



Changing the Reality; Securing Sufficient Leaders for Catholic Schools – An English and Welsh Experience of Succession Planning

The Context

To begin to look at this issue, you have to understand the culture of education in England. It is a high political priority; for the last 10 years, since 1997, Britain has had a Prime Minister who began his term in office saying that his top priorities were “Education, Education, Education”. Whilst there is much dispute as to whether standards have risen and whether the numerous changes made to the system- many structurally and in terms of funding streams – have made a positive impact, there can be little doubt that education remains a national preoccupation, whether you judge this by newspaper column centimetres, debate in both houses of Parliament and associated reforms, or the incessant parental conversations about education. Everyone has a view on schools and Headteachers inevitably feel that they are subject to public scrutiny and often in the eye of a storm.

The Ofsted¹ inspection regime results in very public scrutiny and reporting on individual schools. Although this is now ‘lighter touch’ depending on other performance indicators, Headteachers have often moved on very rapidly (not necessarily voluntarily) when schools were judged to be failing and put in ‘special measures’. This personal vulnerability of Headteachers and some would argue scapegoating, did not provide an exciting picture of headship. It did, however, create opportunities for a new type of Headteacher; the superhead. Their appointments were often accompanied by a fanfare of publicity but many did not stay in post long and turnover was often very high. The model of superhead or, more accurately perhaps, super hero head was not sustainable. Strong but distributed leadership is the preferred model.

“Any idiot can face a crisis. It is day to day living that wears you out.” - Anton Chekhov

Not only have the expectations of schools been changing but also the very nature of schools. The 2006 Education Act² required the setting up of Children’s Services departments in Local authorities (Local Education Authorities also being a thing of the past). Under these new arrangements, the Every Child Matters³ agenda and its 5 required outcomes (being healthy; staying safe; enjoying and achieving; making a positive contribution; and achieving economic well-being) are included in the remit and expectations of every school. So Headteachers arguably have even more responsibilities and an expanded workload as well as high levels of public scrutiny, e.g. through the Ofsted inspection process.

Addressing a recent CES national conference⁴, Steve Munby, Chief Executive of The National College for school Leadership (NCSL) listed some of the activities and responsibilities being fulfilled personally by some Headteachers (<http://www.cesew.org.uk/standard.asp?id=5186>). The list included coping with inspection systems, performance tables, asbestos, water testing and other health and safety requirements, child protection, disability policies and, not least, ensuring nutritional standards in school meals- the list seems endless and is reflected in research into what takes up most of Headteachers time. Some contend that the effect of leadership is over-rated⁵, in terms of the difference that Heads make to performance, but contentious though this hypothesis is, the authors of this recent report also speak of the bureaucratisation of schools and Headteachers expected to be

¹ Ofsted; Office For Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills: London (www.ofsted.gov.uk)

² Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Inspection of Local Authorities (Regulation 2007 No.462 and the Education and Inspection Act 2006 (Prescribed Education and Training, etc) Regulation 2007 No.464.

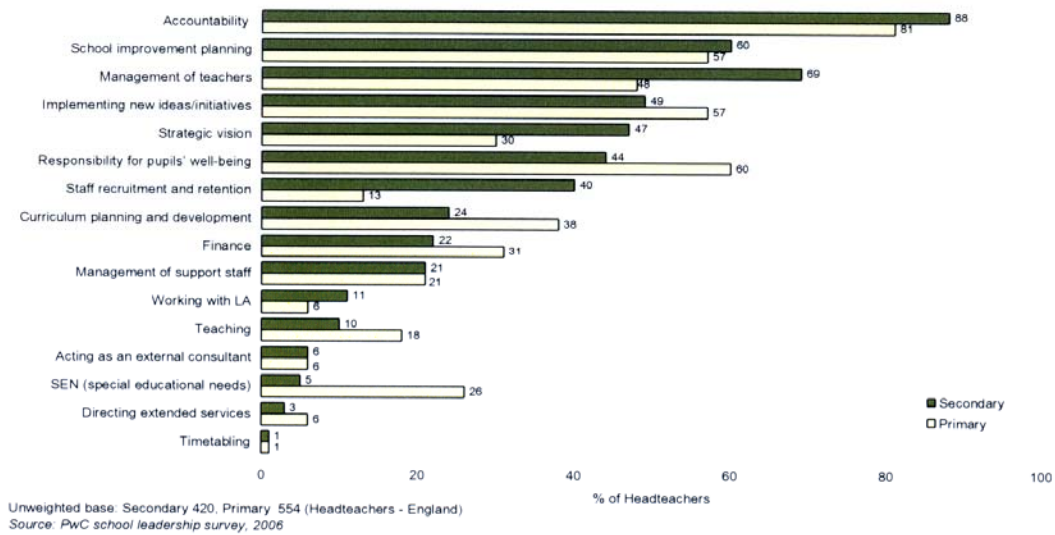
³ Every Child Matters: Change for children

⁴ “*Leading Catholic Schools and Sixth Form Colleges in the 21st Century: Opportunities, Rewards and Challenges*”

⁵ Policy Exchange 2007, *The Leadership Effect: Can Headteachers make A Difference* : London

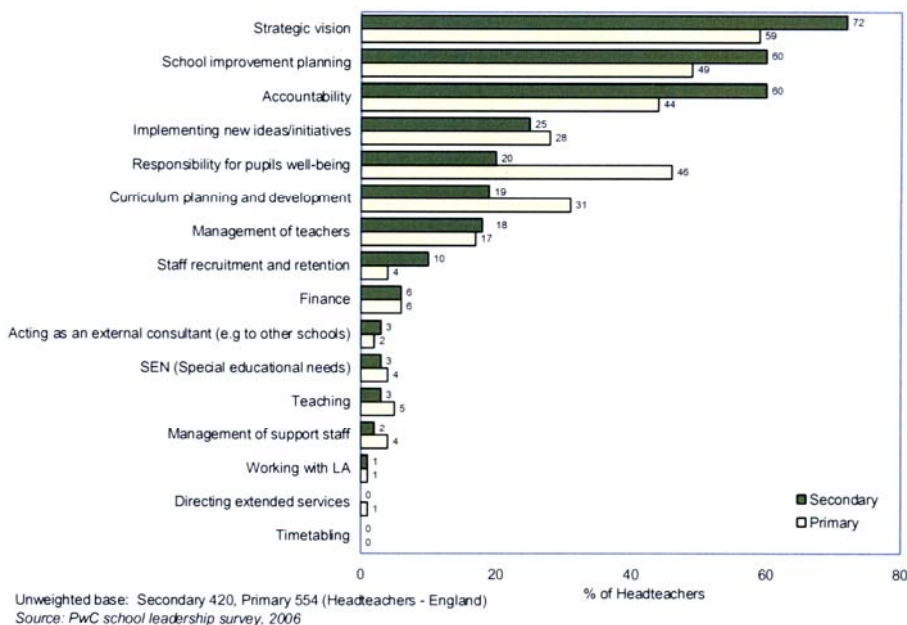
“visionary leaders, curriculum specialists, disciplinarians, senior managers, community representatives and, just occasionally teachers too”.

Tasks taking up most of Headteachers time⁶



This contrasts with the same Headteachers' views of the tasks which should be most important to them and indicates a clear mismatch between the considerable proportions of time spent on operational and managerial aspects of work, and the time spent on higher order, strategic vision for the school.

Headteachers' views of the tasks which should be most important to them⁷

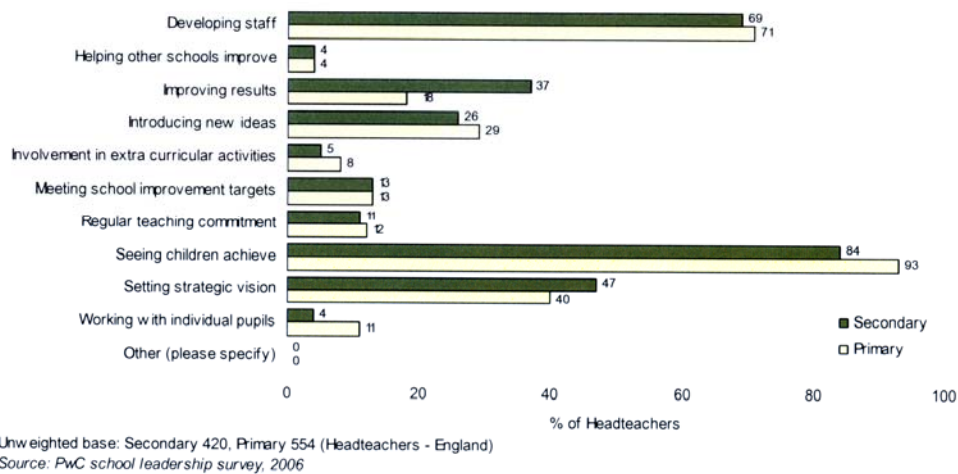


It is interesting to note the congruence of these findings with what gives Headteachers most satisfaction. Yet the emphasis on interactions with pupils and with staff are the very areas that appear to have suffered a reduction in the Headteacher's role over the last five years.

⁶ PriceWaterhouse Coopers (PwC) 2007, Independent Study into School Leadership: London

⁷ PwC Ibid

Aspects of the Headteachers' role that give most satisfaction⁸



Those in the Catholic sector will be well aware that the list excludes an extra tranche of responsibilities and expectations which accompany Catholic school headship. For some this prompts the question, “do Heads in Catholic schools have to work harder than Heads in other schools?” The author suggests that they work differently and often with more moral and practical support than do Heads elsewhere. Ofsted data⁹ indicates that Catholic schools (2003-2005) have stronger links with parents (80% good or better) compared to other schools (66% good or better) and that parents make a greater contribution to their children’s learning in Catholic schools than in others (30% excellent/very good compared to 18% elsewhere). Governance is also scored more highly in Catholic schools. Catholic schools in England also achieve higher standards from 5-16 and they enable better pupil progress. They create an ethos where pupils learn effectively and attendance is better than in other schools.

Headteachers of Catholic schools in England and Wales are arguably more answerable to others, e.g. their bishop and diocesan officers, than is the case for their peers in community schools. This brings additional advice for Catholic Headteachers and accountability. The extent of delegation and local decision making is a prominent feature of community schools. Some Heads have left the Catholic sector or remained outside it because of this difference¹⁰. The equation of workload probably balances out across headship in different types of schools. It should also be remembered that Heads of Catholic schools in England and Wales receive their salaries from government, paid on the same scales and rates as Heads of any maintained school, (typically determined by school size) and subject to the same statutory performance management. We know that many Headteachers of community schools are Catholic. It was recently cited, for example, by a diocesan officer in a private conversation that one third of the secondary Headteachers of one large local authority in his diocese are Catholic. This far exceeds the proportion expected in a country where 10% of the population are Catholic.

⁸ PWC: Ibid

⁹ CES.2006, *Quality & Performance : A survey Of Education In Catholic Schools*: London

¹⁰ private conversations

How school teachers perceive that the role of Headteacher has changed over the last five years in terms of tasks

	Primary		Secondary	
	Do more (%)	Do less (%)	Do more (%)	Do less (%)
Dealing with bureaucracy	92	2	82	1
Implementation of Government initiatives	87	2	83	1
Business management of school budget	75	5	66	12
Networking with other organisations	73	5	74	5
Leadership	64	4	64	2
Training (self)	35	28	31	31
The discipline of students	29	10	36	14
Teaching	16	56	9	55
Contact with students	9	49	15	32

Source: Headspace, 2005

These perceptions must impact on the aspirations of those who could become Headteachers. The Chief executive of NSCL reports¹¹ that there are seven main reasons for why other senior managers in schools do not want to become Headteachers; Work-life balance/stress; personal commitments; less pupil contact; less teaching involvement; not an ambition; administrative demands; accountability/inspection. Despite all this 91% of Headteachers are positive about their leadership role and say that they enjoy what they do and feel confident¹². This is echoed in CES conferences and discussions with Headteachers, affirming that the situation is the same for those in the Catholic sector; most enjoy what they are doing, are proud to be doing it and feel they are serving the common good/fulfilling a vocation¹³. Somewhere in all this, what is possibly human nature or present culture intervenes and in informal interactions those of us in educational leadership sometime succumb to the temptation to have a whinge! This does not encourage others to follow us into leadership.

We need to be wary about the impressions we give. We are the walking advertisement for our roles. Our behaviours are the affidavit we provide for whether those roles are worth the aspiration of others. Opportunities to share the job satisfaction are crucial both practically and motivationally when it comes to headship. This is clear in the growing evidence¹⁴ showing that, for example, occasions to be an acting Headteacher make individuals far more likely to apply for substantive headship- even amongst those who had previously discounted themselves from aspiration to headship. The mark of a good leader should also be their commitment to spotting and nurturing talent in others and their success in growing future leaders¹⁵.

Whatever the perceptions about headship there is one incontrovertible fact; recruitment to headship and succession planning are very serious challenges in England.

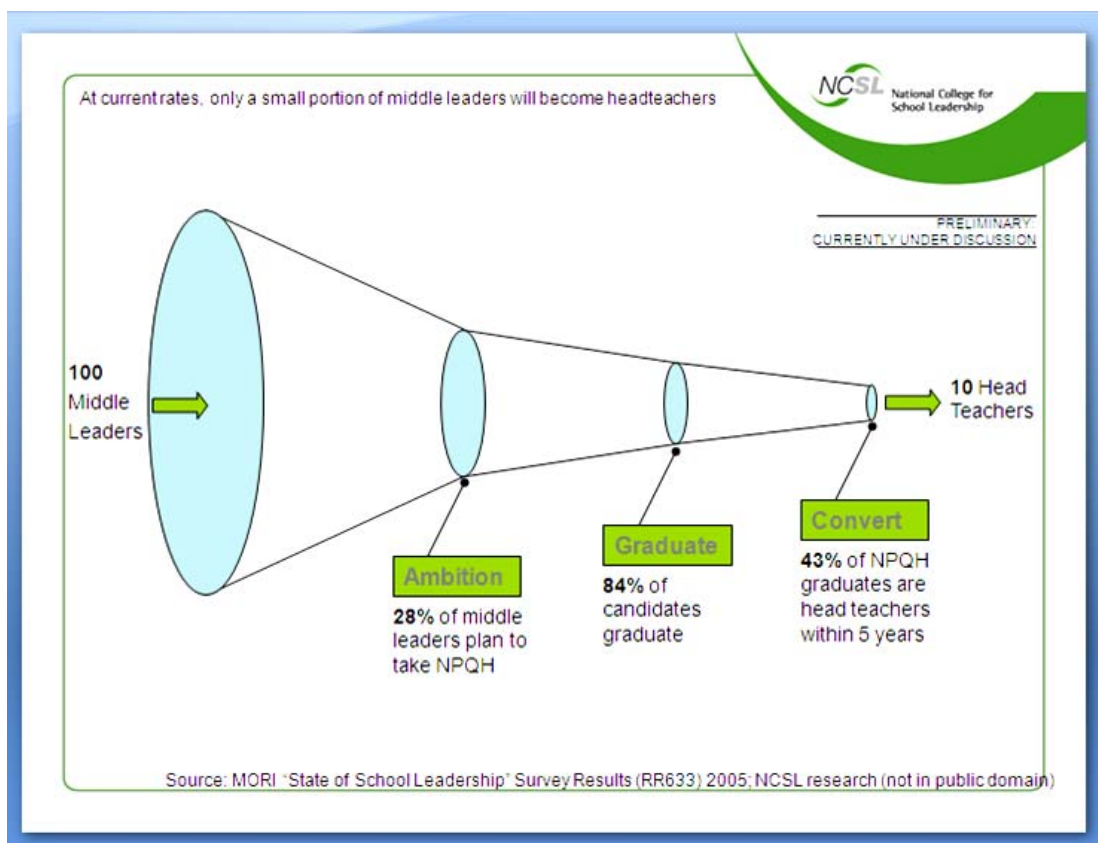
¹¹ At CES National Conference 2007 - *Leading Catholic Schools and Sixth Form Colleges in the 21st Century: Opportunities, Rewards and Challenges*.

¹² MORI Social research Institute 2005: England

¹³ Catholic Teachers In schools and Colleges (CATSC) Secondary Headteachers Conference 2007 : London

¹⁴ Reported experiences of dioceses, unpublished conversations with CES, and data provided for NCSL Succession Planning Advisory Board.

¹⁵ Fullan, M., 2003, *Hope For Leadership In The future*. Ontario: Ontario Institute For Education.



This applies both to the community sector and to Catholic schools but in the Catholic sector the situation is exacerbated. We have a smaller pool of people qualified to be Headteachers of Catholic schools. Nevertheless, it should be remembered, that the Catholic schools' sector in England and Wales is large. We have nearly 2400 schools with the parents of nearly 800,000 pupils currently obtaining a place for their child in a maintained Catholic school. Oversubscription in areas like London and the South East is high and not all demand for places in Catholic schools can be met. Overall, Catholic schools make up 10% of England's maintained schools, and a third of England's schools have a religious character (includes Church of England and other faith groups).

The Annual Survey Of senior staff appointments In Schools In England And Wales¹⁶ revealed that nationally 12% of primary schools and 11% of secondary schools advertised for a new Headteacher in 2006. 36% of primary schools and 29% of secondary schools failed to appoint a Headteacher after their first advertisement. This level was conspicuously higher for Catholic schools where, overall, the re-advertisement ratio was 58%. The re-advertisement ratio for Catholic schools has been above 50% for more than 7 years.

In the diocese of Hexham and Newcastle, for example, these are primary schools that have not made a substantive headship appointment after advertising nationally 4 times. They currently have 7 schools with an acting Headteacher, sometimes someone seconded from another school¹⁷. In Plymouth, a diocese with a rural dispersed population and historically low proportion of Catholics, and shortage of Headteacher applicants, the decision has been made to ensure that a Christian presence remains in education even where this means that a Catholic school can only continue if another Christian Headteacher is appointed. This demonstrates a considered response to local circumstances and alternative strategies are in place to ensure support for the Catholic ethos and conduct of the school/s. It should be stressed that the number of schools in such exceptional circumstances is small and English and Welsh law enables the post of Headteacher and deputy to be reserved for Catholics in the case of Catholic schools. The bishops of England and Wales hold this principle dear and

¹⁶ Howson.J. 2007, *22nd Annual survey Of Senior Staff Appointments In Schools In England And Wales*. Education Data Surveys: Oxford

¹⁷ H O' Neil, H. June 2007, Diocesan schools' commissioner for Hexham and Newcastle, *paper to DCS conference*.

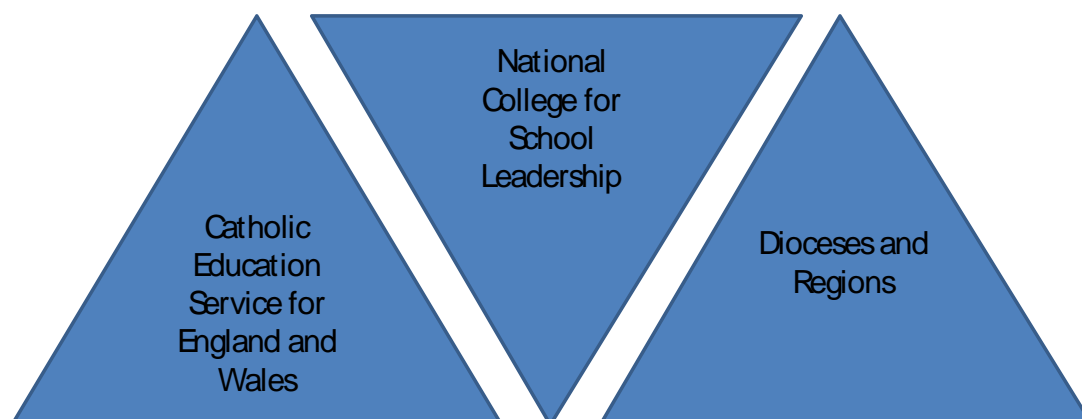
without a strongly Catholic team at leadership level it is hard to see how a school could remain Catholic over a period of time.

Seeking solutions

The problems faced by catholic schools in securing sufficient school leaders are both the same as those facing community schools and distinctive to the Catholic sector. Funding for the strategies to address the issue is common to both community and Catholic schools, e.g. within professional development budgets delegated to schools by their Local Authorities and in central funding located in organisations such as NCSL. Therefore, Catholic schools are urged to participate in the mainstream activities whilst also seeking to ensure that these can be tailored to the particular needs of the Catholic sector.

The NCSL (England) took much persuasion to see that Catholic schools (or any school with a religious character) needed not only the generic training and development opportunities offered to any aspiring leader but also distinctive, nuanced provision to serve the particular of the Catholic school. This was lacking, for example, in the original national Professional Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH) without which no-one may be a Headteacher. Partnership working between the NCSL and CES is now strong and this is extending to diocesan officers making us optimistic that at least some of these shortcomings will be addressed in a current revision of NPQH. Working in partnership is a crucial factor in making progress.

Partners in Nurturing Future Leaders



Thanks to closer working between the NCSL and CES the Catholic sector has been able to benefit from an important Succession Planning Pilot conducted by the college. This has given us access to additional resources and enabled a range of activities to take place. An emphasis on supporting Deputy Headteachers was a common focus, e.g. internship programmes in dioceses, residential conferences followed by twilight sessions for Deputy Headteachers, accompanied by mentoring. In Hexham and Newcastle, for example, significant funds were put into targeting training for Deputy Headteachers and Assistant Heads so that 24 are currently being supported with additional resources to train them as potential Headteachers (this is on top of the requirement that they obtain an NPQH). The diocesan thinking was to 'tell these people we think you could move to that level (headship) and we will provide you with support and training to give you skills and confidence'¹⁸.

What emerges from this strategy is the notion that in addition to the professional development and encouragement of all aspiring Heads, as would happen in any type of school, there is need for dioceses to provide additional training, coaching and support to individuals both before and after headship. This is intended to be both personal and professional. In the north-east, for example, there is a forum for NPQH graduates who have not yet moved into headship. A diocesan personal

¹⁸ The Tablet, 19.05.07: London

and professional development portfolio is being worked on. This is intended to be an interactive career development tool to be used between teachers, mentors and professional development managers in schools. Further initiatives include the setting up of a leadership 'think tank', the enhancement of a website designed to tell a coherent story of leadership opportunities, and also internship programmes. In the diocese of Hexham and Newcastle, the Bishop held a celebration for NPQH graduates and the photographs of this in local media attracted useful publicity and demonstrated the diocesan bishop's personal support for his Headteachers.

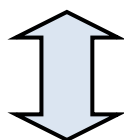
The National Response to the Shortage of Headteachers could be summarised as follows:

- i. Succession planning strategies¹ led by NCSL support and funding for local solutions to local problems (The CES has benefitted from this centrally and by enabling resources to be delegated to dioceses). Today's Leaders Today - Local Solutions to Local Problems.¹
- ii. A revision of National Professional Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH) and other leadership development to better address needs, e.g. more bespoke and personalised provision and learning in more than one context. Includes fast track and Future leaders initiatives.
- iii. Localised strategies to encourage more, qualified people to aspire to/apply for leadership posts (including addressing equalities issues and hard to reach groups). Includes the identification of leadership talent in a systematic way.
- iv. Changing mindsets to bring people to headship at a younger age (to bring into line with other professions). Currently, it takes on average 20 years to become a Headteacher in England.
- v. Retention strategies so that expertise and skills are not lost when a Headteacher no longer wants to work in current ways to retain the capital, e.g. job shares, coaching and mentoring roles, new opportunities.
- vi. Reviewing the role of school leadership, e.g. PriceWaterhouse Coopers¹ research suggesting rethinking the role of Headteachers – do they have to be a qualified teacher?
- vii. Structural changes to school organisation which, for example, bring schools together in federations. Arguably this may reduce the number of Headteacher posts needed. It can also make posts more attractive financially and encourage applications.

Each of these 7 strands is relevant to the Catholic sector and is reflected in action being taken either nationally by CES and /or by dioceses and others.

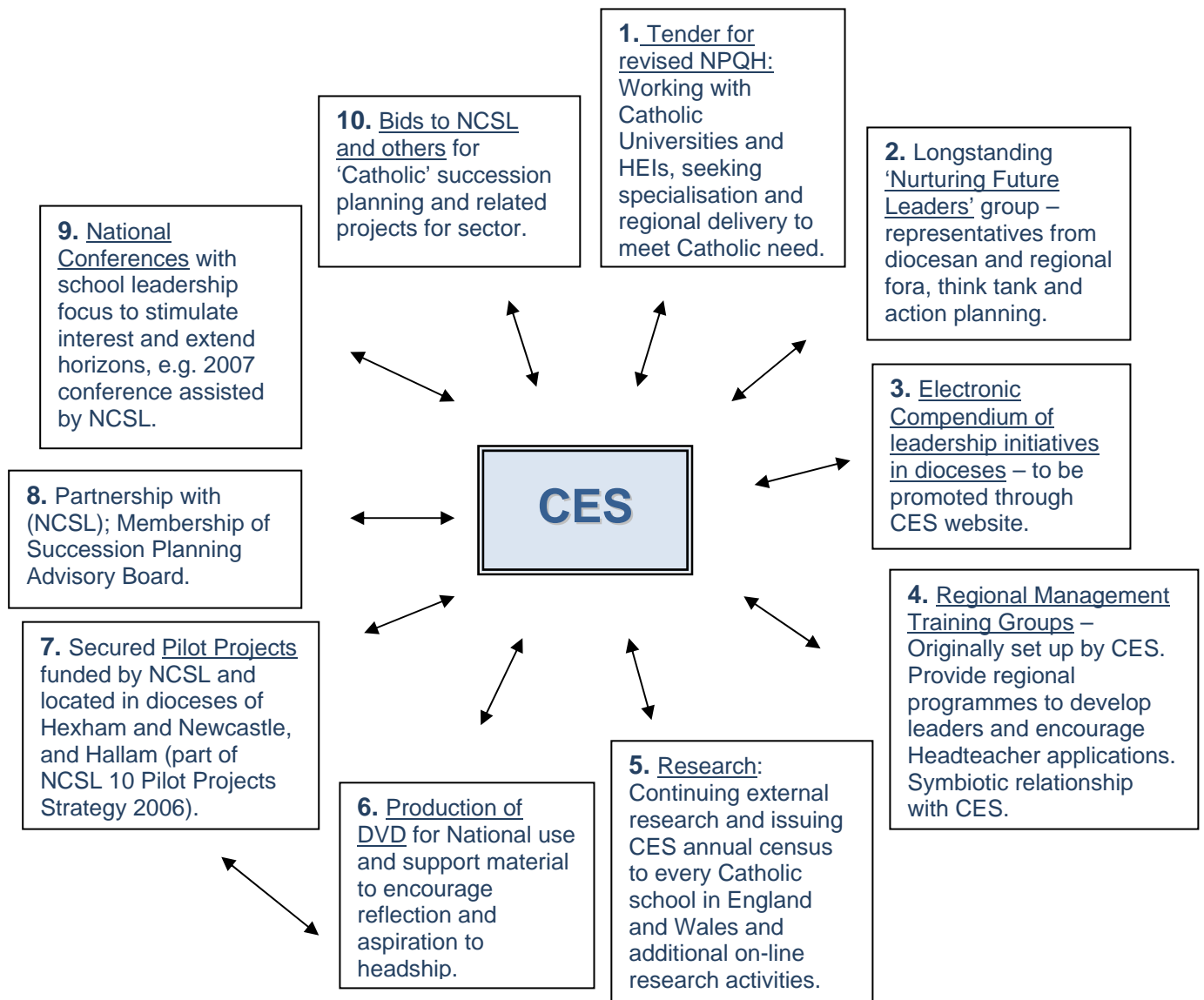
The Journey to Headship: Newly Qualified Teacher to Senior Leader

1. Leadership Enculturation:	Affirmation of the leadership roles and responsibilities of all teachers, e.g. form tutors, reflective early experience from NPQH.
2. Normalising Aspiration to Headship:	Early identification of talent and nurturing. ----- Repeated invitations to self identify and nurturing.
3. Developing and Training for Headship:	Coaching, mentoring, NPQH, other CPD in secular tradition. -----  As above in Christian vocational tradition and formation as leader of a spiritual community.
4. Active and Subconscious Headteacher Observation:	In roles often close to Headteacher, observing their response to the role, their confidence, their self-esteem, how they are treated and the esteem in which they are held (secular and religious).
5. Experiencing Headship:	Opportunities to act up in headship role, to taste headship for real.



DECISION TO APPLY FOR HEADSHIP

Current CES National Activities in Promoting Leadership Development and Succession Planning



More details of the projects and range of work being undertaken or recommended by the Catholic school community for succession planning can be found in Appendix 1. We are helped in this work by succession planning consultants, provided by NCSL, who act as field-workers helping local initiatives and collaborating with diocesan colleagues.

The Impact of the Catholic Community on Securing School Leaders

“Christian leadership is not about going alone; it’s about walking together. Peter was with Christ in the tough stuff and he was only able to be there because Christ was there too. The presence of the Risen Christ is now mediated through the community and through what we do for one another. We need to find ways of mediating that companionship of the Risen Christ in the support we provide and in a way that enables generous men and women, sensibly and sanely, to negotiate the considerable pressures of their job.”¹⁹

Partnership and community are central to Catholic education. We refer often to the triangle of home, school and parish. Community works at two important levels for Catholic leadership. Firstly, there is the example that we set as community and whether this calls people to leadership or, more accurately, helps them to hear and accept the call to the vocation of school leadership. Secondly, there is the work that the community undertakes to fulfil its responsibility to support its Catholic schools. The author suggests that the Catholic community needs to be aware of their influence on whether individuals come forward for headship in Catholic schools and to play a more active part in seeking leaders. This work cannot be done by national and diocesan education offices alone.

The wider Catholic community has significant opportunity to encourage applicants to headship and also to ensure that all who work in schools, particularly leaders, are celebrated and esteemed. Those who work in or with our schools are not yet confident, however, that all opportunities are being seized. It is suggested by some that both Clergy and governors, for example, need more opportunity to review their expectations and response to issues of school leadership.

Little is said publically about the numbers of Catholic Heads leading other types of schools. We know anecdotally of those who will not choose headship in Catholic schools because of their anxiety about lifestyle issues now or in the future, others feel that applications from them for posts back in the Catholic sector would not be welcomed because of time ‘out’. There is doubtless some truth in this historically. The author has heard many reports of apparent reluctance by governors to any consideration of those teachers and leaders who were “not committed to Catholic education” as supposedly evidenced by not spending their entire career in Catholic schools. Somehow such individuals have been portrayed as disloyal or lacking in commitment. Fortunately this attitude is changing thanks largely to the work of diocesan officers, and governors are better able to see the transferable skills that such people can bring to Catholic schools. There is a stronger sense that many ministries can contribute to strong and appropriate leadership. Some dioceses such as Clifton²⁰ have run recruitment initiatives published through parishes and local papers and supported by weekend conferences and professional development opportunities to support potential leaders in their return to the Catholic sector. Dioceses such as Hexham and Newcastle speak of the many gifts and considerable competence that has been brought by “returners” in their area. Such Headteachers also speak of their previous lack of awareness about how much the Church needed to attract Catholic Headteachers; the need was simply not well enough publicised. In its 2007 conference on leadership the CES advertised in national education press as well as Catholic media and attracted a small number of leaders from community schools. These individuals are now applying for leadership posts in the Catholic sector. The CES also subsidised places for governors so that they would be supported in fulfilling their role in succession planning but few took up places; an indication, perhaps, of the difficulties governors experience in attending day time activities and training.

Many Catholic educationalists could identify Catholic colleagues who are leading schools beyond the Catholic sector and contributing enormously to the well being of the wider community in so doing.

¹⁹ Holman, Michael SJ, 2007, *The Distinctive Character of Leadership in a Catholic School*: www.cesew.org.uk

²⁰ Bradshaw Peter, diocesan commissioner for Clifton 2006

Attempts to attract these people back to the Catholic sector have to be undertaken with great caution. Destabilising other schools would be unacceptable and there are benefits to Catholics being represented in all leadership sectors. In recent research²¹ into how three Christian Headteachers successfully transformed schools in challenging circumstances it was noted that although none of the schools were Catholic, two of the Heads were Catholic and the third had been a deputy in a Catholic school; there is always a demand for experienced Catholic leaders.

Suggestions are made about the positive impact of affirmation from the Bishop on those serving in Catholic schools. More communications between Bishops and individuals could help teachers to know that their service is valued and encourage them to develop their careers in Catholic education. For example, a letter that encourages middle managers to apply for NPQH whilst also thanking them for their years of work within the Catholic sector, a letter of appreciation to recently qualified teachers after they have completed their first year in a Catholic school, a letter of congratulations to those in Catholic schools who have obtained their NPQH and an encouragement to apply for headship in a Catholic school could all be effective motivators when sent by the bishop.

Rewards for Headteachers are important too and the PriceWaterhouse Cooper's study on school leadership showed that there is a concern about the salary differentials between different members of the leadership team i.e. in many cases deputy head teachers feel that it is not financially worth them seeking headship. PWC²² recommended that head teachers need a more flexible package and incentives. Their research showed that one third of head teachers felt that secondments and sabbaticals would be the most attractive incentive. A high level of respondents also wanted opportunities to undertake some school hours work at home. The prospect of travelling and holidaying outside the main school holidays were also attractive propositions. All of these are, arguably, more possible given that distributed leadership is a feature of good schools. Some of the recommended practices and incentives are already happening formally or informally in Catholic schools. More could be encouraged.

CONCLUSION

We expect much of our Catholic schools and, particularly, of those that lead them. In a climate that speaks of a crisis of faith, whether true or not, schools are expected to take much responsibility for the transmission of faith and for evangelisation. One of the primary sources of evangelisation is the school; where else do so many generations and faith journeys come together as at the school gate? This gives opportunities to reach out to millions who have direct and indirect relationships with the Church, but this is also an onerous burden. If we are to secure school leaders we must show that there is a firm and evident base of support for them and their work from across the Catholic community.

We must have demonstrable confidence in our Headteachers. Too often we hear the gloom mongers talk about the loss of the Religious as leaders of our schools; yes, but we should also be hearing of the value brought by the experiences and commitment of lay Heads. This should be supplemented by building capacity from opportunities to gain more knowledge and experience from study and reflection in the faith, for example, introduction to theology courses, retreats, and offering the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS)²³. Many study for a Masters level degree in the leadership of a Catholic school²⁴.

As a community it is reasonable that we be asked, "How do we show that we value Headteachers and appreciate their efforts?" We must be realistic about our demands. To hold Headteachers accountable, for example, for Mass attendance is to fail to acknowledge the many other factors at play. We should also credit the positive difference a Catholic education makes to a persons' values and the way they live their life even when their outward witness falls short of weekly Mass attendance. We should be fair about the burdens we place on the shoulders of leaders and remember that they will deter or attract future leaders accordingly. As we expect Headteachers to

²¹ Bazalgette, J. 2006 *Leading Schools From failure To Success*, UIT Cambridge : England

²² PWC, Ibid

²³ Bishops Conference of England and Wales, Board of Religious Studies, Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies

²⁴ St Mary's University College Twickenham. UK.

give of themselves so we must ensure that their reserves are replenished – The evaluations of Headteachers following a three week sabbatical experience²⁵ captures the essence of this:

i. “It’s hard to put into words how much I have gained from my sabbatical experience. I have journeyed from the burden of “busy”ness to the joy of time to truly rest in Our Lord’s presence. To have the time and space for reflection and refreshment is such a gift. I return with renewed energy and enthusiasm for my work.”

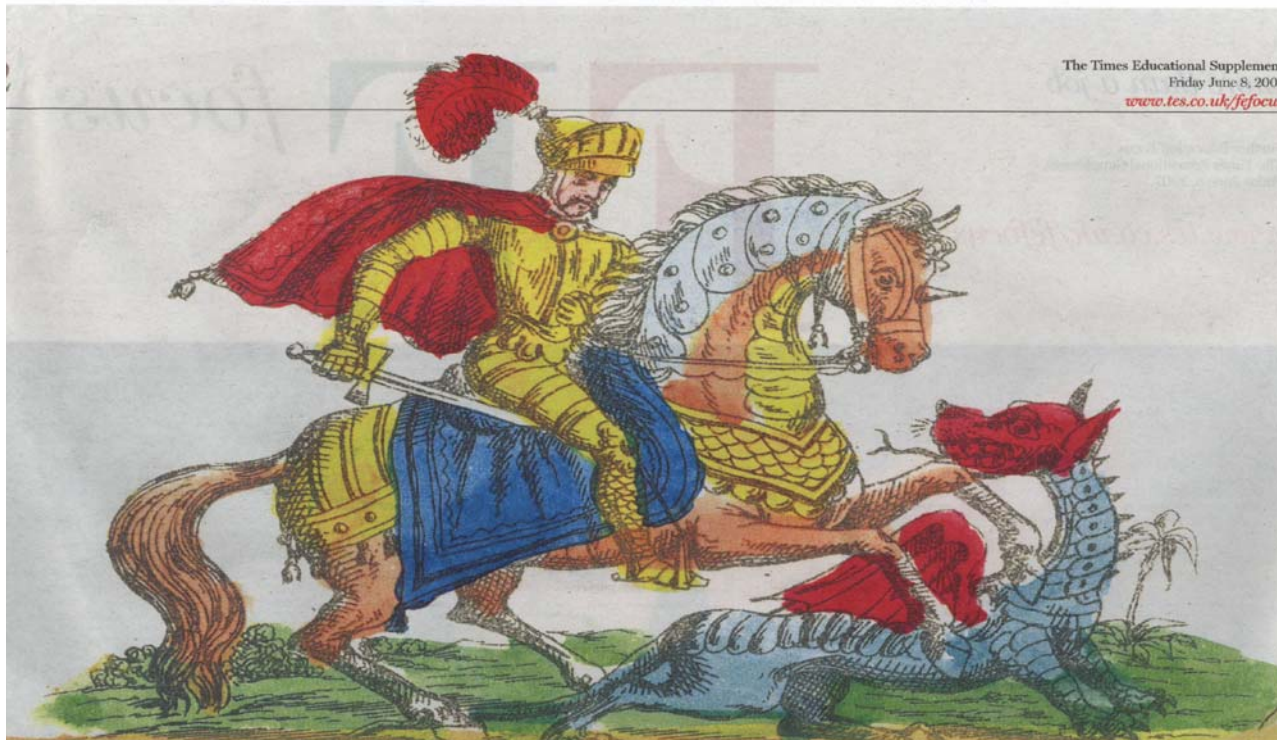
ii. “I was ready to quit Catholic headship because I didn’t see myself connecting to the Catholic Church in the way that I thought I should. I feel now, however, that I am renewed in what I have to offer in terms of the spiritual and academic development of our school. I can enable children to experience awe and wonder in the God given world that surrounds them. I can teach children to walk in the footsteps of Christ in love and deep affection for each other. I can help them find a path through life that is rewarding and of service to others and makes use of their talents and gifts. I can do all this within the traditions of my Church. This is a major realisation for me and I am profoundly grateful to the sabbatical experience.”

Finally, it has been acknowledged that we face many challenges in securing sufficient school leaders. Equally, there is much good work and innovation to celebrate and promulgate. In calling for all in the Catholic community to take some responsibility for future leaders I am reminded of the adage, ‘it takes a village to rear a child’. Perhaps, for us there should be the adage, **‘it takes a community to provide a Headteacher’**.

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²⁵ Diocese of Hallam, 2007. *Sixth Sabbatical Experience for Headteachers of Catholic Schools*. Unpublished.





APPENDIX 1

Succession Planning Initiatives and Recommendations Discussed at CES National Conference 2007

In May 2007, the Catholic Education Service hosted a National conference, *Leading Catholic Schools and Sixth Form Colleges in the 21st Century: Opportunities, Rewards and Challenges*. This served as strategy to promote headship, to research and to provide a think tank. Systems change has become an aid to stimulating Headteacher retention and to new recruitment.

A programme of seminar sessions shared current leadership situations and developed recommendations. The range of the seminars gives some indication of the diversity of school models and systems emerging within the Catholic sector:

- i. Working in partnership with many other schools beyond the sector, as a designated training school with specialist status for languages and sciences and offering enhanced professional development.
- ii. Innovative models of Headship; collaborative arrangements including the Headteacher of one school acting as a consultant leader. The collaboration enables Headteachers to work together, supporting one another, staff and Governors.
- iii. Leading a primary school/Children's Centre. The school offers an extended menu of services to all families in the local community, including the provision of a Children's Centre. The Headteacher found this a rewarding and stimulating opportunity renewing his energy for headship.
- iv. Leading schools in challenging circumstances. The Headteacher of an East London primary school was chosen to become one of a small number of designated 'National Leaders of Education' (NLE). She has mentored other Headteachers, allowed them to shadow her and she has provided leadership in other community schools.
- v. Executive Headship. A Headteacher described her career journey beginning as a teacher of Religious Education in a joint Catholic/Church of England school. She is currently the Headteacher of a Catholic high school and, more recently, has also taken up the Executive headship of a neighbouring 11-16 community school, which was in special measures. The two schools have very different social profiles but it is likely that they will both technically close in order to open one joint Catholic/Church of England academy in the area.
- vi. Attracting teachers and Heads from beyond the Catholic sector. A recent Headteacher and diocesan officer spoke of their diocesan strategy to make contact with Catholic teachers working outside the sector. The used parish networks, secular Headteacher networks and electronic means of communication. The diocese provided a 'transition course' to help individuals to apply for posts in the Catholic sector. Such individuals had also been offered a mentor working in the Catholic sector.
- vii. Succession planning, focusing on alternative models of headship that have been developed in Hexham and Newcastle including federations of schools under one Headteacher.
- viii. Retention planning: a sabbatical programme in north eastern dioceses. Over six years, 72 Headteachers and 23 long serving members of staff have experienced sabbaticals organised by the dioceses. These include an emphasis on spiritual and reflective opportunities as well as action research. It is reported that some Headteachers planning to leave posts have remained Headteachers following the refreshment of these sabbaticals.
- ix. Distributive leadership; leading a learning community. Staffing structures and job descriptions have changed, reflecting the increasingly participative and distributed nature of school leadership. As a result of this the school has become a Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) centre for continuous professional development. Five members of the schools' senior leadership team have been promoted in the last three years (two to headships and three to deputy headships).
- x. Collaboration 14-19. The Principal of a college judged by Ofsted as 'having outstanding leadership' spoke of the different leadership strategies required to meet

new situations and to develop leadership in other staff. Fostering the capacity to respond positively to change, and to discern future challenges has been very important.

- xi. Expectations of a leader of a spiritual community. A Headteacher of a Catholic high school in an ethnically diverse area is currently working with a new Muslim girls' school, also working as a consultant and lead facilitator for the NCSL. He explored the relationship between the leader's personal spiritual life and the role of leading a school emphasising the need to hand on 'spiritual capital' to the next generation of school leaders.

In précis these sessions highlighted the motivating factor of new, worthwhile challenges to serving Headteachers. When they could see an opportunity to help colleagues and pupils in their own schools/colleges or others the Headteachers readily accept the invitation. They were spearheading innovation and working across sectors, i.e. in and beyond the Catholic community. They were an excellent example of the old adage '*if you want something done ask a busy person*'. All were an example of vocation and service in the true sense. None compromised their Catholic commitment and this was clearly underpinning their work and the building of spiritual capital. Fresh and stimulating challenges in leadership and the excitement of innovation seem to energise these Headteachers. They were able to put more into their leadership and remain with headship where some had previously felt their interest and energies waning. In so doing they were successful role models, to less experienced leaders and, in some cases, bringing them to headship.

The conference provided a think-tank for ideas that Catholic leadership teams and diocesan officers want to see introduced or further developed at local, regional and national levels. All are already happening to some degree. These can be summarised as follows;

i. At the School Level:

- More collaboration between local schools (both in and out of the Catholic sector) to provide opportunities for mentoring, teacher and leader exchanges, secondments, work shadowing with parallel staff in different schools.
- Better audit of training needs and sharing of training across schools, setting up local networks of support and a published entitlement requiring every school to offer leadership development opportunities and support for staff (for staff identified for nurturing of early talent and for staff who self-select).
- Arrange work experience opportunities in a range of different schools for leadership staff at all levels (the revision of NPQH will require experience in at least one further context outside the home school).
- Find opportunities to shadow leaders in other organisations beyond schools/ education.
- Ensure more targeted training and support for leaders when in post and throughout their leadership career; the visibility of this to also encourage aspirant leaders.
- Individual schools to promote and support degrees in Catholic leadership or the equivalent e.g. the St Mary's University College MA currently being offered in some satellites.
- Celebration of the positive aspects of working in challenging circumstances and the contribution this makes to leadership development.
- Activities for each schools' governing bodies so that governors have an increased understanding and awareness of leadership issues and succession planning needs.
- Governors to review their recruitment policies and procedures to encourage Catholic applications to leadership posts from beyond the Catholic sector; eliminate prejudice re

Catholics who have been working beyond the Catholic sector.

- Encourage students to consider teaching as a career and give senior students in school experience as classroom assistants.
- Use Parish and other Church networks to invite Catholic teachers and leaders working elsewhere to visit school/maintain links.
- Make good use of Performance Management as a formative experience to encourage applications to headship.
- Give staff plenty of project management experiences/increase project management in school, in order to give everyone real experience of high order responsibility and accountability.

ii. At Diocesan/ Regional Level

- Improve early identification and nurturing of potential leaders.
- Create plenty of opportunities for middle leaders to act up and for deputies and assistants to have taster experiences of headship in their own school or others e.g. as locums, part time etc.
- Track and keep in contact with NPQH graduates in the Catholic sector.
- Keep a database of potential Headteachers and resting Headteachers at diocesan level. Similar re Catholic leaders working outside the sector.
- Diocese to arrange head hunting, welcoming and transition support and induction opportunities for Catholics teaching outside the sector, to encourage them to leadership posts in the Catholic sector (including training in how to apply for posts in Catholic schools).
- Development of sabbaticals as entitlement for all Headteachers after 4 – 5 years of service.
- Revitalise Headteachers through spiritual reflection time and other and support.
- Arrange for the provision of the MA in Catholic leadership regional/local level.
- Diocesan website; a directory of collaboration opportunities and networks for leadership development/ experience.
- Review and revise the diocesan guidance on the appointment of staff and Heads so that such things as younger talent, experience outside the Catholic sector, returners etc are all encouraged to pursue headship in Catholic schools.
- The dioceses to arrange training for and ensure attendance by governors, and by local Clergy to ensure that they understand leadership issues and the need for succession planning (see point at school level). Each governing body to have a governor responsible for succession planning.

iii. At National Level

- Personalise the NPQH/make it more bespoke so it meets Catholic needs, e.g. for spiritual development and leading a worshipping community.
- Maintain and strengthen the CES' role and influence in NCSL; enable more distinctly Catholic succession planning initiatives.

- CES to disseminate/publish examples of good practice in leadership development and succession planning from around England and Wales.
- CES to provide more publicity for and promotion of new models of school leadership, e.g. school federations, job sharing, dual headship, executive headship etc.
- CES to raise awareness and conduct a publicity campaign on the opportunities for collaboration in leadership/the need to have secure succession planning.
- CES to generate a website directory on school collaborations and networking opportunities.
- Change the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS) and the perceptions of it to make clear its relevance to headship.
- Provide a variety of accredited programmes and courses for future Headteachers of **Catholic** schools and for leadership of a spiritual community.
- The CES to produce more guidelines re school federations, children's centres, including contractual arrangements for Headteachers in such new models of leadership.
- The CES to publicise children's centres and encourage others on the same pathway; stimulates new interest in leadership.
- The CES to urge Ofsted to include an evaluation of collaboration in their inspection arrangements.
- Department for Children, Schools and Families to be encouraged to reduce bureaucracy to make headship more attractive to applicants!