of a questionnaire can be interpreted as signifying consent, others recommend explicit verbal or written agreement and some recommend that informed consent should be continuously negotiated rather than being a one-off event (Tisdall, Davis and Gallagher 2009; Denscombe 2010). To ensure that 'informed consent' for this research was obtained in accordance with best practice, a covering letter introduced the on-line questionnaire and contained the following information as recommended by the Social Research Association (2003: 27-30):

- Name of researcher and organisation base
- Function of research (EdD)
- Purpose and aims
- Invitation to be part of research
- Reason for requested participation
- Clarification regarding the participants' role
- Indication as to the amount of time required
- Assurance of confidentiality and non- traceability
- Contact details for researcher

These points, plus the right to withdraw at any time, were reiterated verbally prior to each of the interviews. Having explained these points clearly, respondents were deemed to have signified their consent by their continued participation in the survey/interviews. Interviewees, in particular, were required to give their names and contact details if they wished to participate – this clearly indicated consent.

Deception in research is regarded by many as unacceptable and professional integrity in research is recommended to be upheld without fear or favour (Social Research Association 2003). However, others hold different views. For example, Gans (1962) suggests that if the researcher is completely honest, participants might hide actions or attitudes that they feel may be considered undesirable and that, consequently, the researcher must be dishonest to get honest data and Punch (in Denzin and Lincoln

1998:172) argues that 'one need not always be brutally honest, direct and explicit about one's research purpose'. In this thesis, it was considered essential to gain the trust of participants as a fellow headteacher of voluntary aided schools, in order to elicit genuine attitudes with regard to their school leadership. In order to do this, complete honesty was maintained at all times; the true purpose and conditions of the research were stated explicitly, agreements, such as time and location for interviews, were maintained and the length of time needed for the questionnaires/interviews were honestly described.

In accordance with recommendations by the British Ethical Research Association (2011), the awarding of incentives was not considered to be compatible with honest participation in research. Incentives have also been described as bribery (Seale 2004) and as physical/psychological coercion (Christians 2000). Instead, the introductory letter to the survey mentioned the potential benefits of the research to all stakeholders involved in voluntary aided schools.

The risks in social science research are defined by the Economic and Social Research Council (2010) as the potential physical or psychological harm, discomfort or stress to human participants. Burton, Brundrett and Jones (2008) emphasise that, even after having obtained consent, researchers have an obligation to protect participants against potentially harmful effects. McNiff and Whitehead (2010) stress the importance for researchers to determine possible psychological, legal and professional risks to participants and consider ways to avoid or manage them. Potential risks that have been identified by the Social Research Association (2003) include:

- Personal and social standing – this EdD research should not carry these risks as every precaution was taken to maintain confidentiality
- Privacy – the questions in the survey and interviews were based solely on the leadership views of the participants and did not ask for personal information (e.g. age, marital status, address, etc.)
- Personal values and beliefs – this research aims to identify the leadership perspectives of headteachers and was not be judgemental
- Links to family and wider community – the families and schools of the participants were not identified
- Position in setting – as discussed above

- Stress and discomfort - a pilot questionnaire ensured that insensitive questions were not put to participants and the right to refuse to answer some or all questions was reiterated for both the questionnaire and the interviews.

This research did not involve intervention or experimentation and, consequently, no specific safeguarding was required.
The Social Research Association (2003) also emphasises the need to minimise risks for the researcher. This particular research was not expected to cause any personal risks to the researcher as:

a) respondents to the on-line survey did not meet with the researcher
b) interviews were conducted in the schools of the interviewees i.e. public places
c) all headteacher respondents were, by definition of their roles, CRB checked

Regarding data protection, people are entitled to know how and why their personal data is being stored, to what uses it is being put, and to whom it may be made available (British Ethical Research Association 2011) and recommendations about safe-keeping are made by many (e.g. Denscombe 2010). To comply with these recommendations, participants in this research were informed that no-one other than the researcher would have access to the data, that on-line data were password protected, that paper documentation was stored securely and that all records were to be destroyed/deleted at the completion of the research project.

3.9 Data Collection and Analysis

Likert type questions were utilised for the on-line questionnaire as these are designed to measure attitudes or opinions (Bowling, 1997; Burns and Grove, 1997) and, according to McLeod (2008), this is the most widely used rating scale for measuring attitude as it allows for degrees of opinion, or no opinion, though there is a potential risk of compromise due to respondents giving replies that are affected by 'social desirability' bias. As discussed earlier in this chapter, this inside research by a 'fellow headteacher' is believed to have strengthened this study, eliminated bias and encouraged honest responses.

Opinions differ as to whether Likert type responses are ordinal or interval. Several authors (Keller 2008; Cohen et al. 2011; Boone and Boone 2012) argue that they indicate a rank order of priority rather than a measured progression and that they require non-parametric analysis as there is no assumption that the sample population is normally distributed. Others (Bryman and Cramer 2005; Pell 2005; Kinnear and Gray 2010; Norman 2010) suggest that, with sociological variables such as attitudes, Likert data can be treated as interval data and that it can sometimes be appropriate to use parametric analysis. Jamieson (2004:1217) when discussing the dichotomy of views in this regard suggests that "no statement is made about an assumption of interval status for Likert data, and no argument made in support". This resonates with my own view that the gaps between strongly agree/agree/undecided/disagree/strongly disagree in a questionnaire eliciting perceptions of headteachers would not be equal intervals and, accordingly, these have been regarded as ordinal necessitating non-parametric analysis.

Rowntree (2000) recommends the use of the chi-square test when dealing with categories and investigating whether there is a significant difference between samples in proportions rather than means as "this compares the frequency with which we'd expect certain observations to occur, if chance only were operating, with the frequency that actually occurred" (p187). He describes it as "one of the most widely used tests in social statistics" (p150). He opines that such non-parametric techniques are essential when dealing with category-variables and may in other cases be advisable when we cannot be sure that the parent population is normally distributed

The suitability of chi-square tests for analysing percentages is also highlighted by McMillan and Schumacher (2006:488) "Chi-square ($X2$) is a statistical procedure that is used as an inferential statistic with nominal data, such as frequency counts, and ordinal data such as percentages and proportions." Similarly, Coles and McGrath (2010) recommend that Likert scales can be analysed by plotting percentage responses and that items can then be compared using chi-squared which compares actual and expected responses. Kinnear and Gray (2010) suggest that chi-square tests can be used to establish issues or significant factors which might be identified between items. Boone and Boone (2012) note that descriptive statistics recommended for ordinal scale items include the chi-square measure of association. The utilisation of chi-square tests as a

suitable means of analysing the percentages of respondents to the questionnaire for this research is, therefore, supported by the above views.

Appendix B contains the overall responses to the questionnaire and Appendix C provides an example of a returned questionnaire. The data was then converted into contingency tables that demonstrated how the 5 sub-groups responded to each of the Likert-style questions – these are provided in Appendix D. This enabled the application of chi-square tests to ascertain whether there were significant differences between the sub-groups with regard to observed and expected results utilising the formula:

- $X^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$,
- where the degrees of freedom (r - 1)(c – 1) are greater than 1
- where $E = \frac{\text{row total x column total}}{\text{grand total}}$
- where the expected numbers were no less than 5 as this would render the formula for X^2 invalid (Rees, 2000)

A specialist survey company was utilised to submit the on-line questionnaire and it provided the facility to collate, cross-tabulate and filter the responses with access by password. The software would only accept one response from any single computer. Responses could be monitored individually, in total and by group and were recorded as percentages - these quantitative figures are summarised and presented as findings in Chapter 4 (p92-107).

Two open-ended questions were included in the survey to enable respondents to express their own priorities:

- Which aspects of leading your school give you the greatest pleasure?
- Which aspects of leading your school give you the greatest challenge?

Respondents' answers to these questions were listed individually (but anonymously) on the responses and presented as coded categories in Chapter 4 (p108). This qualitative data, as well as the data from interviews, necessitated a different approach to collection and analysis as discussed below.

Three necessary components for qualitative data analysis are suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994); data reduction (involving selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting and transferring data), data display (providing an organised compressed assembly of information that provides conclusion drawing) and conclusion drawing (ensuring that meanings emerging from the data can be tested for plausibility, sturdiness and confirmability). However, they warn that 'qualitative analyses can be evocative, illuminating, masterful – and wrong - the story, well told as it is, may not fit the data' (p. 247).

Realism research, note Sobh and Perry (2005), unlike constructivism or critical theory, is not interested in every detail – only those perceptions related to the external reality. They stress the need for all observations to have explanations and representative quotations. Charmaz (2003) notes that coding starts the chain of theoretical development and for this EdD thesis, the introduction of the two open-ended questions in the questionnaire enabled respondents to introduce new aspects for consideration and so prevent sole dominance of the researcher's suggestions and any pre-conceptions.

Template analysis (King 2004) produces lists of codes representing identified themes. However, various descriptive terms (codes, categories, concepts, themes, and key points) are all used by different authors (for example; Goetz and Le Compte 1984, Berg 2001, Patton 2002, Allan 2003) to designate ways of extracting and sorting qualitative data. Although Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggest analysing data word by word, they did so from the perspective of grounded theory. Others (for example, Glaser 1992) suggest coding by key points rather than by individual words. Some authors recommend preliminary analysis of data as soon as possible after commencing interviews (Delamot 1992, Miles and Huberman 1994) while others suggest delaying to obtain more of a feel for the whole (Hitchcock and Hughes 1995, Fielding and Thomas 2001).

An initial 'start list' of coding categories, is recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994) which can be modified as more data are produced. They regard this 'start list' as the midway point between deductive and inductive approaches with the benefit of both. However, Sobh and Perry (2005) from a realism perspective suggest that only those perceptions relevant to the external reality are worth pursuing and so codes for reducing data are usually generated from a conceptual framework so that one can 'leapfrog' the

first level codes normally associated with qualitative research. They point out that there may be some missed patterns as a consequence but suggest that these can be picked up during open questions during interviews and recommend that the last question to interviewees should be whether they wish to add any further data. They suggest that the second stage of a research project can aim at verifying the conceptual framework in the first stage by using the same interview protocol across all cases. In this thesis, the initial questions in the survey centred around the particular characteristics of voluntary aided schools (the impact on workload caused by admissions, staff employment, RE curriculum, etc.) but the open ended questions, as noted above, enabled respondents to raise other matters and the subsequent interviews enabled interviewees to elaborate and verify the questionnaire findings as well as raise other issues.

Three approaches to qualitative content analysis are noted by Hsieh and Shannon (2005); conventional (where coding categories are derived from raw data), directed (where initial codes start with theory or relevant research findings, and summative (where coding starts with the counting of words). The approach in this EdD thesis accords with the second 'directed' approach in that the responses to the two open-ended questions in the survey were utilised to form the questions for the semi-structured interview questions – thus providing the initial themes/codes for the qualitative analysis. Miles and Huberman (1994) distinguish between descriptive codes (what the respondent is saying), interpretive codes (what the analyst thinks is implied by the respondent) and inferential codes (in which broader patterns can be identified). They note that the use of matrices for individual cases can disclose patterns. For this thesis, the responses of the interviewees were coded from the initial question themes into broader topics to see whether other patterns became evident.

It should be noted that several authors advocate the use of counting the frequency of responses in qualitative analysis (Goetz and LeCompte 1984, Robson 1993, Miles and Huberman 1994, Silverman 2010, Cohen et al. 2011) in order to establish relativity and patterns. However, caution is urged as meaningful statistics cannot be derived from these and the main focus of qualitative data should be on descriptive narrative. From a realism perspective, Sobh and Perry (2005), in addition to suggesting that data displays can show numerical frequency of empirical experiences, suggest three further guidelines which have been adopted when reporting the findings in Chapter 5;

- The importance of explanations for observations focusing on contingencies, structure and mechanism
- The importance of frequent representative quotations in support of explanations with links to respondents
- The fact that data analysis software is not essential for realism research as this emphasises relationships, connections and creativity and computer software may lead to a decrease in sensitivity about these

3.10 Triangulation, Reliability and Validity

Triangulation has been described by Bazeley (2004) as being a frequently used synonym for mixed methods and Cohen et al. (2011:195) describe it as 'attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint'. Pawson and Tilley (1997) describe it as providing a 'family of answers' for realist research to capture a single, external and complex reality. They note that different interviewees may be asked the same questions to test whether they provide the same perceptions and, if they do not, their answers can foster understanding of the reasons as to why. It is described by Yin (2003:98) as developing 'converging lines of enquiry' and Patton (2002) notes that it counters the concern that a study's findings are due to a single method or source or to an investigator's 'blunders'.

> For realists, the means to determine the reality of a social phenomenon is through the triangulation of cognition process which includes elements of both positivism and constructivism rather than solely one or the other. A perception for realists is thus a window from which a picture of reality can be triangulated with other perceptions (Krauss, 2005:767)

In this thesis, triangulation both between and within methods (McFee 1992) was provided; the former by comparing the outcomes of the questionnaire with those of the interviews and the latter by interviewing a range of different voluntary-aided school headteachers so as to provide different viewpoints. In answer to the main research question 'how do headteachers of voluntary aided schools perceive their leadership role?' the quantitative data presents a national picture of views whereas the qualitative

data facilitates discussion as to why as to why these views are held. The triangulation of both methods adds to the level of authenticity of the research:

> Where there is no perfect truth, a focus on reliability, validity and triangulation should contribute to an acceptable level of authenticity sufficient to satisfy both researcher and reader that the study is meaningful and worthwhile (Bush 2002:71).

Reliability is described by Bell (2005a) as the extent to which a test or procedure produces similar results under constant conditions on all occasions. To facilitate this, the wording and protocol for the interview questions was the same for all interviewees (Sobh and Perry 2005). Validity is the extent to which an indicator is a measure of what the researcher wishes to measure (Sapsford and Evans 1984). However, a reliable item is not necessarily also valid – similar responses an all occasions may not be measuring what is required (Bell 2005a).

A sufficiently large response to the on-line questionnaire indicated reliable patterns to suggest generalisation of opinions. As will be seen in chapter 4, highly structured closed questions generated frequencies of response and enabled comparisons to be made across groups in the sample. Rating scales combined the opportunity for a flexible response with the ability to determine frequencies, correlations and other forms of quantitative analysis – facilitating the freedom to fuse measurement with opinions, quantity and quality (Cohen et al. 2011). The open-ended questions in the questionnaire and the semi-structured inductive interviews addressed the issue of validity as they enabled the respondents to express and develop ideas of their choice. Further 'respondent validity' (Dadds and Hart 2001) was provided as summary transcripts were shared with the interviewees.

This thesis has incorporated the 5 purposes of mixed methods analysis outlined by Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989):

1. Triangulation – the corroboration of results from different methods
2. Complementarity – the clarification of one method from the results of another
3. Development – using the results of one method to inform another method
4. Initiation – seeking the discovery of new perspectives and rephrasing questions

5. Expansion – extending the range of inquiry by using different methods

3.11 Summary

In this chapter, the realism paradigm together with a mixed methods approach has been discussed and justified. A critical discourse has provided the rationale for this choice of approach and to support the decisions made regarding the chosen methods and tools. Issues such as insider researcher bias, triangulation, reflexivity, validity and reliability have been considered; as well as matters of ethics appertaining to this research.

CHAPTER 4 – FINDINGS FROM THE ON-LINE SURVEY

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the findings of the survey will be presented with some explanation as to the composition of the five groups, how the groups are related through cross-tabulation and how the responses from each of the groups differed from the overall responses. Suggestions for these are posited and specific reference is made where statistically significant differences are identified through chi-square tests. In Chapter 6 (Discussion) the survey responses are discussed and related both to interview data (Chapter 5) and the existing literature (Chapter 2).

4.2 Findings – overall responses

In view of the small number of Nursery, First and Middle, and Middle respondents, it was decided to combine the Nursery, First and Infants respondents into an 'Infants' group, the Middle and Juniors into a 'Juniors' group, and the First and Middle together with the Primary into a 'Primary' group. Similarly, as a very small number (7) of respondents described their schools as "other", these were combined with the "secondary" group as these were high schools, all-through 5-18 schools or sixth form colleges where headteachers would usually be secondary based. This gives a primary/secondary split of respondents of 87%/13% which compares favourably with the national picture of voluntary aided primary/secondary schools split of 88%/12% (DfE, 2011). Figure 4.1 below illustrates the revised groupings:

Figure 4.1 - Regrouped respondents based on type of school

1. Type of School

		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Infants	7.79%	35
2	Juniors	5.35%	24
3	Primary	73.94%	332
4	Secondary	12.96%	58
		answered	449
		skipped	1

The next question asked respondents to group their schools according to the number on roll. The cut-off point of 230 pupils was chosen to identify small (below average) schools as 231 was the size of the average primary school in England in 2011 (Bolton 2012). As this research seeks the views of both primary and secondary headteachers, the 'medium' range of 231-500 pupils was chosen as only 3.5% of primary schools exceed 500 on roll in contrast to 89% of secondary schools (DfE 2011). Figure 4.2.2 below shows the breakdown of responses. A direct comparison with national figures was not possible as the DfE (2011) statistics show school sizes for all state-funded schools (without identifying voluntary aided schools as a distinct group) and these are broken down into groups of 100 as follows:

- Under 200 pupils – 59%
- 200-500 pupils - 23%
- Over 500 pupils - 18%

Nevertheless, similar trends were apparent in the responses to the survey as indicated in Figure 4.2 below:

Figure 4.2 – Overall breakdown of respondents based on size of school

2. Number on Roll

		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Under 230	50.56%	226
2	231 – 500	35.12%	157
3	Over 500	14.32%	64
		answered	447
		Skipped	3

The next question asked respondents to identify their schools by religious affiliation. In view of the small number of respondents from the minority faith schools (1 Hindu, 16 Jewish, 1 Moslem) it was decided to combine these into one group (H/J/M) as portrayed in Figure 4.3 below. An additional column compares the proportions of religious denominations in the survey to those in voluntary aided schools nationally.

Figure 4.3 – Overall breakdown of respondents based on denomination plus column indicating national percentages of voluntary aided schools (DfE, 2011)

3. Religious Affiliation				
		Response Percent	Response Total	National Percent
1	Catholic	39.29%	176	48%
2	Church of England	54.69%	245	49.52%
3	H/J/M	4.01%	18	1.23%
4	Other	1.12%	5	.07%
5	None	0.89%	4	1.18%
		answered	448	
		skipped	2	

The proportion of Church of England headteacher respondents was greater and that of Catholic headteacher respondents smaller when compared with national proportions but not significantly so.

The next question asked respondents to describe the type of settings of their schools as displayed in Figure 4.4 below. National statistics are not available for comparisons.

Figure 4.4 – Overall breakdown of respondents based on location

4. Geographical Location of Community			
		Response Percent	Response Total
1	a) Inner City	21.62%	96
2	b) Suburban	39.19%	174
3	c) Rural	24.32%	108
4	d) Mixed	12.84%	57
5	e) Other	2.03%	9
		answered	444
		skipped	6

Respondents were then asked to state their number of years of headship experience as displayed in Figure 4.5 below. It was considered more useful to determine experience of headship rather than the age of respondents as older headteachers may not necessarily be the most experienced.

Figure 4.5 – Overall breakdown of respondents based on headship experience

5. Your Experience of Headship

		Response Percent	Response Total
1	a) Less than 10 years	58.48%	262
2	b) 10 -20 years	31.92%	143
3	c) Over 20 years	9.60%	43
		answered	448
		skipped	2

Having established the above groups, respondents were then asked a series of questions for Likert-style responses. These responses vary from little to marked differences between the proportions agreeing or disagreeing with the statements and are summarised in Table 4.1 below:

Table 4.1 – Proportions of respondents in total responses to Likert-style statements

Statement subject	% strongly agree/ agree	% undecided	% strongly disagree/ disagree
1 Role of faith community	91	6	3
2 Parental involvement in v/a schools	39	31	30
3 Affinity with other v/a heads	47	12	41
4 Workload of v/a heads	37	25	38
5 Inspiration through personal faith	86	7	7
6 Responsibility for Admissions	52	10	38
7 Responsibility for RE	37	9	54
8 Responsibility for staff employment	29	8	63
9 Responsibility for premises	16	5	79
10 Criticism of faith schools	40	15	45
11 Preference to remain in v/a sector	78	15	7

Thus, in the overall responses:

- Statements 1, 5, 9, 11 – showed a large preference in one direction. The respondents, overall, felt very strongly that their faith communities played prominent roles in their schools, that their own personal faith inspired their headship activities, that responsibility for their premises did impact on their workload and that they would prefer to remain within the voluntary aided sector
- Statement 8 – showed a marked preference in one direction. The respondents, overall, felt quite strongly that the responsibility for employing staff did impact on their workload
- Statements 6, 7 – showed some preference in one direction. The respondents, overall, demonstrated that over 50% felt that responsibility for Admissions and RE did impact substantially on their workload
- Statements 2, 3, 4, 10 – showed little preference in either direction. The respondents, overall, were fairly evenly balanced with regard to parental involvement, affinity with other voluntary aided school headteachers, the workload of voluntary aided headteachers compared with those in other types of school and criticism of faith schools.

4.3 Cross-tabulation

Cross-tabulation between the 5 groups identified the following facts which may have some bearing on the responses – these are referred to both in the group responses analysis later in this chapter and in the discussion in Chapter 6:

- The largest group of Infant school responses (50%) came from rural school headteachers
- 89% of Infant school responses came from Church of England schools as did 88% of Junior school responses. This compared to 52% of primary schools and 40% of secondary schools. 43% of the secondary school responses came from Catholic school headteachers
- 88% of the Infant school responses came from small schools with less than 230 pupils. 66% of the Junior school responses came from schools with 231-500 pupils. 56% of the primary school responses came from small schools whereas 89% of the secondary school responses came from schools with over 500 pupils.

- The largest component (42%) of the schools with less than 230 pupils were rural - 65% of them were Church of England, 32% were Catholic and 2% were minority faith
- The largest component (51%) of the schools with 231-500 pupils were suburban – 48% were Church of England, 45% were Catholic, 6% were minority faith and 1% were other
- The largest component (52%) of the schools with over 500 pupils were suburban – 36% were Church of England, 48% were Catholic, 8% were minority faith, 3% were other and 5% were none
- Of the Church of England schools, the largest proportion (40%) were rural; followed by 30% suburban, 19% inner city, 9% mixed and 2% other
- Of the Catholic schools, the largest group (47%) were suburban; followed by 26% inner city, 19% mixed, 6% rural and 1% other
- Of the minority faith schools, the largest proportion (84%) were suburban; followed by 5% (1 school) in each of inner city, rural and mixed
- Across all the religious denominations, the majority of headteachers had less than 10 years of experience. This ranged from 53% (Catholic) through to 66% (minority faiths)
- Rural schools had the largest proportion of headteachers with less than 10 years of experience (71%) and only 4% with over 20 years' experience
- Based on location, all groups had a majority of headteachers with less than 10 years of experience with the exception of the other group which had 44% with less than 10 years and 56% with 10-20 years. Conversely, all groups had a minority of headteachers with over 20 years of experience ranging from the other group with 0% to suburban with 13%
- Based on location, the majority of respondents from rural schools (89%) are from Church of England schools with 10% from Catholic schools and 1% from minority faith schools. The largest group from suburban schools (47%) are from Catholic establishments with 41% from Church of England schools and 9% from minority faith schools. Inner City schools proportions were 49% Church of England, 48% Catholic and 1% minority faith. The small numbers of mixed (5) and other (4) schools were not identifiable.
- Based on school size, all groups had a majority of headteachers with less than 10 years of experience

Contingency tables were prepared outlining how each of the five groups responded to the questionnaire statements and how these differed from the overall responses. These are summarised below to indicate what proportion of each sub-group agreed/strongly agreed with the statements and reasons for any significant differences are suggested.

4.4 Findings – based on type/age range of school

Table 4.2 – Proportions of headteacher respondents from the "Type/age range of school" group agreeing/strongly agreeing with the survey statements

Statement	**Overall responses**	**Infants** (35 responses)*	**Juniors** (24 responses)*	**Primary** (328 responses)*	**Secondary** (58 responses)*
(a)"The faith community plays a prominent role in my school"	**91%**	91%	79%	91%	91%
(b)"Parents are more involved in v/a schools than in other types of school"	**39%**	45%	25%	37%	53%
(c)"I find that I have more affinity with other v/a heads than with those of other schools"	**47%**	43%	21%	49%	45%
(d)"I believe that v/a heads have a heavier workload than do heads of other schools"	**37%**	26%	33%	40%	22%
(e)"My own personal faith inspires my headship activities"	**87%**	83%	75%	87%	92%
(f)"Responsibility for Admissions adds substantially to my workload"	**52%**	48%	35%	52%	58%
(g)"Responsibility for the RE curriculum has no substantial impact on my workload"	**37%**	27%	46%	35%	51%
(h)"Responsibility for employing staff has no substantial impact on my workload"	**29%**	35%	27%	28%	31%
(i)"Responsibility for the premises has no substantial impact on my workload"	**16%**	12%	21%	15%	23%
(j)"Criticism of faith schools creates extra tensions for my role"	**40%**	23%	37%	40%	49%
(k)"I would prefer to remain in v/a sector"	**78%**	75%	75%	78%	82%

*The exact number of responses differed slightly between the responses to each statement as some answers were skipped.

Respondents from the Junior only schools had the lowest proportions agreeing/strongly agreeing with the statements for (a), (b), (c), (e), (f) and (h). Those from Infants only schools had the lowest proportions for (g), (i) and (j). Those from secondary schools had the lowest proportions for (d) and all scored similarly high for (k). It is interesting to note from the cross-tabulations (4.3) that the Junior and Infant school respondents were predominantly from Church of England schools whereas the secondary school respondents were predominantly from Catholic schools.

On applying a chi-square test (utilising the contingency tables), it was seen that two of the statements demonstrated statistically significant differences between the expected and actual results with a probability of less than 0.05; namely, 'parental involvement' (b) and 'heavier workload' (d).

With regard to 'parental involvement' (b), the lowest proportion (25%) of respondents agreeing/strongly agreeing with the statement came from the Junior schools while the highest proportion (53%) came from the Secondary schools. It was noted from the cross-tabulations (4.3) that 88% of Junior schools in the survey were Church of England whereas in the secondary school responses, the Church of England proportion reduced to 40% and a larger proportion (43%) were Catholic. This might suggest that, with regard to parental involvement, parents in Church of England schools are less likely to be involved than those in Catholic schools and it will be interesting to investigate whether this is due to the denominational aspect of these schools or other factors.

With regard to 'heavier workload' (d), the secondary school respondents produced the smallest proportion (22%) agreeing with the statement. This may be due to the fact these were the largest schools (89% with over 500 pupils) and, consequently, would have separate departments for all subjects including RE and administration. The primary school respondents, by way of contrast, had only 4% with over 500 pupils and 56% with less than 250 pupils and would have to deal with the additional curriculum and administration requirements of their faith schools without the additional staffing support enjoyed by their secondary school colleagues.

4.5 Findings – based on size of school

Table 4.3 – Proportions of headteacher respondents from the "Size of school" group agreeing/strongly agreeing with the survey statements

Statement	**Overall responses**	**Under 230** (225 responses)*	**231-500** (157 responses)*	**Over 500** (64 responses)*
(a)"The faith community plays a prominent role in my school"	**90%**	88%	93%	93%
(b)"Parents are more involved in v/a schools than in other types of school"	**39%**	32%	43%	53%
(c)"I find that I have more affinity with other v/a heads than with those of other schools"	**47%**	44%	49%	52%
(d)"I believe that v/a heads have a heavier workload than do heads of other schools"	**37%**	41%	34%	30%
(e)"My own personal faith inspires my headship activities"	**87%**	84%	87%	94%
(f)"Responsibility for Admissions adds substantially to my workload"	**52%**	47%	57%	54%
(g)"Responsibility for the RE curriculum has no substantial impact on my workload"	**37%**	30%	40%	53%
(h)"Responsibility for employing staff has no substantial impact on my workload"	**29%**	30%	28%	32%
(i)"Responsibility for the premises has no substantial impact on my workload"	**16%**	15%	14%	25%
(j)"Criticism of faith schools creates extra tensions for my role"	**40%**	37%	40%	47%
(k)"I would prefer to remain in the v/a sector"	**78%**	75%	81%	83%

*The exact number of responses differed slightly between the responses to each statement as some answers were skipped.

Respondents from the smallest schools showed the lowest proportions of responses in nine of the eleven questions though they had the highest proportion for 'heavier workload' (d). Conversely, the respondents from the largest schools tended to show the opposite responses. Those from the medium range of schools showed the lowest proportions for 'employing staff' (h) and the highest for 'admissions' (f).

Applying a chi-square test (to the contingency tables), two statements showed statistically significant differences between the expected and actual results with a probability of less than 0.05; namely 'parental involvement' (b) and 'RE curriculum' (g).

With regard to 'parental involvement' (b), one might have expected parents to be more involved in small schools. The cross-tabulations (4.3) indicate that 65% of the small school respondents were from Church of England schools whereas this figure drops to 36% in the largest school group which may indicate, as suggested in the previous section, that parents in Church of England schools are less involved than are parents in Catholic or minority faith schools. It is also evident from the cross-tabulations that 42% of the smallest schools are in rural locations whereas only 3% of the largest schools are rural and that, while one might have conjectured that parents would be more active in rural village locations, it may be that logistical reasons e.g. distance and transport, make this more difficult than in suburban or urban areas.

With regard to 'RE curriculum' (g), only 1% of secondary schools have under 230 pupils whereas 80% have over 500 pupils and, as suggested in the previous section, headteachers in the smallest schools would have to deal with the additional curriculum and administration requirements of their faith schools without the additional staffing support enjoyed by their colleagues in the largest schools.

4.6 Findings – based on religious affiliation

Table 4.4 – Proportions of headteacher respondents from the "Religious affiliation" group agreeing/strongly agreeing with the survey statements

Statement	Overall responses	Catholic* (176 responses)	C of E* (245 responses)	H/J/M* (18 responses)	Other* ** (5 responses)	None* (3 responses)
(a)"The faith community plays a prominent role in my school"	**91%**	95%	86%	100%	100%	33%
(b)"Parents are more involved in v/a schools than in other types of school"	**39%**	47%	32%	78%	20%	25%
(c)"I find that I have more affinity with other v/a heads than with those of other schools"	**47%**	66%	31%	78%	40%	25%
(d)"I believe that v/a heads have a heavier workload than do heads of other schools"	**37%**	50%	28%	44%	40%	0%
(e)"My own personal faith inspires my headship activities"	**86%**	95%	80%	83%	100%	50%
(f)"Responsibility for Admissions adds substantially to my workload"	**52%**	54%	47%	71%	60%	100%
(g)"Responsibility for the RE curriculum has no substantial impact on my workload"	**37%**	31%	42%	24%	40%	33%
(h)"Responsibility for employing staff has no substantial impact on my workload"	**29%**	19%	38%	0%	40%	25%
(i)"Responsibility for the premises has no substantial impact on my workload"	**16%**	15%	19%	6%	0%	0%
(j)"Criticism of faith schools creates extra tensions for my role"	**40%**	55%	29%	56%	20%	0%
(k)"I would prefer to remain in the v/a sector"	**78%**	91%	70%	72%	60%	75%

*The exact number of responses differed slightly between the responses to each statement as some answers were skipped.

** Other denominations would include schools with mixed denominations, other Christian or other faiths – these were not identifiable in the survey and were too few in number to feature significantly in the analysis

There is a much wider variation in proportions of responses but this is due largely to the small number of respondents in the other and none categories. (For example, it is not surprising that 0% of the none category respondents felt that "Criticism of faith schools creates extra tensions for my role"). The other/none respondents showed the lowest proportions in eight of the eleven statements, the Church of England respondents showed the lowest proportion in 'admissions' (f) and the minority faith respondents in 'RE curriculum' (g) and 'staff employment' (h).

Applying a chi-square test (utilising the contingency tables) to the 3 main groups (Catholic, Church of England and minority faiths) one statement showed a statistically significant difference between the expected and actual results with a probability of less than 0.05; namely 'parental involvement' (b).

It was suggested in the previous two sections that parents in Church of England schools may be less involved in schools than those in Catholic and minority faith schools and this would appear to be validated by this section where a statistically significant difference is noted. The cross-tabulations (4.3) demonstrate that the minority faith schools have a greater proportion of larger secondary schools (28%) compared with Church of England schools (9%) and far fewer rural schools (6% minority faith: 40% Church of England) and it was suggested in the previous section (4.5) that parents may be less involved in the smaller rural schools for logistical reasons. It may also be the case that the minority faith schools, as they do not have the benefit of established dioceses, rely more heavily on parents to establish and maintain them and that, consequently, parents are far more involved.

4.7 Findings – based on location

Table 4.5 – Proportions of headteacher respondents from the "Location" group agreeing/strongly agreeing with the survey statements

Statement	Overall responses	Inner City(95 responses)	Suburban (174 responses)*	Rural* (107 responses)	Mixed* (57 responses)	Other* (9 responses)
(a)"The faith community plays a prominent role in my school"	**90%**	96%	95%	80%	93%	77%
(b)"Parents are more involved in v/a schools than in other types of school"	**39%**	40%	48%	30%	32%	22%
(c)"I find that I have more affinity with other v/a heads than with those of other schools"	**47%**	51%	52%	36%	44%	55%
(d)"I believe that v/a heads have a heavier workload than do heads of other schools"	**90%**	96%	95%	80%	93%	97%
(e)"My own personal faith inspires my headship activities"	**87%**	86%	92%	77%	91%	89%
(f)"Responsibility for Admissions adds substantially to my workload"	**52%**	61%	56%	38%	59%	22%
(g)"Responsibility for the RE curriculum has no substantial impact on my workload"	**37%**	41%	37%	33%	35%	44%
(h)"Responsibility for employing staff has no substantial impact on my workload"	**29%**	30%	28%	35%	23%	22%
(i)"Responsibility for the premises has no substantial impact on my workload"	**16%**	19%	16%	12%	18%	22%
(j)"Criticism of faith schools creates extra tensions for my role"	**40%**	38%	46%	25%	56%	22%
(k)"I would prefer to remain in the v/a sector"	**78%**	86%	81%	64%	84%	77%

*The exact number of responses differed slightly between the responses to each statement as some answers were skipped.

Respondents from the other group showed the lowest proportion agreeing/strongly agreeing with 'faith community' (a), 'parental involvement' (b), 'heavier workload' (d), 'admissions' (f), 'staff employment' (h) and 'criticism of faith schools' (j) but there were only nine headteachers in this sub-group and it was not possible to identify these locations. Respondents from the rural group showed the lowest proportion agreeing/strongly agreeing with the statements regarding 'affinity with other v/a headteachers' (c), 'personal faith' (e), 'RE curriculum' (g), 'premises' (i) and 'preference to remain in v/a sector' (k).

Applying a chi-square test (utilising the contingency tables) to the three main groups (inner city, suburban and rural), five statements showed statistically significant differences between the expected and actual results with a probability of less than 0.05; namely 'parental involvement' (b), 'affinity with other voluntary aided school headteachers' (c), 'personal faith' (e), 'criticism of faith schools' (j) and 'preference to remain in v/a sector' (k).

It has been noted from the cross-tabulations (4.3) that the rural schools in the survey comprised a majority (89%) of Church of England schools. In comparison, suburban schools comprise 41% of Church of England schools. It has been suggested in previous sections that parents in Church of England schools may be less involved than those from other schools. It may be that these small rural schools are regarded as the "village" rather than the "faith" school and that their voluntary aided status is simply one of historical accident. This could also explain the difference in "personal faith inspiration" responses between the rural and suburban headteachers, why "criticism of faith schools" creates less tension for the respondents from rural schools, why they feel less "affinity" with other headteachers of voluntary aided schools and why they are less affected by "criticism of faith schools".

Alternatively, the remote nature of rural schools could lead to less involvement by parents for logistical reasons. It could also lead to a sense of isolation in which headteachers have less contact with colleagues than they would in urban or suburban areas – they may simply not see enough of colleagues from voluntary aided schools to feel a sense of affinity with them. This would also explain why fewer respondents from

rural schools (64%) than from suburban schools (81%) stated that they wished to remain in the voluntary aided sector.

4.8 Findings - based on headship experience

Table 4.6 – Proportions of headteacher respondents from the "Length of headship experience" group agreeing/strongly agreeing with the survey statements

Statement	**Overall responses**	**Under 10 *years**(262 responses)	**10 – 20 *years**(143 responses)	**Over 20 *years**(43 responses)
(a)"The faith community plays a prominent role in my school"	**90%**	88%	92%	95%
(b)"Parents are more involved in v/a schools than in other types of school"	**39%**	39%	37%	54%
(c)"I find that I have more affinity with other v/a heads than with those of other schools"	**47%**	45%	46%	56%
(d)"I believe that v/a heads have a heavier workload than do heads of other schools"	**37%**	37%	36%	44%
(e)"My own personal faith inspires my headship activities"	**87%**	83%	93%	92%
(f)"Responsibility for Admissions adds substantially to my workload"	**52%**	49%	57%	50%
(g)"Responsibility for the RE curriculum has no substantial impact on my workload"	**37%**	34%	42%	37%
(h)"Responsibility for employing staff has no substantial impact on my workload"	**29%**	28%	30%	32%
(i)"Responsibility for the premises has no substantial impact on my workload"	**16%**	16%	16%	16%
(j)"Criticism of faith schools creates extra tensions for my role"	**40%**	41%	39%	34%
(k)"I would prefer to remain in the v/a sector"	**78%**	74%	82%	86%

*The exact number of responses differed slightly between the responses to each statement as some answers were skipped.

The responses from this group to the Likert-style statements showed the least variation from the overall responses. In seven of the eleven statements the most experienced headteachers showed a larger proportion of agreeing/strongly agreeing. The largest difference was with 'parental involvement' (b) where responses ranged from 39% for the headteachers with less than 10 years' experience to 54% for those with over 20

years' experience. This might be connected to the fact that 60% of the most experienced headteachers were from Catholic schools but might also be a result of better relationships with parents as a result of greater experience.

Applying a chi-square test (utilising the contingency tables), none of the statements showed statistically significant differences between the expected and actual results with a probability of less than 0.05.

4.9 Open ended questions

Two open-ended questions were included in the survey to enable respondents to express their own priorities:

- Which aspects of leading your school give you the greatest pleasure?
- Which aspects of leading your school give you the greatest challenge?

Given that content analysis is a "systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding" (Stemler 2001) and that several authors advocate the use of counting the frequency of responses in qualitative analysis (Robson 1993, Miles and Huberman 1994, Sobh and Perry 2005, Silverman 2010, Cohen et al. 2011) in order to establish relativity and patterns, the frequency of the most quoted keywords was calculated and these were then grouped into coded categories as shown in table 4.7 below:

Table 4.7 - Categories Identified by respondents as giving greatest Pleasure/Challenge

KEY WORDS	CODED CATEGORY	PLEASURE	CHALLENGE
		(FREQUENCY)	(FREQUENCY)
Children Students Pupils	Pupils	284	60
Faith Spiritual Ethos Worship Community	Religion	206	30
Teaching Learning Curriculum Achievements	Education	118	29
Finance Budget Premises	Management	2	92
Government Governors DfE Local Authority OFSTED	External control	4	69
Staff	Staff	89	125
Parents	Parents	22	69

Interestingly, the keyword "leadership" was only mentioned 7 times – 5 in the context of greatest pleasure and 2 in the context of greatest challenge.

4.10 Summary

In this chapter, the findings from the on-line survey have been presented both in the form of overall results and by group. Several of the overall responses were weighted heavily in one direction; others less so. The responses were then analysed by group and this produced results that sometimes varied from the overall responses. Where chi square tests showed these differences to be statistically significant, a number of suggestions were put forward to explain these discrepancies. The categories derived from the open ended questions in 4.9 above were utilised to form the questions for the semi-structured interviews; the findings from these interviews are presented in Chapter 5. These provide additional colour and background for the survey findings and evidence for the suggestions put forward in this chapter. Emerging themes and discussions from both the on-line survey and the interviews are presented in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 5 – FINDINGS FROM THE INTERVIEWS

5.1 - Introduction

As noted in Chapter 3 (Research Methodology), qualitative data gained from interviews with headteachers who had led both voluntary aided and other types of schools would be useful for providing validity for the responses gained from the on-line survey as well as possible answers to the questions raised following analysis of the different groups. The rationale for choosing this purposive sample, as well as a description of and justification for the process were outlined in the earlier chapter.

Twelve open ended questions were put to the interviewees (see Appendix E - example of an interview transcript). The responses to each question are coded and reported in this chapter together with appropriate quotes from the interviewees. A summary of generalisations is provided at the end of the chapter. A discussion linking the interviews to the questionnaire (Chapter 4) and research literature (Chapter 2) is presented in Chapter 6 together with emerging themes and concluding thoughts.

5.2 – Findings: Question 1 – Which aspects of your leadership role do you most enjoy?

This question was put to the interviewees and, as it also formed an open-ended question at the end the survey, the responses from both the survey and the interviews are compared in Table 5.1 below:

Table 5.1 – Responses from the interviews and survey to "Which aspect of your leadership role do you most enjoy"?

KEY WORDS	CODED CATEGORY	SURVEY (450)	INTERVIEWS (12)
Children Students Pupils	Pupils	284	9
Faith Spiritual Ethos Worship Community	Religion	206	5
Teaching Learning Curriculum Achievements	Education	118	2
Finance Budget Premises	Management	2	
Government Governors DfE Local Authority OFSTED	External control	4	
Staff	Staff	89	4
Parents	Parents	22	1
Influence Vision Change	Influence change		4

The largest coded category in the interviews (as in the survey) related to pupils. Interviewees noted the pleasure they gained from ensuring that pupils made measurable progress and being able to improve their life chances and aspirations:

> "I have a chance to create a curriculum that will affect the lives of children for the future" (H1)

> "Obviously, working with children. It's the best part of the job. It's a fairly challenging context, making a difference with these kids. There's not much aspiration with these families or hope for the future" (H2)

> "First and foremost – children achieving" (H4)

"Student related roles; particularly progress" (H6)

However, a couple of interviewees mentioned activities which would not usually be classified as leadership roles:

"I enjoy interacting with the children. I make time for teaching commitments and take Y6 swimming." (H10)

"I enjoy regular contact with the pupils; I take classes as often as possible." (H11)

The question could be posed, therefore, as to whether practising headteachers differentiate between their leadership, management, teaching and pastoral roles or whether they regard all of their activities as "leadership".

The second largest coded category in the interviews (and in the survey) was that of religion. For some, the internal school religious ethos was prioritised:

"We're inspired by the verse in Jeremiah which drives our vision. It certainly motivates me and gets me going in the morning. It's all about learning for life." (H2)

"Forming a community. The school is a family so I feel like the father of the community. I enjoy worship – particularly our wonderful assemblies….. I am leading a faith community." (H5)

Others stressed the links with their local community:

"The link with the church and the community that we have been developing." (H3)

"Our church school role is important for vision and identity." (H6)

"Ensuring that the school plays a prominent part in the community." (H9)

Several of the interviewees (and respondents to the survey) mentioned staff development as a leadership role which gave them pleasure:

"I also like to bring on staff to develop future leaders." (H1)

"I also model lessons for my staff and mentor and support trainee and newly qualified teachers even though we may lose them." (H11)

One aspect that was raised by interviewees in response to this question which had not featured in the survey was the ability to influence change:

"I used to be a Head of Science and could suggest ideas. Now as a headteacher I can 'make my own tunes up' and carry ideas through to see them come to fruition." (H7)

"I'm the person that can push forward the vision. I could not do this as a deputy in the same way." (H8)

"That's the difference between being a Head and being a Deputy." (H12)

It is interesting to note that the 3 key dimensions of leadership as noted by Bush (2011); namely, vision, values and influence, were highlighted in these responses and several of these themes were developed further in the responses to subsequent questions.

5:3 Findings Question 2 – Which aspects of your leadership role do you find most challenging?

This question was put to the interviewees and as it also formed an open-ended question at the end the survey, the responses from both the survey and the interviews are compared in Table 5.2 below:

Table 5:2 - Responses from the interviews and survey to "Which aspect of your leadership role do you find most challenging"?

KEY WORDS	CODED CATEGORY	SURVEY (450)	INTERVIEWS (12)
Children Students Pupils	Pupils	60	2
Faith Spiritual Ethos Worship Community	Religion	30	1
Teaching Learning Curriculum Achievements	Education	29	1
Finance Budget Premises	Management	92	3
Government Governors DfE LEA OFSTED	External control	69	3
Staff	Staff	125	2
Parents	Parents	69	3

The three joint highest elements were "management", "external control" and "parents" which had all featured highly in the survey as presenting challenges (though the highest element in the on-line survey was "staff").

Management issues such as premises and finance were presented as being time-consuming challenges which detracted from the main business of education:

"Finance is also a big challenge." (H5)

"Our current building project is particularly demanding." (H6)

"Balancing the budget." (H9)

External control, mainly in the form of changing government legislation, was recited as being extremely challenging:

> "Meeting government expectations." (H4)

> "Being restricted by bureaucracy from doing what you want to do." (H7)

Difficult parents, albeit a minority, were regarded as creating challenges for some interviewees ranging from aspirational parents to those with social and even criminal problems:

> "I find it difficult to deal with unreasonable parents who expect unreasonable achievements from their children. This is typical of what I encountered in the private sector. Parents don't understand there is a limit to what schools can do." (H1)

> "Dealing with difficult parents. We have had parents fighting on the premises and have families on the Child Protection Register for drugs and drink related problems. It's only a small minority but it is very time consuming. (H10)

Challenges related to staff were of two types; lack of staff and underperforming staff:

> "Dealing with awkward staff. It's quite hard here as there is no Deputy (we're a small school) and I have no one to whom I can delegate ICT, finance, premises and difficult parents." (H11)

> "Dealing with underperforming staff – children deserve the best."(H12)

Some interviewees listed other challenges:

> "Lots of issues. SATs results, immigration, integration, 32 different languages." (H2)

> "It's a bottomless pit with ridiculously long hours – there are never enough hour to do everything. This is a challenging neighbourhood and I get upset when children have big problems – for some you can see they're en route for prison – it's a challenging neighbourhood." (H5)

One interviewee expressed particular challenges linked to the faith community:

> "There are pressures resulting from working with the faith community. You need a lot of energy and there are more weekend and extra-curricular activities." (H3)

Several of these themes were developed further in subsequent questions.

5.4 Findings Question 3 – What role does the faith community play in your school?

Table 5.3 below categorises the responses of the interviewees to the open-ended question regarding the role of faith communities in their schools.

Table 5.3 – Responses of the interviewees to "What role does the faith community play in your school?"

KEY WORDS	CODED CATEGORY	FREQUENCY
Religious leaders as guest speakers Religious leaders do pastoral work in school Religious leaders run seminars Religious leaders take assemblies	Religious leaders	12
Links with charities Links with youth groups Links with sports groups Links with faith organisations	Communal organisations	7
Diocese provide governors Diocese provides advice and support services Diocese own premises Diocese provides termly meetings	Diocese link	10
School organises visit to places of worship	Place of worship	2
School has own spiritual chaplain	Chaplain	1

Several interviewees highlighted the various roles played by visiting religious leaders to their schools; to boost attendance in their own places of worship, to build a sense of community or to contribute to activities in school. Some noted poor attendance at church by their pupils and their families. An interesting point was made that some religious leaders do not necessarily understand how religious schools function while others serve on the governing body and view schools as the pride of the community :

> "Local rabbis come in as guest speakers or to run seminars – this is their way to access

a young audience as most of our pupils don't go to synagogue." (H1)

"The vicar leads assemblies and this year has done more pastoral work e.g. meets with me every few weeks and conducts a family service to which child and family are invited and classes are involved in the planning. The church is keen to build a sense of community." (H3)

"Local clergy are keen to be involved but don't really understand how schools work. They help with readings, trips and assemblies" (H5)

"We are linked to 2 churches in one parish. Both parish priests are on the governing body and come into school. There is a positive presence of both priests as the children see them. Both come in because they value the school and describe the school as "the jewel in the crown of the parish" and the "visible church" in the area" (H9)

"About a third of our families attend church regularly and this figure is dropping" (H12)

Interviewees also discussed the support provided by dioceses/denominational authorities providing governors as well as financial and personnel advice:

"The Diocese Board of Education provides governors" (H5)

"The Diocese owns the premises and there are meetings every half-term with the Diocese Director" (H6)

"We work closely with the diocese, there is an adviser who helps organise events such as the pilgrimage for leavers. The diocese helped me with issues of incompetence when I took over here" (H8)

"We have a Service Level Agreement with the Diocese who send in officials to help with problems." (H10)

Interviewees also highlighted connections with other organisations such as youth clubs and charities with which schools provide an effective link to engage with young people:

"There are charities that have connections with the school. There are Jewish youth group e.g. Tribe, Maccabi – the school provides an easy way for them to access children. There are also lots of contacts with communal organisations such as the Board of Deputies, United Synagogue. It is difficult to manage as there are so many so, for example, we only support 3 charities per year" (H1)

"They lead youth groups that some of our pupils attend." (H7)

"There is also the nearby family centre which is heavily involved with the school and the local community." (H10)

Another interesting fact that arose during these interviews was that the intake into two of the schools came from poorer neighbourhoods in contrast to the common claim that faith schools have a more affluent intake than community schools and 'cherry pick' middle class pupils:

"Pupils are bussed in from all over the city to this 'leafy suburb'- 45% of our pupils are in the bottom 1% for deprivation" (H6)

"Our families come from two parishes – many of them from socially deprived areas – our intake is poorer than the neighbourhood in which the school is located" (H7)

5.5 Findings Question 4 - What role do parents play in your school?

Table 5.4 below categorises the responses of the interviewees to the open-ended question regarding the role of parents in their schools.

Table 5.4 – Responses of the interviewees to "What role do parents play in your school?"

KEY WORDS	CODED CATEGORY	FREQUENCY
Supportive - Education is a priority	Supportive	2
Very involved	Involved	3
Too involved, lack of professional distance	Too involved	5
Lack of involvement due to secondary issues Lack of involvement due to distance Lack of involvement due to large families Lack of involvement due to low expectations	Not involved	7
Not religious but like ethos	Ethos	2

The majority of comments by the interviewees indicated a lack of involvement by parents. Suggested reasons include geographical distance, employment, time needed for their other children and language difficulties:

"Not a great deal as many of them are employed and have their own tasks" (H2)

"They don't attend. Most live a long distance from the school which makes it more difficult to get involved and many do not speak English" (H6)

"We don't have many parent volunteers in school (other than a gardening club) for a number of reasons; geographically most do not live near the school also many have large families and so cannot spare the time to volunteer. They do help with occasional transport and they do attend assembly performances" (H11)

Some interviewees suggested that parents may become too involved with a lack of professional distance resulting from the closeness of the community:

"The schools are in a village setting which leads to a certain amount of gossip. Support staff who live locally feel that parents sometimes take liberties." (H8)

"20/30 families live near the school. As a result of the closeness, there are occasional breaches of 'professional distance'" (H9)

"25% of our parents are related to staff so there is some lack of professional distance and a small number do take liberties" (H11)

"There is a certain lack of professional distance by families due to the closeness of the Catholic community" (H12)

Others noted examples of positive parental involvement in their schools although they disagreed as to whether this was due to the religious nature of the school:

"We have the usual PTA and parent helpers – not more so than in other schools (low % attend church). It's a school for everyone. Very few are practising religious families" (H3)

"There are 25/30 visits a week from parents as volunteers – grandparents also help. There's a strong community aspect with some parents continuing to help even after their children leave the school" (H9)

"We have a wonderful Friends Association. Parents know each other well and come from 10 wards across the borough. Certainly, a "common characteristic" is useful when appealing for help" (H12)

Some interviewees described their parents as "supportive" rather than "involved" and appreciative of the school ethos even if not religious themselves:

"On a positive note- Education is extremely important to our parents e.g. homework will be supported by parents if they are contacted. This was not typical in myprevious community school where we had nice parents but education was not a priority. We have a 100% turnout of parents to parents' evenings other than for illness" (H1)

"The majority of our parents are not church-going but like the ethos of the schoo and our motto of "sense of work and honesty but always forgive" (H10)

5. 6 Findings – Question 5 - What do you think most attracts parents to apply to your school?

Table 5.5 below categorises the responses of the interviewees to the open-ended question regarding what attracts parents to their schools.

Table 5.5– Responses of the interviewees to "What do you think most attracts parents to your school?"

KEY WORDS	CODED CATEGORY	FREQUENCY
High standards Academic reputation	Standards	6
Religious studies Faith element Ethos Sense of community	Faith ethos	8
General reputation Standards of behaviour Nice school	Reputation	8
Local school Convenient location	Location	5

Interviewees each suggested a combination of reasons as to why parents chose to send their children to their schools. The most popular reasons were the faith ethos and the general reputation of their schools followed by academic standards and, lastly, location. However, these reasons were linked to each other with faith ethos merging into a general sense of community and a wish for knowledge and high attainment. Some felt that parents liked the 'old-fashioned' nature of their faith school believing that this promoted good discipline – one noted a "perception" of high standards in faith schools. Others noted location as being an important factor in parents' choices of school reinforcing the point suggested earlier that some voluntary aided schools are regarded more as the 'village" rather than the "faith" school. However, others pointed out that their families chose to commute considerable distances to their schools:

"I think parents are attracted by the high standards of teaching and learning, high standards of behaviour. Our extra-curricular programme is highly thought of as well. Our high standards of teaching and learning include RE – it's across the board" (H1)

"Some choose for the faith element – though we are inclusive, not just for Christians… we are becoming oversubscribed in lower classes largely due to a sense of community"(H3)

"Hopefully, our ethos and mission statement. We emphasise teaching and learning, progress and tracking. Some pupils commute here rather than going elsewhere" (H4)

"Parents like the Christian character of the school and a major factor is our improving exam results. They also like the 'old-fashioned' atmosphere with uniforms and strong discipline" (H5)

"Few parents are practising Christians, perhaps 1/8th, but like the Christian ethos and modelling of caring, individual attention. Also, remember, that they want to support the village school – there are no nearby community schools, the nearest is 2 miles away" (H8)

"Parents are attracted by the strong Catholic ethos (perhaps one family here is not Catholic) and a strong Catholic wish for knowledge. Also by the fact that our academic results are the best in the area" (H9)

"The majority of our families come here because it is their nearest school – a few come because of the church but only 60% are Christian. 10% of our families commute for 4/5 miles – some of these work near the school, some do so for the Christian element. About 60% of our families are nominally Christian with about 15-20% practising. Just under 20% are mainly Moslem, some Hindu. 10% have no faith" (H10)

"They come here for the strictly orthodox (Jewish) ethos and for the very high standards of behaviour and attainment in both Jewish and secular subjects. Some parents attended here as pupils themselves (the school has existed for 25 years)" (H11)

"There is a perception of higher standards in faith schools which attracts parents and the wish to mix with other Catholic families. We are very mixed socially from poverty through to well-off and have a large Polish contingent (we have a Polish parent ambassador and Polish staff). About 10% of our roll are non-Catholics.[Why do you think they want to come?] Some because it is convenient, others because of our academic and social reputation, others because of our positive discipline" (H12)

5.7 Findings Question 6 – What role do governors play in your school?

Table 5.6 below categorises the responses of the interviewees to the open-ended question regarding the role of governors in their schools.

Table 5.6 – Responses of the interviewees to "What role do governors play in your school?"

KEY WORDS	CODED CATEGORY	FREQUENCY
Engaged with school Involved in governance Strategic direction Extremely positive Give good advice	Effective governance	7
Limited to meetings Do not hold us to account	Weak governance	2
Interference in day to day management	Interference	5
Doing their bit for the community Sense of responsibility to Faith community	Communal loyalty	3

The majority of comments by the interviewees reflected effective governance in their schools. Several, noted that governors were more involved in voluntary aided schools than in community schools and had more parents on the governing body as well as Diocesan representatives. The importance of governor training was voiced as was regular contact between headteachers and governors:

"Governors here are much more engaged than in my previous non-v/a school. The Chairman and I encourage newer governors to train, this has really paid off and next year they will be able to make more contributions – they need to train to act from a position of knowledge" (H1)

"There are a lot of Diocese representatives on the governing body. They are very involved in governance matters but do not interfere in management" (H6)

"I speak with my Chair of Governors about 3 times a week and meet about once a week. I'm in email contact with governors virtually every day" (H11)

"The Diocese provides training for governors regarding governance v. management. Most of our foundation governors are parents who give good advice and show mutual respect" (H12)

Several interviewees expressed concerns about governors' interference in day to day management matters though opinions differed as to whether this was due to the closeness of their faith or village community, the disproportionate numbers of parents on their governing body or whether it was a "middle-class thing":

> "It's a struggle with role of 'critical friend' – the DfE struggles with this. It's aparadox. What does 'critical friend' mean? Governors should set the strategic direction in consultation with the SMT – how it is determined is up to the SMT – they know how to deliver it. It makes no sense for governors to 'manage' as it is not their area of expertise – they are not here. I think it is more of a middle-class problem. Parents will contact a parent-governor about an issue who seeks to do something about it. Middle-class parent-governors are more likely to want to do something. In a faith school, they are more likely to know the parents." (H1)

> "In my previous school, governors did interfere – middle class school and personality issues" (H6)

> "Sometimes parents approach governors rather than the school about day to day matters and there is some confusion about their remit. I think this is a 'middle-class' thing and 'village' thing" (H8)

> "Our governors are all parents and are very active in the school. There is some interference in management issues but not for their own children usually. They are sometimes approached by parents with complaints and also sometimes by staff. They do not always appreciate the respective role of headteacher and governors" (H11)

Some comments were expressed about weak governance with governors who do little other than attend meetings and who do not hold the school to account. Some felt that their governors were acting out of a sense of responsibility to the community rather than the school and that :

> "We have parent governors but not much involvement from others" (H2)

> "Governors are keen to be involved but mostly this is limited to meetings" (H3)

> "Governance is difficult in … generally but we have able governors who see the

faith element as crucial. Probably, do not hold us enough to account. My last school was a village community where parents dominated the governing body – not here!" (H4)

"Eight out of 21 governors are foundation governors and some of these are also parents – there is a federated governing body for both schools. They value the important roles of school/church/village and so some feel that they are doing their bit for the village by serving the church schools" (H8)

5.8 Findings Question 7– What aspects of your school do you believe attracts staff to join your team?

Table 5.7 below categorises the responses of the interviewees to the open-ended question regarding what attracts staff to their schools:

Table 5.7 – Responses of the interviewees to "What aspects of your school do you believe attracts staff to join your team?

KEY WORDS	CODED CATEGORY	FREQUENCY
Faith ethos Caring ethos Practical for faith practitioners Sense of community	Ethos	10
High academic standards Good discipline High expectations	General reputation	4
Recommendation by Teacher Training Bodies	Recommendation	1

The majority of responses from interviewees described "ethos" as being the main attraction for staff although "ethos" appeared to include religious ethos, caring ethos and a "sense of community". Interestingly, the ethos of these schools appeared to attract both practitioners and staff who were not practising of the school faith and the interviewees from the Catholic and Church of England schools had no difficulties with staff recruitment (other than for headteachers). Other factors attracting staff included general reputation, close proximity to work and the popularity of the schools' location:

"Our caring ethos mainly" (H2)

"There are no recruitment problems in ……. as it is a popular place to work and live in. Also the local teacher training college attracts people to the area and they then tend to stay. There's a mix of staff here, not all are practising Christians. They like the sense of community" (H3)

"Staff would say they enjoy the Christian ethos – 2 have left and come back! There were 30 applicants for a maths post and 70 for a technology post so the school would appear to be popular" (H4)

"Many applicants applied for SMT posts because they like the ethos. Most staff live near – only 10% are practising Christians but the others do like the Christian ethos" (H6)

"We have 10 teachers who commute and 20 support staff who live locally. Two of the teachers are practising Christians and have a real mission to serve Christ in schools. Others like the ethos" (H8)

"There is a good team ethos and vacancies attract a large number of applicants. [Why?] There is a nice "ethos" of care, starting every day afresh, we "go the extra mile to support individuals (e.g. a previous pupil who was excluded for mental health reasons - the school community prayed!), we believe that every child is a gift and special" (H10)

Other interviewees believe that other factors such as high academic standards and good discipline provide attractions for staff:

"We are more successful at attracting staff now than in the past. They like the high standards and discipline. We also provide and support in-depth courses including Masters and Doctorates" (H5)

"I think teachers are attracted by our good working environment and standard of discipline" (H11)

Difficulties in recruitment were expressed by the two interviewees from Jewish schools who felt that potential candidates are put off from applying due to a lack of

understanding about the nature of their schools. This may also be the experience in the other minority faith schools (from which there were no interviewees):

"About half the staff are Jewish and it's relatively easy to attract practising Jewish staff because they know our reputation as a good school. It's completely different with non-Jewish staff. We all encounter problems due to; bad press about the Jewish community, anti-Israel press and a misunderstanding about modern orthodoxy (many assume we are more right-wing) therefore potential applicants do not apply. If they actually come to an interview, they feel positive about the school being 'normal'. Many of our non-Jewish staff are here through word of mouth from friends/colleagues. Staffing is a big issue" (H1)

"Recruitment is difficult due to new Jewish schools opening and competing for staff" (H11)

5.9 Findings Question 8 - In what ways does leading your current voluntary-aided school differ from your other non v/a headships?

Table 5.8 below categorises the responses of the interviewees to the open-ended question regarding differences between voluntary aided and other types of schools:

Table 5.8 – Responses of the interviewees to "In what ways does leading your current voluntary-aided school differ from your other non v/a headships?"

KEY WORDS	CODED CATEGORY	FREQUENCY
Family atmosphere Shared values More stable families Moral framework	Family values	5
Faith element Common background Able to be more open with personal faith Sense of belonging to a bigger community Sense of tradition More of a spiritual leader	Faith values	9
More advice from Diocese re: grants, admissions, etc.	Diocesan involvement	4

Faith values were presented by the interviewees as providing the most noticeable difference between their current v/a school and previous experience in other types of schools. From a personal viewpoint, interviewees felt that they could be more open about their faith and the fact that families shared a common background led to a greater sense of community. Not only did this lead to stronger family values within schools but some interviewees noted a greater proportion of "stable families" attending their current v/a schools than was the case in their previous experiences of headship. As a consequence, there was greater expectation by parents and the local community. Interviewees who had worked in voluntary controlled schools felt that faith values there had been more "bolt-on" when compared to the ethos of voluntary aided schools:

"It's the faith element; children come from a common background. We are very aware that you are working within and for a faith community. Also, there is an additional big responsibility as the local neighbourhood judges all Jews by our pupils' behaviour" (H1)

"I could not be as open about faith in my other schools. There's more opportunity to promote my personal faith and values" (H2)

"I've worked in 5 schools – 2 of them faith schools. I don't feel any difference with teaching and learning or curriculum leadership but there is a massive difference in the focus on the Christian bedrock with regard to admissions, RE and finance. All pupils take GCSE RE" (H4)

"In a v/a school it's easier to weave a story/tell a narrative. You don't have to hold back or be more careful which prayers are said. There are shared solid values – and a real moral framework. There's a sense of belonging to a bigger community and a real sense of tradition" (H5)

"I have seen in other v/c schools that the religious element is more 'watered down' than in v/a schools e.g. no worship table and a different attitude during prayers – RE feels more like a 'bolt-on' part of the school" (H8)

"In a previous community school, I felt the lack of a 'community' both internally and externally." (H9)

"Personally I am a practising Christian and I feel that I am the spiritual leader of the school with a more pastoral role than in my previous school. There is also a greater expectation by parents regarding communal care" (H10)

"I found that there are mainly the same management issues but the community comes together far more in a v/a school due to a common bond in spirituality" (H12)

"Atmosphere – undoubtedly there is a family atmosphere here– shared values and our social and cultural value system (even if not religious) makes it feel like one family. Family values – there are many more stable families than in my previous school, the vast majority here have stable, family relationships" (H1)

The role of Dioceses was commented upon by interviewees and while some of them appreciated the support network of their Diocese, others noted that it led to additional work for headteachers when compared to community schools where more premises and finance related activities were undertaken by Local Authorities :

"There are many diocesan related differences. Pressures on the budget, frustration in staff recruitment to church schools" (H6)

"The Diocese provide advice on building plans and activities for v/a schools whereas v/c schools are more on your own. Extra work for v/a schools is caused by the need for organising the 10% capital cost contributions" (H8)

"I have led 2 very different schools. I enjoy being a church-school head and find that having the Diocese as another network is very supportive" (H10)

5.10 Findings Question 9 - What role does the Local Authority play in your school?

Table 5.9 below categorises the responses of the interviewees to the open-ended question regarding the role of the Local Authority.

Table 5.9 – Responses of the interviewees to "What role does the Local Authority play in your school?"

KEY WORDS	CODED CATEGORY	FREQUENCY
Good links Huge support Extremely helpful	Large role	10
Less involved Support not so needed here Feel different to community school heads Do not see much of the Local Authority Feel closer to Diocese	Small role	5
Tense atmosphere	Tense role	1

Most of the interviewees expressed the view that their Local Authority played a supportive role in their schools. Some felt that there was no difference in the relationship between LA and v/a or other maintained schools and that faith schools were important constituents within Local Authorities. Good links with LA advisory services were stated though concern was expressed at the prospect of future cuts to budgets:

> "No difference to my previous school. This is a good Local Authority. They have a light touch but are there to be supportive when you need them" (H1)

> "There are good links with the Local Autority with termly visits from Advisers. I don't feel there is any difference in this respect to other community schools." (H3)

> "Personally, I received a great deal of support from the LA when I took on the school which was in difficulties. I feel that faith schools are important to our LA. I don't feel different when I am in meetings with heads of community schools" (H8)

> "……They have been both proactive and reactive but this level of support may dwindle due to cuts within the Local Authority." (H11)

Other interviewees had less involvement with their Local Authorities ranging from lack of support because it was focused on community schools to hostility in one case where the LA wanted to close the school:

"There is an evident decline in Local Authority support so they focus this where it is most needed which is not here! We don't see much of the LA" (H4)

"There have been LA redundancies and it is perceived as weak. It allowed the school to get into problems. I feel there is some tension – they are only concerned with exam results" (H6)

"The LA wanted to build a new school next door, close this one……so the atmosphere is tense. I'm the proud head of this school despite the LA." (H7)

"I know the LA as I worked for them as a consultant before this headship. However, we do not see much of the LA here at school and we are left to our own devices" (H9)

5.11 Findings Question 10 - Are you affected by criticism of faith schools?

Table 5.10 below categorises the responses of the interviewees to the open-ended question regarding criticism of faith schools.

Table 5.10 – Responses of the interviewees to "Are you affected by criticism of faith schools?"

KEY WORDS	CODED CATEGORY	FREQUENCY
Criticism has grown over the years It matters because of headteacher colleagues Some feel we cream off the best pupils Makes me more determined Not threatened but impacts on admissions and curriculum Sometimes feel offended	Yes	6
Not bothered Let it wash over me We are in a bubble Need to stay strong No antagonism from other heads No – but I will argue when necessary	No	6

Responses from interviewees indicate that they were equally balanced between those who were affected by criticism of faith schools and those who were not. Some were

concerned at allegations that faith schools 'cream off' more able pupils – a situation exacerbated by published league tables - while others felt that this was not a problem in their vicinity. Some were troubled by growing anti-religious and anti-faith school rhetoric in society while others felt it may them more determined and, in one case, that the tide of secularism would turn:

"I've had 18 years' experience in 3 schools. Anti-faith school feeling has grown over the years. I sense it more now in meetings. For me, it matters more with headteacher colleagues than in newspapers. A few might be anti-religious, but the majority feel that we cream off the best children and so have an easier time. The change over the past 18 years has been due to the Performance Tables. We are judged against each other because of that" (H1)

"If anything, criticism of faith schools makes us more determined. I do not feel any sense of antagonism from community school heads" (H3)

"We need to stay strong on this. A growing proportion of politicians and the public are against funding faith schools" (H4)

"I'm not bothered. The tide is turning – secularism is not such a strong tradition. The last 70 years will come to be seen as an aberration – a rejection of religion –which will change in the future" (H5)

"I let it wash over me. We don't really fit the stereotype. I feel different to the other LA heads due to our differences and also to their suspicion about church schools. There used to be many meetings here with other schools" (H6)

"I'm not bothered by criticism of faith schools but get cross when community schools get preferential treatment" (H7)

"Not really as we are 'in a bubble' here. Faith schools offer opportunities for Christian values to pupils who have a lack of RE and values in society. My own children gained immensely from being in faith schools. I worked for 20 years in community schools and loved it but it did not have the same feel. I believe that our church ethos improves relationships and our inspectors have agreed. Other LA heads understand that you can't refuse pupils if you have spaces so they do not blame us for taking their potential pupils" (H8)

"I pay attention as it could have an impact on admissions and curriculum but do not find it personally threatening. There is very little feeling among community heads that faith schools are cherry-picking the best pupils" (H11)

"I am used to it but sometimes feel quite offended. There is a perception among community school headteachers that we cherry-pick the most able pupils" (H12)

5.12 Findings Question 11 - How would you describe your style of leadership?

Table 5.11 below categorises the responses of the interviewees to the open-ended question regarding their style of leadership.

Table 5.11 – Responses of the interviewees to "How would you describe your style of leadership?"

KEY WORDS	CODED CATEGORY	FREQUENCY
Consultative	Consultative	1
Authoritative	Authoritative	4
Collaborative	Collaborative	1
Varied	Varied	3
Collegiate and team player	Collegiate	2
Distributive	Distributive	1

Responses from the interviewees varied considerably and several did not appear to have a clear view of their own style. The leadership styles quoted all related to relationships with staff – none of the interviewees quoted any of the styles associated with educational change (e.g. transformational, instructional) though they clearly are involved in promoting the best possible educational outcomes for their schools. This would suggest that practitioners in the field of educational leadership may not be aware of, or involved in, academic discussions and developments in this area:

"Consultative. Being a head for a long time in a few places makes you develop a gut feeling of what will work therefore it's hard to allow colleagues to input because you feel you

know what to do. This can make you into an autocrat (which I know) so I try to get other views and change my views" (H1)

"Authoritative. I know where I'm going. I feel more personally fulfilled in a v/a school" (H2)

"We are a small school with me, assistant head and 4 other teachers. Everyone is a subject leader of more than one area" (H3)

"This varies depending on the issue. I'm quite democratic and like people to buy into things but sometimes I need to lead from the front which I don't really like" (H4)

"Staff might say ruthless! I can be authoritative but also listen a lot and have a sense of humour. I don't accept excuses – you have to teach well to enable children to achieve." (H5)

"I'm open to suggestions. A staff survey showed that they thought I was 'principled' and 'knew where the school is going'. I don't think I'm dictatorial but am very outspoken about church schools and the importance of multiculturalism. I'm not a 'pastor' figure" (H6)

"Collegiate and team player but will lead from the front when necessary. I also feel that I have a pastor/minister role as a leader of a faith school e.g. parents come and see me for bereavement counselling." (H7)

"I am ambitious for the school and want to develop my staff. I try to treat them well. I try to get across my passion for the school. I'm more authoritative than before but in a nurturing environment. I feel a huge responsibility to enhance spiritual lives" (H8)

"Easy-going, I expect high standards. More distributive rather than centrist. I do want to keep my staff happy" (H9)

"Positive. Staff might describe me as authoritarian. I am developing my SMT and involve parents through questionnaires" (H10)

"Informal and collegiate. I maintain some distance from staff but can't do it all and all staff have some leadership roles. The school is a relaxed friendly place with a warm, welcoming

atmosphere. I rarely manage by dictat and will seek to inform, persuade, delegate and empower" (H11)

"Fair, empathetic (I have a young family of school age children), sometimes too open (everybody's friend) but now more distant. I have a role as a spiritual leader leading by example - the Catholic ethos is part of my life" (H12)

5.13 Findings Question 12 - How could colleges/trainers better prepare headteachers for leading voluntary-aided schools?

Table 5.12 below categorises the responses of the interviewees to the open-ended question regarding preparation training for headteachers.

Table 5.12 – Responses of the interviewees to "How could colleges/trainers better prepare headteachers for leading voluntary-aided schools?"

KEY WORDS	CODED CATEGORY	FREQUENCY
Handling governors Handling parents Interviews	Inter-personal skills	3
Finance Practical management Recruitment	Management	5
Morals and citizenship Inter-faith forum RE	Faith	4

Responses from some of the interviewees indicated the need for training in the areas of management, faith and inter-personal skills though these were broad rather than specific suggestions. Other interviewees mentioned difficulties such as headteacher recruitment but did not give actual suggestions. Views differed as to the effectiveness of the NPQH:

"There should be much more training on handling governors and parents in a v/a school context and more generally about finance" (H1)

"They need to do more" (H2)

"My NPQH did not prepare me for headship – there was a lot of theory but not so much practical. I was not prepared in my first headship for things like SEF and budgeting. I'm not sure what courses could really cover as every school is individual. I've always found plenty of support from the LA and diocese" (H3)

"I'm a big fan of the NCSL. I did the NPQH which I think is essential. Catholic schools have difficulties in recruiting heads" (H4)

"The Lichfield Diocese has links with Worcester University and has developed a programme for an MA in church schools. I think the Diocese needs to be clearer about church school morals and the importance of citizenship – they could be greater advocates for 'true education'" (H6)

"I think that current courses provide too much emphasis on leadership in terms of styles and business models. What we really need is more practical management guidance e.g. finance, headteacher reports, v/a funding such as LCVAP and legal advice" (H11)

"Colleges could do more to prepare us for interviews. Dioceses are doing more about preparation for v/a schools" (H12)

5.14 Findings Question 13 - Any other comments?

Table 5.13 below categorises the responses of the interviewees to the request for any other comments

Table 5.13 – Responses of the interviewees to "Any other comments?"

KEY WORDS	CODED CATEGORY	FREQUENCY
Concern regarding succession Do heads need to be practising?	Succession	2
We need more interfaith liaison	Interfaith	1
Concern about surplus capacity	Capacity	1
Concern about cuts to transport subsidies	Cuts	1
Need to be as good or better than community schools	Competition	1
Faith ethos Spirituality Personal faith as motivation	Faith	3

Some interviewees took this opportunity to voice concerns while others elaborated on their previous comments or made further suggestions:

"Succession, future leaders – where are they coming from?" (H1)

"I'm interested to follow through on how important is the need for 'practising' headteachers. Is it inevitable to follow the Jewish lead and accept heads who are not of the faith?" (H2)

"I'd like to see more connection between leaders of other faiths" (H5)

"My reasons for taking on this job

- I am a Christian with a strong sense of inclusion
- I had not worked before in a church school
- I would not have wanted to lead another church school
- My faith drives me to lead a challenging school" (H6)

"Future challenges with schools being rebuilt which could lead to surplus capacity. Cuts by LAs to faith school transport subsidies could seriously affect our parents" (H7)

"V/A means you have to be as good or better than local community schools" (H9)

"Faith ethos is in your face the moment you walk in the door due to v/a schools' independence on RE and identity" (H11)

"Spirituality is outstanding because of the links in the school" (H12)

5.15 Summary

The interviewees' responses in this chapter have provided additional background information and colour to supplement the information gained from the on-line survey.

In particular, the following generalisations/patterns have emerged:

- The underlying and pivotal role of personal faith in the headship activities of these interviewees
- The strong presence of 'vision, values and influence' (Bush 2011) in their roles
- A strong sense of satisfaction by interviewees in their ability to influence change

- Interviewees believed that the special ethos – a result of faith and shared values- and general reputation of their schools were more attractive to parents than high academic standards or location
- Interviewees had found that faith was stronger in voluntary aided schools due to a common background shared by families and a strong sense of belonging to a caring community - some described faith provision in voluntary controlled schools in which they had previously worked as more 'bolt-on'
- Interviewees from Catholic and Church of England schools had no difficulties with recruitment (other than for headteachers) and believed that staff were attracted to their schools because of the special ethos though minority faith schools found more difficulty with teacher recruitment
- There was a lack of clarity among the interviewees regarding leadership styles and what constitutes leadership
- There was evidence that pupils in voluntary aided schools are not all from middle-class backgrounds and can travel from poorer neighbours to their schools in more affluent areas
- The most challenging areas for the interviewees were based on management and external pressures rather than educational matters and this is where interviewees felt more training was most needed
- Governors were more involved in voluntary aided schools than in community schools and had a greater proportion of parents as members
- The interviewees from minority and small rural village schools experienced more interference from governors and lack of professional distance by parents due to the close nature of their school and family communities
- Relationships with Local Authorities were variable depending on local circumstances – most were good
- Relationships with Dioceses were generally good with varying amounts of support and advice
- Interviewees expressed concerns for the future about; succession, cuts in transport provision and over-supply of places

In Chapter 6, the findings of the interviews, the on-line survey and the literature review will be compared and emerging themes will be discussed.

CHAPTER 6 – DISCUSSION AND EMERGING THEMES

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the findings from the on-line questionnaire, those from the interviews and the references from the Literature Review, are synthesised, compared and contrasted. Explanations are sought from the interview data to bring colour and possible reasons for the survey results and both are discussed to ascertain the extent to which they support the findings of earlier studies. These discussions have been grouped into 4 broad areas: leadership and management; personal faith and ethos; differences between the Catholic, Church of England and Minority Faith schools; and other issues that have arisen from the survey and interviewees' responses. From these discussions, emerging themes are extrapolated.

6.2 Leadership and Management

A surprising result from both the survey data and interviews were the responses to the concept of 'leadership'. In the responses to the open ended questions in the survey, the word 'leadership' only occurred 7 times; 5 in the context of greatest pleasure and 2 in the context of greatest challenge. In the responses to the interview question "Which aspects of your leadership role do you most enjoy?" activities such as "taking Y6 swimming" and "I enjoy regular contact with the children" were quoted. This would suggest that headteachers do not differentiate between leadership and other roles and, perhaps, use the term 'leadership' as an umbrella term to encompass all of their activities. This would accord with the views of Lewis and Murphy (2008) that the link between leadership and management in education is difficult to separate and with those of Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003) that every day activities are important in order to create a good working atmosphere. However, it may suggest that these practitioners have not had access to academic studies about leadership and so may be unaware of the views that exist regarding the nature of leadership. Similarly, the leadership styles quoted by interviewees all related to relationships with staff – none of the interviewees quoted any of the styles associated with educational change (e.g. transformational, instructional) though they clearly are involved in promoting the best possible educational outcomes for their schools.

Some interviewees appeared to veer between different styles, for example, "authoritative but listen a lot", "collegiate but will lead from the front". This may also indicate a lack of awareness regarding leadership styles though Bush and Glover (2003) describe the 'contingent' style of leadership as being one where styles are adapted according to context and Hammersely-Fletcher and Kirkham (2007) noted that, in small primary schools, 'at times, it may be appropriate for the headteacher to act autocratically, at others more democratically or, indeed, in a more distributed manner' (p 430).

The management of finance and premises featured strongly in the survey as being extremely challenging. In the 'How could colleges/trainers better prepare headteachers for leading voluntary aided schools?' question, these management tasks were the top priority with interviewees requesting less theory and more practical advice to prepare them for headship. Specific examples of areas that involve voluntary aided headteachers were quoted; for example, LCVAP (LA Coordinated Voluntary Aided Programme). These responses support the views that managerialism creates pressure for headteachers of voluntary aided schools due to the conflicting demands of budgets, finance and marketisation as opposed to the religious requirements of serving the poor (Grace 1995, 2002 and 2009a;, Luckcock 2006; Fincham 2010) and educational matters (McInerney 2003).

Responses to the statement "I believe that v/a heads have a heavier workload than do heads of other schools" produced a fairly balanced overall response with 37% agreeing/strongly agreeing and 38% disagreeing/strongly disagreeing with the statement. On applying a chi-square test, the type/age range of school group demonstrated a significant difference ranging from Primary school respondents (40%) to Secondary school respondents (22%). It was suggested in Chapter 4 that this discrepancy may reflect the fact that secondary schools by virtue of their size would have large departments responsible for subjects and administration whereas in the Primary schools, 56% of which had under 250 pupils, factors applicable to voluntary aided schools, such as employment of staff and premises, may have more impact on the workload of headteachers. This suggestion was supported by Interviewee H8 (a primary headteacher) who stated that "Extra work for v/a schools is caused by the need for organising the 10% capital cost contributions" - work which in secondary schools

would be more likely to be undertaken by a bursar. This supports the research by Robinson (2011) that, in small schools, administration forms a third element to leadership and management as there are so few members of staff.

Surprisingly, this element was not as evident in the size of school sub-group where responses from the largest schools agreeing /strongly agreeing with the statement amounted to 30% and those from the smallest schools amounted to 41% - proportions which were not significantly different (by chi-square testing). However, cross tabulations (4.3) indicate that, in fact, 19% of the respondents from the largest schools were from primary headteachers – this may well explain the larger proportion of respondents from the largest schools (compared to the proportions from Secondary schools) agreeing/strongly agreeing with the statement.

Interviewees also suggested that colleges/trainers prepare headteachers for their leadership role by providing training in faith related matters such as morals and citizenship, and inter-personal skills such as handling parents and governors. Grace (2009a) suggests that there is no shortage of training courses provided for the secular needs of faith school leaders and that, consequently, more needs to be done for religious spiritual and moral responsibilities. Similarly, the 8 headteachers in Fincham's (2010) study all expressed the opinion that their staff would benefit from enhanced theological literacy. Sullivan (2006) suggests that in faith schools there is a greater need for training in personal formation, orientating the curriculum, community-building, coping with personal failings and vulnerabilities and on the role of prayer and worship. However, the interviewees in this research clearly felt there was insufficient preparation for practical management tasks and this would suggest that the additional management functions required in voluntary aided schools are not provided for in Local Authority or Diocesan training programmes and that that this area required more training for those aspiring to headship.

My own experiences as a headteacher of 27 years in voluntary aided schools may shed some light regarding these findings. At the time of my first appointment, there was no NPQH training for headteachers and new appointees were expected to 'learn on the job'. Local Authority training for newly appointed headteachers varied considerably between different areas and tended to focus on local needs and priorities. Although this

has improved considerably with Local Authorities offering a plethora of management courses, these tend to focus on issues facing community schools rather than on the additional responsibilities for finance and premises that feature in voluntary aided schools.

6.3 Personal Faith and Ethos

Although it has not been possible to deduce that voluntary aided schools attract headteachers with a particular leadership style, given that 86% of the 450 respondents in the survey agreed/strongly agreed that their personal faith inspired their headship activities, it can be conjectured that personal faith plays a significant part in the role of headteacher in these schools. Responses from the headship experience group indicated 83% agreeing/strongly agreeing with the statement from the 'least experienced' group and 92% agreeing /strongly agreeing from the ''most experienced' group. This may support the research by Francis (1986) that younger teachers were less likely to emphasise religious ethos and research by Stone and Francis (1995) that younger governors were less committed than older ones which, as previously suggested, could result in them appointing less committed headteachers. This could lead over time to a diminishing number of headteachers for whom personal faith was important. Nevertheless, the 83% response from the 'least experienced' group is still a high proportion.

In the open-ended questions at the end of the survey, in response to "What aspects of your leadership role do you most enjoy?", the second highest category (after 'pupils') was that of religion. Similarly, the interviewees prioritised the religious ethos of their schools as giving them the greatest sense of pleasure second only to that of pupils. In addition, the "Any other Comments" section at the end of the interviews (5.14) elicited comments regarding the importance of "faith ethos", "spirituality" and "personal faith".

In the survey, 78% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed that they would prefer to remain in the voluntary aided sector. Interviewees, when discussing the differences between voluntary aided and other types of school, gave a number for reasons for their preference for this sector including: greater opportunity to promote personal faith, a sense of belonging to a bigger community, more shared values within the school community, stronger family values and a special 'ethos' that was not experienced

elsewhere. Faith values were stronger than in voluntary controlled schools where faith was described by two interviewees who had previously worked in these schools as 'bolt-on'. Interviewees also believed that faith ethos and a general reputation for discipline were more attractive to parents than academic standards.

The concern expressed by Grace (2002) regarding the preservation of 'spiritual capital' in Catholic schools did not appear to be shared by the participants in the survey as 95% of the Catholic respondents agreed/strongly agreed that "personal faith impacts on my headship activities" and that "the faith community plays a prominent role in my school". However, the differences noted between Catholic and Church of England respondents with regard to "personal faith" would appear to support Johnson (2003) as she suggests that headteachers of Catholic schools embody "Catholic values" in their behaviour as an example to the school as a whole whereas in Church of England schools there is no expectation that the headteacher and teaching staff should be practising Anglicans. However, the proportion agreeing/strongly agreeing from the Church of England schools was still relatively high at 80% and this may reflect Johnson's other suggestion that the Dearing Review 2001 led to a shift in policy for the Church of England with schools to be viewed as a vehicle to promote the Church's mission to the nation. Similarly, Brown (2003) suggests that, as a result of the Dearing Report, the previous attitude of the Anglican tradition might have shifted. Street (2007) suggests that confidence in Anglican schools grew as a result of the report while Morris (2009), who also contrasts the Catholic confessional model with the Anglican neighbourhood model, believes that it is the secularisation of society that prompted the shift.

It should be noted that Johnson's study (2003) reviewed research with just 6 Catholic headteachers, 7 Church of England headteachers and 1 Quaker headteacher to discuss how their personal beliefs impacted on their schools. Similarly, as noted in Chapter 2, other research has tended to focus on small numbers of respondents; for example, the study by Stone and Francis (1995) into the personal beliefs and attitudes of headteachers comprised 37 headteacher participants and that of Grace (2002) comprised 60 headteachers. This thesis with 450 headteachers (245 Church of England, 176 Catholic, 18 minority faith, 9 other/none) has built on previous studies to add to the research regarding voluntary aided schools.

Interviewees noted that parents were attracted to their schools primarily by the faith ethos and reputation for discipline followed by high standards and, lastly, location. Discipline and high standards are aspects of ethos as defined by OFSTED (Morris 1998). This supports the suggestion of Morris (1997) that congruity between the values, attitudes, practices and expectations of schools and parents leads to success.

This research has highlighted the importance placed on their own personal faith by headteachers together with an appreciation of the special ethos that they believe exists in voluntary aided schools and that this ethos is a combination of shared values both within and without the school environment together with the sense of belonging to a bigger community.

In my own headship experience I have found that although the perception of good exam results and high standards of discipline have some bearing on the popularity of faith schools, these are not the main reasons for parental choice. They want their children to be taught by teachers who share the same religious values and who will, therefore, help to create an all-pervading ethos within the school (Shaw 2006a)

6.4 Differences between Catholic, Church of England and Minority Faith (Hindu, Jewish and Moslem) schools

Respondents from the Church of England schools demonstrated differing proportions agreeing/strongly agreeing with the survey statements in a number of cases in addition to that of personal faith noted in the previous section. With regard to the role of the faith community, the overall response agreeing/strongly agreeing with the statement that "the faith community plays a prominent role in my school" was 91% (with 6% undecided and 3% disagreeing/strongly disagreeing). On analysing by group, the responses were Church of England – 86%; Catholic – 95%; Minority Faith – 100%. Other sub-groups produced smaller proportions (Junior schools – 79%; smallest schools – 88%; rural schools – 80%) but these were still large majorities and were not identified as being statistically significant by chi-square testing. It is, however, interesting to note that 88% of the Junior schools, 65% of the smallest schools and 89% of the rural schools were all affiliated to the Church of England; adding to the evidence that respondents from this denomination yielded a smaller proportion of responses agreeing/strongly agreeing with the statement than did their colleagues from Catholic

and Minority Faith schools. This might support the views of those (e.g. Morris 2009) that contrast the 'confessional' nature of Catholic schools with the 'neighbourhood' model of those affiliated to the Church of England. However, it might also support the view that some of the small, rural Church of England schools are regarded mainly as "village" rather than "faith" schools and that the character of these schools is largely due to historical circumstance rather than religious commitment. (The only small percentage noted was that of the "no religious affiliation" group (33%) where only 1 out of 3 respondents agreed with the statement; not only were the numbers in this group too small to be significant but it is not surprising that the faith community does not play a prominent role in schools with no religious affiliation).

Responses to the related interview question, "What role does the faith community play in your school?" highlighted, primarily, the role played by visiting religious leaders into schools. This was followed by (in descending order of priority) Diocesan links, links with communal organisations, visits to places of worship and, in one case, a school chaplain. All of these contributed to the faith ethos of these schools to which, in many cases, pupils came from non-practising homes or from other faiths. However, interviewees did not portray a view of faith communities that 'set their own vision and related agendas"' (McGettrich 2005) but rather supported the view of Street (2007:145) that 'local clergy were seen to be sensitively reactive but not creatively proactive'.

There was a relatively balanced overall response to the survey statement that "parents are more involved in voluntary aided schools than in other types of school" with 39% agreeing/strongly agreeing, 31% undecided and 30% disagreeing/strongly disagreeing. However, as explained in Chapter 4, chi-square tests demonstrated significant differences in the responses of four out the five sub-groups to this question. As noted above, the majority of Junior schools, small schools and rural schools in the survey were affiliated to the Church of England and it is interesting to note that, as with the previous item, this denomination produced a lower proportion of responses agreeing/strongly agreeing with the statement.

The related interview responses provide several possible reasons for this lack of involvement by parents including; distance, lack of time due to large families, low expectations and general lack of contact due to the nature of secondary schools. In

particular, the distance element may contribute towards the lack of involvement in small, rural schools where many families may live considerable distances from the schools. The minority faith schools scored particularly high and, as previously suggested, this may be due to the lack of Diocesan support for these schools (in contrast to the Catholic and Church of England schools) and the consequent need for more parental input.

However, responses were also forthcoming expressing the view that some parents were too involved and that they exhibited a 'lack of professional distance'. This was more apparent in the minority faith and small schools where staff and parents were better known to each other. Similarly, governors in small village schools were often well-known local figures and were approached by parents regarding day-to-day management issues which were not part of their governance role. A similar pattern emerged with the minority faith schools where, even in relatively large establishments, the nature of the communities led to more familiarity between staff, governors and parents than would be the case in other large schools. In my own experience, the close community element around the schools that I have led has been extremely positive in terms of families rallying round each other in times of need, but there have also been occasions when over-familiarity has led to awkward situations.

With regard to the statement "criticism of faith schools creates extra tensions for my role", this produced an overall fairly balanced response with 40% agreeing/strongly agreeing with the statement and 45% disagreeing/strongly disagreeing. However, the responses from the religious affiliation group were statistically significant and this would appear to indicate that respondents from Church of England schools were significantly less affected by criticism of faith schools. This may be due to the reason, previously suggested that, because of the rural location of many Church of England schools, they are perceived as the 'village' rather than the 'faith' school. However, these differences could also demonstrate, as noted earlier, the different priorities of the Church of England whose mission is to serve all who live in the parish with those of the Catholic sector whose mission is to prioritise those of the faith (Brown 2003). The responses from the Minority Faith schools were similar to those from their Catholic colleagues and may result from a sense of relative insecurity as these schools do not have the large numbers and infrastructure of the Christian dioceses. I make this

suggestion from a personal perspective as a headteacher of a minority faith school as I have felt the need to respond to criticism of faith schools in the press (as discussed in Chapter 2) and have had several letters/articles printed (Shaw 2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2006d, 2006e, 2007a, 2007b, 2008a, 2008b, 2009, 2011) as well as others that remain unpublished.

This trend was replicated with the interviewees as the 6 headteachers from the Church of England schools did not feel that criticism of faith schools caused them tensions whereas the headteachers from the Catholic and Jewish schools expressed more concerns. Some of the interviewees expressed the view that they are perceived as 'cherry picking' the most able pupils and that it was this, rather than any faith element, which caused tensions. This would be more evident in the larger, suburban and inner city schools that are in closer proximity to other schools and less evident in rural locations where smaller Church of England schools have less competition.

In response to the statement, "I find that I have more affinity with other v/a heads than with those of other schools", there was a fairly balanced response with 47% agreeing/strongly agreeing and 41% disagreeing/strongly disagreeing. However, the religious affiliation group responses ranged from 78% from the minority faith schools agreeing/strongly agreeing to just 31% from the Church of England schools. This may be due simply to the small number of minority faith headteachers feeling a stronger sense of camaraderie with each other than would the large group of Church of England headteachers across England.

This resonates with my own experience as a headteacher of a minority faith school. Although I feel an affinity with all headteachers, there is no doubt that it is stronger with other v/a heads with whom there is common ground and stronger still with headteachers of Jewish schools. For example, there is an Association of Headteachers of Jewish Schools which organises meetings and conferences and which provides support and advice to its members.

The location group alone demonstrated statistically significant different results (via chi-square testing) to the affinity statement in which responses ranged from 36% (rural) to 52% (suburban) for those agreeing/strongly agreeing with the statement. Both of the

interviewees from rural schools (H8 and H9) noted the distance element as leading to a sense of isolation so this may simply be a matter of rural headteachers of voluntary aided schools not seeing enough of colleagues to feel a particularly strong sense of affinity with them.

With regard to the statement suggesting that headteachers of voluntary aided schools have a heavier workload than do heads of other schools, there was a noticeable (though not significant) difference between the responses from the Catholic (50%) and Church of England (27%) respondents. This might suggest that some Church of England headteachers, particularly those in isolated rural locations, see their schools as the "village" school on a par with community schools rather than the "faith" school.

There were also differences in the group responses agreeing/strongly agreeing that responsibility for Admissions adds substantially to their workload; though none was statistically significant. In the religious affiliation group, 47% of the Church of England respondents agree/strongly agreed with the statement and 54% of the Catholic respondents did so possibly reflecting, as noted earlier, the contrasting policies of the Church of England whose rational is to serve everyone living in the parish and the Catholic policy which is to prioritise members of the faith to preserve the faith. The proportion from the minority faith schools was even higher at 71% and this might reflect the particular admissions criteria of these faiths.

None of the interviewees raised Admissions as an area that affected their workload particularly though it was mentioned by one interviewee as an area in which support was forthcoming from the Diocese and some respondents were concerned at the perception that faith schools might be "creaming off" more able pupils. Given the amount of academic research and media coverage given to faith school admissions, a greater degree of workload and pressure for headteachers of voluntary aided schools might have been expected. Notably, interviewees H6 and H7 explained that their pupils were bussed in from poorer areas than the ones in which their schools were located thus challenging the opinion that "faith schools seem to get a disproportionately high percentage of their intake from the educational middle classes" (Crace 2006) and other interviewees noted academically weak and underprivileged pupils in their schools. This would support the view that research in London schools such as that carried out by

Allen and West (2009a) is not typical of the situation nationally (Grace 2009b); which Allen and West acknowledge in their later study (2009b).

The statement regarding the pressure of responsibility for RE on workload also elicited differences when analysed by group. The responses from the size of school group demonstrated variations that were statistically significant (according to chi-square tests) ranging from 30% in the smallest schools to 53% in the largest schools. It should be noted that the respondents from the largest schools were also predominantly (65%) Catholic while those from the smallest schools were predominantly (89%) Church of England. This would suggest that the headteachers of Catholic schools have more pressure with regard to organising RE in their schools; perhaps due to staffing difficulties or a more intensive curriculum. Responses from the religious affiliation group ranged from 24% from the minority faith group to 42% from the Church of England group. This was not statistically significant but the fact that the minority sub-groups had more pressure is interesting and may be due to the difficulties experienced in providing specialist tuition for RE in their schools.

Interviewees referred more to 'ethos' and 'values' rather than the 'RE curriculum' though the stronger focus on RE in voluntary aided schools was noted (H4 and H8). The interviewees from minority faith schools note that their schools employ specialist staff for RE as this involves another language. The open ended questions in both the survey and interviews highlighted the religious aspect of their schools as giving the headteachers the second highest sense of pleasure.

With regard to impact on workload as a result of employing staff, there was a marked overall result with only 29% agreeing/strongly agreeing with the statement and a statistically significant difference (based on a chi-square test) among the religious affiliation group ranging from 0% (minority faith) to 19% (Catholic) to 38% (Church of England). This would suggest that headteachers in Catholic schools have far more problems with employing staff than do those in Church of England schools and that the minority faith schools heads have even more challenges. However, even the Church of England headteachers had a majority who felt that employing staff did have a substantial impact on their workload and this also featured strongly in the open ended questions regarding greatest challenges.

Interviewees demonstrated that it was the two minority faith schools that faced problems with staff recruitment – this may explain the noticeable difference in their responses. This supports the view that Catholic and minority faith schools prefer to employ teachers of the faith as they are the "committed embodiment of the message being taught" and not a "neutral communicator" (Hewer 2001, McGrath 2003, Parker-Jenkins et al. 2005). However, dealing with underperforming staff was also mentioned as a source of challenge and it may be that this is more difficult to deal with in a faith community school where staff may have close links with colleagues and pupils' families outside of school and where the school setting is perceived as a faith community. Staffing issues featured as the most frequently noted challenge in the on-line survey and joint second in the interviews.

The statement "Responsibility for the premises has no substantial impact on my workload" produced an overall response of just 16% agreeing/strongly agreeing with the statement. The responses from the religious affiliation group ranged from 6% for the Minority Faith schools to 15% for the Catholic and 19% for the Church of England schools. Interviewees presented management issues of finance and premises as being time-consuming and challenging but whereas the Catholic and Church of England schools had large, strong, well-established Dioceses with historic traditions of supporting schools, the newer minority faith schools did not have such support and this would appear to explain the additional pressures experienced by these headteachers.

A large majority (78%) agreed/strongly agreed that they would prefer to remain in the voluntary aided sector with 15% undecided and only 7% disagreeing/strongly disagreeing. Most groups showed little variation; however, the religious affiliation group ranged from 70% (Church of England) to 91% (Catholic) and the location group, which was statistically significant, ranged from 64% (rural) to 86% (inner city) noting, as explained previously, that the rural group were predominantly Church of England. This would suggest that respondents from Church of England schools were less likely than those from other schools to prefer to remain in the voluntary aided sector and so adds weight to the possibility that some rural schools are viewed as the 'village' rather than the 'faith' school.

Interviewees, when discussing the differences between voluntary aided and other types of school, gave a number of reasons for their preference for this sector including; greater opportunity to promote personal faith, a sense of belonging to a bigger community and more shared values within the school community. This supports the views expressed by Parker-Jenkins et al. (2005).

6.5 Other issues raised by respondents and interviewees

External control, in the form of DfE, governors, Dioceses and Local Authorities, was presented as being challenging by both respondents and interviewees. Although all maintained schools receive directives, often challenging, from central government, some respondents felt that they had additional pressures due to the nature of their governing bodies as voluntary aided schools have a majority of governors who are foundation governors appointed by the foundation body/Diocese. These foundation governors are often parents as well. Concerns were expressed by some respondents at the 'lack of professional distance' that can occur in voluntary aided schools due to the close nature of the faith communities – this was particularly evident in small and minority faith schools. Interviewees expressed that while many governing bodies were effective; others interfered in management issues. Some governors, it was reported, served out of a sense of duty to the wider faith community rather than out of a sense of commitment to the school and some were ineffectual.

Relationships between interviewees and their respective Dioceses and Local Authorities varied considerably and would appear to depend on local politics and priorities. Interviewees discussed the support provided by dioceses/denominational authorities which included providing governors as well as financial and personnel advice. Most of the interviewees expressed the view that their Local Authority played a supportive role in their schools. Some felt that there was no difference in the relationship between the Local Authority and voluntary aided or other maintained schools and that faith schools were important constituents within Local Authorities. Good links with Local Authority advisory services were stated though concern was expressed at the prospect of future cuts to budgets. However, other interviewees had less involvement with their Local Authorities ranging from lack of support, because it was focused on community schools, to hostility in one case where the Local Authority wanted to close the school. It would appear, therefore, that generalisations cannot be made about these links and that

relationships between voluntary aided schools and their respective Dioceses and Local Authorities are influenced by personalities, local politics and funding issues.

Additional comments by the interviewees included concerns, suggestions and elaboration on earlier points. Concerns included; succession planning, cuts to transport and surplus capacity. Suggestions included; inter-faith forums and the need to appoint non-practising headteachers. Elaboration included; “Faith ethos is in your face the moment you walk in the door due to v/a schools’ independence on RE and identity” (H11)

6.6 Emergent Themes

From the discussion in the previous sections, the following themes can be extrapolated:

1. On-line responses were received from 245 headteachers of voluntary aided Church of England schools from all over the country. Given that 86% of them agreed/strongly agreed that “the faith community plays a prominent role in my school” compared with 95% and 100% responses to this statement from the headteachers of 176 Catholic and 18 minority faith schools respectively, this research would appear to lend some support to the opinions expressed in the Literature Review by several authors (e.g. Brown 2003, Colson 2004), that some Church of England schools are more likely to support all who live in the parish rather than seek to cater solely for their own church members and that some rural village Church of England schools may be regarded as the 'village' rather than the 'church' school. However, 86% is a relatively high proportion and this may indicate a shift by the Church of England towards the Catholic model thus supporting this suggestion by Johnson (2003).

2. The headteachers of Catholic and minority faith schools were more affected by criticism of faith schools (55% and 56% respectively) than those from Church of England schools (29%) - possibly for the same reason as (1). However, it may also be due to the fact that accusations of ‘cherry-picking’ the most able pupils would be less evident in the many remote rural Church of England schools where competition for places would not arise.

3. Difficulties in employing staff are perceived as much more of a problem in Catholic and minority faith schools (75% and 94% respectively) than in Church of England schools (52%). This may be a result of the stronger desire in Catholic schools to employ practising members of the faith and the additional difficulties of recruiting specialist staff that are able to teach religious studies in a second language in minority faith schools.

4. A large majority of respondents to the survey (79%) noted premises matters as having a substantial impact on their workload (more so than staffing or RE curriculum matters). This, together, with finance matters, featured as the greatest challenge in the open ended questions in the survey. Several interviewees, when asked how headteachers could be better trained, highlighted these practical management issues. This has implications for training providers.

5. A large majority of respondents to the survey (78%) agreed/strongly agreed that they wished to remain in the voluntary aided sector. This research has highlighted the importance placed on their own personal faith by headteachers together with an appreciation of the special ethos that they believe exists in voluntary aided schools and that this ethos is a combination of shared values both within and without the school environment together with the sense of belonging to a bigger community.

6. Interviewees were able to state differences between their current voluntary aided schools and their previous headships in other types of school including other faith school establishments such as private schools and voluntary-controlled schools. They felt that they could be more open about their own faith and that there was a stronger sense of community and stronger family values due to a shared common background and purpose of vision. These shared values impacted on the special ethos in their schools and led to improved academic performance. These responses validate previous research by Clark and Wildy (2004), Arthur (2005), Morris (2005), Bush (2011) and Marshall (2012).

7. Respondents' perception of 'leadership' is interesting. Several, in the open questions in the survey asking about 'aspects of leadership', quoted activities such as 'working with children' , 'enjoying worship' and 'taking Y6 swimming'. The word 'leadership'

was only utilised a total of 7 times by the 450 respondents to the on-line survey (5 in the context of greatest pleasure, and 2 in the context of greatest challenge). This would seem to indicate that the practitioner headteachers' understanding of leadership may be quite different to that of the academics' - they may be using the umbrella term of 'leadership and management' to describe everything they do in their schools. Further research with headteachers would be valuable for investigating whether this perception of leadership is widespread and how greater understanding of leadership can be propagated. Similarly, when interviewees were asked to describe their leadership style, most responded in terms of how they related to their staff (e.g. collegiate, collaborative, democratic) and did not discuss (or perhaps were not aware of) other leadership styles that exist such as transformational, instructional, etc.

8. Relationships between headteachers and Dioceses/Local Authorities varied considerably and were influenced by personalities, finances and local politics - it was not possible to generalise.

9. Although all maintained schools have governing bodies; voluntary aided schools have a majority of governors who are foundation governors appointed by the foundation body/Diocese. These foundation governors are often parents as well. Concerns were expressed by some respondents at the 'lack of professional distance' that can occur in voluntary aided schools due to the close nature of the faith communities – this was particularly evident in small and minority faith schools. Interviewees expressed the view that while many governing bodies were effective in carrying out their governance responsibilities; others interfered in day-today management issues. Some governors, it was reported, served out of a sense of duty to the wider faith community rather than out of a sense of commitment to the school and some were ineffectual.

10. Notably, two interviewees explained that their pupils were bussed in from poorer areas than the ones in which their schools were located thus challenging the opinion that faith schools seem to get a disproportionately high percentage of their intake from more affluent neighbourhoods (e.g. Allen and West 2009a). Further research would be interesting to determine the situation nationally regarding the intakes in voluntary aided schools.

11. The largest proportions of responses both to the open ended questions in the survey and the interviewees regarding what aspect of leadership gave the greatest pleasure were related to pupils. This might appear to support the views of those who believe that leading learning and teaching ought to be at the heart of school leadership (Lingard et al. 2003) and who evidence the important influence of leadership in effecting student outcomes (e.g. Day et al. 2009; Robinson et al. 2009; Robinson et al. 2011; Leithwood and Seashore-Louis 2012). However, education as a coded category (comprising teaching, learning, curriculum and achievements) ranked 3rd in the survey responses and 4th in the interview responses; contrasted with pupils which ranked 1st in both. This would indicate that, despite the prominence and status given to outcomes and league tables by successive governments, it is the pupils themselves that rank as most important to the headteachers in this research (and probably to most others as well).

12. Interviewees, when asked if they wished to add any further comments, contributed a variety of concerns about their schools including succession planning and the effect on parents that would result as a consequence of Local Authorities cutting back on subsidised transport to faith schools. They suggested that their schools would benefit from more opportunities for inter-faith activities and that their governing bodies needed to consider employing headteachers who may not be practising of the faith in order to alleviate the recruitment shortage.

6.7 Conclusion

The distinctive nature of voluntary aided school leadership has been highlighted through this research. Headteachers of these schools have to interact with three stakeholder groups that are not present for colleagues in community schools; namely, a Diocese/faith trust, the local faith community and a governing body in which the majority of members are appointed by the denominational authority. However, unlike colleagues in private faith schools, headteachers of voluntary aided schools also have to work with, and as part of, their Local Authority.

In the survey, 78% of respondents stated that they wished to remain in the voluntary aided sector despite the additional workload resulting from finance and premises responsibilities appertaining to their schools. Both survey respondents and interviewees expanded on the special ethos that exists in their schools (e.g. Interviewee H11 who

stated that "faith ethos is in your face the moment you walk in the door due to v/a schools' independence on RE and identity"). Contributory factors to this ethos included: shared values with their families, a common background of faith, a sense of belonging to a bigger community and the ability to be more open about their own personal faith.

87% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed that personal faith plays a significant role in their leadership and this has highlighted the role of these headteachers as spiritual leaders of their schools. The role of faith/religion scored 2nd highest place (after 'pupils') in both survey and interview responses with regard to what gave the respondents the greatest pleasure and interviewees, when asked if they wished to add any further comments, highlighted the importance of faith together with the distinctive ethos that was evident in their schools. Despite the pressures and tensions of league tables and managerialism, these headteachers ranked pupils and faith as their priorities. They noted and supported the stronger focus on RE in their schools and compared this with the 'bolt-on' attitude to RE in their previous headships in other types of schools (e.g. Interviewee H2 who state that "I could not be as open about faith in my other schools – there's more opportunity to promote my personal faith and values").

Although none of the conventional leadership 'styles' was evident, the three dimensions of leadership as espoused by Bush (2011) - values, vision and influence – were, due to the distinctive nature of voluntary aided school leadership, particularly evident in the views expressed by the interviewees and portrayed by many of the survey respondents in their responses to the open ended questions. Marshall (2012) in his research with 7 secondary school headteachers in one Local Authority noted that the one voluntary aided school headteacher in the study was very clear about the advantage of having a clear vision for his school and suggests that 'faith schools are empowered by this idea of a common purpose of vision' (Marshall 2012:198). The data in this thesis have provided evidence to support this view for voluntary aided schools nationally.

Similarly, where Bush (2011) warns that vision can sometimes be so generic that it does not highlight a school's uniqueness and identifies the importance of a leader's own values on his/her leadership role, the data collected in this thesis have confirmed that the personal beliefs held by the headteachers of voluntary aided schools and the spiritual aspect of their role have strengthened their sense of values, clarified their vision and

provided incentives for them to influence not just the educational progress of their pupils but also their spiritual development and that of the wider school community:

> In a v/a school it's easier to weave a story/tell a narrative. You don't have to hold back or be more careful which prayers are said. There are shared solid values – and a real moral framework. There's a sense of belonging to a bigger community and a real sense of tradition (Interviewee H5)

> We're inspired by the verse in Jeremiah which drives our vision….It's all about learning for life (Interviewee H2)

> Forming a community. The school is a family so I feel like the father of the community …..I am leading a faith community (Interviewee H5)

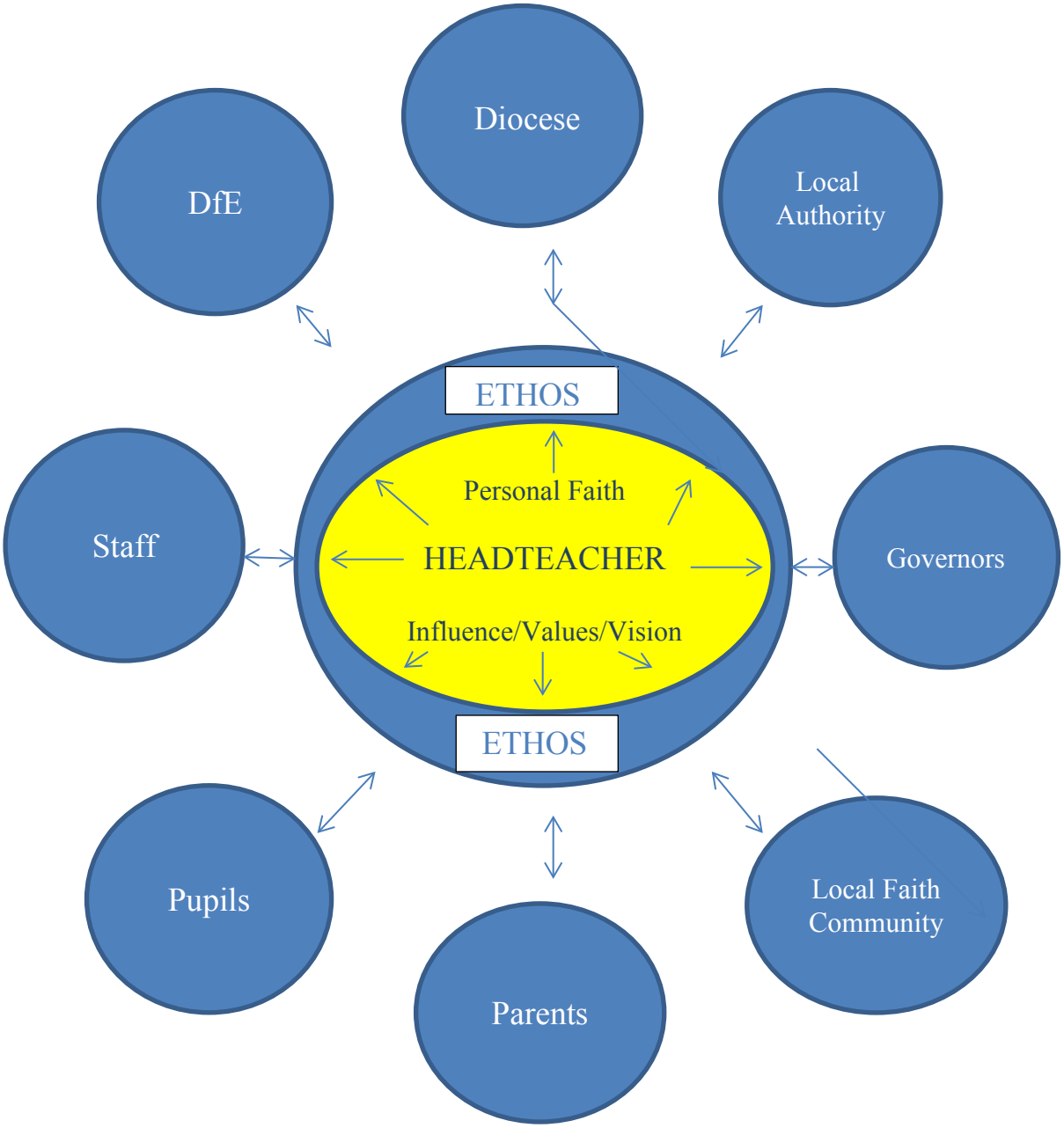
The priorities, principles and values expressed by the respondents and interviewees have answered the main research question of this thesis; namely, 'what do the headteachers of voluntary aided schools perceive as their leadership role?'

A possible leadership model was suggested at the end of Chapter 2 (Fig. 2.1) to form part of the conceptual framework for this research. As a result of the findings from this thesis, the model has been developed further to portray an enhanced form of leadership which could perhaps be termed as 'ethotic leadership' (as demonstrated in Figure 6.1 below) due to the significant role of the special ethos which envelops the headteachers of these schools and which is created by the combined efforts of the headteachers and the eight stakeholder groups with whom they interact.

The model presents 'ethos' as an additional layer encompassing the headteacher who both cultivates and is nurtured by the distinctive atmosphere that permeates the school. Whilst all of the surrounding stakeholders, to varying degrees, contribute to this special ethos, it is the headteacher through his/her leadership who plays the pivotal role in coordinating everyone within the school community to create and sustain the ethos. The findings from this thesis have established that the three dimensions of values, vision and influence together with personal faith are major elements utilised by the headteachers to contribute towards the school ethos and so these have been presented centrally around the headteacher in the model. I would suggest that this thesis has provided the evidence

to present 'ethotic leadership' as a style common to headteachers of voluntary aided schools nationally.

FIGURE 6.1 - SHAW'S MODEL OF ETHOTIC LEADERSHIP



6.8 Dissemination of this EdD research

Several studies (e.g. Silcock 2009) highlight the fact that dissemination should be seen as an essential part of research rather than a neglected afterthought in busy research schedules. Hillage et al. (1998) express concern that many research projects show little evidence of a comprehensive dissemination strategy. Harmsworth and Turpin (2000) stress the need for researchers to consider why they intend to disseminate and suggest three elements: awareness - there is value in a broad awareness, even without detail, of the research and the outcomes; understanding – there is value in sharing more detailed findings with other researchers and targeted audiences to promote discussion and gain appreciation; action – there is value in evaluation and review of thinking leading, where appropriate, to activity.

With regard to early dissemination of research findings, Pitchford, Porter, van Teiglingen and Forrest-Keenan (2009) recommend that researchers give presentations of work in progress to colleagues or conference audiences. Following this recommendation, I presented a paper, consisting of a PowerPoint presentation, at the UJIA 2013 Conference on Research in Jewish Education in May 2013 outlining the findings of this thesis. The delegates at this conference consisted of a mix of academics, teachers, inspectors and lay leaders and the PowerPoint presentation appeared to be well received by all.

One of the emergent themes from this thesis is the apparent difference in the understanding of the term ‘leadership’ that is held by practitioners as opposed to academics. The relationship between educational research, practice and the making of policy has always been complex (Hallam 2000). Busher (2002) suggests that one of the unintended consequences of inspections and of the National Curriculum on schools since the 1990’s has been to make teachers reluctant to get involved in any research projects that might add to their already daunting workload. This may explain why the headteachers interviewed in this thesis seemed unaware of the leadership styles that are discussed by academics. Clearly, the different worlds of the academic researcher and the professional practitioner play a large part in the lack of effective dissemination. Barnes, Clouder, Pitchford, Hughes and Purkis (2003) note that traditional routes of dissemination such as journal articles and conference papers often confine audiences to academics.

In an attempt to bridge the gulf between the academic and professional worlds in education, various different means of dissemination are considered. For example, Briggs (2002) lists the following:

- Oral reports to colleagues and staff from neighbouring schools
- Brief written summaries of research findings and recommendations to colleagues
- Summaries of research findings with explanatory contextual detail posted on internet discussion group web pages
- Research papers posted on the internet
- Articles in educational newspapers or magazines
- Papers submitted to educational or academic conferences
- Papers submitted to academic journals

The use of the internet and its implications for research and dissemination are discussed at length by Wake and Saunders (1998) drawing on the work of Burbules (1998), Harnad (1990 and 1997) and Ives and Jarvenpaa (1996). Wake and Saunders address the impact of the internet and its implications for research and dissemination focussing on the key areas of openness, immediacy, enrichment and authority. Openness can be brought into the academic arena, they argue, in that work in progress can be offered for protracted scrutiny by widely dispersed colleagues at low cost. In addition to this peer review, different communities can communicate more easily than in the buildings and structures of traditional scholarship. Immediacy is important, they suggest, because education is subject to changes that match policy-makers time scales rather than those of researchers.

There is an enormous academic demand for immediate access to information that has immediate relevance, they claim, quoting the on-line publication of the Dearing Report as an example. Enrichment of research and dissemination, they postulate, is enhanced by the facilities available through ICT. These include multi-media sources, on-going commentary by authors and web-like conceptual organisations. These are particularly relevant for educational research due to the closeness of research to practice in this field. Authority, they put forward, can be suitably enhanced through an internet research community. Citations can be challenged by direct access to the articles themselves. Scholars can see their colleagues' work directly, how many others are accessing it, and

how it is being amended and improved. However, they continue, there are issues to be addressed. Whilst a decline in library use has resulted from the increase in ICT resources, there has not been a corresponding provision of training in information retrieval. Searches on the internet can be extremely time-consuming and yield poor results on the one hand while suitable research material can be missed on the other.

From my own perspective as a serving full-time headteacher, there is no doubt that this professional doctorate would have been extremely difficult to research without the internet. In common with many headteacher colleagues, 50 hour working weeks in my school are not uncommon as are numerous evening meetings and weekend events. Reliance, as in the past, on library visits for research purposes would have been problematic and library access alone would have severely limited the range and scope of accessible studies. Whilst agreeing that internet searches can be time consuming, this problem is outweighed by the time saved in travel and by the facility to engage with internet sources at any time.

Guidelines for research and dissemination are presented by Tobin (2003) based on a comparison of three articles on the same theme published in the April 15th 1953 issue of Nature magazine. Investigating the reasons why one of the articles was so successful compared to the other two, he concludes that collaborating with colleagues is better than competing against them and that research is of no value if it is unpublished. This thesis has sought from the outset to investigate the perceptions of headteachers of voluntary aided schools from the perspective of an inside researcher colleague and attempts will be made, as described below, to share the findings with as wide an audience as possible.

Given that the pursuit of truth is essential to educational research even if it is only to try to uncover what people understand to be truth through the interconnectedness of their beliefs (Bridges 1999), the dissemination of accurate findings is, therefore, an ethical responsibility. A note of caution is expressed by Busher (2002) who suggests that other motives might be driving research such as gaining a doctorate, obtaining a large research contract or developing an impressive list of publications. These motives, explains Busher, can focus on the individual researcher's actions and may be in tension with basic principles of professional practice. However, other authors do not appear to have a problem with researchers having additional personal motives provided that their

work is rigorous and robust. Briggs (2002) appears to welcome personal involvement suggesting that 'a passionate interest in issues of equity or access to education may underlie your research ….. but this does not mean that your investigation will be biased or lack rigour' (p. 285-6). Bassey (1999) makes the point that an audience needs to know that the researcher is speaking with authority and Briggs (2002), after quoting Bassey, adds that readers need assurance that the research has been carried out; that it recognises and builds upon what has been previously researched and understood; that the data collected have been analysed thoroughly and thoughtfully; and conclusions bear in mind not only the research findings, but also previous knowledge and the constraints imposed by the scale of the research.

This thesis has complied with the suggestions of both Briggs and Bassey in that it has been undertaken by a headteacher with 27 years of experience in voluntary aided schools; it has discussed, compared, contrasted and, where appropriate, verified previous studies; it has gathered responses from 450 serving headteachers across England from a range of different types, locations and denominations of faith schools; emergent themes have incorporated findings both from this and previous studies; constraints imposed by the scale of the research have been identified. These elements will be apparent as the research is disseminated as described in the following table which outlines some of the possible outlets that would reach target audiences:

Table 6.1 Routes for Dissemination

AUDIENCE	ROUTES FOR DISSEMINATION
The wider public	The Times
	The Guardian
	The Independent
	The Internet
Headteachers/ professional educators	The Times Educational Supplement
	Teaching Today
	NAHT News
Headteachers of voluntary-aided schools	FASNA* Website
Religious leaders of schools/faiths	NCSL** Leading Seminar Conference
	NCSL** Leading Seminar Website
	Catholic Dioceses
	Church of England Dioceses
	Minority Faith groups
Central and Local Government	DfE
	Local Authorities
Research Community	British Educational Research Journal
	British Journal of Educational Studies
	British Journal of Religious Education
	Journal of Beliefs and Values
	Oxford Review of Education
	Research Papers in Education
	School Leadership and Management

*Foundation and Aided Schools National Association
** National College of School Leadership

Bearing in mind the need to speak with authority and that this requires some form of 'reputation', I have submitted a number of letters/articles for publication including the following:

- Letters regarding faith schools have been published in the Times (8/12/08), the Times Educational Supplement (21/4/06, 19/5/06, 13/4/07, 22/8/08, 27/11/09, 29/4/11) and the Jewish Chronicle (14/4/06, 4/8/06, 3/11/06)
- An article has been published in the Jewish News (25/1/07)
- An article has been included in Viner's (2010) book on leading faith schools
- A paper outlining this EdD research was presented at the UJIA 2013 Conference on Research in Jewish Education on 23rd May 2013

6.9 Next Steps: Future Research and Recommendations

This thesis has focused on the perspective of headteachers in voluntary aided schools throughout England with regard to their leadership role. Further research could investigate the views of governors/other senior leaders of these schools regarding their perceptions of school leadership and to what extent these align with the perceptions of headteachers. As has been seen in this study, the governors' role of critical friend is open to interpretation and a national survey of headteachers could identify where this causes confusion and potential problems. Local Authorities and Dioceses have responsibilities for voluntary aided schools and further research could investigate national data representing their views.

Future research could also focus on academies where funding is received directly from the government and where the Local Authority has no formal role in the school other than providing services that these schools opt to purchase from them. It would be particularly interesting to conduct research with headteachers of schools that have changed from voluntary aided to academy status to investigate to what extent removal of the Local Authority element affects their leadership roles and whether they sense any change in ethos.

Recommendations arising from this thesis include:

- Training for headteachers on practical management issues that affect headteachers of voluntary aided schools could be organised jointly between dioceses and other faith groups on matters of mutual interest such as LCVAP, DFC and other premises related issues
- Styles and aspects of 'leadership' could be further promoted to headteachers through the auspices of the National College of Teaching and Learning (formerly NCSL) or DfE sponsored initiatives
- A national survey of voluntary aided schools where the pupil intakes come from poorer neighbourhoods than those in which the schools are situated could be undertaken by the DfE to ascertain the numbers of such schools

6.10 Original Contribution to Knowledge and Practice

This thesis has made a significant original contribution to the body of knowledge concerning the leadership of headteachers in voluntary aided schools by presenting an overview of the perceptions held by headteachers of 450 voluntary aided schools throughout England (over 10% of the total number of such schools) from different phases of education, sizes of school, types of location and denominations. In particular, all 151 Local Authorities that contain voluntary aided schools are represented in this research (there is only one other Local Authority in England - the Isles of Scilly - but this has no voluntary aided schools) as are Catholic, Church of England, Hindu, Jewish and Moslem schools. It has focused specifically on headteachers of voluntary aided schools which have a particular combination of characteristics (identified in Chapter 1) and has addressed the current gap in existing research as identified by several authors.

This research was carried out by a serving headteacher with colleagues and, as a result, respondents and interviewees were more open, honest and forthcoming than they would have been with an academic or ex-headteacher researcher (Ribbins 1997, Rayner 1997). (One interviewee, in particular, felt that he could share with me his own difficult childhood experiences as he believed these had shaped his' life path'). This, together with the large sample of respondents, has resulted in the verification of some previous smaller-scale studies and has highlighted a number of emergent themes as noted above.

It also examined the various theories of leadership (e.g. transactional, transformational, distributive) to conjecture whether voluntary aided schools tend to attract a particular style of headteacher. Although none of the conventional styles was apparent, the three elements of leadership as espoused by Bush (2011) - values, vision and influence - were all present in the views expressed by the interviewees and were portrayed by many of the survey respondents in their responses to the open ended questions. These three elements of leadership together with the strong personal faith exhibited by the respondents contributed to, and were supported by, the 'special ethos' which the headteachers believed existed in their schools and which were affected by the varying influences of the eight stakeholder groups that impacted on them. This has led this researcher to devise a model of 'ethotic leadership' as being a style common to headteachers of voluntary aided schools nationally.

With regard to contribution to practice, this research at doctoral level has had an impact both on researcher and participants similar to that expressed in the research by Drake and Heath (2011) in that it gave all involved the time and opportunity to reflect on their activities, to express sentiments and to share both problems and successes. Several interviewees, when thanked for giving time from their busy schedules, said that they welcomed the opportunity to participate in a critical study and that they felt they had gained personally and professionally from the encounter. They felt that the opportunity to be reflective about their leadership had given them both ideas and encouragement which would help them to become more effective practitioners (Bleakley 1999, Branson 2007).

This research will hopefully be of interest and benefit to other headteachers and governing bodies of voluntary aided schools as well as central and local government politicians and advisers, headteacher associations and faith leaders. The contribution this thesis has made to my own practice is outlined in my personal reflections in the next and final section.

6.11 Personal Reflections about this Doctoral Journey

The original aims when I commenced this doctoral journey, as outlined in Chapter 1, included the desire to engage in rigorous academic research, to view professional practice through the lens of a doctoral researcher, to overcome the sense of isolation felt by headteachers, and to improve my own leadership performance through mutual support with other headteachers of voluntary aided schools. Day to day headship activities are time consuming (Day 2005) and leave little time for reflection which is essential for headteachers to be effective (Leithwood et al. 2008). Through reflection and reflexivity during the course of this study, not only have the original aims been met but I have come to realise that there were also other drivers that motivated me subconsciously. These included the need to justify the important role of headteachers in society generally despite the criticisms levelled at the teaching profession by both government and the general public, as well as the role of faith schools more specifically in the face of attacks by secularists.

Through professional dialogue with colleagues and conversational partnerships (Rubin and Rubin 2005), this study has enabled me to reflect in a professional context with headteachers from a variety of voluntary aided schools facilitating coaching and self-coaching in leadership (Scott 2004; Burgess, Sieminski and Arthur 2006). This has mitigated my earlier sense of isolation both as a professional headteacher and as a leader of a faith school. As a result, I have grown in confidence and have 'stood up' for the profession and for faith schools through letters and articles in the press and through presentations and discussions with academics. This growth in confidence has enabled me to reenergise my leadership skills and introduce measures in my own school such as restructuring the school day. Perhaps, even more telling, is that after 25 years of headship I took on a new headship in September 2013 at a time when the average length of headship tenures has reduced from 10 to 7 years (Ingate 2010).

From a personal perspective, this thesis has developed my academic research skills and my own awareness of leadership styles. It has heightened my understanding of the challenges faced by headteacher colleagues throughout the country in a wide variety of voluntary aided schools. It has enabled me to speak with some measure of authority not only within my own faith community but also among other faith groups to share good practice and facilitate useful and productive discussions. Above all, it has developed my own leadership skills that have been beneficial in leading my own school, developing my staff and promoting teaching and learning for the benefit of my staff and pupils.

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APPENDIX A – Explanatory letter regarding the on-line survey

Dear Colleagues,

As a fellow practising headteacher, I would be grateful for your kind participation and assistance in research I am undertaking with heads of voluntary/aided schools. This doctoral research, through the University of Derby, is seeking to ascertain how leading a v/a school with its particular characteristics, differs from leading other types of schools. I would hope that the results of this research will be of benefit to us all and can be used to inform policy makers, academics, governing bodies, training providers and the wider public.

I appreciate how busy you are and so have designed a short on-line questionnaire which should not take up much more than 5 minutes of your time. This can be accessed by simply clicking on the link provided and completing the questionnaire - there is no need to reply or forward anything. In this way, I am hoping to receive a large number of responses from a variety of v/a schools covering a range of faiths, sizes and locations.

Following this, I would also like to interview a small sample of headteachers who have led both v/a and other types of schools – please complete the section at the end of the questionnaire if you would be willing to participate in this.

This research meets the ethical standards required by the University of Derby and I would note in particular that:

Participation is voluntary and may be terminated at any time
All responses will be treated confidentially and no participant or school will be identifiable in the research
Participants will be acknowledged in the study unless requested otherwise
Data records will be stored securely and destroyed once the research is completed
A summary report will be sent to all participants at the end of the research

Please click on the following link to access the questionnaire:

http://www.smart-survey.co.uk/v.asp?i=32429rsoui&m=1240468kfqrq

Please email me (revalanshaw@hotmail.com) if you have any further questions or concerns about this research.

Thanking you in advance for your time and cooperation,

Yours sincerely,

Alan Shaw
Headteacher

Appendix B – Overall Results from the On-Line Survey

Results Summary

1. LEADERSHIP OF VOLUNTARY-AIDED SCHOOLS: AN ANALYSIS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF HEADTEACHERS

1. Type of School

		Response Percent	Response Total
1	a) Nursery	0.22%	1
2	b) Infant	4.01%	18
3	c) Junior	4.90%	22
4	d) First	3.56%	16
5	e) Primary	73.50%	330
6	f) First and Middle	0.45%	2
7	g) Middle	0.45%	2
8	h) Secondary	11.36%	51
9	i) Other	1.56%	7
		answered	449
		skipped	1

2. Number on Roll

		Response Percent	Response Total
1	a) Under 230	50.56%	226
2	b) 231 – 500	35.12%	157
3	c) Over 500	14.32%	64
		answered	447
		skipped	3

3. Religious Affiliation

		Response Percent	Response Total
1	a) Catholic	39.29%	176
2	b) Church of England	54.69%	245
3	c) Greek Orthodox	0.00%	0
4	d) Methodist	0.00%	0
5	e) Quaker	0.00%	0
6	f) United Reform	0.00%	0
7	g) Hindu	0.22%	1
8	h) Jewish	3.57%	16
9	i) Moslem	0.22%	1
10	j) Seventh Day Adventist	0.00%	0
11	k) Sikh	0.00%	0
12	l) Other	1.12%	5
13	m) None	0.89%	4
		answered	448
		skipped	2

4. Geographical Location of Community

		Response Percent	Response Total
1	a) Inner City	21.62%	96
2	b) Suburban	39.19%	174
3	c) Rural	24.32%	108
4	d) Mixed	12.84%	57
5	e) Other	2.03%	9
		answered	444
		skipped	6

5. Your Experience of Headship

		Response Percent	Response Total
1	a) Less than 10 years	58.48%	262
2	b) 10 -20 years	31.92%	143
3	c) Over 20 years	9.60%	43
		answered	448
		skipped	2

2. LEADERSHIP OF VOLUNTARY-AIDED SCHOOLS: AN ANALYSIS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF HEADTEACHERS

6. The faith community plays a prominent role in my school

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	1.Strongly agree		65.92%	296
2	2.Agree		24.50%	110
3	3.Undecided		6.46%	29
4	4.Disagree		2.00%	9
5	5.Strongly Disagree		1.11%	5
			answered	449
			skipped	1

7. Parents are more involved in v/a schools than in other types of school

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	1.Strongly agree		11.58%	52
2	2.Agree		27.39%	123
3	3.Undecided		30.96%	139
4	4.Disagree		25.61%	115
5	5.Strongly Disagree		4.45%	20
			answered	449
			skipped	1

8. I find that I have more affinity with other v/a heads than with those of other schools

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	1.Strongly agree		14.92%	67
2	2.Agree		31.63%	142
3	3.Undecided		12.03%	54
4	4.Disagree		31.63%	142
5	5.Strongly Disagree		9.80%	44
			answered	449
			skipped	1

9. I believe that v/a heads have a heavier workload than do heads of other schools

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	1.Strongly agree		10.47%	47
2	2.Agree		26.50%	119
3	3.Undecided		25.39%	114
4	4.Disagree		29.18%	131
5	5.Strongly Disagree		8.46%	38
			answered	449
			skipped	1

10. My own personal faith inspires my headship activities

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	1.Strongly agree		59.23%	263
2	2.Agree		27.48%	122
3	3.Undecided		6.53%	29
4	4.Disagree		4.28%	19
5	5.Strongly Disagree		2.48%	11
			answered	444
			skipped	6

11. Responsibility for Admissions adds substantially to my workload

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	1.Strongly agree		14.38%	63
2	2.Agree		37.21%	163
3	3.Undecided		10.05%	44
4	4.Disagree		28.77%	126
5	5.Strongly Disagree		9.59%	42
			answered	438
			skipped	12

12. Responsibility for the RE curriculum has no substantial impact on my workload

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	1.Strongly agree		5.71%	25
2	2.Agree		31.05%	136
3	3.Undecided		8.68%	38
4	4.Disagree		36.30%	159
5	5.Strongly Disagree		18.26%	80
			answered	438
			skipped	12

13. Responsibility for employing staff has no substantial impact on my workload

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	1.Strongly agree		4.76%	21
2	2.Agree		24.49%	108
3	3.Undecided		7.94%	35
4	4.Disagree		38.78%	171
5	5.Strongly Disagree		24.04%	106
			answered	441
			skipped	9

14. Responsibility for the premises has no substantial impact on my workload

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	1.Strongly agree		3.36%	15
2	2.Agree		12.78%	57
3	3.Undecided		4.93%	22
4	4.Disagree		37.44%	167
5	5.Strongly Disagree		41.48%	185
			answered	446
			skipped	4

15. Criticism of faith schools creates extra tensions for my role

		Response Percent	Response Total
1	1.Strongly agree	10.41%	46
2	2.Agree	29.64%	131
3	3.Undecided	14.71%	65
4	4.Disagree	35.75%	158
5	5.Strongly Disagree	9.50%	42
		answered	442
		skipped	8

16. I would prefer to remain in the v/a sector

		Response Percent	Response Total
1	1.Strongly agree	54.73%	243
2	2.Agree	23.42%	104
3	3.Undecided	14.64%	65
4	4.Disagree	5.86%	26
5	5.Strongly Disagree	1.35%	6
		answered	444
		skipped	6

APPENDIX C – Example of one completed Survey Response

LEADERSHIP OF VOLUNTARY-AIDED SCHOOLS

User Details – 2508216

Date Started: 06/05/2011 11:06:47 **Date Ended**: 06/05/2011 11:14:01

Time taken: 7 mins, 14 secs **IP Address**: n/a

Page 1: LEADERSHIP OF VOLUNTARY-AIDED SCHOOLS: AN ANALYSIS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF HEADTEACHERS

Q1. Type of School
e) Primary

Q2. Number on Roll
b) 231 – 500

Q3. Religious Affiliation
a) Catholic

Q4. Geographical Location of Community
d) Mixed

Q5. Your Experience of Headship
a) Less than 10 years

Page 2: LEADERSHIP OF VOLUNTARY-AIDED SCHOOLS: AN ANALYSIS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF HEADTEACHERS

Q6. The faith community plays a prominent role in my school
1.Strongly agree

Q7. Parents are more involved in v/a schools than in other types of school
4.Disagree

Q8. I find that I have more affinity with other v/a heads than with those of other schools
2.Agree

Q9. I believe that v/a heads have a heavier workload than do heads of other schools
1.Strongly agree

Q10. My own personal faith inspires my headship activities
1.Strongly agree

Q11. Responsibility for Admissions adds substantially to my workload
2.Agree

Q12. Responsibility for the RE curriculum has no substantial impact on my workload
4.Disagree
Q13. Responsibility for employing staff has no substantial impact on my workload
4.Disagree

Q14. Responsibility for the premises has no substantial impact on my workload
4.Disagree

Q15. Criticism of faith schools creates extra tensions for my role
2.Agree

Q16. I would prefer to remain in the v/a sector
1.Strongly agree

Q17. Which aspects of leading your school give you the greatest pleasure?
Making a difference in the children's lives my sharing my faith and treating people with love and respect.

Q18. Which aspects of leading your school give you the greatest challenge?
Budgetary and premises issues, pressure of league tables and OFSTED. Dealing with big rise in Child Protection issues.

Q19. Would you like to be included in a list of acknowledgements in this research?
b) No

Q20. If you have been a headteacher of both voluntary-aided and other types of schools and would be willing to be part of a sample for interview at a mutually convenient time, please add your details below
No Response

Appendix D – Tables showing responses of each sub-group to the Likert-style statements in the on-line survey

4.4 Findings – based on type/age range of school

On examining the responses of this group to the Likert-type statements in the survey:

1. Role of faith community –

Table 4.4.1 – Type/age range of school response to "The faith community plays a prominent role in my school"

Type/age range of school		**% strongly agree/ agree**	**% undecided**	**% strongly disagree/ disagree**
1 Infants	(35 responses)	91	10	0
2 Juniors	(24 responses)	79	17	4
3 Primary	(331 responses)	91	5	3
4 Secondary	(58 responses)	91	5	3
6 Overall response		**91**	**6**	**3**

The Junior school respondents differed from the other groups in that fewer agreed/strongly agreed with the statement and more were undecided

2. Parental involvement in v/a schools –

Table 4.4.2 – Type/age range of school response to "Parents are more involved in v/a schools than in other types of school"

Type/age range of school		**% strongly agree/ agree**	**% undecided**	**% strongly disagree/ disagree**
1 Infants	(35 responses)	45	31	23
2 Juniors	(24 responses)	25	12	59
3 Primary	(332 responses)	37	33	31
4 Secondary	(57 responses)	53	26	22
6 Overall response		**39**	**31**	**30**

A much wider variation between the groups. The Junior school respondents differed from the other groups in that fewer agreed/strongly agreed with the statement or were undecided and more disagreed/strongly disagreed

3. Affinity with other v/a heads –

Table 4.4.3 – Type/age range of school response to "I find that I have more affinity with other v/a heads than with those of other schools"

Type/age range of school		% strongly agree/ agree	% undecided	% strongly disagree/ disagree
1 Infants	(35 responses)	43	20	37
2 Juniors	(24 responses)	21	0	80
3 Primary	(331 responses)	49	11	40
4 Secondary	(58 responses)	45	17	38
6 Overall response		**47**	**12**	**41**

The Junior school respondents differed once again from the other groups

4. Workload for v/a heads –

Table 4.4.4 – Type/age range of schools response to "I believe that v/a heads have a heavier workload than do heads of other schools"

Type/age range of school		% strongly agree/ agree	% undecided	% strongly disagree/ disagree
1 Infants	(35 responses)	26	43	31
2 Juniors	(24 responses)	33	17	51
3 Primary	(331 responses)	40	24	36
4 Secondary	(58 responses)	22	29	48
6 Overall response		**37**	**25**	**38**

The Infant school respondents showed the most noticeable difference with 43% undecided (overall 25%)

5. Inspiration through personal faith –

Table 4.4.5 – Type/age range of schools response to "My own personal faith inspires my headship activities"

Type/age range of school		% strongly agree/ agree	% undecided	% strongly disagree/ disagree
1 Infants	(35 responses)	83	9	9
2 Juniors	(24 responses)	75	13	12
3 Primary	(328 responses)	87	6	7
4 Secondary	(56 responses)	92	5	2
6 Overall response		**87**	**7**	**7**

There was, in fact, a noticeable difference in degree between the proportions of strongly agree/agree responses from the Junior school respondents (29/46) and the Secondary school respondents (71/21).

6. Responsibility for Admissions –

Table 4.4.6 – Type/age range of school response to "Responsibility for Admissions adds substantially to my workload"

Type/age range of school		% strongly agree/ agree	% undecided	% strongly disagree/ disagree
1 Infants	(35 responses)	48	9	43
2 Juniors	(23 responses)	35	9	56
3 Primary	(321 responses)	52	11	37
4 Secondary	(58 responses)	58	7	34
6 Overall response		**52**	**10**	**38**

The Junior school respondents differed from the other groups in that 35% strongly agreed/agreed (overall 52%) and 56% disagreed/strongly disagreed (overall 38%)

7. Responsibility for RE –

Table 4.4.7 – Type/age range of school response to "Responsibility for the RE curriculum has no substantial impact on my workload"

Type/age range of school		% strongly agree/ agree	% undecided	% strongly disagree/ disagree
1 Infants	(34 responses)	27	12	62
2 Juniors	(24 responses)	46	4	50
3 Primary	(323 responses)	35	9	56
4 Secondary	(56 responses)	51	5	45
6 Overall response		**37**	**9**	**55**

A noticeable difference in degree between the proportions of strongly agree/agree and corresponding strongly disagree/disagree proportions of Infant (27:62) and Secondary (51:45) school respondents

8. Responsibility for employing staff –

Table 4.4.8 – Type/age range of school response to "Responsibility for employing staff has no substantial impact on my workload"

Type/age range of school		% strongly agree/ agree	% undecided	% strongly disagree/ disagree
1 Infants	(35 responses)	35	11	54
2 Juniors	(22 responses)	27	14	60
3 Primary	(325 responses)	28	8	63
4 Secondary	(58 responses)	31	2	67
6 Overall response		**29**	**8**	**63**

The Junior school respondents showed a marked difference in their disagree/strongly disagree proportions (5/55) compared with the overall proportions (24/39)

9. Responsibility for the premises –

Table 4.4.9 – Type/age range of school response to "Responsibility for the premises has no substantial impact on my workload"

Type/age range of school		**% strongly agree/ agree**	**% undecided**	**% strongly disagree/ disagree**
1 Infants	(35 responses)	12	0	88
2 Juniors	(24 responses)	21	8	71
3 Primary	(328 responses)	15	4	81
4 Secondary	(58 responses)	23	10	67
6 Overall response		**16**	**5**	**79**

The Infant schools respondents showed the greatest contrast with 12% agreeing/strongly agreeing (overall 16%), 0% undecided (overall 5%) and 88% disagreeing/strongly disagreeing (overall 79%)

10. Criticism of faith schools –

Table 4.4.10 – Type/age range of school responses to "Criticism of faith schools creates extra tensions for my role"

Type/age range of school		**% strongly agree/ agree**	**% undecided**	**% strongly disagree/ disagree**
1 Infants	(35 responses)	23	23	54
2 Juniors	(24 responses)	37	17	46
3 Primary	(324 responses)	40	14	45
4 Secondary	(58 responses)	49	12	40
6 Overall response		**40**	**15**	**45**

The Infant school respondents demonstrated a smaller proportion agreeing/strongly agreeing at 23% (overall 40%) and higher proportions of undecided and disagreeing/strongly disagreeing.

11. Preference to remain in v/a sector –

Table 4.4.11 – Type/age range of school response to "I would prefer to remain in the v/a sector"

Type/age range of school		**% strongly agree/ agree**	**% undecided**	**% strongly disagree/ disagree**
1 Infants	(35 responses)	75	26	0
2 Juniors	(24 responses)	75	13	13
3 Primary	(326 responses)	78	14	8
4 Secondary	(58 responses)	82	12	5
6 Overall response		**78**	**15**	**7**

Respondents from all types of school had similar agree/strongly agree totals. The Infant school respondents, were unusual in that they demonstrated a large proportion (26%) as 'undecided' and had no disagree/strongly disagree responses

4.5 Findings – based on size of school

On examining the responses of this group to the Likert-type statements in the survey:

1. Role of faith community –

   Table 4.5.1 – Size of school response to "The faith community plays a prominent role in my school"

Size of school	**% strongly agree/ agree**	**% undecided**	**% strongly disagree/ disagree**
1 Under 230 pupils (225 responses)	88	8	4
2 231 – 500 pupils (157 responses)	93	6	1
3 Over 500 pupils (64 responses)	93	3	3
6 Overall response	**90**	**6**	**3**

The relative proportions of strongly agree/undecided changed from the smallest (60/8) to the largest (73/3) schools

2. Parental involvement in v/a schools –

   Table 4.5.2 – Size of school response to "Parents are more involved in v/a schools than in other types of school"

Size of school	**% strongly agree/ agree**	**% undecided**	**% strongly disagree/ disagree**
1 Under 230 pupils (225 responses)	32	33	34
2 231 – 500 pupils (157 responses)	43	32	26
3 Over 500 pupils (64 responses)	53	22	25
6 Overall response	**39**	**31**	**30**

   The proportions of agree/strongly agree increase and those of disagree/strongly disagree decrease, as the size of the schools increase

3. Affinity with other v/a heads –

Table 4.5.3 – Size of school response to "I find that I have more affinity with other v/a heads than with those of other schools"

Size of school	% strongly agree/ agree	% undecided	% strongly disagree/ disagree
1 Under 230 pupils (226 responses)	44	12	45
2 231 – 500 pupils (157 responses)	49	11	41
3 Over 500 pupils (63 responses)	52	13	35
6 Overall response	**47**	**12**	**41**

As above, the proportions of agree/strongly agree increase and those of disagree/strongly disagree decrease, as the size of the schools increase

4. Workload for v/a heads –

Table 4.5.4 – Size of schools response to "I believe that v/a heads have a heavier workload than do heads of other schools"

Size of school	% strongly agree/ agree	% undecided	% strongly disagree/ disagree
1 Under 230 pupils (226 responses)	41	25	34
2 231 – 500 pupils (156 responses)	34	26	40
3 Over 500 pupils (64 responses)	30	25	46
6 Overall response	**37**	**25**	**38**

The proportions of agree/strongly agree compared with disagree/strongly disagree vary from the smallest (41/34) to the medium (34/40) to the largest (30/46)

5. Inspiration through personal faith –

Table 4.5.5 – Size of school response to "My own personal faith inspires my headship activities"

Size of school	% strongly agree/ agree	% undecided	% strongly disagree/ disagree
1 Under 230 pupils (222 responses)	84	8	8
2 231 – 500 pupils (156 responses)	87	5	8
3 Over 500 pupils (63 responses)	94	5	2
6 Overall response	**87**	**7**	**7**

The proportion of respondents demonstrating agree/strongly agree was particularly high (94%) in the over 500 category

6. Responsibility for Admissions –

Table 4.5.6 – Size of school response to "Responsibility for Admissions adds substantially to my workload"

Size of school	% strongly agree/ agree	% undecided	% strongly disagree/ disagree
1 Under 230 pupils (217 responses)	47	11	42
2 231 – 500 pupils (154 responses)	57	10	33
3 Over 500 pupils (64 responses)	54	6	41
6 Overall response	**52**	**10**	**38**

There was not such a marked difference between the 3 categories – the 231-500 grouped was weighted more towards agree/strongly agree (57%) compared with overall (51%)

7. Responsibility for RE –

Table 4.5.7 – Size of school response to "Responsibility for the RE curriculum has no substantial impact on my workload"

Size of school	% strongly agree/ agree	% undecided	% strongly disagree/ disagree
1 Under 230 pupils (220 responses)	30	11	59
2 231 – 500 pupils (152 responses)	40	7	53
3 Over 500 pupils (63 responses)	53	5	43
6 Overall response	**37**	**9**	**54**

The respondents from the largest schools demonstrated a larger proportion who agreed/strongly agreed (53%) than overall (37%) and less who disagreed/strongly disagreed (43%) than overall (54%)

8. Responsibility for employing staff –

Table 4.5.8 – Size of school response to "Responsibility for employing staff has no substantial impact on my workload"

Size of school	% strongly agree/ agree	% undecided	% strongly disagree/ disagree
1 Under 230 pupils (222 responses)	30	9	61
2 231 – 500 pupils (153 responses)	28	8	65
3 Over 500 pupils (63 responses)	32	3	65
6 Overall response	**29**	**8**	**63**

There was little difference in the proportions in these responses though the respondents from the largest schools showed fewer 'undecided' than overall

9. Responsibility for the premises –

Table 4.5.9 – Size of school response to "Responsibility for the premises has no substantial impact on my workload"

Size of school	% strongly agree/ agree	% undecided	% strongly disagree/ disagree
1 Under 230 pupils (223 responses)	15	4	81
2 231 – 500 pupils (157 responses)	14	5	81
3 Over 500 pupils (63 responses)	25	10	65
6 Overall response	**16**	**5**	**79**

The respondents from the largest schools demonstrated a greater proportion of agree/strongly agree (25%) than overall (16%), a greater proportion of undecided (10%) than overall (5%) and a smaller proportion of disagree/strongly disagree (65%) than overall (79%)

10. Criticism of faith schools –

Table 4.5.10 – Size of schools response to "Criticism of faith schools creates extra tensions for my role"

Size of school	% strongly agree/ agree	% undecided	% strongly disagree/ disagree
1 Under 230 pupils (221 responses)	37	15	48
2 231 – 500 pupils (154 responses)	40	15	45
3 Over 500 pupils (64 responses)	47	14	40
6 Overall response	**40**	**15**	**45**

The respondents from the largest schools demonstrated a greater proportion of agree/strongly agree (47%) than overall (40%) and a smaller proportion (41%) of disagree/strongly disagree than overall (45%)

11. Preference to remain in v/a sector –

Table 4.5.11 – Size of school response to "I would prefer to remain in the v/a sector"

Size of school	% strongly agree/ agree	% undecided	% strongly disagree/ disagree
1 Under 230 pupils (222 responses)	75	18	7
2 231 – 500 pupils (155 responses)	81	10	8
3 Over 500 pupils (64 responses)	83	13	5
6 Overall response	**78**	**15**	**7**

As above, the respondents from the largest schools demonstrated a greater proportion of agree/strongly agree (83%) than overall (78%) and a smaller proportion (5%) of disagree/strongly disagree than overall (7%)

4.6 Findings – based on religious affiliation

On examining the responses of this group to the Likert-type statements in the survey:

1. Role of faith community –

Table 4.6.1 – Faith group responses to "The Faith community plays a prominent role in my school"

Religious affiliation	**% strongly agree/ agree**	**% undecided**	**% strongly disagree/ disagree**
1 Catholic (176 responses)	95	4	1
2 Church of England (245 responses)	86	9	4
3 Minority faiths (18 responses)	100	0	0
4 Other (5 responses)	100	0	0
5 None (3 responses)	33	0	66
6 Overall response	**91**	**6**	**30**

The overall response for agree/strongly agree of 91% masks a wide variation among the faith groups. Not surprisingly, the schools with no religious affiliation demonstrated the smallest proportion agreeing with the statement

2. Parental involvement in v/a schools –

Table 4.6.2 – Faith group response to "Parents are more involved in v/a schools than in other types of school"

Religious affiliation	**% strongly agree/ agree**	**% undecided**	**% strongly disagree/ disagree**
1 Catholic (176 responses)	47	32	20
2 Church of England (244 responses)	32	30	39
3 Minority faiths (18 responses)	78	17	5
4 Other (5 responses)	20	40	40
5 None (4 responses)	25	50	25
6 Overall response	**39**	**31**	**30**

There was a marked difference in the responses to this statement by the different affiliations with the minority faith schools response being particularly high.

3. Affinity with other v/a heads

Table 4.6.3 – Faith group response to "I find that I have more affinity with other v/a headteachers than with those of other schools"

Religious affiliation	**% strongly agree/ agree**	**% undecided**	**% strongly disagree/ disagree**
1 Catholic (176 responses)	66	7	26
2 Church of England (244 responses)	31	16	53
3 Minority faiths (18 responses)	78	0	22
4 Other (5 responses)	40	0	60
5 None (4 responses)	25	25	50
6 Overall response	**47**	**12**	**41**

As above, there was a marked difference in the responses to this statement by the different affiliations.

4. Workload for v/a headteachers –

Table 4.6.4 – Faith group response to "I believe that v/a heads have a heavier workload than do heads of other schools"

Religious affiliation	**% strongly agree/ agree**	**% undecided**	**% strongly disagree/ disagree**
1 Catholic (176 responses)	50	24	26
2 Church of England (244 responses)	28	26	45
3 Minority faiths (18 responses)	44	22	33
4 Other (5 responses)	40	20	40
5 None (4 responses)	0	25	75
6 Overall response	**37**	**25**	**38**

Once again, the rather balanced picture conveyed by the overall responses changes when the responses by the different affiliations are examined.

5. Inspiration through personal faith –

Table 4.6.5 – Faith group response to "My own personal faith inspires my headship activities"

Religious affiliation	**% strongly agree/ agree**	**% undecided**	**% strongly disagree/ disagree**
1 Catholic (175 responses)	95	3	1
2 Church of England (244 responses)	80	9	11
3 Minority faiths (18 responses)	83	11	5
4 Other (5 responses)	100	0	0
5 None (2 responses)	50	0	50
6 Overall response	**86**	**7**	**7**

The overall response figures mask differences between the groups.

6. Responsibility for Admissions –

Table 4.6.6 – Faith group response to "Responsibility for admissions adds substantially to my workload"

Religious affiliation	**% strongly agree/ agree**	**% undecided**	**% strongly disagree/ disagree**
1 Catholic (175 responses)	54	10	35
2 Church of England (237 responses)	47	11	43
3 Minority faiths (17 responses)	71	12	17
4 Other (5 responses)	60	0	40
5 None (4 responses)	100	0	0
6 Overall response	**52**	**10**	**38**

Responses differ among the different affiliations.

7. Responsibility for RE –

Table 4.6.7 – Faith group response to "Responsibility for the RE curriculum has no substantial impact on my workload"

Religious affiliation	**% strongly agree/ agree**	**% undecided**	**% strongly disagree/ disagree**
1 Catholic (172 responses)	31	5	65
2 Church of England (241 responses)	42	11	47
3 Minority faiths (17 responses)	24	5	71
4 Other (5 responses)	40	20	40
5 None (3 responses)	33	33	33
6 Overall response	**37**	**9**	**54**

Though not as varied as with the other statements, proportions do differ according to the affiliation of the schools.

8. Responsibility for employing staff –

Table 4.6.8 – Faith group response to "Responsibility for employing staff has no substantial impact on my workload"

Religious affiliation	**% strongly agree/ agree**	**% undecided**	**% strongly disagree/ disagree**
1 Catholic (173 responses)	19	6	75
2 Church of England (242 responses)	38	10	52
3 Minority faiths (17 responses)	0	6	94
4 Other (5 responses)	40	0	60
5 None (4 responses)	25	0	75
6 Overall response	**29**	**8**	**63**

As above.

9. Responsibility for the premises –

Table 4.6.9 – Faith group response to "Responsibility for the premises has no substantial impact on my workload"

Religious affiliation	**% strongly agree/ agree**	**% undecided**	**% strongly disagree/ disagree**
1 Catholic (175 responses)	15	5	80
2 Church of England (244 responses)	19	5	77
3 Minority faiths (18 responses)	6	6	88
4 Other (5 responses)	0	0	100
5 None (4 responses)	0	25	75
6 Overall response	**16**	**5**	**79**

There was a much smaller difference in responses to this question with all groups disagreeing/strongly disagreeing with the statement.

10. Criticism of faith schools –

Table 4.6.10 – Faith group response to "Criticism of faith schools creates extra tensions for my role"

Religious affiliation	**% strongly agree/ agree**	**% undecided**	**% strongly disagree/ disagree**
1 Catholic (175 responses)	55	12	33
2 Church of England (241 responses)	29	17	54
3 Minority faiths (18 responses)	56	11	33
4 Other (5 responses)	20	0	80
5 None (3 responses)	0	66	33
6 Overall response	**40**	**15**	**45**

Although the overall responses seems fairly balanced, analysing these by group demonstrate that the Catholic and minority faith respondents clearly view this differently than do the Church of England respondents. Not surprisingly, the None group are not so affected by criticism of faith schools.

11. Preference to remain in v/a sector –

Table 4.6.11 – Faith group response to "I would prefer to remain in the v/a sector"

Religious affiliation	**% strongly agree/ agree**	**% undecided**	**% strongly disagree/ disagree**
1 Catholic (176 responses)	91	7	2
2 Church of England (241 responses)	70	20	10
3 Minority faiths (18 responses)	72	22	6
4 Other (5 responses)	60	0	40
5 None (4 responses)	75	0	25
6 Overall response	**78**	**15**	**7**

The overall response figures mask a noticeable difference between the faith groups.

4.7 Findings – based on location

On examining the responses of this group to the Likert-type statements in the survey:

1. Role of faith community –

Table 4.7.1 – Location group response to "The faith community plays a prominent role in my school"

Religious affiliation	**% strongly agree/ agree**	**% undecided**	**% strongly disagree/ disagree**
1 Inner City (95 responses)	96	3	1
2 Suburban (174 responses)	95	5	1
3 Rural (108 responses)	80	12	7
4 Mixed (57 responses)	93	4	4
5 Other (9 responses)	77	11	11
6 Overall response	**90**	**6**	**3**

There are varied though not drastically different responses.

2. Parental involvement –

Table 4.7.2 – Location group response to "Parents are more involved in v/a schools than in other types of school"

Religious affiliation	**% strongly agree/ agree**	**% undecided**	**% strongly disagree/ disagree**
1 Inner City (96 responses)	40	32	28
2 Suburban (174 responses)	48	25	27
3 Rural (107 responses)	30	32	39
4 Mixed (57 responses)	32	44	24
5 Other (9 responses)	22	33	44
6 Overall response	**39**	**31**	**30**

These responses vary considerably according to the group.

3. Affinity with other v/a heads -

Table 4.7.3 - Location group response to "I find that I have more affinity with other v/a heads than with those of other schools"

Religious affiliation		**% strongly agree/ agree**	**% undecided**	**% strongly disagree/ disagree**
1 Inner City	(95 responses)	51	16	32
2 Suburban	(174 responses)	52	6	43
3 Rural	(108 responses)	36	17	47
4 Mixed	(57 responses)	44	14	42
5 Other	(9 responses)	55	11	33
6 Overall response		**47**	**12**	**41**

As above

4. Workload for v/a headteachers -

Table 4.7.4 – Location group response to "I believe that v/a heads have a heavier workload than do heads of other schools"

Religious affiliation		**% strongly agree/ agree**	**% undecided**	**% strongly disagree/ disagree**
1 Inner City	(96 responses)	96	3	1
2 Suburban	(174 responses)	95	5	1
3 Rural	(108 responses)	80	12	7
4 Mixed	(56 responses)	93	4	4
5 Other	(9 responses)	77	11	11
6 Overall response		**90**	**6**	**3**

The Rural and Other groups show smaller proportions of agree/strongly agree than do the other groups but even these are weighted heavily in this direction.

5. Inspiration through personal faith –

Table 4.7.5 – Location group response to "My own personal faith inspires my headship activities"

Religious affiliation		**% strongly agree/ agree**	**% undecided**	**% strongly disagree/ disagree**
1 Inner City	(95 responses)	86	6	7
2 Suburban	(173 responses)	92	5	3
3 Rural	(107 responses)	77	10	13
4 Mixed	(56 responses)	91	5	4
5 Other	(9 responses)	89	0	11
6 Overall response		**87**	**7**	**7**

As above.

6. Responsibility for admissions –

Table 4.7.6 – Location group response to "Responsibility for Admissions adds substantially to my workload"

Religious affiliation		**% strongly agree/ agree**	**% undecided**	**% strongly disagree/ disagree**
1 Inner City	(95 responses)	61	8	30
2 Suburban	(170 responses)	56	8	37
3 Rural	(104 responses)	38	12	51
4 Mixed	(56 responses)	59	14	26
5 Other	(9 responses)	22	11	66
6 Overall response		**52**	**10**	**38**

A more marked difference than with the above questions. It may be that inner city schools with high density population have the most pressure on their places whereas the rural/other schools have more difficulty filling their places.

7. Responsibility for RE -

Table 4.7.7 – Location group response to "Responsibility for the RE curriculum has no substantial impact on my workload"

Religious affiliation		**% strongly agree/ agree**	**% undecided**	**% strongly disagree/ disagree**
1 Inner City	(92 responses)	41	5	55
2 Suburban	(171 responses)	37	9	54
3 Rural	(107 responses)	33	13	54
4 Mixed	(55 responses)	35	4	62
5 Other	(9 responses)	44	11	44
6 Overall response		**37**	**9**	**54**

The responses to this statement are less varied.

8. Responsibility for employing staff -

Table 4.7.8 – Location group response to "Responsibility for employing staff has no substantial impact on my workload"

Religious affiliation		**% strongly agree/ agree**	**% undecided**	**% strongly disagree/ disagree**
1 Inner City	(93 responses)	30	3	66
2 Suburban	(173 responses)	28	9	62
3 Rural	(105 responses)	35	9	57
4 Mixed	(57 responses)	23	11	67
5 Other	(9 responses)	22	0	77
6 Overall response		**29**	**8**	**63**

As above.

9. Responsibility for the premises

Table 4.7.9 – Location group response to "Responsibility for the premises has no substantial impact on my workload"

Religious affiliation		**% strongly agree/ agree**	**% undecided**	**% strongly disagree/ disagree**
1 Inner City	(96 responses)	19	4	77
2 Suburban	(173 responses)	16	8	76
3 Rural	(107 responses)	12	2	86
4 Mixed	(57 responses)	18	4	79
5 Other	(9 responses)	22	0	77
6 Overall response		**16**	**5**	**79**

As above.

10. Criticism of faith schools –

Table 4.7.10 – Location group response to "Criticism of faith schools creates extra tensions for my role"

Religious affiliation		**% strongly agree/ agree**	**% undecided**	**% strongly disagree/ disagree**
1 Inner City	(95 responses)	38	14	49
2 Suburban	(172 responses)	46	15	39
3 Rural	(108 responses)	25	19	55
4 Mixed	(54 responses)	56	7	37
5 Other	(9 responses)	22	22	55
6 Overall response		**40**	**15**	**45**

A more noticeable difference in responses than above.

11. Preference to remain in v/a sector –

Table 4.7.11 – Location group response to "I would prefer to remain in the v/a sector"

Religious affiliation	**% strongly agree/ agree**	**% undecided**	**% strongly disagree/ disagree**
1 Inner City (95 responses)	86	8	5
2 Suburban (172 responses)	81	13	6
3 Rural (107 responses)	64	24	11
4 Mixed (57 responses)	84	12	4
5 Other (9 responses)	77	11	11
6 Overall response	**78**	**15**	**7**

Respondents from the rural schools demonstrated a lower proportion of agree/strongly agree than did those from other schools

4.8 Findings - based on headship experience

1. Role of Faith community

Table 4.8.1 – Headship experience response to "The faith community plays a prominent role in my school"

Headship experience	**% strongly agree/ agree**	**% undecided**	**% strongly disagree/ disagree**
1 Less than 10 years (262 responses)	88	8	3
2 10 – 20 years (143 responses)	92	4	3
3 Over 20 years (42 responses)	95	2	2
6 Overall response	**90**	**6**	**3**

There was little difference in the responses to this statement

2. Parental involvement –

Table 4.8.2 – Headship experience response to "Parents are more involved in v/a schools than in other types of school"

Headship experience	**% strongly agree/ agree**	**% undecided**	**% strongly disagree/ disagree**
1 Less than 10 years (261 responses)	38	31	30
2 10 – 20 years (143 responses)	37	32	31
3 Over 20 years (43 responses)	54	21	25
6 Overall response	**39**	**31**	**30**

The most experienced headteachers showed a greater proportion agreeing/strongly agreeing with the statement.

3. Affinity with other v/a heads –

Table 4.8.3 – Headship experience response to "I find that I have more affinity with other v/a heads than with those of other schools"

Headship experience	**% strongly agree/ agree**	**% undecided**	**% strongly disagree/ disagree**
1 Less than 10 years(262 responses)	45	12	44
2 10 – 20 years (142 responses)	46	13	41
3 Over 20 years (43 responses)	56	9	35
6 Overall response	**47**	**12**	**41**

The most experienced headteachers showed a greater proportion agreeing/strongly agreeing with the statement.

4. Workload for v/a headteachers –

Table 4.8.4 – Headship experience response to "I believe that v/a heads have a heavier workload than do heads of other schools"

Headship experience	**% strongly agree/ agree**	**% undecided**	**% strongly disagree/ disagree**
1 Less than 10 years(262 responses)	37	26	38
2 10 – 20 years (142 responses)	36	24	41
3 Over 20 years (43 responses)	44	23	32
6 Overall response	**37**	**25**	**38**

The most experienced headteachers showed a greater proportion agreeing/strongly agreeing with the statement.

5. Inspiration through personal faith –

Table 4.8.5 – Headship experience to "My own personal faith inspires my headship activities"

Headship experience	**% strongly agree/ agree**	**% undecided**	**% strongly disagree/ disagree**
1 Less than 10 years(259 responses)	83	9	9
2 10 – 20 years (143 responses)	93	3	4
3 Over 20 years (42 responses)	92	5	2
6 Overall response	**87**	**7**	**7**

The least experienced headteachers demonstrated a lower proportion agreeing/strongly agreeing with the statement.

6. Responsibility for Admissions –

Table 4.8.6 – Headship experience response to "Responsibility for Admissions adds substantially to my workload"

Headship experience	**% strongly agree/ agree**	**% undecided**	**% strongly disagree/ disagree**
1 Less than 10 years(255 responses)	49	10	40
2 10 – 20 years (141 responses)	57	11	32
3 Over 20 years (42 responses)	50	5	46
6 Overall response	**52**	**10**	**38**

The least experienced headteachers demonstrated a lower proportion agreeing/strongly agreeing with the statement.

7. Responsibility for RE –

Table 4.8.7 – Headship experience response to "Responsibility for the RE curriculum has no substantial impact on my workload"

Headship experience	**% strongly agree/ agree**	**% undecided**	**% strongly disagree/ disagree**
1 Less than 10 years(257 responses)	34	10	57
2 10 – 20 years (140 responses)	42	7	51
3 Over 20 years (41 responses)	37	7	57
6 Overall response	**37**	**9**	**54**

The least experienced headteachers demonstrated a lower proportion agreeing/strongly agreeing with the statement.

8. Responsibility for employing staff –

Table 4.8.8 – Headship experience response to "Responsibility for employing staff has no substantial impact on my workload"

Headship experience	**% strongly agree/ agree**	**% undecided**	**% strongly disagree/ disagree**
1 Less than 10 years(259 responses)	28	8	64
2 10 – 20 years (139 responses)	30	9	60
3 Over 20 years (43 responses)	32	2	65
6 Overall response	**29**	**8**	**63**

The least experienced headteachers demonstrated a slightly lower proportion agreeing/strongly agreeing with the statement.

9. Responsibility for the premises –

Table 4.8.9 – Headship experience response to "Responsibility for the premises has no substantial impact on my workload"

Headship experience	**% strongly agree/ agree**	**% undecided**	**% strongly disagree/ disagree**
1 Less than 10 years(261 responses)	16	7	77
2 10 – 20 years (142 responses)	16	2	81
3 Over 20 years (43 responses)	16	0	83
6 Overall response	**16**	**5**	**79**

There was little difference between the groups.

10. Criticism of faith schools –

Table 4.8.10 – Headship experience response to "Criticism of faith schools creates extra tensions for my role"

Headship experience	**% strongly agree/ agree**	**% undecided**	**% strongly disagree/ disagree**
1 Less than 10 years(259 responses)	41	16	42
2 10 – 20 years (142 responses)	39	12	48
3 Over 20 years (41 responses)	34	15	51
6 Overall response	**40**	**15**	**45**

The most experienced headteachers demonstrated a lower proportion agreeing/strongly agreeing with the statement.

11. Preference to remain in the v/a sector –

Table 4.8.11 – Headship experience response to "I would prefer to remain in the v/a sector"

Headship experience	**% strongly agree/ agree**	**% undecided**	**% strongly disagree/ disagree**
1 Less than 10 years(261 responses)	74	18	8
2 10 – 20 years (140 responses)	82	10	7
3 Over 20 years (43 responses)	86	9	5
6 Overall response	**78**	**15**	**7**

The most experienced headteachers demonstrated a greater proportion agreeing/strongly agreeing with the statement.

Appendix E – Example of one Interview Transcript

Interview H1

1. **Which aspects of your leadership role do you most enjoy?**

I have the chance to create a curriculum that will affect the lives of children for the future. I also like to bring on staff to develop future school leaders.

2. **Which aspects of your leadership role do you find most challenging?**

I find it difficult to deal with unreasonable expectations from parents who expect unreasonable achievements from their children.

This is typical of Jewish schools and very typical of what I encountered in the private sector. Parents don't understand there is a limit to what schools can do – their view is "I'm spending a fortune – why isn't my child achieving?"

3. **What role does the faith community play in your school?**

It plays a large part. There are charities that have connections with the school. There are Jewish youth groups e.g. Tribe, Maccabi – the school provides an easy way for them to access children. Local rabbis come in as guest speakers or to run seminars – this is their way to access a young audience as most of our pupils don't go to synagogue. There are also lots of contacts with communal organisations such as the Board of Deputies, United Synagogue.

[Is this in their or the school's interest?]

The school would be poorer without them. It is difficult to manage as there are so many so, for example, we only support 3 charities per year.

4. **What role do parents play in your school?**

On a positive note- Education is extremely important to our parents e.g. homework will be supported by parents if they are contacted. This was not typical in my previous community school where we had nice parents but education was not a priority. We have a 100% turnout of parents to parents' evenings other than for illness.

The downside – a minority of parents cannot believe that their child misbehaves e.g. there are rules against talking during examinations but we have had parents calling the individulator a "liar" even before speaking to their child – leaping to their defence.

5. **What do you think most attracts parents to apply to your school?**

I think parents are attracted by the high standards of teaching and learning, high standards of behaviour. Our extra-curricular programme is highly thought of as well.

[You haven't mentioned RE]
Our high standards of teaching and learning include RE – it's across the board. Excellent quality of Jewish Studies teaching – all teachers are qualified or are on GTP courses – all are graduates who want to teach. We have an interesting text-based curriculum – it fires up children who love Jewish studies

[What percentage enjoy Jewish Studies?]

High 80s. They are set by ability with high quality discussions. We do not get children who say "Oh no, not JS"

6. **What role do governors play in your school?**

Governors here are much more engaged than in my previous non-v/a school. Many of them have professional qualifications and are university educated so it is easier to explain things – they are more with you. There are 2 groups; an inner group who are heavily engaged in terms of time and a more recently appointed group who are still learning. The Chairman and I encourage newer governors to train, this has really paid off and next year they will be able to make more contributions – they need to train to act from a position of knowledge.

It's a struggle with role of 'critical friend' – the DfE struggles with this. It's a paradox. What does 'critical friend' mean?

Governors should set the strategic direction in consultation with the SMT – how it is determined is up to the SMT – they know how to deliver it. It makes no sense for governors to 'manage' as it is not their area of expertise – they are not here.

[Do they understand that governance does not mean day-to-day management?]

Good question. We've grown slowly so our governors have been trained from the outset to know their role. My previous experience has been different re: governors' interference.

[Do you think this a particular problem for Jewish or faith schools generally?]

I think it is more of a middle-class problem. Parents will contact a parent-governor about an issue who seeks to do something about it. Middle-class parent-governors are more likely to want to do something. In a faith school, they are more likely to know the parents.

[Do you think this is more of a primary school problem?]

That as well – not so much in secondary. We had the benefit of training from the beginning.

7. **What aspects of your school do you believe attracts staff to join your team?**

Interesting. About half the staff are Jewish and it's relatively easy to attract practising Jewish staff because they know our reputation as a good school.

It's completely different with non-Jewish staff. In Jewish primary schools most of the teachers are Jewish but in secondaries this is not the case. There aren't so many Jewish teachers so we try to attract the best by advertising everywhere. We all encounter problems due to; bad press about the Jewish community, anti-Israel press and a misunderstanding about modern orthodoxy (many assume we are more right-wing) therefore potential applicants do not apply. If they actually come to an interview, they feel positive about the school being 'normal'. Many of our non-Jewish staff are here through word of mouth from friends/colleagues. Staffing is a big issue.

[Do you have a large pool to choose from?]

No. Very small numberss apply on the whole. Academic subjects might get 5/6 applications – but often none are suitable. We have to re-advertise several times. Due to the growth of the school we need 20 new teachers per year. Typically, we advertise in October, then several more rounds until the post is filled in May.

[I would have assumed hordes of applicants]

We get lots of Jewish applicants in the first tranche – but they are not always the best.

8. **In what ways does leading your current voluntary-aided school differ from your other non v/a headships?**

Very different.

Atmosphere – undoubtedly there is a family atmosphere here– shared values and our social and cultural value system (even if not religious) makes it feel like one family.

Family values – there are many more stable families than in my previous school, the vast majority here have stable, family relationships.

[Is the atmosphere similar to private schools?]

Interesting. Yes. It's the faith element, children come from a common background. The school reinforces that, e.g. Y7-9 informal programme means they all mix together

[Are your tasks different?]

Very. We are very aware that you are working within and for a faith community. Also, there is an additional big responsibility as the local neighbourhood judges all Jews by our pupils' behaviour.

9. **What role does the LEA play in your school?**

No difference to my previous school. This is a good LEA. They have a light touch but are there to be supportive when you need them.

10. **Are you affected by criticism of faith schools?**

Yes. I've had 18 years' experience in 3 schools. Anti-faith school feeling has grown over the years. I sense it more now in meetings. For me, it matters more with headteacher colleagues than in newspapers.

[Do you think other heads believe you are 'creaming off' the best pupils?}

In many cases, yes. A few might be anti-religious, but the majority feel that we cream off the best children and so have an easier time. The change over the past 18 years has been due to the Performance Tables. We are judged against each other because of that.

11. **How would you describe your style of leadership?**

Consultative. Being a head for a long time in a few places makes you develop a gut feeling of what will work therefore it's hard to allow colleagues to input because you feel you know what to do. This can make you into an autocrat (which I know) so I try to get other views and change my views.

I don't like staff coming to me with problems without a suggested way to help. Most people like working for me; when setting up the school, a number contacted me saying they'd love to be involved and work with me again. Can't be all bad!

12. **How could colleges/trainers better prepare headteachers for leading voluntary-aided schools?**

There should be much more training on handling governors and parents in a v/a school context and more generally about finance.

Any other comments?

Succession, future leaders – where are they coming from?